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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 93, Number 12

June 16, 1994



Campers ON MISSION

Arkansas Baptist Campers on Mission members held their annual Spring Rally May 19-22 at Maumelle State Park. The rally was a preparation for the 1995 national rally to be held in Hope.

ARKANSAS BAPTIST HISTORICAL COMMISSION
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Pastor's final message urges people to 'get right with God'

By Robert O'Brien
Foreign Mission Board

HARARE, ZIMBABWE (BP)—Abel Nziramasaanga preached a message urging people to prepare to meet God — then died.

The African Baptist preacher's invitation at the close of the May 15 worship service to "get right with God" motivated 50 university students and many others to come forward to respond.

Shortly after finishing the sermon at Harare Baptist Church in Zimbabwe, Nziramasaanga welcomed those who came forward, shook hands with his deacons, walked out the back door and fell a short distance away.

People in the choir saw him through a window and ran to help. He was dead by the time Southern Baptist missionary Evelyn Moss got him to the hospital.

Nziramasaanga, 69, retired in 1992 as pastor of the Harare church, where he had served 33 years. He was general secretary of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe when he died. He also was one of the first pastors Southern Baptist missionaries worked with when they began work in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) in 1950.

Moss described the veteran pastor's final day this way:

"He seemed stronger than I had seen him in weeks; his voice was strong. He had a beautiful smile on his face as he walked down the aisle to the pulpit. He said his message would be short (and that) ... he was all 'full up' himself because he and the Lord had been talking from 2 a.m. until 7 a.m.

"His message was about the Holy Spirit and his text was John 16:8-9. He said his work was done and that the Lord wanted him to tell his people that he and the Lord were okay in their relationship — and to ask if the people at Harare were ready to meet God.

"The Spirit was very evident. People said they had never heard him preach that way before. There was a glow about him."

Baptist leaders in Zimbabwe have extolled Nziramasaanga as the "father" of Baptist development in Zimbabwe, including the Harare church and its mission congregations, the Baptist convention, youth work and many other ministries, Moss said.

"In the days before his death, Nziramasaanga had systematically gone about getting convention business in order while commenting that his time was short, Moss said.

The morning he preached, he borrowed a ball-point pen from church member Stanley Kandulo before the service to write some notes.

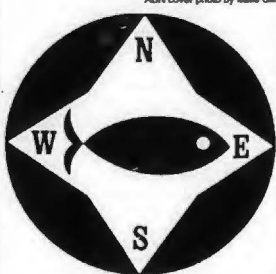
"This is the last thing I will write," he told Kandulo, handing back the pen. "Just remember it."

Following his death, which electrified the community, more than 200 people attended worship services led by local pastors each night in the Nziramasaanga home. The services continued until his funeral May 21 at Harare Baptist Church.

That's the African Christian's way to grieve, Moss said: to surround a family with song, prayer, testimony, remembrance of life and the joy of the Christian faith — not despair over death.

Cover Story

ABN cover photo by Mills GM



Campers on Mission 13

Campers on Mission is a Southern Baptist Convention organization of campers that meet regularly to camp while building or repairing Baptist church or camp facilities. Pictured on the cover are members of Arkansas COM listening to Harley Petty, minister of youth for First Church, Sherwood, during the group's annual meeting May 19-22 at Maumelle State Park.

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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Seven Arkansas churches among CP leaders

Immanuel Church in Little Rock is among the top 20 churches in Cooperative Program giving for 1993, according to a Uniform Church Letter analysis by the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission. Seven Arkansas Baptist churches are among the top 100 CP contributors for the second consecutive year.

Immanuel Church ranked 13th in CP giving among Southern Baptists' more than 38,000 churches. The 1993 report marks the fourth year in a row that Immanuel has ranked 13th in the annual survey.

Immanuel channeled 18.6 percent of its undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program for a total of \$406,214. Rex Horne is pastor of Immanuel.

Among the other Arkansas Baptist churches listed in the top 100:

■ Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock ranked 22nd for the second straight year. The church gave 16.5 percent of its receipts through CP for a total of \$327,704. Paul Sanders is pastor.

■ Central Church in Jonesboro ranked 46th in CP giving last year compared to 62nd in 1992. The church gave 14.9 percent of its gifts through CP for a total of \$257,176. Rex Holt is pastor.

■ Park Hill Church in North Little Rock ranked 47th in CP giving after ranking 31st the previous year. Park Hill channeled 14 percent of its receipts through CP for a

total of \$256,317. Cary Heard is pastor.

■ Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith moved from 84th in 1992 CP giving to 69th last year. The church gave 14.5 percent of its gifts through CP for a total of \$226,361. Ed Saucier is pastor.

■ Springdale First Church moved up from 96th to 75th in CP giving. The Springdale church gave 5.8 percent of its gifts through CP for a total of \$220,000. Ronnie Floyd is pastor.

■ Crossett First Church gave 30.1 percent of its gifts through CP, the second consecutive year the church has given the highest CP percentage among all top 100 churches. The church's CP gifts of \$210,269 moved the church's ranking from 88th to 85th. David Newberry is pastor.

Among all Southern Baptist congregations, First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla., is the top CP giving church for the third consecutive year. The church gave 14 percent of its gifts through CP last year for a total of \$894,805.

Other top five contributors include: First Baptist Church of Midland, Texas, \$613,841 (16.3 percent); Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., \$602,970 (5.5 percent); First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss., \$537,507 (9.4 percent); and First Baptist Church, Amarillo, Texas, \$497,314 (13.1 percent).

In other financial reports, the Southern

Baptist Home Mission Board reported that Arkansas Baptist churches gave \$1,089,341 to the 1993 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions, an increase of \$22,849. Gifts to the annual home missions offering totaled \$36.3 million nationwide.

According to HMB statistics, top churches in total Annie Armstrong giving for the state were Park Hill, North Little Rock; Immanuel, Little Rock; Central, Jonesboro; Geyer Springs First, Little Rock; Grand Avenue, Fort Smith; First, Springdale; First, Benton; First, Little Rock; Immanuel, El Dorado; and First, El Dorado.

Top Arkansas Baptist churches in per capita giving to home missions were Pinnacle, Little Rock; Union Hill, Hermitage; First, Sparkman; Black Oak, Fayetteville; Barcelona Road, Hot Springs Village; Bella Vista Church; New Hope, Dardanelle; Calvary, Mena; Washington Church; and First Stutzgart.

Foreign Mission Board officials reported that Southern Baptists gave a record \$82,899,291 to the 1993 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. The final total, tallied after books on the offering closed May 31, represents a 2.37 percent increase over the previous year's offering for a gain of \$1.9 million. Receipts missed the \$85 million goal but topped the previous record, set in 1991, by more than \$1.5 million.

Youth 'catch the wave' in Van Buren revival

More than 100 youth and adults "Caught the Wave," making professions of faith during a recent Disciple Now Weekend for students at First Church, Van Buren, that splashed over into a high school baccalaureate service.

"As a church," said pastor Bryan Smith, "we saw a Disciple Now weekend turn into a youth revival which has now begun a church-wide revival. We saw God do things in the lives of young people and adults which only God could do."

"I should have suspected that something great was going to happen," Smith commented, "when (minister of students and recreation) Craig Hobson told me that some of our young people had been meeting together to pray for our Disciple Now weekend as early as four months prior to the event."

"Catch The Wave" was the weekend's theme. The program featured youth communicator and evangelist Ken Freeman of San Antonio, Texas, who spoke at two Van Buren junior high schools, the baccalaureate service, a banquet and worship services. Bible study lessons for participating youth were conducted at host homes.

Describing the events of the week and their results, Smith noted, "Nine participants made professions of faith at a kick-off banquet Thursday evening. He said Friday that Freeman spoke at both of the town's junior high schools and Friday evening and Saturday morning the students participated in Bible studies. Saturday evening featured a concert by the weekend's musician, David Files of Alhambra, Calif. and a message given by Freeman "with 33 professions of faith being made in Jesus Christ," he said,

and "25 professions of faith being made" in the Sunday morning service.

Smith said Freeman was asked to speak at the baccalaureate services being conducted at First Assembly of God Church in Van Buren Sunday afternoon. "This is an annual event sponsored by the Ministerial Association in Van Buren," he explained.

"During the service," Smith noted, "Freeman led over 200 graduating seniors in prayer as they knelt at the altar." Smith said Freeman concluded the service with a public invitation "after asking all of the pastors and ministers of youth who were present for the service to come to the front of the church."

"Over 40 graduating seniors from Van Buren High School stood up, came forward and prayed to receive Christ as their personal Lord and Savior," he reported. "Three of these were baptized that same evening at First Baptist Church."

Even after the successful weekend, Smith was "amazed" at the Sunday evening testimony service.

"This was unquestionably one of the most amazing services which I have ever been a part of," Smith noted. "No sermon was ever preached, no formal order of service was printed and yet, in four and one-half hours, we saw over 20 people pray to receive Christ and 54 baptized following their public profession of faith."

Smith is enthused about the Disciple Now concept. "By His amazing grace, He answered our prayers over and above what many of us ever expected. If there ever was a time for First Baptist Church to Disciple Now, it is now!"

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABSBC Executive Director

What wonderful days these are! "Wonder" is a word used casually but should be reserved for God and His activity. He is a wonder! His grace and mercy are wonderful! His attributes are described as wondrous! This is a wonderful day!

From man's standpoint, it could hardly be described as wonderful. Moral darkness overshadows our lives. But for God, "where sin did abound, grace did much more abound." Fear of failure, loss, violence and the future stalks us. But with God, "perfect love casts out fear." Masses of people are experiencing loneliness, even in the midst of people and feverish activity. But God says, "Fear thou not for I am with thee." Despair is a prevailing emotion. To this God says, "Cast all your care upon Him for He careth for you."

It is a wonderful day because every discouraging, negative and painful experience of man has the potential of opening him up to God. Even God's judgment upon the nation and His people is wonderful. It says He cares and that He is not willing to let us go on to our own ruin. He intends to turn us back to Him.

Some churches, long plateaued, declining or stagnant, have begun to come alive. This is not the result of a new scheme or program. It is the result of the people of God crying out to Him for direction and their meeting His conditions. Most churches having such struggles think they only need an effective pastor, when in fact they only need to restore their relationship with God and obey His leading. He will restore the church when that happens.

Individuals who have lost the vitality of a fresh and exciting relationship with God are making that wonderful discovery.

I can tell you that what is happening is not man's doings. It is the work of God. I take great heart in this and urge that we all seek His favor and give to Him lives through whom He can mightily manifest Himself in redemptive power.

The summer of '94: Could this be the period of time God moves in mighty revival and awakening? Let's pray to that end.

RONNIE ROGERS

President's Corner

Perform ministry! (Part IV)



8. Don't focus on what people can't do, but what they can do. Build on a solid biblical foundation, and use people where God has gifted them. If no one wants to perform a certain ministry, don't force it. Preach, pray, mature the saints and wait on the Lord.

9. Determine needs in your community. This can be done by talking to different groups in your church or area. Then seek to meet those needs.

10. One of the major hurdles in transitioning our churches is leading deacons from being an administrative board to a ministering body. This change may take several years, but be patient and persistent. Start by allotting time each meeting to focus on ministering to the needs of your church and community. Each time emphasize the needs around you; then pray and spend time discussing how to meet those needs, gradually replacing the reading of budgets with meeting needs. Be assured, the needs are already there. Ordain only men who live as deacons before ordination because ordination does not make a deacon, it only officially recognizes what God has made them.

11. Make each committee a ministry team. A ministry team with a coordinator denotes action whereas a committee and chairman denotes decision making. Once the church votes people into an area of service and gives them a budget, let them minister. This builds greater ministry awareness and removes the barrier of having to go before the church every time you spend a nickel. The church does not lose control, but it does expand its outreach. Micro-management of ministries dooms a small church to remaining small.

12. Meet needs with the ultimate goal of seeing people saved. Ministry must be directly or indirectly evangelistic. This is not a utilitarian approach, but if ministry is meeting human needs, it must include ministering to the greatest need of man - or else it would not be compassionate. Evangelism and ministry are inextricably bound together even though some ministries are less direct in their contribution to evangelism.

Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Church in Hot Springs, is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Personal perspectives

"Grandparents are today sacrificing everything they can for... grandchildren and marriages of 40 years are being strained because of the problems in their children's families."

- Irene Endicott, author, *Grandparenting by Grace*

"Pastors, in part, are pretty resistant to counseling. They are afraid that if they go for counseling, people may think they are weak or inadequate."

- J.D. Stake, director, ABSBC ministry of crisis support

"There are no negatives when you are out doing God's business. He's going to bless your socks off."

- Warren Bursleson, member, First Southern Church, Bryant

A sure cure for the cancer of complacency

The cancer of complacency. It is one of those haunting phrases that echoes in your mind—at least it is for me.

I was introduced to the phrase during a Sunday evening worship service several months ago as a furloughing foreign missionary voiced the benediction. As he prayed, he asked God to rescue American Christians from "the cancer of complacency."

The dictionary defines complacency as "self-satisfaction accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies." Perhaps more specifically, it's the old head-in-the-sand syndrome—a case of being so self-absorbed that an individual fails to pay any attention to the needs and concerns of others.

I fear that we all suffer the cancer of complacency from time to time. What is the cure? Awareness and involvement.

Jesus put it this way: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." He also assures us that even a cup of cold water given in His name will not go unrewarded.

On the practical level, Southern Baptists are preparing to launch an intensive six-week effort called Hope for Hurting Humanity. Designed as the denomination's first simultaneous ministry outreach campaign, the emphasis is scheduled for June 19 through July 31. Of course, individual Baptist churches may plan their participation to begin sooner, last longer or become an ongoing ministry project.

Hope for Hurting Humanity, which is co-sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Brotherhood

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



By TRENNIS HENDERSON

Commission and Woman's Missionary Union, is part of Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust emphasis.

According to promotional information about the effort, "Hope for Hurting Humanity has the potential to involve every Southern Baptist in ministry, performing redemptive, loving service for people in the name and spirit of Christ. As a result, we will move closer to our goal that every person in the world have the opportunity to hear the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ by the year 2000....Hope for Hurting Humanity is one Southern Baptist response to God's call to accomplish His purpose."

Here in Arkansas, Baptist Building personnel have taken the initiative to become personally involved in Hope for Hurting Humanity projects. Sandy Wisdom-Martin, the effort's statewide coordinator, has planned a series of projects for convention employees to participate in during the coming weeks. The projects range from serving meals at a soup kitchen for the needy to doing repair work and

painting at an associational crisis closet.

Many churches throughout the state already are involved in ongoing "Hope"-type projects such as free health care clinics, food and clothing closets, literacy training, Backyard Bible Clubs and neighborhood block parties.

For congregations that do not currently provide such ministries, Wisdom-Martin said assessing community needs is a starting point in determining how a church can expand its ministry efforts to those in need. Assessing church resources and recruiting interested volunteers are other keys to establishing a successful project.

Whether or not an individual congregation has ever been involved in such projects, there is no question that unmet ministry needs abound in every community, town and city throughout the state. Regardless of a church's size or location, there are needs to be met and ways to be involved.

Emphasizing that Hope projects should seek to minister to people's physical and spiritual needs, Gerry Hutchinson, associate director of the HMB's church and community ministries department, said individual Hope projects "can be as simple or elaborate as the church chooses....All we're saying to the church is, 'Find a hurt and heal it. Find a need and fill it in Jesus' name.'"

Individuals or churches interested in obtaining additional information about participating in Hope for Hurting Humanity may contact Sandy Wisdom-Martin at 376-4791, ext. 5137. The call may be the first step in helping overcome the cancer of complacency.

In defense of Masons

It is sad that Dr. Larry Holly and his friends insist on continuing their campaign against Masonry, at the Home Mission Board or any other place. They, and any who are tempted to join them, need to be aware of the company they are keeping:

Masons in Russia suffered sporadic persecutions under the Imperial government, but with the coming of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in 1917, Masonry was entirely suppressed and remained so in Russia and the Eastern European satellite countries until the fall of Communism.

Hitler professed contempt for the Bolsheviks, but followed them in this: From the Nazis' rise to power in 1933 until their collapse in 1945, lodges were closed and Masons driven underground in Germany and their conquered territories.

Of course, the dictators may have been



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

right, but I would think that most American Christians would rather follow the examples of George Washington and the founders of our country.

Clay Hale
El Dorado, AR

Use professional courtesy

It is nice to see churches advertise for prospective pastors and staff persons in the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. When committees advertise and allow prospects to apply directly, they are

expressing a definite confidence in their church's ability to discern God's leadership in personnel selection.

However, if committees advertise, they should be prepared to be professional in their dealings with responders.

When a person responds to such ads, it is with obvious interest and hope that the committee will at least acknowledge having received the resume. Unfortunately, all too often that is not the case.

Persons sending resumes to churches deserve the professional acknowledgment of the resume having been received. When a church calls someone, a letter expressing that information should be sent to every applicant *before* the information comes out in public media about that position having been filled.

Winfred P. Bridges
Lake City, AR

European Baptist leader shares partnership update

By Trennis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

"Look at the nations and watch and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told," Habakkuk 1:5 declares.

Noting that the impact of a Bible verse sometimes comes after the fact, John Merritt said that verse "came alive" for him "a few months after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the crumbling of a great empire."

Merritt, who has served since 1974 as general secretary of the European Baptist Convention, was in Little Rock recently to brief Arkansas Baptist leaders about initial efforts and future plans for the 1994-96 missions partnership between Arkansas Baptists and the EBC.

Describing the "dramatic, earth-moving stage that started in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin wall," Merritt emphasized that "Europe will never be the same again."

Merritt noted that much of the history of the European Baptist Convention, which dates back to 1957, occurred during the Cold War. He explained that the convention's early years focused primarily on ministering to American military families stationed in Europe.

The convention's first churches were launched in Germany with brothers Herman and Herbert Stout serving as pastors. The convention has grown to include approximately 60 English-language churches in cities throughout Europe.

"In the 1980s we began to get a vision that because of the importance of English, our churches could be reaching far more than just Americans," Merritt pointed out. He said the convention started at that time "intentionally planting English-language churches in major European cities."

In 1989, the convention enlisted church planters with the goal of eventually establishing an English-language Baptist church in every major metropolitan area of Europe.

With the fall of the wall, "the two military powers stationed against each other, in effect, are gone," Merritt noted. "You don't keep 300,000 U.S. military troops in Europe when there is no threat on the other side." He said U.S. officials already have sent an estimated 200,000 military personnel and their families back to the States.

"The effect on the European Baptist Convention has been very dramatic," Merritt said. He explained that 14 churches

with close ties to military families have had to close and many others have had to refocus their goals and priorities.

The military drawdown also has impacted the convention's budget, with budget reductions required each of the past two years.

On the positive side, Merritt added, during the time that 14 churches were closing, 18 new churches were established elsewhere in Europe. He said there are "at least 10 more places we believe churches should start in the next two years."

"There are people who come to our churches who don't understand English, but they feel they are loved and accepted and they come for that.... The gospel, in love and power, communicates."

— John Merritt

General Secretary
European Baptist Convention

Noting that Eastern European school children had to study Russian during the Cold War, Merritt said events of the past few years have brought "a language shift where English is being taught in schools more than ever before."

Describing English as "the language of economic opportunity," Merritt said the attraction of English "has tremendous implications for the gospel."

Prior to 1989 the EBC had no English-language churches in Eastern Europe. Today, Merritt noted, the convention has congregations in such nations as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania and Russia.

Emphasizing that "we are planting all these churches in cooperation with local

Baptists," Merritt added that "one of the unique things about our churches is connecting people with the larger world Baptist family." In addition to the EBC's ties to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, with several EBC pastors under appointment as FMB missionaries, the convention also is affiliated with the European Baptist Federation and the Baptist World Alliance.

Partnership plans call for Arkansas Baptists to assist in church planting efforts as well as providing prayer support, leadership training, simultaneous revivals and other ministry projects.

While Eastern Europeans have rejoiced over their newfound religious freedom in recent years, Merritt warned that in many countries "a dramatic change has occurred with the reassertion of power in the old state churches." He said there continues to be "tremendous pressure on religious people" in many former Soviet countries.

Merritt said International Baptist Church in Sofia, Bulgaria—the only English-language church in the nation—is among EBC congregations that need special prayer.

Emphasizing that prayer is the key to starting and maintaining churches in Europe, he said the Sofia congregation has "survived on prayer."

Merritt said another prayer need for EBC congregations is for the opportunity and resources to purchase church property. Explaining that only 20 to 25 percent of EBC churches own their buildings, he said, "It's rare when one of our churches has an opportunity to buy a building." He said high rental costs and limited space produce ongoing challenges.

Despite such limitations, Merritt said EBC churches baptized more than 450 people last year and also channeled approximately 20 percent of undesignated gifts to mission causes.

Merritt said approximately half of the EBC congregations already have requested partnership projects with Arkansas Baptists. He said that pace is "far, far ahead" of previous partnership efforts with other conventions.

Affirming the tremendous ministry opportunities available throughout the partnership, Merritt said many people being reached by EBC churches previously "have never felt spiritual, social warmth in their lives."

"There are people who come to our churches who don't understand English," he added, "but they feel they are loved and accepted and they come for that."

As more churches are planted and language barriers are bridged, Merritt emphasized, "The gospel, in love and power, communicates."

Grober shares partnership opportunities

Arkansas Baptists' three-year missions partnership with European Baptists is "an integral part of the missionary planning of the European Baptist Convention," according to Glendon Grober, Arkansas Baptist partnership coordinator.

The EBC is a convention of 60 English-language congregations located throughout Europe. Grober said the partnership "has the obvious advantage of allowing Arkansas Baptists to be involved in foreign mission projects that can potentially reach to the ends of the earth without the need for a translator."

The European partnership and other TTEOTE (To The Ends Of The Earth) mission projects provide "a call and opportunity for every Arkansas Baptist to be personally involved in foreign missions." He said specific opportunities include personally participating in an overseas project or being involved in intercessory prayer for missionaries, missions volunteers and churches on the mission fields.

Grober said one specific need of the partnership is the establishment of a "rapid deployment interim pastoral force." He explained that the group will include retired ministers and others available to travel to Europe on short notice in order to serve interim pastorates.

In addition to interim pastorates, several churches in Europe also seek Southern Baptist pastors to fill permanent pastoral roles. Churches currently seeking full-time pastors include Fellowship Baptist Church in Bad Kreuznach, Germany (contact Pat Bartlett; HHC, 1st AD; CMR 438, Box 322; APO AE 09111) and Anderson Memorial Baptist Church in Schweinfurt, Germany (contact Annette Kirk, B 5/41, Unit 25862 Box 774, APO AE 09033).

Grober said those interested in additional information about the work of the EBC may contact his office to subscribe to *Highlights*, the EBC's monthly newsletter. He also encouraged individuals wishing to participate or pray for the partnership to contact him at the ABCS Brotherhood department, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 376-4791, ext. 5158.

Arkansas volunteers meet diverse needs in Europe

Three teams of Arkansas Baptist volunteers recently traveled to Europe for a pastors' conference, a women's prayer retreat and wood and electrical repair for European Baptist Convention churches.

The teams went as part of a missions partnership between the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and the European Baptist Convention.

ABSC partnership coordinator Glendon Grober represented Arkansas Baptists at a recent EBC pastors' conference in Frankfurt, Germany, where participants gave him project ideas for Arkansas Baptists.

"It was an informational and promotional trip," explained Grober, "that resulted in about 50 project requests from European Baptists."

Church-to-church partnerships

He said the projects will include a variety of ministries and that the EBC churches "asked for church-to-church partnerships or groups of churches or associations" to help them in their requests.

"That's a new style for Arkansas Baptists," Grober noted. "Arkansas Baptist churches will be working on the individual needs of EBC churches. It may be three of our churches for every one of theirs, or even an association to one of their churches."

Leading a Ladies' Prayer Retreat in Dorfweil, Germany, were Marjorie Grober, Becky Kirkpatrick, Billy Richardson and Peggy Sutton, all members of Immanuel Church, Little Rock. The retreat attracted 120 participants from Sweden, England, Belgium, Germany, Kenya, the Philippines, Croatia and other countries.

"This was something that the European Baptist Convention WMU does yearly," Mrs. Grober explained. "We had the responsibility of leading the prayer conferences and special prayer times."

Mrs. Grober said she led the "early bird" morning prayer sessions; Kirkpatrick led a conference on how to pray for and with their children "to meet the young mothers' needs"; Sutton led "Finding Time to Pray," a prayer-time management session; and Richardson led a session on types of prayer and a conference on using Scripture in prayer.

"We also had a prayer concert talking about needs and then broke off into small groups to pray for those needs, such as personal, family and church work needs," Mrs. Grober added.

Six Arkansas Baptist laymen traveled to Baumholder, Germany, April 28 through

May 9 to repair woodwork and electrical wiring in Trinity Baptist Church's fellowship hall and parsonage.

The team included leader Warren Burleson and John Bornemeier, both of First Southern Church, Bryant; Steven Hammond of Fairdale Church, Hot Springs; David Raulerson of Columbus Church; Bob Fluharty of Woodlawn Church, Little Rock; and Noel Leverett of First Church, Nashville.

Dan Sims, Trinity Church's pastor, shared the church's appreciation "for sending this work team to assist our church. They did a super job."

Sims said the team "hit the ground running" after its arrival in Baumholder. "Working from six o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock each night, they completely rewired the fellowship hall and the two floors of the parsonage."

"We wanted to do as much as we could in the time we had," Burleson said of the long days. "We were there for that purpose."

"That's just our ministry," he remarked. "Some are called to be pastors, some evangelists and some to work with their hands." He said most of the group is involved with Church in a Day, an Arkansas Baptist church construction group.

Burleson described the group as "jacks of all trades." He said the group included an electrician, electric small tool repairman, lumber company employee, two with medical backgrounds and a farmer.

Burleson said the group members raised their own money for the trip, which cost approximately \$1,000 each. He said the need to raise their own money led to generous giving by others.

"Raulerson didn't have the money to go and Leverett did," he said. "Leverett's church said, 'We'll send you,' so he just took David. Steve Hammond went to his church with a desire to go and they said, 'We're sending you.' And this is a church that runs only about 100 in Sunday School. Burleson said he and Bornemeier were helped by a special missions fund established at First Southern Church."

"They are the greatest bunch of guys," he said of his co-workers. "There are no egos when you are on a trip like that. You put your ego in your pocket and show your commitment to the Lord. We laughed and had a great time."

Burleson said there are "no negatives when you are out doing God's business. He's going to bless your socks off. The pay's no good, but the benefits are out of this world."

Senior adults gather at OBU for annual 'celebration'

By Millie Gill

Arkansas Baptist

Senior adults from Arkansas Baptist churches heard a new senior adult musical drama, were introduced to a new curriculum and received innovative ideas for improved programs within their churches when they met at Ouachita Baptist University June 2-4 for a Senior Adult Celebration.

The musical, based on the hymns of Fanny Crosby and written for the event by John Dresbach of Central Church in Jonesboro and Wanda Pearce of First Church in Malvern, was presented by a mass choir of senior adults from Central Church, Beech Street First Church in Texarkana, Park Hill Church in North Little Rock and First Church in Arkadelphia.

Grandparenting by Grace, to be released in September by the Baptist Sunday School Board, was the new curriculum introduced by author Irene Endicott of Seattle, Wash.

"This curriculum has been written to meet the needs of the 2.3 million grandparents who currently are raising their grandchildren as a result of the decades of the '60s, '70s and '80s when substance abuse, immorality and 'me first, you last and everyone owes me something' captured the interest of young parents," Endicott declared.

"Grandparents are today sacrificing everything they can for these grandchildren and marriages of 40 years are being strained because of the problems in their children's families," she continued.

"It is the responsibility of churches to minister to these needs. It discusses grandparenting as a ministry, the role of the grandparent, healthy and unhealthy concern, having fun, helping grandchildren grow, grace through the difficult times and leaving a legacy of love," she concluded.

Lucille Trudell, a member of Second Church in Little Rock, is anxious for the new curriculum to become available. "Having been exposed to it in this conference, I have learned how to help others, including my children," she said. "I'm going to talk it up to my children so they will be better prepared for their role as grandparents."

"How to Deal with Senior Adults as an Ongoing Ministry in the Local Church" was the leadership conference led by Jay Johnston, senior adult specialist with the Baptist Sunday School Board.

He encouraged leaders to use their

senior adults as mentors, as teachers and as examples, remembering that "God called Abraham at age 65."

"Senior adults are deserving of honor, respect and recognition," Johnston said. "Aging provides experience, knowledge and wisdom and can serve as an example of a worthy life."

He also discussed the need for churches to minister to senior adults in a Christ-like way by identifying crises facing them, and assisting them in coping with the crises.

Adult day care centers were suggested as an outreach ministry for the local church. "This is a rapidly growing need that churches must consider meeting," Johnston said. "It will assist not only senior adults, but their families as well."

Juanita Phillips, senior adult coordinator for First Church of Gravel Ridge, said the leadership conference was very informative. "It has emphasized the need for senior adult leaders to return to the basics of letting senior adults be ministers and ministered to with Christ as the focal point," she stated.

Other special-interest conferences on spiritual growth, ministering to others and financial management were led by Marjorie Grober, a member of Immanuel Church in Little Rock; Diana Lewis, a member of First Church in Benton; and James Walker, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's annuity and stewardship department.

Celebration speaker Bob Norman, pastor of Clearview Church in Nashville, Tenn., emphasized the need for senior adults to participate on every committee of the local church and encouraged them to lead out in praise. Quoting from 1 Corinthians 11:1-2, he said, "If it is lovable, let it be audible."

Bob Holley, director of the ABSC discipleship and family ministry department which sponsored the event, said the interest conferences were a unique aspect of the celebration. He added that *Grandparenting by Grace* materials will be introduced at future associational and church-sponsored Discipleship Training conferences, as well as the 1995 May Institute for Christian Discipleship.

Arkansas Baptist senior adults again have an opportunity to be involved in worship services, Bible study, fellowship, interest conferences and leadership training Oct. 8-15 when a tour has been planned to Ridgcrest Baptist Conference Center. Those interested may contact Holley at P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 376-4791, ext. 5160.

WMU to 'Impact' church leaders in fall meetings

Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union wants to make an "Impact" on church leadership during IMPACT '94 Conferences at nine locations this fall.

Julia Ketner, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention WMU, explained, "We want to make an impact on church leadership by equipping leaders for the new year."

She said participants also will get a "sneak preview" of the changes in WMU, "Women on Mission," that will occur in 1995 and the opportunity to purchase new materials at a Baptist Book Store at each location.

Ketner said the program will feature two tracks of conferences, "one in the participants' leadership role and an elective," taught by Arkansas WMU leaders.

Conference topics will include basic and advanced conferences on Mission Friends, Girls in Action and Acteens; Baptist Women, Baptist Young Women and WMU officer, mission support, mission study and mission action training; relationship skills improvement; a preview of Women on Mission and promotion and publicity.

Conference sites

IMPACT '94 conferences will be held Aug. 29 at Eastside Church in Ft. Smith; Aug. 30-31 at First Church, Farmington; and Aug. 31-Sept. 1 at East Side Church in Mountain Home.

Conferences will be held Sept. 12 at Hickory Street Church in Texarkana; Sept. 13-14 at First Church in Camden; and Sept. 15 at Second Church, Monticello; Sept. 26 at Immanuel Church in Little Rock; Sept. 27-28 at First Church in West Memphis; and Sept. 29 at Walnut Street Church in Jonesboro.

There is no cost for the conferences and nursery care for children through preschool is available free at each location. Participants are responsible for their own lodging and meals, but refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact Ketner at the ABSC Woman's Missionary Union; phone 376-4791, ext. 5137.

Ministers, families 'at Stake' in counseling ministry

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Pastors, their wives and children have a lot of pressure on them, said J.D. Stake, new director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's ministry of crisis support. He said such pressure "can lead to burnout, marital problems and low self-esteem."

That's where the ministry of crisis support comes in. Stake is available to provide counseling and support resources to all ministers, their wives and children who serve Arkansas Baptist congregations.

"The ministry of crisis support deals with the special issues related to ministry," Stake explained. "In particular, it deals with the problems and stresses of the minister in his role as the spiritual leader in a church and his role as husband and father. It also deals with the issues involved in being a minister's wife and the child of a minister."

Stake will conduct workshops, seminars, education programs and assist directors of missions and associational leaders in providing support for pastors and families. His duties also include leadership training "to meet needs for pastors and train associational leaders to do peer counseling in ministry."

"The ministry offers individual, marriage and family counseling from a distinctly Christian perspective," Stake noted. He said his counseling is biblically based and is conducted "in a warm, supportive, empathetic setting with complete confidentiality and integrity."

Underscoring the need for confidentiality in his duties, Stake emphasized, "What is said in my office stays in my office. Period. When I use the word 'confidentiality,' that's what it means."

"My counseling approach is characterized by caring, listening and communicating to build self-esteem, produce wholeness and achieve a redemptive goal," he added.

ABSC executive director Don Moore emphasized the need for the ministry. "The stress placed upon ministers today seems to be greater than before," Moore pointed out. "It seems to be the Christian thing to do to provide support so they can remain healthy and effective."

Stake came to his current ministry May 1 from First Baptist Church in Lafayette, La., where he served since 1981 as a staff minister and director of the church's pastoral counseling program. He also has served as associate pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in New Iberia, La.; pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Thibodaux, La.; and director of the juvenile division for Iberia



"My approach is characterized by caring, listening and communicating to build self-esteem, produce wholeness and achieve a redemptive goal."

- J.D. Stake, director
ABSC ministry of crisis support

Parish Sheriff's Office in New Iberia. A veteran of the U.S. Navy, Stake is a charter member of the American Association of Christian Counselors.

His experience and range may best be illustrated by his counseling efforts at First Church, Lafayette. While serving as church counselor, he conducted more than 10,000 hours of individual marriage and family counseling and developed the marital preparation program, FOREVER, which involved more than 600 couples.

He compiled extensive workshop leadership experience at First Church, including topics such as marriage preparation, marriage communication, relationship building, personal growth and development, temperament analysis, divorce and remarriage and sexual issues.

Stake also was minister to single adults at First Church, one of the largest single adult ministries in the Southern Baptist Convention. The enrollment grew from 100 in 1981 to more than 700 by 1986.

He said his experience will help him meet the needs of a variety of Arkansas Baptists. "I am a licensed professional counselor and an ordained minister who has served as a small mission pastor, a bivocational minister and on the staff at a large church."

"The years of practical experience in

counseling in the local church setting will be invaluable," Moore agreed. "His experience as both a staff person and bivocational minister will help him identify with all people who will confer with him."

"Since ministers seldom have close relationships conducive to discussing their personal or family problems at a local level," Moore noted, "Dr. Stake provides them an opportunity to discuss them with an objective outside person."

Stake earned the bachelor of arts degree from Louisiana College in Pineville; the master of arts degree in psychology and counseling from Nicholls State University in Thibodaux; and the doctor of ministry degree in pastoral counseling from Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Fla.

Stake said the "major problem" he will encounter among ministers in the crisis support ministry is burnout. "There are definite depressive symptoms of burnout," he said, "including fatigue, difficulty becoming motivated, a loss of enjoyment and enthusiasm, withdrawal, sadness, loss of appetite, sleep disturbance and decision-making troubles." He added that ministerial burnout also may affect a minister's wife and children.

He warned that "pastors, in part, are pretty resistant to counseling. They are afraid that if they go for counseling, people may think they are weak or inadequate."

Seeking to alleviate such fears, he explained, "Any problem that you have is common to all of us in ministry."

Describing problems common to wives and children of ministers, Stake said, "The congregation frequently has unreal expectations of wives and kids. They will expect the wife to be present at every church function and always be in agreement with church members. In general, to conduct themselves in an unreal manner."

"Ministers' kids have just as unreal expectations about their behavior," he continued. "Because dad is a minister, they should behave in a certain way and conform to a more adult behavior than a normal adolescent. The church also may put limits on their expression of emotions and they're not always allowed to say what they think or feel."

Although Stake does not conduct psychiatric counseling, he serves as a resource or referral service for psychiatric needs.

Individuals interested in scheduling an appointment or obtaining additional information may contact Stake at the Medical Towers Building, 9601 Life Drive Suite 660, Little Rock, AR 72205; phone 225-1113. The ministry of crisis support is funded by the Cooperative Program and there are no costs to individual participants.

Acceptance of Christianity reportedly growing in China

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist World Alliance

NANJING, CHINA (BP)—Chinese intellectuals are "more open and friendly to Christianity than probably any time in past history," Bishop K.H. Ting, leader of the China Christian Council, told an international delegation of the Baptist World Alliance.

The 34-member delegation from eight countries, led by BWA general secretary Denton Lotz, attended recent sessions at the Nanjing Theological Seminary.

National criticism of ultra-leftism after the downfall of the Gang of Four gave the Christian faith a chance to be judged "on facts," Ting said. Because of this, there is now "an unprecedented appreciation for Christianity," with many intellectuals rejecting the notion of Christianity as an "opiate of the people."

Religion is no longer thought of as superstition but now affirmed as "a part of human culture" and contributing to that culture, Ting said.

"These conclusions may not be exciting to Christians and theologians in the West," Ting said, "but they are epoch-making in People's China after all its devaluation of religion."

"It would not help to paint a rosy picture of the church in China," Ting said, "but all

through the church's history, it has been plagued by problems, weaknesses and mistakes of all sorts but has witnessed to Christ and has grown in spite of them all and through them all."

While no one knows the precise numbers, Chinese Christian leaders told the delegation people are turning to Christianity in record numbers and there are not enough trained Christian pastors and leaders to disciple new converts.

The delegation visited three different churches in Nanjing where they saw evidence of the growth. Each of the churches was filled to overflowing.

Many young people attended, and in one church the choir was made up almost entirely of people under 30.

While not allowed to preach, team members gave greetings to the churches.

"Evangelism is happening," Ting said, noting, "We cannot cope. The quality of spirituality will go down if more come and we cannot train them. This is detrimental to the life of the church."

In many rural areas, a lack of trained leadership led to "heretical and unbiblical teachings," Ting added.

Communion, baptism and ordination also have been "irregular" because there are so few trained clergy and most of the work has been done by laypeople.

WenZao Han, head of the Amity

Foundation, said statistics indicate there are 8 million Christians in China with only 1,100 ordained pastors, 10,000 elders and preachers and 850 students in 13 theological schools which send out 200 graduates a year. There are 8,000 churches and approximately 20,000 home meetings.

The Chinese leaders spoke of other concerns such as materialism and moral concerns they and their country face.

"We already have a negative effect from the market economy in our country," Han said. "The get-rich-quick mentality has pervaded China and even some clergy have put business negotiations before pastoral care."

"In their eyes, foreigners are all rich businessmen," Han said, "and many groups come with much money to tempt leaders to explore their 'heretical' teachings."

This already has caused disunity and some church splits, Han said, and is threatening the image of Christianity "in the eyes of the general public."

The lure of money is also leading to greater urbanization in China, said Nanjing professor Ji Ti. "Many young people are moving to Beijing looking for jobs in the city. This leads to a loss of community and now the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer, with many now sleeping on the streets."

Several young pastors also spoke of growing social problems such as AIDS.

"The problems of the young people are so different to those of the older people," one pastor said, "and we need help to deal with these."

Chinese leaders answer queries about Bibles, legal constraints

NANJING, CHINA (BP)—"It is not true Bibles are not allowed in China. Foreigners are still welcome!" said WenZao Han, head of the Amity Foundation, the social and welfare arm of the China Christian Council.

Han responded to what he said are two of the most pressing questions Christians around the world currently have about China as he spoke to a Baptist World Alliance delegation visiting Nanjing.

Concerning Bibles and whether they need to be smuggled into China "because we have no Bibles," Han recounted, "When a United States congressman recently said this to me, I was able to refute this with the fact that millions of Bibles have been printed by Amity."

The BWA team visited the Amity Printing Press and saw Bibles coming off the press.

Director Wee En Yang reported Amity will print 2.25 million Bibles this year. In 1993, 1.6 million were printed.

Yang said Bibles, sold at approximately \$1 (U.S.), are provided to anyone needing one, including Christians in house churches not affiliated with the official China Christian Council.

Yang said Amity had an agreement with East Gate Ministries,

led by Ned Graham, son of Billy Graham, to print 1 million Bibles for house churches as a gesture of reconciliation.

Han also spoke about the reported ban on foreigners coming to China to work because of restrictions in a recent set of regulations published by the government called Document 144.

In many ways, the document gives clearer guidelines for religious activity by registered churches, but is harsher on unauthorized religious activities, he said.

Han said any restriction is "for those who would do things in an illegal if not clandestine way which would eventually jeopardize the work and growth of the Chinese church."

Bishop K.H. Ting, head of the China Christian Council, reported that protestant churches "are reopening or newly built at the rate of three every two days for the last 14 years." In addition, "there are tens of thousands of groups meeting in homes."

Noting that the council has worked with the government on some of these complaints, Ting noted, "I am not terribly upset by the atheists' advocacy of atheism in China," Ting said, "because the fact that God was, is and will be forever cannot be changed by any human denial of His existence."

Orlando's growth compels Baptists to stay alert

By Rachel Gill

Baptist Press

ORLANDO, FL (BP)—Orlando, Fla., is a boom town with a corner on the dream market — a wildly successful market along International Drive with Disney World as its anchor.

It is now the world's fourth largest tourist attraction, just after Jerusalem, Mecca and Rome — cities where devoted pilgrims throng to worship.

In 1993, 13.5 million travelers came to Orlando for sun, fun and fantasy. And every day, say city planners, 300 of them decide to stay.

The city is playing a frenzied game of catch-up — scraping, shifting and shining with newness — as it accommodates the growth of the past two decades.

Local Southern Baptists also are playing catch-up. The 123 churches of the Greater Orlando Baptist Association mean there is only one Baptist church for every 100,000 people. That's why Ronnie Reynolds came to town.

Reynolds was a church starter strategist in North Carolina when R. Edward Gilstrap, the association's director of missions, asked him to come to Orlando. Since Reynolds' arrival in 1990 there have been 27 church starts in the association.

Meeting the demands presented by Orlando's growth can be daunting, but Reynolds has made it his business to learn about the city's unique ministry needs and interpret them to the association. For the first six months, he did nothing but study the community.

Meeting people's needs

"I'm excited and challenged by the change here," Reynolds noted. "My job is to try to start enough churches to meet the needs of people who are coming to Orlando daily."

It's a real challenge for him to keep up. "Starting churches is hard, hard work," he acknowledged. "It's a job and a half."

He means that literally. When screening applicants for church-starting positions, Reynolds not only inquires about skills and vision, he also wants to know about an applicant's willingness to put in 50-60 hour weeks. He knows the job demands that.

During Cross Over Orlando, when volunteers will come from across the Southern Baptist Convention to help in the association's evangelism and church start efforts, leaders hope to launch churches in three communities: Hispanic, black and suburban. The association's



Church starter Ronnie Reynolds (standing) challenges ministers in the Greater Orlando Baptist Association to start satellite missions to reach more people for Christ.

goal for 1994 is to establish 10 new works.

It's an ambitious goal, but one Reynolds believes is achievable. "We have this idea that it takes a lot of money to start a church," he said. "And that we need clergy in place to do it. But that's not necessarily so." He is a strong believer that churches can be started by laypeople with a minimum of training on a shoestring budget.

Because more than one-third of Orlando's population lives in apartment communities, they are a focal point of his work. Two Home Mission Board-appointed Along with apartment communities, there are many large housing, areas that cry for new church starts. One has 50,000 people without a single church.

Areas like this trouble Reynolds greatly. But success stories in other communities give him hope for the future, stories like Riverway Baptist Mission, located in a densely populated area to the north of the city, which will soon become Riverway Baptist Church. Members of 14 families, all new Baptists, will become charter members.

Riverway is delaying plans for a permanent building to put their money into ministry. Their willingness to do this, Reynolds said, may be part of a new trend.

Buying property to build in Orlando is a formidable process: land is expensive, zoning laws are restrictive and laws that protect Florida's fragile ecology are intricate.

Even so, Iglesias Bautista El Camino, a mission of Goldenrod Baptist Church, has

decided to buy land in an area of the city where large numbers of Hispanics are projected to settle. They worship now at Goldenrod — in a space they are fast outgrowing — and pray for funds to build. The congregation includes people from seven Latin American nations and Spain.

Reynolds said he hopes Cross Over Orlando evangelistic efforts prior to the SBC annual meeting will be the genesis of another mission for the ever-growing Hispanic population.

There is one community still on the drawing board Reynolds said he hopes will provide another Cross Over church start. Celebration City, a project of Disney Enterprises, will occupy hundreds of acres near Disney World. Plans for the model city — with housing for every income group — call for schools, a hospital, recreation facilities and churches.

Over lunch, Reynolds and the association's church-starting committee discuss possibilities with Disney officials who are soliciting their ideas. It's a new and different opportunity, but one that the association welcomes.

Reynolds has a special burden for the thousands of people who come to Orlando thinking it is a kind of utopia.

"Disney promotes a big illusion," John Morgan remarked. "The tourists go home, load up the U-haul and move down. Then the bubble bursts."

When that happens, Orlando Baptists want a loving community to be there for them, reaching where love and hope and dreams live forever.

Staff changes

Keith Brickell will begin serving as pastor of First Church in Paragould June 26, going there from Second Church in Monticello. In addition, he has served Caddo Valley Church near Arkadelphia. Brickell is a graduate of Williams Baptist College, Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Marilyn, have three children, Justin, Derek and Kelly.

Marty Watson will begin serving June 26 as pastor of Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock, coming there from First Church of Drumwright, Okla.



He previously served as pastor of other churches in Oklahoma, Louisiana and Texas. He is a graduate of Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, La., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His wife, Sharon, also is a graduate of Southwestern Seminary. They have three sons, Stephen, Matthew and Aaron.

Greg M. Schanfish has joined the staff of First Church in Hatfield as minister of music and youth. A native of Texarkana, he graduated in May from Ouachita Baptist University with a double major in biblical studies/language and history.

Ron Berry is serving as pastor of Shannon Church in Pocahontas, going there from Lone Star Church in Higden.

Gary Crawford has joined the staff of First Church in Corning as minister of education and youth. He moved there from Arabi, La., where he was a member of First Church.

Don Warford has resigned as pastor of Northeast Church in Fayetteville.

Dow Welsh joined the staff of Central Church in North Little Rock June 5 as interim minister of youth. A native of North Augusta, S.C., he is a May graduate of Clemson University, Clemson, S.C.

Roy F. Lewis, pastor of Forest Tower Church in Hensley for the past four years, has announced his retirement from the pastoral ministry, effective July 31. He has served six other churches in Arkansas, Georgia and Ohio. In addition, he served the Arkansas Baptist State Convention for eight years as associate executive secretary, serving concurrently as director of



stewardship and as director of business services. He also served for two of those years as acting executive director of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation. Prior to joining the ABSC staff, Lewis served for eight years on the staff of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Lewis and his wife, Betty, will continue to reside in Saline County and he will be available for interim pastorates and pulpit supply.

Mandy Dillon and **Becky Jordan** are serving as summer youth interns at East Side Church in Paragould. Dillon, a sophomore at Arkansas State University, will work with the junior high youth. Jordan, a recent ASU graduate, will work with the senior high youth.

Charlie Lee Brown II is pastor of Ridgeview Church in Fayetteville, going there from First Church of Fordyce.

He previously was minister of education and administration for Immanuel Church in El Dorado; minister to youth and college students for First Church of Oak Cliff in Dallas; and associate minister to teens for First Church of Dallas. Brown is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Karen, have two children, Sarah and Rachael.

Gary Crawford has joined the staff of First Church in Corning as minister of youth and education. He is a graduate of Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, La., and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Crawford and his wife, Marjorie, have a son, Matthew Aaron.

Bob Ivy has resigned as pastor of Beech Grove Church of Paragould due to health reasons.

Daran Robertson has resigned as part-time music director for Hurricane Lake Church of Benton to attend West Bauxite Missionary Baptist Church.

Mark Darr of Mansfield has joined the staff of First Church in Crossett as summer youth intern. He is a junior at Ouachita Baptist University.

Steve Satterfield is pastor of First Southern Church of Crossroads near Winthrop. He previously was youth minister for Shiloh Memorial Church in Texarkana. Satterfield and his wife, Lora, have two children, Hannah and Luke.

Church news

River Road Church is the new name that has been adopted by Redfield First Southern Church. The church began as River Road Mission, but in 1984 became Redfield First Southern. The recent name change reflects the church's beginnings and better identifies its physical location.

Pine Bluff First Church recently presented Southern Baptist foreign missionaries Steve and Tommie Smith a set of handbells for use on their Portugal mission field. Kim Bowen, minister of music, made the presentation. John McClanahan is pastor.

Norphlet First Church recently honored Rosalie Love upon her retirement as director of the four- and five-year-old preschool Sunday School department and in appreciation for her 45 years of continuous service in that position. In addition, Love has served as a state-approved preschool worker and has written curriculum materials for older preschoolers and their leaders. She has led leadership conferences at both Gloreita and Ridgecrest conference centers.

Bearden First Southern Church recently voted to construct a 13,000-square-foot worship facility. The sanctuary and educational spaces will accommodate up to 250 people, and the fellowship area will service approximately 150. Bill Carpenter is pastor.

Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock held a revival May 15-18 that resulted in 89 professions of faith, the largest to be recorded in the church's history and nine additions by letter. Kelly Green of Mobile, Ala., was the evangelist. The music program was led by minister of music Carlos Ichter. Paul Sanders is pastor.

Ordinations

Finch Church of Paragould ordained Jon Stricklin and Mack Thompson to the deacon ministry May 15.

Harmony Church near Rector ordained pastor Shelly Elkins to the ministry May 29. Ordained as deacons were Sonny Johnson, Steve Lambert and Tim McCluskey.

Benton First Church held an ordination service May 15 to ordain minister to students Ronnie Brock to the gospel ministry and Tommy Blackburn, Mike Bourns, Ron Fincher, Joe Forman, Alan Haltom, Farrell McCoy, Mark Schlieff, James Stitz, Keith Thomas and Allan Yearty to the deacon ministry.

Big Flat Mission ordained pastor Dale Chapman to the ministry May 21.

Lake Hamilton Church at Hot Springs ordained associate pastor Kenneth King to the ministry May 29.

Obituaries

Blanche Riley Douglas of Pine Bluff died May 27 at age 82. She was the wife of Ralph Douglas of Pine Bluff, a former associate executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. A member of First Church in Pine Bluff, she founded and organized the first Baptist Pastors' Wives Conference and held offices in Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union. She was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and attended the Woman's Missionary Union Training School of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Mrs. Douglas had taught at Baptist High School in Little Rock. She also wrote and produced numerous religious pageants that were used in Arkansas, as well as at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly. In addition to her husband, other survivors are a son, Hunter Riley Douglas of Little Rock; a daughter, Rosalee Douglas Scott of Pine Bluff; five grandsons; and one great-granddaughter. Memorials may be made to the Blanche Riley Douglas Scholarship Fund at Ouachita Baptist University or Williams Baptist College.

Benson Edwards of Cherokee Village died May 30 at age 69. A Southern Baptist pastor, he had served First Church of Palestine, First Church of Grubbs, First Church of Tuckerman, Sage Church and Spring River Church. In addition, he had been superintendent of missions for Big Creek Association. Memorials may be made to the National Kidney Foundation.

Albert Harold Johnson of Wilmot died June 1 at age 77. He was the pastor of Gains Church in Wilmot, Brotherhood director for Delta Association and director of the drug and alcohol abuse program in Wilmot. Survivors include his wife, Eloise Johnson; one stepson, Edward Curry of Wilmot; one daughter, Linda Lou Stewart of Chicago; two stepdaughters, Terry Mayo of North Hollywood, Calif., and Sharon Parham of Crossett; one brother; one sister; eight grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.



Arkansas Campers on Missions assemble buttons that will be used to promote the 1995 national COM rally to be held June 13-15, 1995, in Hope.

Arkansas Campers on Mission prepare to host national rally

Along with a hamburger cookout, a potluck dinner and a goulash supper during their spring rally May 19-22 at Maumelle State Park, Arkansas Baptist Campers on Missions found time to begin plans for hosting the June 13-15, 1995, national COM rally.

Arkansas campers will issue a formal invitation to the rally and distribute "Arkansas National COM Rally" buttons during the 1994 national rally to be held June 20-23 in Tallahassee, Fla., according to Arkansas COM president Clayburn Bratton of Fort Smith.

Lendol Jackson of Jonesboro, the state COM coordinator and 1995 rally chairman, said the state organization will hold a fall rally Sept. 8-11 in Hope "as a dry run for hosting the '95 rally."

Assisting Jackson with coordinating the 1995 program will be Pete Petty, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department, and state COM officers Bratton; vice president Charles Stender of Little Rock; and secretary/treasurer Dorothy Jackson of Jonesboro. ABSC executive director Don Moore; Southern Baptist Home Mission Board president Larry Lewis; and Dennis Swanberg, pastor of First Church in West Monroe, La., have been chosen as featured speakers.

Serving as committee chairmen will be Jean Stender, registration; Robert Tucker, parking; Louise Melton, hospitality bags and door prizes; Bonita Petty, children and youth; Bonnie Peoples, food and

refreshments; Jesse Bratton, publicity and hostess; Margaret Gobert, missions fair; Tom Blevins, craft building; Ray Peoples, first aid; Mary Lou Evans, tour groups; Jerry Cooper, sound system and video; Toni Zin, golf tournament; and Ellis Melton, R.V. maintenance.

Billy Kilmer of Hensley, Harley Petty of Little Rock and Jimmie Garner of Trumann were featured speakers during the spring rally.

A report concerning mission activities was presented by Clayburn and Jesse Bratton, Don and Margaret Gobert of Hot Springs and Ken Evans of Fayetteville. "We were assisted with constructing a Kansas church in April by COM members from Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas and Florida," Bratton said. He said they also participated in the dedication of an Iowa church which they helped launch this year as a part of the Arkansas/Iowa partnership.

Jackson said he and his wife will be traveling to Fargo, N.D., in August to assist the HMB COM division and the North and South Dakota Fellowships in establishing a senior adult program, as well as starting a new church.

Other Arkansas COM projects planned include: Bud Latson of Little Rock and Central District members will do repair work on the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries Sunshine House in Little Rock and Northwest District COM members will work in North Arkansas Association, reroofing homes of members of Trinity Church near Harrison.

Leadership Profile for ABSC Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee for the 1994 Arkansas Baptist State Convention invite Arkansas Baptists to submit names of persons to that committee for consideration when they bring the convention nominations for state committees and boards.

This recommendation will not insure nomination, but the committee will consider each recommendation. The committee will not contact

any person recommended until they approve the nominations. The Nominating Committee will hold its first meeting July 28 and needs all recommendations no later than July 1.

Members of the committee: Jimmy Wallace, chairman; Bill Gunter, Paul Peoples, Bill Bowen, Dennis Dodson, Wallace Williams, Van Harness, Barry King and Tony Preston.

July 1 is the deadline for recommendations

Nominee _____ Layperson Minister Age _____ Occupation _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Member of what church? _____ Association _____

Current leadership responsibilities

Professional _____

Civic _____

Church _____

Association _____

State or SBC Boards _____

Past leadership experience (within last five years)

State or SBC Boards _____

Association _____

Local Church _____

Personal

This person's greatest contributions, based on his or her past record, knowledge and experience, should be in the area of _____

Is this person currently active in a local church? _____

Is this person able to be away from family and work for at least one or two days, three times a year? _____

Give the name and phone number of at least one person, other than his or her pastor or director of missions, who knows of the nominee's involvement in Baptist life. _____

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank this person's understanding of and commitment to the way Southern Baptists work together? (Circle) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Check the board, committee or commission on which you believe this person could best serve.

Board of Trustees

- Executive Board
- Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc., Memphis
- Children's Homes and Family Ministries
- Foundation
- Ouachita Baptist University
- Williams Baptist University
- Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Committees and Commission

- History Commission
- BSU Advisory Committee
- Constitution and Bylaws Committee
- Convention Program Committee
- World Hunger Committee

MAIL THIS FORM TO:
Jimmy Wallace, Chairman
c/o Executive Director's Office
P.O. Box 552
Little Rock, AR 72203

Signed _____
(Name of person making this recommendation)

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

HMB's Lewis defends Catholic document

ATLANTA (BP/ABP)—Saying he must have the freedom to "exercise prophetic leadership," Home Mission Board president Larry Lewis defended a document he signed this spring on evangelical and Roman Catholic relationships.

In a 10-page letter to HMB directors, with copies to state Baptist newspaper editors and others, Lewis rejected a call that he publicly withdraw his endorsement of "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium."

Lewis and Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, were the only two Southern Baptists among 40 representatives of Catholic and evangelical groups to develop and sign the 25-page document.

Some reviews hailed the accord as the ushering of a new era in Catholic-evangelical relations. Others assailed the document's ban on "proselytizing" of active church members as an affront to evangelism efforts among Catholics.

SBC presidential candidate Fred Wolfe, chairman of the SBC Executive Committee, predicted the Catholic-evangelical accord may be the big issue at this week's SBC.

"I think there's going to be a motion that we disassociate ourselves from that document," said Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala.

Wolfe said he recently was in south Louisiana, a Catholic stronghold, and heard

complaints from Baptists in the region. "They're ballistic. There off the wall about this. There is much more fervor over this than the seminaries or anything else."

"You must allow your president to exercise prophetic leadership — freedom to preach what he believes he should preach...to stand where he feels he should stand on significant issues," Lewis wrote to HMB directors. "If you're a pastor, I imagine you expect that from your church; and I expect that from you."

Missions/evangelism emphasis

Lewis also refuted charges the report restricts mission efforts. A "strong emphasis on missions and world evangelism is interwoven throughout the document," he wrote. "How anyone could read this document and conclude it opposes evangelism and world missions, or even implies such, I can't imagine."

Pointing to the document's supporters, Lewis listed 11 religious leaders who signed the paper. "Why do you suppose such evangelical leaders as Charles Colson and Pat Robertson would sign such a document and rejoice in doing so?" he asked.

The paper was not designed to address doctrinal differences between the two groups, Lewis noted, referring to a portion that states some longstanding differences "may never be resolved short of the Kingdom Come."

The document refers to Catholics and evangelicals as "brothers and sisters in

Christ" and affirms that both traditions represent "authentic forms of discipleship." Those assertions are fodder for critics who argue that Roman Catholic positions contradict fundamental Christian doctrines, such as salvation through faith and the necessity of a personal, born-again experience with Jesus Christ.

Lewis told ABP that he views the Roman Catholic Church as a "legitimate expression of Christian faith" but one that is "an aberrant expression and doctrinally perverted at many points."

Simply put, the document is not about theology. Neither Catholics nor evangelicals have yielded or compromised anything in the realm of doctrine or theology," he wrote.

The primary issues addressed in the document are missions, evangelism, social concerns and religious liberty, he said. He argued that some critics miss the document's true significance — a recognition from a Catholic perspective that evangelical groups represent a legitimate expression of Christianity and acknowledgement of their freedom to bear witness to that expression.

"Perhaps for the first time, a group of Catholic scholars and leaders have agreed to recognize Protestants and evangelicals as 'brothers in Christ' and our denominations as legitimate, bona fide religious groups rather than perverted schisms of the only true church — sects and cults to be disdained and disparaged," Lewis wrote.

Lewis also reviewed the document's condemnation of proselytizing, calling it the "most misreported, misinterpreted and misunderstood" portion.

During their meeting, Catholics charged evangelicals with "sheep stealing," and evangelicals responded that the Great Commission mandates to "preach the gospel to every creature," Lewis wrote.

"This was undoubtedly the one area of greatest tension and most extensive discussion," he wrote. "We clearly stated that our primary thrust is to evangelize the unsaved, regardless of where they may be members and to congregationalize the unchurched, even if they are inactive members of some denomination, even our own."

Lewis' one concession to critics concerns a passage referring to the Catholic doctrine of salvation through the sacrament of baptism.

"It appears those of us who endorsed the document are lending credence to that heresy," he wrote. "Frankly, I simply did not catch this when I reviewed the original draft or I would have insisted on a rewrite. I apologize."

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376-4791, ext. 5121.

Ministers, churches target of IRS crackdown

By Keith Hinson

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON (BP)—Ministers and churches are being targeted by the Internal Revenue Service as part of its recent crackdown on the nation's self-employed, according to magazine articles and tax guides published in recent months.

Forbes magazine reports ministers are one of 31 "industries" targeted for scrutiny by the IRS's "Market Segment Specialization Program." Other targets include lawyers, cemetery owners, truckers and pizzeria owners.

"The IRS is publishing a series of manuals, one for each of the 31 industries targeted so far," said the *Forbes* article. They are designed to train IRS tax examiners "on how small-business people in different industries minimize their tax bills," the article said.

Another potential tax pitfall for ministers is whether they are classified as church employees or as self-employed for income tax purposes.

"The IRS is carrying out a sweeping campaign to slash the number of taxpayers permitted to be self-employed for income tax purposes," according to the 1994 edition of *The Zondervan Minister's Tax & Financial Guide*. "The IRS's attack has caught dozens of ministers in its web."

Insight magazine recently quoted a United Methodist Church official who "estimated that more than 1,000 of the church's clergymen have faced audits by the IRS

concerning their employment status."

What difference does it make whether a minister is classified as an employee or self-employed? It makes a difference as to where a minister deducts unreimbursed professional expenses on his or her annual tax return.

A taxpayer classified as an employee should deduct unreimbursed expenses as an itemized deduction on Schedule A, where the total of expenses is reduced by 2 percent of adjusted gross income.

Many ministers who consider themselves as self-employed deduct professional expenses on Schedule C where their deduction is not reduced but gains a dollar-for-dollar savings off taxable income.

In the case of an IRS audit, the minister almost always ends up being reclassified as an employee and may face "a staggering tax bill," according to the Zondervan guide.

The prospect of such a large tax bill is greatest for ministers who do not have enough itemized deductions to use Schedule A, according to Richard Hammar, an attorney and CPA, who is the author of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board's 1994 tax guide. For those who can itemize, the difference is often minimal, said Hammar, who also is author of the annual *Church and Clergy Tax Guide*.

"Generally you are an employee if your employer has the legal right to control both what you do and how you do it," says the Zondervan tax guide, "even if you have considerable discretion and freedom of action."

Hammar has a warning for ministers who are reimbursed on the "honor system" by a church that does not require the minister to provide receipts, purpose of expenses and other documentation: report them as part of wages on Form W-2. They may then deduct professional expenses, with receipts, on Schedule A, where the expenses are reduced by 2 percent of adjusted gross income.

Hammar pointed out reimbursements need not be reported on Form W-2 and Schedule A if the church adopts the following policies:

1. A minister will be reimbursed for only those expenses that are substantiated within 60 days. The minister must provide the church with the amount, date, place and business purpose of the expenses.

2. A minister must return excess funds within 120 days to the church. For example, if a church advances a minister \$200 for a trip to a professional seminar and the minister spends only \$160 on trip-related expenses, then he or she would be required to return \$40 to the church.

Hammar urges churches to adopt these policies because it allows ministers to:

■ Report their business expenses to the church rather than the IRS.

■ Avoid Schedule A's limitations on the deductibility of employee business expenses.

■ Avoid the new rule requiring any deduction for business meals and entertainment expenses to be reduced by 50 percent on Schedule A.

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Conference to prepare children's choir leaders

The only state-sponsored leadership training conference for children's choir teachers until 1996 will be held Aug. 12-13 at Second Church, Little Rock. The Preschool/Children's Choir Leader Workshop, sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's church music ministries department, will feature a program of conferences, age group training and a "roomful of freebies" for choir teachers of three-year-olds through sixth graders.

Peggy Pearson, a church music ministries associate, said the workshop will appeal to teachers in a broad range of experience. "It will be good for new teachers because the leaders are top notch—every one of them is well-known in their field—and for the inspiration.

"More experienced teachers also will enjoy the inspiration," she noted, "and there's always something new to learn."

Pearson said the choral instruction during the workshop is needed by many church choir teachers. "So many teachers don't know how to teach children how to use their singing voice. A lot of what we'll do is teach teachers to sing like children."

She said a change from previous programs will be non-age graded topical conferences given by program leadership. Conferences will include, "A Potpourri of Hymn Activities for Children," "Helps for the Uncertain Singer," "Instruments in Choir," "Get Ready for Fall" (reviewing changes in children's music literature) and "Music Games and Early Bird Activities."

She said there also will be a "room of freebies" available to participants. "This is a room of old festival materials that is all music and literature that is available free to those who want them."

Program leaders will include: Vivian Rice of Oklahoma City, Okla., for preschool leaders; Barbara Sanders of Nashville, Tenn., for younger children's leaders; Susan Messer of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, for older children's leaders; Cyndy Hewell of First Church, Benton, for combined choir leaders; and Gayle Clutts of Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith, for new choir leaders.

The program will begin at 7 p.m. on Friday and conclude Saturday at 3:30 p.m. Child care for children up to six years old is available at no extra cost to participants.

The cost for the workshop is \$8 per person before July 18. A special Saturday-only rate of \$6 per person also is available. The cost includes all materials and conference fees. Participants are responsible for their own meals and lodging.

For more information, contact Pearson at the ABSC church music ministries department; phone 376-4791, ext. 5121.

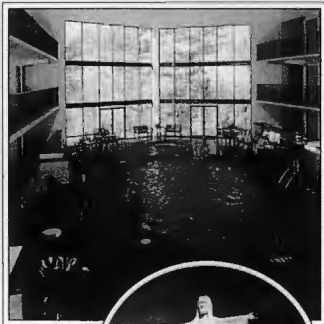
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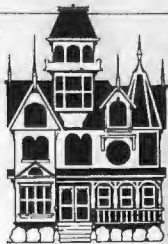
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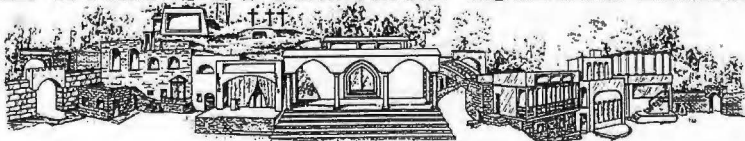
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NATION

Abortion clinic access law draws challenges

WASHINGTON (ABP/BP) — A new law to protect abortion clinics and their clients was signed into law May 26. On the same day, anti-abortion groups filed suit to stop the law's enforcement.

The law makes it a federal crime to block access to abortion clinics, to damage property or to physically intimidate patients and clinic workers. President Clinton signed the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act into law at a May 26 White House ceremony.

The new law imposes up to six months' imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine for first-time, non-violent offenders (who block access without damage to property or persons). Violent offenders are subject to stiffer penalties — a maximum of \$100,000 in fines and one year in prison. Bodily injury or death carry the stiffest penalties.

The bill also contains a provision that would make it a crime to block access to churches and synagogues or to vandalize those facilities. Homosexual and abortion rights activists have blocked entrance to some places of worship, disrupted services and vandalized buildings.

Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., charged FACE discriminates on the basis of the content of the protest.

"In the 'brave new world' of FACE, a group of pro-life protesters could block one entrance of an abortion clinic, while a completely different group engaged in a labor dispute could block another entrance of the clinic, and only the pro-life protesters would be charged as federal felons, simply because their viewpoints are disfavored by the current administration," Smith said in a written statement.

Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, called the clinic-access bill "a farce."

"The signing ceremony was a masquerade ball for pro-aborts and the president to put on a false face that this federal law was needed to stop violence at abortion-clinic entrances," Whitehead said.

"We join other pro-life leadership in deploring and condemning violence," he said, "but FACE is really about abortion politics and making federal political prisoners out of peaceful protesters."

Five protesters were charged in the first application of the law June 4 in Milwaukee. The protesters chained themselves to cars and a concrete-filled drum in front of an abortion clinic in defiance of the new law.

They succeeded in closing the clinic for 90 minutes while police and firefighters pried open chains and handcuffs linking them to the cars and drum.

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Mississippi casino fight looms over proximity to Baptist complex

PASS CHRISTIAN, MS (BP)—Opposing sides will square off before the Mississippi Gaming Commission in what may be the final battle over a proposed casino within sight of Gulfshore Baptist Assembly in Pass Christian.

Chuck Patton, spokesman for the commission, said the state's three gaming commissioners will take up the proposal during their June 30 meeting at Treasure Bay Hotel in Biloxi.

Spectrum, Inc. has proceeded with its bid to build the multi-level, 24-hour gambling facility within 400 yards of the 40-year-old state Baptist campground, despite opposition from the Mississippi Baptist Convention and local landowners.

The Harrison County Board of Supervisors, in whose jurisdiction the casino

will be located, voted unanimously in October against endorsing the project. However, the legal power to approve the casino rests solely with the state's gaming commission.

The Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention has circulated a letter around the state urging all Mississippi Baptists to write personal letters to the three gaming commissioners to express their opposition to the project, according to Paul Jones, executive director of the Baptist agency.

"We shouldn't be intimidated that this hearing is being held at a gambling facility. If we have to go into the 'lion's den' to stop this casino, then that's what we must do," he said.

Jones pointed out that there is no legal

mechanism by which casino approval can be rescinded once the state gaming commission gives the green light.

Jones has warned that the casino is not an isolated issue, since thousands attend events at Gulfshore each year.

"We have to win this battle at the state gaming commission level. Gulfshore is the largest religious assembly in the state," he noted. "Are there no areas that can be casino-free?"

MK prayer calendar

Missionary kids with birthdays in June attending college in Arkansas:

■6/29, Marc Verlander, OBU Box 3024, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; freshman from Senegal.

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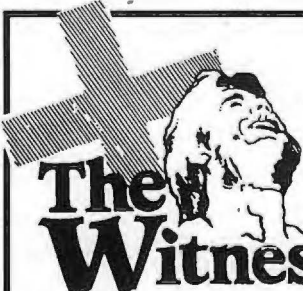

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Convention Uniform

God brings victory

By Ledell Bailey, DOM,

Calvary Association

Basic passage: Exodus 13:17-14:31

Focal passage: Exodus 14:21-31

Central truth: God's intervention always brings victory.

God's mighty act of deliverance was real proof to Israel that He did see their need and that He cared for them. Even as He brought about their deliverance from Pharaoh, He also would bring about an even greater victory.

As they drew near the Red Sea the people became afraid. The sea was before them and Pharaoh's army was behind them. Moses reassured them in Exodus 14:13-14 that the Lord would deliver and give victory. Moses said, "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." Oh, what a blessed realization as we face life's enemies and trials!

As you look at the crossing of the Red Sea, be mindful of the truth that God makes a way for His people not around, but through, all sorts of difficulties. He makes a way even though His people can find none.

The scene of God's people standing at the Red Sea, and God's parting the waters is one that lingers long in one's mind. What a mighty miracle this was! The people marched through the sea on dry land with a wall of water on each side of them.

God's marvelous act meant that Israel's redemption was at last a realization. The people of Israel had witnessed God's mighty hand in bringing deliverance and victory. Future generations would be told of God's intervention in behalf of His people.

One of the natural results of witnessing God's power in deliverance is that of reverence and trust. We can live our lives today with the assurance that God still works miracles and that He alone can bring victory.

Just as God worked in overthrowing the forces of Pharaoh, He overrules for His people in difficult circumstances today. He even overrules the evil intent of men in order to fulfill His purpose. May we remember that He is able and that nothing is impossible with God. May our hearts be encouraged in the fact that God still brings victory today.

Life and Work

Confidence in God

By Mark Baber, pastor,

First Church, Marion

Basic passage: Habakkuk 2:18-3:19

Focal passage: Habakkuk 3:16-18

Central truth: God's past acts give confidence for present and future hope.

The third chapter of Habakkuk is a recorded prayer (v. 3:1). Few things, if any, reveal more about a person than their private prayers. What we say to and about God when we are alone paints the true picture of both the genuineness of our faith and the depth of our theology.

This passage, therefore, reveals the abiding hope of the prophet Habakkuk. His hope, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, was that his nation would be delivered from its enemies. The prophet's hopes were not based upon either a "holy hunch" or "wishful thinking." He had a faith in God that had been forged out and developed due to his intimate knowledge of God's past acts in Israel's history (vv. 3:2-15). Since God had delivered His people from their enemies in former days, Habakkuk rightly reasoned that He would deliver them from their present and any future oppressors.

Habakkuk's one request in this private prayer is that God would once again let the world witness His redemptive work. It is the glad confession of New Testament believers that this prayer was ultimately answered in Jesus Christ the Lord.

Verses 16-19 of chapter three provide one of the Old Testament's most beautiful affirmations of faithfulness and reliance upon God. Many so-called people of faith would do well to contemplate these stirring words. Habakkuk had a faith that demanded nothing of God. He confessed that neither crop failure nor lost cattle (the staples of life) would keep him from trusting in and relying upon God his savior. Lesser troubles have tripped up many who possess shallow faith. Mature faith is a faith that keeps on trusting even when the heavens seem strangely silent. An absence of answers to prayer may well say more about the people who pray than they do about God. Faith that is faith trusts in God no matter what.

In the inevitable crises of life a study of Habakkuk's private prayers will yield rich results and issue forth in profound faithfulness.

Bible Book

Come and dine

By Ed Harrison Jr., pastor,

Dollarway Church, Blue Bluff

Basic passage: John 21:1-25

Focal passage: John 21:1-14

Central truth: Through His loving care, Jesus always provides for us abundantly.

Simon Peter, the leader of a fishing expedition, was to be a part of the last lesson that John records of Jesus teaching His disciples. Peter, not knowing what to do, reverted back to his old way of life and carried six other bewildered disciples with him: Thomas, the doubter; Nathaniel, an Israelite indeed; the two sons of thunder, James and John; and two disciples not named. They toiled all night and caught nothing.

The next morning, Jesus stood on the shore expressing His love as He asked His children, "Have ye any meat?" He demonstrated His love for them as He instructed them to "cast the net to the right side" of the boat. Through His loving care, Jesus always provides for our needs abundantly.

Like Peter, who was naked, we sometimes find ourselves unaware of Jesus' presence and need a friend like John to make us aware of Him.

Without hesitation, Peter swam to shore while the others came by boat. Jesus now extended the call, "Come and dine." He already had made preparation with the fire, the fish and the bread. His invitation was for them to bring what they had. Now, with 153 fish, they joined Jesus and dined.

We may ask, "Why number the fish?" It could be just the way God wants us to take inventory of our lives - to see what He has done for us and how we might use it for Him.

Jesus wanted these disciples to go into all the world with the message of love, caring and sharing the lesson that had been taught to them.

The call still goes out today to "Come and dine" with Jesus. He has made preparation by dying on the cross. He has the provision to satisfy every hungering soul because of His resurrection. Some may be unaware of the call of Jesus and fail to recognize all that He has provided.

But the call still goes out, "Come and dine."

Convention Uniform

Depending on God

By J.R. DeBusk, pastor,
South Side Church, Pine Bluff
Basic passage: Exodus 16:1-36
Focal passage: Exodus 16:1-24
Central truth: Our dependence on God will be tested.

We sometimes sing, "Learning to lean, learning to lean, I'm learning to lean on Jesus." In everyday living we often find that it is easier to sing about depending on the Lord than it is to actually practice. This is the exact predicament in which the Israelites found themselves. With great joy they left Egypt, but after approximately one month their food supply was running low. Facing hunger and possible starvation, they cried out against Moses and Aaron (vv. 1-3).

Preservation was a continual theme throughout the wilderness journey. On several occasions the Hebrews faced hostile enemies, a lack of water or a low food supply. Each time the Lord revealed Himself to be able to meet their needs. On this occasion the Lord provided quail in the evening (vv. 12-13) and He introduced the manna (vv. 4, 13-14) the following morning. The manna would remain their staple until they entered the Promised Land (Joshua 5:11-12).

While the Lord promised and provided the manna, He made it clear that this was to test "whether they will walk in My law, or not" (v. 4). From Deuteronomy 8:3 we gain an additional insight from the Lord "that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord."

Israel's experiences in the desert should teach us that dependence on the Lord is a lesson that is learned in the realm of daily living. Parents begin training their very dependent children at an early age to become independent. God must take our independent human nature and teach us dependence. Step by step, day by day, we learn that we can trust the Lord, for He is able to meet our needs.

Life and Work

Sufferers, yet comforters

By Jeff Cheatham, DOM,
Arkansas River Valley Association
Basic passage: II Corinthians 1:1-11
Focal passage: II Corinthians 1:1-11
Central truth: By comforting believers in their suffering, God equips them to comfort others.

Titus and perhaps Timothy had reported to Paul on the reception of the first letter to the Corinthian church. What was reported troubled Paul, so he wrote to the church again. This letter was very personal from beginning to end and is a defense of his calling and ministry.

After his customary greeting, Paul told the Corinthians that the reason for his faithfulness to his calling and ministry during times of tribulation was to comfort. To comfort is more than being consoled. The English word *comfort* comes from the Latin word *confortis* and means, "brave together." To be comforted is to receive strength; to survive under extreme pressure. It is someone coming alongside to "shore up" or to uphold during difficult times. The source of Paul's mercy and comfort was God (v. 3).

Paul described the events in which God's comfort was his sustenance. The trouble in Asia (v. 8), the pressures that took his strength (v. 8) and the feeling that a death sentence was about to be carried out upon him (v. 9). Through all of this Paul declared that God was his deliverer.

When God comforted Paul it was for a reason. He was to be a comfort to others (v. 4). The same is true for us. The blessing and comfort given to us through the Holy Spirit are a testimony meant to encourage others. One of our spiritual assets is our testimony to God's sustaining power during temptations and testings.

Many people have a "comforter." It is a special blanket used to snuggle into when one wants to isolate himself from the hurts of the day. In just a few minutes the warmth of that blanket erases the reason that caused its use. So it is with God's comfort. Once we are surrounded by His strength we are renewed and have a joyful testimony to God's deliverance.

Paul attributed the arrival of God's comfort to the prayers offered in his behalf. With society becoming more hostile to the church and Christianity, God's people need to be vigilant in their prayers for those who suffer because of their commitment to Christ.

Bible Book

The mystery of suffering

By Jack J. Bledsoe, DOM,
Carey Association
Basic passage: Job 1:1-2:13
Focal passage: Job 1:1, 6; 2:1, 11
Central truth: Godly people suffer too.

Man has always wondered about the mystery of suffering. No one is exempt, even godly people of great piety and faith. Often we have heard dedicated Christians ask why suffering has come to them. We have no real answer for such questionings, but we are assured in the Bible that God knows and cares about everything, good or bad, that happens in our lives. He works in every circumstance for our good and His glory as we maintain a faithful commitment to Him. His grace is sufficient.

■ There was a man (1:1).

The Book of Job records the life-changing experiences from tragedy to triumph of the patriarch Job, in one of the oldest books of the Bible. The writer is not identified, although many scholars attribute it to Moses. Job was a man of great material wealth, a large family and a deep faith in God. God pays him the ultimate compliment in verse 1:8b, commending him for his personal piety. His personal suffering in the loss of everything makes us aware that no one is immune to suffering.

■ There was a day (1:6; 2:1).

In the eternal counsels of God, beyond the knowledge of Job, Satan, the epitome of all evil, challenges God's compliment of Job, arguing that devoid of divine protection, even Job would curse God. God turns Job over to Satan and in two swift strikes, Satan reduces him to a penniless wretch, sitting in a pile of ashes, bemoaning his fate. His wife urges him to curse God and die, but Job remains faithful. Three friends come to comfort him, but sit silently as they view his pain.

■ The profitability of righteousness.

Let us be encouraged in our study of Job that there is nothing that occurs to us that is beyond the knowledge and care of God and that He will bring us ultimately through every trial. His grace is sufficient.

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NEWS DIGEST

Former missionary named FMB prayer strategy director

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—Former missionary Randy Sprinkle joined the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board staff June 1 as director of its international prayer strategy office. Sprinkle, 44, succeeds Minette Drumwright, who retired March 31. He assumes the missions prayer role after working four years as associate pastor of First Baptist Church in St. Joseph, Mo.

Before that, Sprinkle and his wife, Nancy, were missionaries for 15 years in southern and eastern Africa. They resigned from mission work in 1990 because of family health problems.

During his missionary career, Sprinkle worked as a vocational teacher in Ethiopia, an airplane pilot and general evangelist in Botswana and a general evangelist in Lesotho. The Sprinkles established Southern Baptist mission work in Lesotho, a small nation landlocked inside South Africa.

National CP gifts above previous year by 3 percent

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for May were up 16.36 percent above the previous year which helped push total CP receipts for the year to more than 3 percent above 1993, according to Morris H. Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee.

Gifts for May 1994 totaled \$12,956,497 compared to May 1993 of \$11,135,016, an increase of \$1,821,481 or 16.36 percent. For the eight months of fiscal year 1993-94, total gifts reached \$95,713,259, an increase of \$2,803,349 (3.02 percent) over 1992-93.

For the SBC program allocation budget, gifts have surpassed the budget for the eight-month period by 3.86 percent. For the year to date, designated gifts are at \$107,438,230 compared to the previous year of \$105,232,750 or a 2.1 percent increase.

CLC promotes boycott of RU-486 abortion pill companies

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has joined with the National Right to Life Committee, Focus on the Family and other organizations to promote a boycott of the companies which have made possible the introduction of the French abortion pill RU-486 into the United States.

The boycott will target the products of Roussel Uclaf, the French manufacturer of RU-486; Hoechst AG, the German parent company of Roussel Uclaf; and Hoechst Celanese and Hoechst Roussel, the German corporation's United States subsidiaries.

At the repeated urging of the Clinton administration, Roussel Uclaf recently donated its United States patent rights for mifepristone, commonly known as RU-486, to the Population Council Inc., a nonprofit corporation. The action cleared the way for the Population Council to pursue the marketing of the controversial pill in this country. RU-486 may be available for use in the United States by 1996.

Baptists challenge administration in dispute over tithes

WASHINGTON (ABP) — The Justice Department's contention that a Minnesota church should return more than \$13,000 in tithes contributed by a couple headed for bankruptcy has elicited a stern rebuttal from Baptist and other religious groups.

The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs joined five other groups May 23 in asking the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to reject the Clinton administration's argument that Bruce and Nancy Young were giving away creditors' property when they donated \$13,450 to Crystal Evangelical Free Church during the 12 months before they filed for bankruptcy in February 1992.

\$1.2 million judgment against diocese allowed to stand

WASHINGTON (ABP)—A Colorado court's \$1.2 million sexual-misconduct judgment against a denominational entity will stand. The U.S. Supreme Court refused May 31 to review the decision against an Episcopal diocese and bishop, which were held legally responsible for a parish minister's sexual misconduct.

Affirming a trial court's decision in favor of the victim, the Colorado Supreme Court said the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado and Bishop William Frey were negligent in hiring and supervising an assistant priest who became sexually involved with a parishioner he was counseling.

Brent Walker, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, called the case "wrongly decided." Particularly disturbing, he said, is the judgment tagging the diocese with negligent hiring and supervision when the relationship between the diocese and assistant priest was so limited.