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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

Volume 95, Number 25

December 12, 1996



lory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace,
good will toward men.

LUKE 2:14

SBC RESTRUCTURING

Severance package outlined for 'imminent' personnel cuts

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—With staff reductions "imminent," the severance benefits package has been approved for employees of the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Radio and Television Commission who will not be employed by the new North American Mission Board.

The number of employees to be released as the result of the merger of the three agencies into NAMB has not yet been announced. Earlier reports stated that a "considerable" number of the 500 employees of the three agencies would not be employed by NAMB when it officially becomes a part of the SBC in June 1997, as part of the conventional restructuring began in 1995.

RTVC president Jack Johnson, chairman of the nine-member Logistics Transition Team for NAMB, said the severance package was approved at a Nov. 14 meeting of the LTT in Fort Worth, Texas.

Johnson described the package as completed in the spirit of generosity. However, we understand the pain the employee will feel who learns he or she no longer has a job. We feel we have done everything possible in the severance area to be supportive of each person.

"Citing the staff reductions as 'imminent, before the end of 1996," Johnson said each employee will receive individual counsel and will have the opportunity to ask questions and receive clarification related to options and severance benefits.

He said the LTT will meet about every two weeks and will be forwarding an increasing number of proposals to the Implementation Task Force for action. The ITF is charged with implementing the "Covenant for a New Century," which reduces the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12.

Those eligible for severance benefits include Brotherhood, RTVC, and Home Mission Board employees who are notified that due to restructuring they will have no job available at their current location or those who are offered a job with NAMB at a lower pay level. Employees who will not have placement will be given four weeks' notice before their termination date. Severance policies could be continued through Dec. 31, 1997, because of the transition process.

If an employee is offered a position at NAMB and declines, he or she will be ineligible for NAMB employment as a full-time employee or as a consultant for a period of one year after the termination date, according to the severance package.

Benefits, under the package, include:
 ■ One week of pay for each year of denominational service provided with a minimum of four weeks and a maximum of 26 weeks.

■ Medical and/or dental insurance benefits currently in place at each agency or insurance benefits of the successor agency (NAMB) will continue through the severance period.

■ Existing benefits will be paid during the four-week notice period, but there will be no other benefits paid by the agencies during the severance benefit period except those listed above.

■ Payment of severance benefits is contingent upon the employee signing an acceptable release/waiver agreement to be supplied by the employing agency.

Other guidelines specify that there will be no special benefits for early retirement other than those options available through each agency's current policy; any outplacement services will be based on current agency policy; and each agency is responsible for notifying employees of termination, benefits and procedures.

Cover Story

**Glory to God
in the highest,
and on earth
peace, good will
toward men.**

LUKE 2:14

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Convention leaders share Christmas 'wish list'

REX HORNE

President, Arkansas Baptist State Convention

My Christmas prayer for Arkansas Baptists is taken from the angel's words in Luke 2. May God bless us with the wonder of the good tidings of our Savior whose birth we celebrate.

I pray for our churches, convention and individuals peace and good will toward one another. As we individually experience peace with God, we can express this peace that passes understanding with everyone else.

Good tidings, great joy, peace and Merry Christmas to you, Arkansas Baptists!

EMIL TURNER

Executive Director, Arkansas Baptist State Convention

My heart is full of gratitude to God for the kindness shown me by Arkansas Baptists this year. I believe God has blessed our convention in some special ways. We are a people who have commitments to His Word, to evangelism and to cooperation as a way to reach the lost world. Our struggles are faced honestly and resolved biblically. God has indeed blessed us.

These five things I pray that God would give each of our churches: The yieldedness of Mary, the obedient response of Joseph, the giving hearts of the Wise Men, the evangelism of the angels and shepherds and the grace of Joseph. May God give us compassionate hearts toward those around us.

NANCY GREER

President, Arkansas Baptist Ministers' wives

My Christmas wish for ministers' wives this year is that our homes would not only be filled with the "scents" of Christmas due to holiday baking, potpourri and greenery, but also filled with the "sense" of worship.

Just as Mary's home must have been filled with the wonderful fragrance of the oil she poured upon Jesus' feet, she also filled her home with a "sense" of worship.

As friends and family visit in our homes this season, may they "sense" the true meaning of Christmas — Jesus!

MARVIN PETERS

President, Arkansas Directors of Missions

As one who has a missionary heart and vision, my wish for Arkansas Baptists is that we would have a heart for missions. There are thousands of unchurched people here. There are thousands of hungry people in Arkansas. There are thousands of people of different racial and cultural backgrounds in our state. Our greatest challenge as Arkansas Baptists is to live out God's love in our world — that is my Christmas wish.

BEN J. ROWELL

President, Arkansas Baptist Pastors' Conference

My Christmas wish for Arkansas Baptist pastors is that we celebrate the wonderful first Advent of our Lord in a marvelous way, by glorifying our Savior. "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7).

May we make winning of souls our first priority, and continue to emphasize giving to missions.

JEROL SWAIM

President, Williams Baptist College

Like most kids' Christmas is my favorite time of the year. Much of this stems from all of the pleasant memories derived from growing up in a Christian home and having parents who always worked at helping my brother and me enjoy the "gifts" but also to have a deep, abiding love for the true "GIFT" of Christmas.

If I had the opportunity to make a few major wishes, I would definitely wish that all children could have the advantage of Christian parents who love them and teach them to love the true "GIFT" of Christmas.

BEN ELROD

President, Ouachita Baptist University

My Christmas wish for Arkansas Baptists is for the unbounded joy of life in the Lord Jesus Christ. In a world where millions have never known the meaning of freedom, those who are in Christ have ultimate freedom; in a world of hopelessness and despair, those in Christ have the bright light of hope for time and eternity glowing in their hearts. Joy to the world!

BARBARA WIKMAN

President, Arkansas Women's Missionary Union

Last Christmas in the chapel at the Baptist Hospital in Bangalore, India, I noticed Bibles in several different languages.

My Christmas wish for Arkansas Baptists is that every church would have a program for missions education. I wish that every pastor would encourage and promote the organizations that teach missions. We all need to understand that the gospel is to be shared with everyone of every language.

DENNIS SMITH

President, Arkansas Baptist Religious Educators

My wish for my fellow Arkansas Baptists this Christmas is for peace. We need to hear the Christmas angel once again, "...and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:15b NIV).

As a religious educator, I know that

more is caught than taught. We must reinforce our Christmas talk of love and hope with our actions. We, as Christ's ambassadors, should have and reflect God's peace to each other and the world.

DAVID MOORE

President, Arkansas Baptist Foundation

The Foundation is totally dependent upon donors who see God's hand at work in our Baptist ministries and who wish to support that work perpetually. Thus, our wish is that Arkansas Baptists will continue to be a united, loving and sweet group of believers who emphasize evangelism and missions.

As our churches and Baptist causes are used of God, believers will support those effective ministries. If people see a need, they will give and give generously. They will want that ministry to continue in future years with their support!

DAVID PERRY

Executive Director, Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes

My real wish is that our services will diminish for lack of need that homes will not fall apart, that children will not be abused, and that youth will turn to Christ instead of harmful things.

Understanding that we will always have broken homes, abused children and troubled youth, I wish that more of our churches will allow us to share "our story," that Baptist couples will feel called out to serve as houseparents, that donors will provide the four new vans we need, and above all else, that Arkansas Baptists will pray that each child in our care will experience the love of that first Christmas gift — Jesus Christ.

CHUCK McALISTER

President, ABCS Executive Board

The message of Christmas is as true today as it was when the angel announced it: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

The love of God, through His Son, Jesus, will bring peace and good will to those of us who are willing to acknowledge Jesus as our Lord. It is then that we know Jesus is there for us, not just at Christmas, but always.

My prayer for Arkansas Baptists is that we will be united around the supremacy of Jesus Christ, our Lord...our Master...our Savior...and our King. May we settle for nothing less than absolute surrender to the Son of God in our personal lives and in our convention. And may we know the joyous benefit of being at peace with God and each other.

A PASTOR'S HEART



By EMIL TURNER
ABCS Executive Director

She was a college student — a new Christian — from a rural community. I chaperoned her and 40 other students to a Christmas conference in a large northern city. Somehow she got separated from our group and became lost. Asking a man she thought was a store clerk to give her directions, she was led when he offered to escort her back to our hotel. Too late, she realized his intent to harm her. He pushed her into an alley and assaulted her.

Later that evening at the police station I sat with her as she answered the graphic, embarrassing questions of a police officer. She described her assault as best she could through her tears. It was a long, hard day — the assault, the hospital, the police.

That evening I led her and a small group of students in prayer. Her prayer moved me to tears. "Lord," she prayed, "Christmas exists because you came to us to forgive our sins. Thank you for forgiving my sins. Lord, forgive this man who has done this to me. If you can forgive me, I can forgive him."

This year, for Christmas, forgive someone who has hurt you. If God can forgive you, you can forgive others.

■ Have you read *Galileo* by James Reston (Harper, 1996)? This is a history of the persecution of the inventor of the telescope and microscope, and the proponent of the earth's revolution around the sun. It is an interesting insight into church history. It is hard to read, often sad, but very informative.

Executive director's schedule:

Dec. 13 Senior Adult Banquet,
Beech Street, Texarkana
Dec. 15 First, Haven

DONNA CHEATHAM

Woman's Viewpoint

Giving brings blessings



Tithing and stewardship are subjects close to my heart. A Training Union program during my youth shaped my stewardship commitment and practices. Our leader pointed out that the tithe should be a tenth of the gross income rather than the net.

Many Christians can testify to the blessings they have received from God when they have been faithful in their giving. God has provided for some special needs in our family in breath-taking ways.

There was the time I decided to return to school and complete the nursing education begun before marriage and the birth of children. During the time I was preparing for college entrance, the church custodian found an envelope between some outside doors which had been sealed when the church was remodeled. . . a most unlikely place! The envelope had the inscription "For the Pastor." My husband earmarked the money in the envelope for my tuition. The money was sufficient for tuition and some books. The day I enrolled, another envelope was found in the sealed doors. Together with the first envelope of money, there was almost the exact amount spent for books and tuition. There was never any indication of the human source of that money.

Another blessing came when we bought our first home after living in

church parsonages for years. A family member gave us money for a down payment. Once we selected the home we wanted, the realtor told us rather apologetically the required down payment to pay the owner's equity. Our family members looked at each other with wide eyes and open mouths. It was exactly the amount we had to spend.

When I was appointed for a short-term volunteer mission assignment in Gaza, our association voted to help with expenses for the trip. Not only did their generous check help pay expenses, it did so within about \$2.

These are the kinds of blessings God showers upon us when we are faithful in our giving. I'm reminded of what Malachi wrote: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10). We cannot out-give God!

Donna Cheatham is the wife of Jeff Cheatham, director of missions for Arkansas River Valley Association. She teaches a singles Sunday School class at Second Church, Russellville, and is president-elect of the Arkansas chapter of Baptist Nursing Fellowship. The Cheathams have three grown children and five grandchildren.

Personal perspectives

"One of the things that paved the way for our planting churches in Eastern Europe was the relationship that we built with Baptist people there in the tough times."

—John Merritt, retiring general secretary, European Baptist Convention

"As I look forward, I can see how He has carried me each step. I realize that being faithful to God even in the difficult times is the best decision one can make."

—FMB missionary Nancy Watts, whose husband and son were critically injured earlier this year in an automobile accident

Anticipation...Celebration...Proclamation

The scenario begins each fall, usually sometime between Halloween and Thanksgiving. Youngsters wake up one morning and realize that Christmas is rapidly approaching. Anticipation mounts with each passing day, spurred on by television commercials, festive decorations and parties galore. When Dec. 25 finally arrives, anticipation quickly gives way to celebration punctuated with squeals of delight. As wrapping paper and bows fly through the air, children joyfully discover the latest baby doll, video game or action figure that they've always wanted.

Avoid the Christmas celebration, kids spontaneously take time for one other holiday tradition — proclamation. "Look, Grandmas I got the exact Baby Do Everything I've wanted so, so much!" They. Sis, did you see my new Captain Krypton computer game — pretty cool, huh?"

But wait, this isn't merely a formula invented by toy manufacturers to ensure

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



By TRENNIS HENDERSON

non-stop commercialism and greed. In fact, the cycle of anticipation, celebration and proclamation is a centuries-old practice that dates back to the very first Christmas.

According to Luke 2, immediately after a host of angels appeared to the shepherds and told them of Jesus' birth, "the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this

thing which is come to pass" — anticipation. "And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger" — celebration. "And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child" — proclamation.

As the heavenly host delivered their message, the shepherds' anticipation must have been tremendous. But that wasn't enough. The celebration over seeing the tiny baby in the manger was surely overwhelming. But there was still more to be done. The shepherds chose to joyfully share words of proclamation about all they had seen and heard.

As your children or grandchildren repeat that cycle this month, let it serve as a reminder of the true meaning of the season. Take time to anticipate and celebrate the eternal impact of Christ's birth — and then make a point to proclaim good tidings of great joy.

the change (and the tragedy) occurred within the ABCS nominating committee. It is one thing to reject all eight names submitted for the four vacant positions as unacceptable. But to arbitrarily replace them with other names without conferring with OBU is indeed a tragedy.

The statement by nominating committee chairman William Hatfield that "this is an effective way of keeping our entities accountable to the people in the pews" belies something which is difficult to name. Indeed, for 81 years this policy has been effective. OBU set the policy and operated within policy. It was the nominating committee, not OBU, that unilaterally changed the policy. That is the first tragedy. The second tragedy is that there are those within the convention who now want to blame OBU. The action of the committee is simply part of the continuing power grab that has been so evident in the convention over the last several years. These actions are not in the best interests of Arkansas Baptists nor the non-Christian world.

As a denomination we are clearly moving away from our roots. This is a very dangerous thing. The Bible says, "Let everything be done with decency and in order." A review of the past 18 to 20 years leads one to think that we are becoming a people of "indecency and disorder." The convention-wide "addiction to control," on the part of some, must grieve the Holy Spirit to a severe degree.

The vote at the convention in support of OBU was heartening. And the move toward resolution is commendable.

Jim Caldwell
Pine Bluff, AR



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

pastors did, but they should realize that they are in positions of leadership, and should set good, Christlike examples. I know that because I am a female, some of these same men may feel that I shouldn't be outspoken. However, there are wives and mothers who sit in their church pews who think as I do. Maybe it's time to step back and let Ouachita's leaders do what they've done very effectively for decades — educate our children.

Linda Bagley
Lexa, AR

Process prompts tragedy

The reaction of many during the Arkansas Baptist State Convention annual meeting regarding Ouachita Baptist University's trustee action was most interesting.

All Arkansas Baptists must remember that OBU trustees voluntarily amended the university charter in 1914 to give permission to the convention to elect OBU trustees. To my knowledge, the arrangement has worked well. During that time, OBU (as is the case with most, if not all, state Baptist organizations having a board) has submitted names for consideration as trustees.

In the view of many, a tragedy regarding this arrangement has occurred. However,

Christian examples needed

It never ceases to amaze me that so many bad things can be said and done in the name of Christianity. I recently attended the state Baptist convention in Little Rock. I went because, as a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and mother of a student at OBU, I am interested in the fate of that institution.

Most of us who have attended Ouachita and who are familiar with Dr. Ben Elrod know that he would act only in the best interest of Ouachita. I truly believe in Dr. Elrod's sincerity in trying to keep Ouachita from becoming a political pawn.

When I attended OBU, I thought I was receiving a very good education. Today, my son is a senior, and I feel that OBU is much stronger academically than it was when I graduated. How could Arkansas Baptist leaders even consider removing Cooperative Program funds that all of us contribute to because some leaders aren't happy with the board of trustees?

In the spirit of love, I think that those pastors most outspoken should have been willing to let OBU's board and the nominating committee use this next year to work out differences, if at all possible.

I grew up with a Baptist mother who taught me that certain language and expressions were not very nice. My mother was with me that day and heard one pastor use the expression, "Come Hell or high water." Maybe some people wouldn't see anything wrong with that expression, but we felt that it was inappropriate anywhere, especially in the Lord's house.

I sincerely do not want to sound as "mean-spirited" as I thought some of those

Point of Grace receives state recognition

By Tremala Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

November 14 was more than just another concert date for Point of Grace. It was officially proclaimed "Point of Grace Day" in Arkansas by Gov. Mike Huckabee.

The popular contemporary Christian recording artists, who got their start at Ouachita Baptist University, were back in the state for an evening performance at Barton Coliseum in Little Rock. Gov. Huckabee, also an alumnus and a trustee of Ouachita, invited the group to the state capitol for a brief proclamation ceremony.

"The state of Arkansas is extraordinarily proud of the group, Point of Grace," Huckabee noted. "They have been a point of grace across America, really presenting the gospel of Christ in an effective way."

Describing Point of Grace as "one of the most successful contemporary Christian music groups in the country," the proclamation emphasized that the group "has inspired and influenced thousands of lives through their uplifting music and unapologetic stand for their Christian faith."

In addition to the recent proclamation, the group — composed of Heather Floyd, Denise Jones, Terry Jones and Shelley Phillips — has earned numerous national awards, including the Gospel Music Association's 1996 Dove Award for Group of the Year.

With the release of their third album,



Gov. Mike Huckabee proclaims "Point of Grace Day" in Arkansas in honor of (left to right) Denise Jones, Shelley Phillips, Heather Floyd and Terry Jones.

'Life Love and Other Mysteries,' the foursome recently saw their latest single, "Keep the Candle Burning," hit No. 1 on the adult contemporary Christian music chart.

The song was the group's 12th single — all 12 of which have reached No. 1, a feat unmatched by Elvis, the Beatles or any other artist in recording history.

Even amid their national success, the group members seek to keep their accomplishments in perspective and give God credit for their ministry. "God is who we are about," Heather explained. "He is the reason we are here."

"God Forbid," a song on their current album, "is a song that we measured every other song by because it speaks so loudly about who God is," she noted, adding that the lyrics — "God forbid that I should speak of you at all without a humble reverence in

my heart" — provide a constant reminder that "He's still the main thing in our lives."

"From the beginning, our goal has been to encourage people," Terry pointed out. "We've been very particular about making sure the lyrics are strong, godly Christian lyrics with a strong message."

Noting that "we're blessed to be where we are and to do what we get to do," Denise remarked, "God has shown us He is faithful in the small things and the big things. He cares about all of it." As a result, many of the group's songs emphasize that "God is in control of our lives and our relationships."

Among the messages the group shares with young people is the importance of sexual purity. Acknowledging that many parents tell the group members that they are role models for their children, Shelley said, "It's a big responsibility. We definitely take it very seriously."

"I think America is coming around to wanting to hear about people who have high morals and high standards," Heather agreed. "They want to hear songs that are encouraging and will lift them up."

While each of the four group members "holds each other accountable" in their Christian ministry together, Shelley noted that being a role model is not limited to recording artists and other public figures. "Any Christian has a responsibility to live the way you say you live," she emphasized.

Shelley's family still lives in her hometown of Little Rock. Her dad, Joe Phillips, was among the group's relatives and friends gathered backstage at Barton Coliseum as more than 6,000 people arrived to hear Point of Grace.

"It's been a blessing. God has led them all the way," he affirmed. "They're exactly what you see.... They're really sincere."

"These kids are living their dreams," he added. "Every day is a blessing."



Point of Grace returns to Arkansas to perform at Barton Coliseum in Little Rock.

Church starts hit high in '96

Record year for Anglo, black works also features no church 'deaths'

Arkansas Baptists reported a record number of new church starts in the state during the 1995-96 year. The Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department reported that 28 new churches were started in the 1995-96 reporting period. That number exceeded the previous record of 24 set during the 1990-91 reporting period.

The number represents a combination of Anglo (25) and black (3) new works only. Nine new language works, which included seven Hispanic and two deaf ministries, also were established during the same reporting period. Annual reporting periods for new works in Arkansas begin and end with Arkansas Baptists' annual state conventions.

In addition to the record number of new church starts, Arkansas Baptists reported another record: no church "deaths" among new works. The 1995-96 year marked the first reporting cycle, since the missions department began recording church losses in 1984, that showed no newly-formed Southern Baptist congregation in the state disbanding.

Jack Ramsey, church extension associate in the missions department, gave "three reasons" for the record-setting year in church extension.

"First, we had more associations organized in missions development," he said. "We also have been able, through new work probes, to identify more areas of work and third, I believe that Arkansas Baptist associations and churches are becoming more aware of an increasing number of lost people in our state."

Ramsey noted that the "most typical" area for the churches established this year in Arkansas was what he called "the rural fringe" — in most cases, outside of towns of 8,000 or less and within three to four miles of towns where people are living on small acreage.

Ramsey said the record figure highlights the ABCS's long-term commitment to starting new works. "Four out of the last seven years, our Anglo and black new works have been number one in church starts per capita in the nation," he noted, "and for all seven of those we have been in the top 10."

But doesn't Arkansas, a state with an established Southern Baptist presence, have enough churches?

"That's not a true statement," Ramsey countered. "The number of church buildings does not indicate the number of church people. We have a million unchurched people living in a state of 2.4 million people.

Church starts: a 10-year look*

YEAR	NEW STARTS	NUMBER LOST	NET GAIN
1987	19	4	15
1988	21	4	17
1989	22	4	18
1990	22	4	18
1991	24	3	21
1992	19	2	17
1993	20	4	16
1994	11	1	10
1995	20	1	19
1996	28	0	28
TOTAL	206	27	179

*Includes Anglo/black works only

"We need churches because of our diversity," Ramsey added, noting the diversity of a few of the new works established in the past year to meet a variety of needs:

■ The Church at Rock Creek, a Southern Baptist work in west Little Rock which features non-traditional worship. It has attracted an average of 4.5 new members a week since its inception a year ago.

■ Reynolds Park Church in Paragould, which Ramsey said was "developed through a very Southern Baptist process, using a Praxis team from a seminary, sponsored by Westview Baptist Church and led by a layperson, Rondal Richardson."

■ New Creation Church in North Little Rock, a predominantly African-American congregation which is dually aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention and National Baptist Convention, meets in the North Pulaski Association offices.

■ Primera Iglesia, a mission of First Church of Danville, started by an Anglo layman who noticed a rise in the number of Hispanics in the area and held revival services with help from First, Russellville, and First, Fort Smith, to initiate the work.

While Anglo and black starts set a record, language works in the state also had a banner year and missed the record mark by only one congregation for the 1995-96 year. The nine new language works established during the past year brought to 67 the number of new language works in the state in the past 10 years.

Missions department language associate

Jim Hauser said the language works saw such a high number of increases because "we had three new Hispanic pastors come to the state — we had more leadership. We are also emphasizing church planting among our existing Hispanic congregations."

Hauser said the state's two new deaf groups "are ministries of existing churches."

Jimmy Barrentine, missions department director, said the high new work numbers are due to "the Lord sending to Arkansas Baptists a team of mission pastors and mission volunteers that any state convention would be pleased and proud to have. They are diligent, creative and fearless in their approach to reaching people for the Lord."

He said Ramsey "is probably the best extension man in the nation" and that Hauser, while "still relatively new, has done an incredible job establishing relationships with Hispanic works."

Barrentine said that despite this year's good language church numbers, "we still need new ethnic works. We have, on the western side of the state, areas that still need Hispanic churches and we need more Asian churches in the Fort Smith area and more deaf churches everywhere in the state."

To accomplish those goals, he said, "We are going to emphasize training more church planters — not just pastors, but lay leaders."

Barrentine noted that with 37 combined new church starts, "We've never done better than this year, in that these churches have a strong profile for continued existence and there are good strategies in place to see that those churches are nurtured."

"It was beyond the goal for the year, which was 30 total," he added, "and it is above our trend line of 25 a year."

Although the new work numbers are "slightly above the population growth trend," Barrentine cautioned that they also were "below the need trend. If 44 churches a year aren't being started, we won't be getting ahead of the population growth trend. We need to make up the deficit, then surpass the growth."

"The need is four a month," he said. "In my view, there is only one thing that can keep us from having that record: If we assume that we are doing this. We are doing the Lord's work. The Father did it and the rest of us played a little role."

"If we remember that and give Him praise, He may let us continue. If not, He may shut the shop down."

Pass the etiquette, please

Little Rock author encourages parents to teach children social graces

By Russell N. Dilday

Arkansas Editor, Arkansas Baptist

"Etiquette is a set of rules that we have in our head and manners are in our heart and together they are a shield against embarrassment," said June Hines Moore, noting the need for social graces in society. "If you know the rules, you won't embarrass yourself and if you have manners in your heart, you won't embarrass someone else."

Moore, a member of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, is the author of the recently-released book, *You Can Raise a Well-Mannered Child*, published by Broadman & Holman. The book serves as a map for almost any social situation, from table manners to correspondence, from party situations to church congregations and, as Moore notes in her Chapter 14 heading, "From Basketball to Ballet."

She has had plenty of opportunities to research her subject well. The former school teacher has owned and run Moore Than Manners Consulting, a social and business etiquette training service, since 1987. "I teach all ages, I teach classes, I hold workshops for corporations and teach in the continuing education department at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock," she explained. "I also wrote the 'Moore on Manners' column for several years for the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*."

Her etiquette classes have drawn more



Etiquette author June Moore conducts her research using libraries, training sessions — and her two granddaughters

than 500 children and teens over the years, but Moore said she wrote the book to answer the needs of their parents. I had fifth and sixth-graders in my classes, but the drawback was that I didn't have these children all day like their parents do. The parents began telling me that they needed a guide to reinforce what I was teaching and to give them more information.

"That's the reason for the book," she explained. "I decided that parents needed to know how to teach children... because they are the teachers all the time. I wanted to address the questions and the needs

that I have seen in all my business seminars and classes. I have been asked every question imaginable."

Moore, who also has written *A Business Etiquette Manual for the Professional* as well as "Passing on the Baton of Faith" for *Home Life* magazine and curriculum material for camps and schools, is now working on a still-united second work "for the adult professional. It will be a guide to confidence in business etiquette."

Moore said there is a current movement back to etiquette spurred by the business community. "Society evolves," she noted. "The pendulum went so far in the direction of too much propriety before the '60s that the hippies started the pendulum the other way."

In the late '60s and '70s, the business community discovered that the '60s generation was highly trained and educated, but lacking in social skills," she commented, "and when they found that it was affecting their bottom line, they got in gear and did something. Corporations all over the country began calling in people to conduct seminars and training. The return to proper manners didn't start at some little old ladies' tea party, but in the business world."

When she began teaching etiquette, the Ouachita Baptist University graduate recalled that she was alarmed when she "found out not everybody knows the rules. I did a class one time where we had a large number of PhDs. They were so much more educated, but they did not know the elementary rules of table etiquette or how to greet someone. They lacked confidence because they lacked social skills."

Although Moore makes a living teaching adults and older children social skills, she said etiquette training must begin at home early. "For it to really start, it must begin with young children. For parents, as soon as the child is born, you can start saying 'please' and 'thank you' and make positive comments to the child. They see modeling by the parent."

Moore said she has noticed a downturn in social etiquette among teens, blaming the trend on "the breakup of the family. The fact that parents and children don't eat together, we live such a fast-paced life and they don't have much opportunity until their senior prom. That's when they really get interested."

She explained that etiquette "is a family value to pass on to children — the mores and folkways and the proper way to do things." She cautioned, however, that "you never do the proper thing just for the sake of doing it. You do it for a reason. There is

'Interrupting' among book's helpful topics

June Hines Moore's new book, *You Can Raise a Well-Mannered Child*, contains answers for a variety of social situations that children (and their parents) encounter daily.

While the book gives many general etiquette guidelines, it also features specific courtesy direction, such as the following excerpt on "Interrupting" from the chapter, "Mouth Manners and Other Menaces":

Without warning, children take their chances and jump into conversations as the mood strikes them. They may recognize only their need to be heard at any cost. The word interrupting is not in their vocabulary; or if it is they ignore the rules about it.

If we give children their fair chance to speak, they eventually learn the rules. The following are some ways to teach conversational skills.

■ When we finish a sentence or our story, we tell the child that it is now his

or her turn to speak. We must remember to keep our story brief; children are short on attention ability.

■ Conversation is like playing ball. One person pitches and another catches. A parent makes a comment, pitching a ball to the child and instructing him to make his comment after he catches the ball.

■ Use exchanges between ill-mannered actors on television for demonstrations. Ask, "Who was rude in that program?" or "Let's count the manners mistakes." This kind of critique is proper because actors are people we don't know personally.

■ Be sure to alert your child to the times you will want him to interrupt you, such as when her brother is about to fall off the roof of the house, or his sister is trying to drown the family cat.

■ When he or she must interrupt, teach the child to say "Pardon Me" or "Excuse me" or "I am sorry, Mom, but..."

a reason for every rule of etiquette."

Many of those reasons, such as shaking hands, came from common practices. "We shake hands in America because this country was settled by men carrying guns. They extended their open hand without a gun in it to show that they were friend and not foe."

Other common social practices grew out of religious practices. "I researched in 27 libraries on reasons for etiquette and so many of them are related to religion. When

someone sneezes, we say 'Bless you.' That goes back a long way to the time when a person's life was considered to be in their breath. When a person sneezed, it kept them from dying, someone else would say, 'Bless you.'"

While many of her classes have dealt with common social practices, she admits having to improvise when it comes to dealing with regional needs common to Arkansas. Once, while teaching male students the correct way to seat a date in

a car, one of her students became concerned about how to seat his date in his tall four-wheel drive truck.

"To tell you the truth, I'd never read anything about that," she said. "So we went out to his truck and I was standing there contemplating how, with a straight skirt on, I could get into that truck. He was a big football player and he finally picked me up and put me in it."

Her courteous response to his solution? "I think that will do just fine."

Nursing homes are author's mission fields

By Colleen Becken, Assistant Editor, Arkansas Baptist

After recursion. That was Rosalie Alderman's first reaction to visiting a nursing home. "I was horrified," she said. "Nobody in his right mind would voluntarily go near such a place!" But that was nearly three decades ago and a lot has changed.

For the past 27 years, Alderman has been actively involved in nursing home ministry, discovering that residents "were ill and lonely folks who could and would work creatively for God if someone would teach them to do so."

Alderman didn't initially volunteer for service; she was pressed into it. It was 1966, and both kids were out of the nest. "One daughter was married and the other daughter was in college. Rosalie was enjoying gardening around her home in Hope, an active social life and weekends spent in the Ozark Mountains with her husband, Edwin.

Then one night in May, Edwin asked her, "Why are you breathing so hard?" The next thing she knew, Rosalie was in a hospital being diagnosed with coronary thrombosis. The doctor ordered a change in lifestyle, curtailing her activities.

"From then until May 1969 my life was a continuous nightmare," Alderman explained. "Time passed, but my life pattern became no easier to live with." Frustrated and depressed, she couldn't understand why things that had interested her before — like teaching Bible class at First Church, Hope — no longer appealed to her.

Then something changed. At a meeting of a mission action group in her church, Alderman remembered, "I was my usual bored self." Then it was announced that a Bible teacher was needed for Heritage Manor Nursing Home. "I'll do that!" she said. "The ladies thought that I'd flipped!"

"It was an awesome experience," Alderman recalled. "God filled me with the sweetest, most peaceful feeling in my restless spirit."

Alderman began Bible studies that Wednesday and today conducts Bible studies at three nursing homes in Hope and a Sunday morning service at one of them.

Her strategy for nursing home ministry is simple, aimed at directly meeting the needs of nursing home residents. She believes they have a need to hear the Bible read regularly and a need for personal worth. She always greets the residents with a handshake or a hug, and remembers to look directly into their eyes. She tells even comatose patients, "I love you."

Alderman recruits help from church, nursing home staff and from residents, both for an extensive prayer ministry and nursing home worship. Knowing that her health limits her, she works to make sure that teachers, music leaders and pianists are scheduled. "Nursing homes are a fact of life today," she

noted. "One of the most compassionate fields of service open to humanity is that of helping those who live in them."

Her crusade is outlined in her book, *Take Heart: A Teaching Story of Ministry to 'Forgotten' People*, first published in 1978 and re-issued this year with an updated chapter. "It's a story of men and women refusing to become a vast and barren wasteland of humanity, waiting only to die."

Indeed, her book is a painfully honest account of victories, large and small, as well as failures and misunderstandings. It also serves as an extended "thank you" to all those who have helped her over the years, including her husband, Edwin. He now assists with the Sunday morning worship in addition to the financial and emotional support that he has provided for Rosalie over the years.

The book also details her efforts to teach the residents to manifest Christ's love by doing good for one another. The teaching has resulted in informal support groups, gathering when a resident receives bad news from home or a disturbing diagnosis. Racial boundaries have crumbled, even for Alderman, who was raised in small-town Mississippi.

The book serves as a reminder that even a smile can be a small victory. One such account notes a gentleman who would speak to her in the hall, but was embittered and would not come to Bible study meetings. He asked her, "Has God ever answered one of your prayers?"

Her reply was, "Yes, this visit in an answer to prayer."

A short time after their conversation, the gentleman came and acknowledged Jesus as his Savior and participated in the communion that Alderman's pastor, Stan Parris, and the church's deacons, administer at the nursing home. Four days later, the resident died.

Parris has known the Aldermans for many years, having grown up in the church he now serves as pastor. "They are genuine servants of the Lord," he remarked. "With Rosalie, what you see is what you get — this is a true calling to a mission field. Those people love her. She can minister on that field like no one I've ever seen."

Now 80 years old, Alderman has five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, but is more determined than ever to get others involved in nursing home ministries. "There are two kinds of people in this world — those who contribute time and talents toward the solving of problems and those who are the problems," she explained. "I know that, in my own life, there was a time when I was the problem."

"I know now, three decades later, that God... was forcing me to wait, which was something I was not good at," she added. "My restlessness and misery were His method of directing my focus toward a ministry to hundreds of people.... It had been His purpose for me all along."



Alderman

U.S. agrees to evacuate at-risk Kurds

WASHINGTON (BP)—The United States plans to evacuate up to 5,000 endangered Kurdish relief workers and family members—including Jews and Kurds known to Southern Baptists—from northern Iraq in the next future.

The Kurdish workers, under threat of death from Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, reportedly will be moved across Iraq's northern border into Turkey. From there they will be flown to Guam for processing, then on to the United States for resettlement. The evacuees, employed by more than 20 aid groups, will include 563 workers and family members connected to an international relief agency through which Southern Baptists have aided the Kurds in northern Iraq since the end of the Persian Gulf War.

The evacuation was to have remained secret until it was completed because of concerns that Saddam Hussein or various Kurdish factions might try to prevent it. But news organizations began reporting the plan Nov. 25, and it was confirmed by the U.S. State Department the same day.

"We intend to move forward with the departure from northern Iraq of local employees of U.S. funded and/or U.S. based non-governmental organizations and their family members," a State Department spokesman acknowledged during a press briefing.

"We are concerned about the well-being of these people." That statement represents a major victory for aid workers, who have sought the evacuation of their Kurdish colleagues with increasing desperation. For three months Kurdish workers have faced the threat of retaliation from Saddam Hussein because they had worked with U.S. or foreign sponsored relief groups.

FMB sends \$150,000 to resettle refugees

KIGALI, RWANDA (BP)—While many agencies are clamoring to offer immediate relief to the half million Rwandans streaming home from refugee camps in Zaire, Southern Baptists will help them start over once they return. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board expects to spend \$150,000 on farming supplies and household goods, plus other needs as they are identified, to help speed the process of rebuilding their lives.

The Rwandans, who fled genocide in 1994 during the country's civil war between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, started moving in masses out of Zaire in late November after the militias that had ruled refugee areas were run out.

"Riding through the mass of people was like going back in time," said Stan Lee, an FMB missionary in Rwanda. "As far as one could see before and behind and to the side, were people—men, women and children all carrying something on their heads."

Hundreds of relief agencies are vying to get work started in Rwanda as refugees return. But Lee and several other Southern Baptist workers have labored with Rwandans all along—before and during the latest upheaval—at their homes in Rwanda, and in refugee camps in Tanzania and Zaire.

The FMB money will buy seed, tools, household goods and food for the short term. Other more specific needs will be determined as local teams survey areas around the Baptist convention's 56 churches, which will serve as distribution points.

BWAid shifts Rwandan focus to self-help

MCLEAN, VA (BP)—Baptist World Aid is increasing its efforts to resettle refugees returning to Rwanda from Zaire.

In recent weeks, BWAid has supported Baptists in Rwanda as they have cared for returnees, particularly in the Cyangugu area. Now, the Baptist World Alliance relief arm additionally will support a larger initiative of Rwandan Baptists as they provide care for returnees living close to their churches. The program will include the provision of seeds, tools, basic household equipment and emergency food aid.

Rwandan Baptists have asked BWAid for \$500,000 in support of the program. Since 1994, BWA has provided more than

\$750,000 for relief work among Rwandan refugees in Zaire and rehabilitation efforts inside Rwanda.

The flood of returning Rwandan refugees has placed a huge demand on the resources of international agencies. Many had made contingency plans for a more gradual return of the refugees, with food and water being made available at transit stations. Priority is now being given on getting assistance to the villages.

WMU to expand 'job corps' to help needy

BIRMINGHAM, AL (BP)—Christian Women's Job Corps will become an official ministry of Woman's Missionary Union March 1, 1997, opening the door for the development of ministry sites across the country.

The decision to move Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) from a pilot project status to an official ministry of WMU came during a recent meeting of the CWJC National Task Force. The task force has helped in the development of CWJC since it was conceptualized by WMU leaders more than two years ago.

"The task force's decision to recommend that Christian Women's Job Corps become an official ministry of Woman's Missionary Union was their way of saying, 'It works,' said Trudy Johnson, WMU special projects manager. "They unanimously agreed that God has used the pilot projects to change lives and give women in poverty hope for a better life."

Task force member Evelyn Blount, executive director of South Carolina WMU, agreed. "Christian Women's Job Corps is one of the most exciting things in which I have participated. To my knowledge, we have never devised a ministry that so completely takes into account the needs of the individual person. We have targeted needs and people, but CWJC ministers to the total person at their points of need and does so in a Christian context."

Johnson said the purpose of CWJC is twofold: to provide a Christian context in which women in need are equipped for life and employment and to provide a missions context in which women help women.

Illness forces Hopper to resign seminary

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC (ABP)—The president of the International Baptist Theological Seminary, who led the European Baptist school through turmoil and transition, will resign for health reasons. John David Hopper, president since 1988, recently announced his resignation during a tense meeting with trustees.

The seminary—relocated to Prague from Ruschlikon, Switzerland, in 1995—is owned and operated by the European Baptist Federation, but Hopper and some other employees serve as missionaries of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Hopper, 61, was president of the seminary when the school was defunded by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1991 over charges of liberalism. The incident ignited protests from Baptists on two continents. Hopper resigned from the FMB. The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship picked up financial support of the seminary and its faculty, appointing Hopper as the group's first missionary in May 1992.

Hopper had open-heart surgery three years ago but was able to return to work. After some improvement, observers say, his health worsened last fall.

Hopper's ability to perform his duties became a concern of trustees. "He has been unable to take charge of the situation like we need him to do," said Jim Smith, vice chairman of the trustees.

During last month's trustee meeting, Smith chaired a tense session during which Hopper's performance was criticized. Afterward Hopper offered his resignation.

The resignation was voluntary, said Smith, a CBF missionary who represents the CBF on the board. "I believe John David realized he could not give more than he already had given to the seminary, which was a lot." The trustees "have tremendous respect for what he has done," Smith added.

Merritts impact Europe with English churches

By Michael D. Creswell
 MC, Foreign Missions Board

WIESBADEN, GERMANY — Draw a map of Baptist work in Europe and somewhere you'll have to put the names of John and Elizabeth Merritt.

For more than 30 years these two Southern Baptist foreign missionaries have helped start and lead English-language Baptist churches in Europe. As they retire and head back to the States this fall, they leave a solid record — and a bit of their hearts — behind.

Since 1972 Merritt has served as general secretary of the European Baptist Convention, a fellowship of 66 English-speaking congregations across Europe. These nearly two and a half decades have included Cold War years in which most English-language congregations were composed of American military personnel. The fall of communism in 1989 meant many of those soldiers and their families went back to the United States — and more than a dozen EBC churches closed for lack of members.

But the EBC switched its emphasis to reaching international citizens for whom English is an important language. Amid dozens of other native languages, English continues to be the continent's most popular second language because of its extensive use in business, industry and education. Every European city of any size has a population of English speakers — making English-speaking Baptist churches a viable ministry.

More than a dozen new churches have been organized in recent years, including eight congregations in Eastern European capitals such as Moscow and Budapest, Hungary. As soon as it became possible, Merritt had begun to rally support for starting English-language churches in Eastern Europe.

"One of the things that paved the way for our planting churches in Eastern Europe was the relationship we built with Baptist people there in the tough times," Merritt noted. Before communism fell, the EBC had contributed almost \$250,000 in assistance to Eastern European Baptists with no strings attached during the preceding 10 years.

"We gave it just because of our love and concern," he explained. The EBC had close cooperation from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the national Baptist unions, he noted. The Arkansas Baptist State Convention also is actively involved in the work of the EBC through a six-year missions partnership scheduled to continue through 1999.

The Merritts were appointed Southern

EBC witnesses leadership change

By Judith Lynn Blossomer
 European Baptist Commission

HEIDELBERG, GERMANY (BP) — Saying good-bye to John and Elizabeth Merritt and welcoming James and Wilma Heflin were key features of the 32nd annual meeting of the European Baptist Convention in Heidelberg, Germany.

John Merritt is the retiring general secretary of the EBC, encompassing 66 English-language churches in 21 countries in Europe. James Heflin is Merritt's successor. Merritt is a Southern Baptist foreign missionary who served the EBC 24 years. Heflin formerly was professor of preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

A highlight of the Oct. 30-31 meeting was a celebration dinner in the King's Room in the Heidelberg Castle, attended by 200 individuals from around Europe. The convention presented the Merritts with several farewell gifts, including flying their sons from the United States to attend the dinner.

Symbols of leadership

Welcoming the Heflins, EBC Executive Committee members presented them with several items to represent the different roles of the general secretary keys to the office signifying convention leadership, the EBC directory signifying the pastoral guidance to pastors and a map of Europe signifying the proclamation of the gospel throughout Europe.

In business sessions, the convention approved a budget of \$404,072 for 1997, including \$48,000 in salary and benefits for Heflin. This will be the first time the EBC will fully support a staff member.

The convention also voted to extend

its missions partnership with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention through 1999. The two conventions originally had established a three-year partnership, which was extended last year for an additional year.

The convention re-elected Race Larney, pastor of Rhein Valley Baptist Church in Waldorf, Germany, as president, and Scott Spearman, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Paris, as vice president. Also elected were Mary Iles, clerk; Ron Cooker, treasurer; Laurie Martin, EBC Women president; Herb Grover, EBC Men president; and Howard Clark, historian.

Merritt preached the convention sermon, using Psalm 98:1 as his theme verse. He highlighted three key items he believes God had accomplished through the EBC.

First, Merritt said, God has kept the EBC united in spirit, despite various differences which, viewed wrongly, could cause division. Yet, through it all, there has been unity, he affirmed.

Second, God has given the EBC a new vision. Merritt said, noting that people from more than 100 nations participate in the convention's churches. "We are a small convention of 4,000 members, yet God has helped us focus on our possibilities and not on our problems."

Third, God has brought salvation through EBC churches, Merritt said. At the end of his written report were two tables showing statistical information for the past 24 years. One figure in particular sticks out, he said: During those years, the baptism ratio is one baptism per 9.7 members.

"God has done great things," Merritt concluded, "through us — His way."

Baptist foreign missionaries in 1964. They first served an English-speaking Baptist church in Milan, Italy. While there they helped start three Italian Baptist churches. When Merritt became general secretary of the EBC in 1972, the convention had just 37 churches. That number has almost doubled under his leadership.

In 1991 Merritt was elected president of the European Baptist Federation, the umbrella organization for national Baptist unions across Europe. It is the only time an American missionary has been so honored.

Elizabeth Merritt is quick to point out that, while her main assignment has been to support her husband, "I have had my identity." She has chaired EBC committees,

led pastors' wives retreats and served on the missions committee. For the past five years she has led women's work in the EBC and even edited the convention's newsletter for a while. Her interest and education in counseling has given her a virtual second career.

The EBC has named its long-range endowment fund in the couple's honor. Already the fund has more than \$500,000. Eventually, interest from the fund will be used to endow the starting of new English-speaking Baptist churches across Europe.

Even when the Merritts are peacefully retired back in their native state of Mississippi, their long-held dream of starting new churches will still be going strong.

Staff changes

Lynn P. Worthen Jr. began his ministry Dec. 1 as pastor of First Church of El Dorado, coming there from First Church of Springfield, Mo., where he has served since 1992. He previously was pastor of First Church of Arkadelphia, as well as churches in Oklahoma and Kansas. While in Missouri, Worthen served as chairman of the Word & Way committee, the state paper of the Missouri Baptist Convention. He also is a former trustee of Ouachita Baptist University. Worthen is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee; Central State University, Edmond, Okla.; and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, the former **Mary Ida Crews**, have one son, **Lyndell Phillip Worthen III**.

Bruce L. Baker began serving Dec. 1 as pastor of Immanuel Church of El Dorado, coming there from Second Church of Raytown Texas. Baker is a graduate of East Texas Baptist University, Marshall and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife the former **Penny Jeanne Hendricks**, have three children, **Christopher James**, **Stephanie Kathleen** and **Gregory Lee**.

Morris Ferrel Duffel Jr. is pastor of First Church of Hardy. He moved to Hardy from Cherry Valley where he had served six years as pastor of First Church. He also has served First Church of Madison and Crosby Church of Searcy. A native of Forrest City, Duffel is a graduate of East Arkansas Community College and Mid-South Bible College of Memphis. He also attended Mid-America Seminary. He and his wife, **Christy**, have three children, **Michael Jeremy**, **Phillip Aaron** and **Jennifer Rhea**.

Richard Arlen Porter Jr. is the new pastor of Pleasant Hill Church in Sardis. He came there from Riverside Church in Fort Worth, Texas, where he previously served as associate pastor and interim minister of adult education. Porter also was pastor of Lakeshore Heights Church in Hot Springs in 1985-91. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is married to the former **Cindy Fincher**. They have three children, **Seth**, **Luke** and **Faith**.

Rusty Kisling is pastor of East Whelen Church of Gurdon. Kisling has been pastor of Bethlehem Church of Whelen Springs and a prison chaplain for the Department of Corrections of Arkansas. A native of Virginia, he attended Eastern Mennonite College of Harrisonburg, Va., and Boyce Bible School in Little Rock. He and his wife, **Emily**, are parents of five daughters and two sons.



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By LILLIE GILL

Gary Henson is director of missions for Arkansas Valley Association, coming there from Gamville Church. He also has been pastor of other Arkansas churches as well as churches in Missouri and Illinois. Henson attended Williams Baptist College, Mid-America Seminary, Bible College and Mid-America Seminary. He and his wife, the former **Sandra Tucker**, have two children, **Deborah** and **Gary II**.

Jimmy L. Hull is vocational pastor of Illinois Chapel of Prairie Grove which was accepted into Washington-Madison Association during the association's annual meeting Oct. 21. Hull previously was minister of youth for Liberty Church of Lincoln and interim minister of youth for Calvary Church of Fayetteville. He currently is a student at the University of Arkansas. Hull is married to the former **Denise Robinson**.

M. Dean Whitener has accepted the call of Ouachita Association to launch a new mission in the Rich Mountain community effective Dec. 1. He previously served as pastor of First Church of Oden as well as churches in Oregon, California and Texas.

Eddy Howell of Conway is pastor of Easterwood Mission near Mayflower. A graduate of the University of Central Arkansas, he attended Ouachita Baptist University and Boyce Bible School. He currently is a doctor of ministry candidate at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Howell and his wife, **Debbie**, are parents of two sons, **Matthew** and **Phillip**.

Michael Smith has joined the staff of First Church in Springdale as minister of junior high students. He and his wife, **Kim**, moved there from West Monroe, La., where he had served for more than seven years as minister of youth for New Chapel Hill Church. Both are graduates of Northeast Louisiana University.

Tim Ellis has accepted the call to serve as director of missions for Buckeye Central Erie Association in Ohio. A graduate of Williams Baptist College, he has served as pastor of Spring Lake Church in Williford. Ellis and his wife, **Brenda**, began their new work Dec. 1.

Gerry Patterson is serving as youth and family ministries director for Calvary Church of Monticello. She previously served as youth director of churches in

West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Patterson attended Angelina Community College of Lufkin, Texas, and Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas. She and her husband, **David**, have three children, **Suzanne**, **Burkane** and **Sean**.

Larry Dice of Sheridan has joined the staff of First Church of Pine Bluff as interim youth minister. A graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, he currently is employed in Malvern.

Leroy Patterson recently retired as pastor of First Church in Oppelo following 45 years of ministry as a pastor of churches in Arkansas and Texas. Other Arkansas churches he has served include First Church in Alexander, Vimy Ridge Immanuel Church and Roland Church. Patterson, who is available to serve as a supply preacher, may be contacted at 501-868-5557.

R.L. Williams recently retired as pastor of First Church of Nimmons due to medical reasons.

Church news

Black Oak Church in Washington Madison Association observed the 50th anniversary of its founding Oct. 27. Speakers included former pastors **Perry Hillis**, **Homer Rich** and **Euel Wright** as well as directors of missions **Pete Petty** and **Harold Gateley Terrel Gordon** is pastor.

Nashville First Church recently honored pastor **David Blase** and his wife, **Ann**, in recognition of 10 years of ministry. The church presented them with a plaque, red roses and a money tree. The Blases have two sons, **John**, pastor of First Church in Stephens, and **Shawn**, music director for First Church in Mandeville. The church also observed **Friend Day**, setting an all-time high attendance record when 542 were present for Sunday School. The previous attendance record of 503 was set in 1950.

Enon Church of Monticello observed Thanksgiving Nov. 24 with a fellowship dinner at which **Joan Bordeaux** was presented a plaque for 31 years of service as church clerk and **Kathleen Rash** received a plaque for 11 years of service as church treasurer. **Larry Wilkerson**, a member of Northside Church in Monticello, was the guest speaker and **Davey Nugent**, a student at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, presented special music. **Frank Pfenneger** is pastor.

University Church of Fayetteville recently observed **Pastor Appreciation Day** in honor of **H.D. McCarty's** 31 years of

service to the congregation. Marty Brown read a letter of appreciation to McGarty and his wife, Shirley.

Grand Avenue Church of Fort Smith's music ministry will present "Music in the Mall" at Central Mall Dec. 15 at 6:30, 7:30 and 8:30 p.m. as a holiday outreach ministry.

People

Lendol and Dorothy Jackson of Jonesboro were commissioned as Mission Service Corps Volunteers Nov. 3 at Central Church in Jonesboro where they are members. They have been assigned to serve as coordinators of Arkansas Campers on Mission after having completed MSC orientation this past summer at Gloria (N.M.) Conference Center. MSC is a volunteer organization of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Charles Pullin, Gene Thomas and Phillip Bowles recently were honored by Ashley County Association. Pullin and Thomas were named vocational pastors of the year and Bowles was named bivocational pastor of the year. Pullin has served four years as pastor of Gardner Church, Hamburg, and Thomas has been pastor of Magnolia Church of Crossett for seven years. Bowles has completed four years of ministry as pastor of Fellowship Church of Hamburg.

Ordinations

Pine Bluff First Church ordained Wayne Divine and David Smelser as deacons Oct. 20.

Greenway First Church ordained pastor David Finley Jr. to the ministry Nov. 10.

Beech Street First Church of Texarkana ordained Lynn Burton, Barry Ivers, Michael Chesshir, Gary Fuller, Norman Wolf and Travis Odum as deacons Nov. 17.

Greenland First Church ordained Tony Wing and Barry Sinec as deacons Nov. 17.

Nashville First Church ordained John Ahlert, Lynn Crowell, Dale Henry, Phil Kennedy, Brent Mahaffey, Tom Morrow, Frank Pokornik, Jeff Starr and Randy White as deacons Nov. 17.

Markham Street Church in Little Rock ordained Matt Burns, Steve Campbell, Kevin Langford, Lee Miller and Brad White as deacons Nov. 20.

Calvary Church of Corning ordained Jim VanNada and John Herren as deacons Nov. 24.

Lake Village Church ordained Mike Self as a deacon Dec. 1.

BSU dedicates new building for Henderson State students

Students, donors and area Baptists gathered on the campus of Henderson State State University in Arkadelphia Nov. 7 for the dedication of the new Baptist Student Union building adjacent to the campus. A large part of the new 5,000 square-foot facilities was built using labor provided by students and other volunteers.

During the dedication ceremony, building committee chairman J.T. Wright said the facility was needed because the growing numbers of students attending the BSU's events has made it the largest single organized group on campus. It appears evident that the BSU program has proven to be a worthy mission program for our association and churches and an effective avenue for students to grow as disciples and be involved in mission activities.

David James, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention student ministries department, noted that while the building was made possible through the volunteer work and giving of many Arkansas Baptists, he singled out Stamps layman A.O. Smith who donated "the lead gift to the construction of the building."

Members of the Smith family accepted a plaque recognizing his contribution. Smith also was instrumental in constructing the BSU facilities at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

James also recognized "the dogged determination and unbelievable perseverance of commitment" of department associate George Sims for his work in coordinating volunteers for the project and BSU director Mark Robinson for his "faithfulness and commitment. A lot of times when you do this, your membership goes down. But that didn't happen here. This has been a great semester for Henderson BSU."

Alert to the impact of the BSU on campus is Henderson president Charles Dunn. "This place is alive," Dunn said as

he described the ministry of the BSU. "That's one thing I noted immediately when I came as president. I appreciated the good cheer that came from that. I'm very proud of this facility and I'm mindful of the role it plays and Mark plays in the lives of students."

BSU executive director Emil Turner told the more than 100 participants. "It is the motive behind the work that is so inspirational - that you have worked hard to make this a facility where people come to Christ. I am glad that I can be associated with this site."

Noting that the volunteer labor and support given to the project changed Robinson's perspective on missions work, he remarked, "I never knew what it was like to be on the receiving end of a mission trip, to see God's people work together in excitement and fun."

Robinson ceremonially "gave" the new building to student representatives Radeanna Presley and John Curtis, adding that "this is a gift to you from Arkansas Baptists and we know that it is in capable hands."

Following the ceremony, Presley, who is serving as the 1996-97 BSU president, said she felt "excitement and thanksgiving" about the new building "because He made it possible. I don't think anything will change. We'll just have more room for students. We'll see growth because we can welcome more people in."

Robinson agreed that "it means a new era of possibilities of reaching more people, different kinds of people, and a more comprehensive program. To get out of vague terms, last night (Dec. 3) we had to pull out all of the chairs, office chairs, sofas - everything that could be sat on - for worship."

"I think that God is going to do a great work because of what everybody contributed here," Curtis said. "It will provide a common place for people to come and meet."



Henderson State University BSU director Mark Robinson (right) expresses appreciation to building committee chairman J.T. Wright.

'96 state conventions highlight resolutions, leadership changes

By Bob Allen

Associated Baptist Press

(ABP) — Abortion drew the most attention in resolutions by Baptist state conventions this fall, particularly President Bill Clinton's veto of a ban on the controversial 'partial birth' abortion procedure.

Other common resolution topics included gambling and same-sex marriages. Other highlights of fall meetings included key leadership transition in several conventions.

Baptists in Arkansas Alabama, Oklahoma, Louisiana, South Carolina, New Mexico, New England, Ohio, Kentucky and Missouri all passed anti-abortion resolutions this fall. Some of the resolutions also condemned assisted suicide.

Concern for the growth of legalized gambling surfaced in several states. Anti-gambling resolutions were adopted in Arkansas, Alabama, Ohio, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Hawaii, West Virginia and Texas.

Hawaii Baptists took a stand opposing same-sex marriages. A case on same-sex marriages in the state's Supreme Court

prompted Congress to pass last summer's Defense of Marriage Act, which forbids federal recognition of same-sex unions.

Messengers in Arkansas, South Carolina, Oklahoma and Florida also passed resolutions critical of homosexuality.

Alabama, North Carolina and West Virginia Baptists passed resolutions decrying arson attacks against African-American churches.

A Southern Baptist Convention resolution against the Disney Company, which gained national media attention last summer, went almost unnoticed in state conventions this fall. Alaska Baptists endorsed the prospect of a Disney boycott for what they deemed anti-family corporate policies. California Baptists passed a statement registering disappointment in Disney policies, but rejected language threatening a boycott.

Leadership transition

Several states marked changes in leadership this fall.

North Carolina executive Roy Smith surprised messengers with an announce-

ment that he will retire next year. A committee will be named to nominate his successor.

Missouri Baptists honored retiring executive director Don Wideman with a surprise ceremony during the Oct. 28-30 state convention. Wideman, who has held the post 10 years, is scheduled to retire next summer.

Oklahoma Baptists adopted a new convention structure designed to be driven by "purpose" rather than "program," and elected native Oklahoman Anthony Jordan as the state convention's new executive director. Jordan, a longtime Oklahoma pastor, has been serving as executive director since May, pending final approval by the convention. He succeeds William Tanner, who retired.

Louisiana Baptists were introduced to a new executive director, Dean Doster, 52, a staff member at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, was elected to the post just prior to the Nov. 11-12 state convention. He succeeds Mark Short.

Ohio Baptists also met a new executive director Jack Kwik, 46, who has been on staff at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, will succeed Orville Griffin, who retires Jan. 10.

New York Baptists honored executive director Quinn Pugh, who retired in July

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Missionary family continues healing odyssey

By David Willard

Special Focus

MEMPHIS, TN (BP)—Miracles can be huge.

Southern Baptist Foreign missionary Nancy Watts knows. The fact that her husband, Wade, and her 5-year-old son, Marcus, are alive today is proof enough of that. By all accounts they should have died Feb. 1 when the car the family was traveling in was destroyed in a head-on collision on a mountain road outside Lima, Peru.

It was a miracle no one was killed.

As it was, both Wade and Marcus were left in grave condition, their minds in comas, their odds for survival slim.

But that was eight long months ago. Now, as she brings her family through the slow process of healing in Memphis, Tenn., Nancy has found that miracles also are little things—small blessings that accumulate day by day.

The recovery of Marcus has been amazing. Physically and mentally he is back to 90 percent. With a little help, he is adjusting to the fourth grade at Macon Road Baptist School, is making new friends, and is dealing, along with his 8-year-old brother, Joshua, with the pain of missing his father.

Their dad's progress has been much slower. After the accident, weeks went by before he could be flown back to the United States; brain and internal injuries made the lengthy flight too risky. Finally medical authorities decided to move him.

But even then, while his body was stabilizing, it was unclear whether his mind would heal.

Every day Nancy visited the hospital. "I would talk, tell him about all that was going on, but we weren't getting any answers from him... We didn't know if he understood what we said. It felt like he did, but there was no way we could be sure."

Finally a breakthrough came. He was able to respond to statements by blinking his eyes. Seizing this opportunity, they worked out a system in which he would blink once for yes, twice for no. By asking him specific questions, Nancy finally was assured that his memory was intact. It was the first hopeful sign.

Signs of progress

Such signs of progress have kept Nancy's situation bearable. But she has had to be strong in ways she would have thought impossible before the accident. Circumstances demand it.

Although Marcus is recovering steadily, he still has special needs. His short-term memory suffers. The teachers at his school have been helpful, modifying assignments to help him feel successful. But he does not want to be different, he wants things to come easily, as they did for him before.

Nancy tries to be patient. In late September, when Joshua got a bicycle for his birthday, Marcus wanted to ride. His first attempts were futile. He kept falling off. Exasperated, he became impossible to console. "The next day he did fine. He just

took off." His mom recalled. Things like that are frustrating, trying to encourage him until he masters the things he wants to do.

Beyond his frustration of not being able to do things is the challenge of understanding why things are different.

"Marcus knows that God saved him, that he was very close to dying and that God spared his life," Nancy explained. "But he misses Peru and his home a lot. That's where he's coming from. 'Why do we have to be here? Why did it have to happen?' It's tough for me. I have no answer for him. God did not cause it, but for some reason He allowed it to happen, and we just don't know why."

The questions do not seem to bother Joshua as much, although he also misses Peru. The family talks daily about friends and the missionary "family" there.

Nancy also is eager to return. She has found much strength in the prayers of friends and colleagues. "If people hadn't been praying, where would I be? Would we be this far along in the recovery process?"

Recently one of Wade's therapists called his progress a miracle. "I totally agree with that, and I think it's because God is answering people's prayers."

The experience has drawn her closer to God. "As I look back, I can see how He has carried me each step. I realize that being faithful to God even in the difficult times is the best decision one can make."

"The miracle is happening," she continued. "First we got one in Marcus, and now it appears Wade is (healing), too. We're just going to keep on praying and working really hard, see how far we can get, because no one really knows."

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Committee to study religious persecution gets mixed reviews

WASHINGTON (APB)—The U.S. State Department has named 20 religious leaders and scholars—including a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention—to an advisory committee on religious liberty abroad.

The committee, which is expected to begin meeting next year, will call attention to the problems of religious persecution abroad and is expected to provide advice on how to bring about reconciliation in those areas where religious enmity is a threat to peace, according to a statement by the White House.

Religious and ethnic conflict have been at the forefront of human rights dilemmas in recent years, said John Shatruck, a State Department official and chairman of the new advisory panel. The panel's creation represents the Clinton administration's "commitment to address these issues with new and creative means," he added.

Members of the committee will include Florida Baptist pastor Jim Henry, immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"It is my fervent prayer that the work

of the committee will visibly ease the animosity of our government and public consciousness to the increasing persecution against Christians and other religious minorities in many places in the world," said Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla.

"Hopefully, the full weight of the government and the public outcry against the violation of these basic religious and human rights will alleviate the loss of life, property and imprisonment currently being experienced," Henry added. "We cannot be silent and indifferent in the face of the mounting losses of religious freedom."

Panel's impact questioned

Other evangelical leaders who have been pushing several months for a presidential adviser to investigate reports of Christian persecution, however, were unsatisfied with the naming of the committee.

Richard Land, executive director of

the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, said the committee should focus specifically on persecution of Christians, which he said is widespread and "most ignored around the world."

An in-house committee at the State Department will be less effective than a special adviser reporting directly to President Clinton, Land added. He also said that while some members of the committee—like Henry—have been outspoken on the problem of Christian persecution, other members include people who have been skeptical that any such problem exists.

"I fear that many people of genuine goodwill who are serving on this committee will be extremely frustrated," Land said.

At a State Department briefing, Shatruck said the committee will foster "greater dialogue between religious communities and the U.S. government" on the issue of religious persecution.

"Religious freedom is a right we hold sacred in America," Shatruck said. "It is a right which we would look to see exercised in every corner of the globe. The creation of the advisory committee is a step in that direction."

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California pastor Rick Warren declines NAMB presidency

MISSION VIEJO, CA (ABP) — Rick Warren, pastor of the Southern Baptist Convention's fastest growing church, has turned down an invitation to become the first president of the North American Mission Board.

Warren, who founded Saddleback Valley Community Church in Mission Viejo, Calif., in 1980 and developed it into one of the largest churches in the country, told the committee seeking a NAMB president "Although I consider this position to be the most strategic one in the SBC, God has not released me from my call to Saddleback Church, so I cannot accept your nomination."

Warren was the first and unanimous choice of the 15-member incorporators group assigned to nominate a president for the new agency, which is the center piece of a plan to downsize and restructure the Southern Baptist Convention's massive bureaucracy. The NAMB, created from the merger of three current SBC agencies, will coordinate all evangelism and church-starting efforts of the 16 million member Southern Baptist Convention.

The merger would bring together the resources of the Home Mission Board

Radio and Television Commission and Brotherhood Commission, while downsizing the staff of all three. In anticipation of the June merger, staff cuts already are under way at the three agencies, which currently employ about 500 people.

C. B. Hogue, chairman of the incorporators group, told the *California Southern Baptist* newspaper that he received Warren's letter by fax Dec. 2 but he declined to discuss the contents. He acknowledged the committee had held "initial exploratory conversation" with several persons, and that Warren "was talked to a second time in the process."

Warren's appeal as a candidate for the post is based on his record-setting role as pastor of the Saddleback congregation, which he started 16 years ago with seven members. Warren tailored the church's contemporary worship and innovative programs to meet the needs of a target audience — mostly baby boomers. The church has grown to an average weekly attendance of 13,000 in its several worship services.

Regarding Warren's decision to remove himself from consideration Hogue said the California pastor apparently "felt he

did not want to go further in the process."

The incorporators group was chosen to recommend a president for NAMB, but only the trustees of the new agency can elect the chief executive. That board will not be constituted officially until the end of the 1997 SBC meeting in June.

Hogue said the incorporators group now will resume "examining other candidates who are within the process." He declined to specify how many other prospective nominees are under consideration. No date has been set for the incorporators to resume their selection process, he said.

MK prayer calendar

Missionary kids with birthdays in November attending college in Arkansas

- Dec. 5: Jim Langston, OBU Box 3398, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001, freshman from Botswana
- Dec. 6: Tim Atkins, OBU Box 4360; sophomore from South Brazil
- Dec. 13: Jeremy Greenwich, OBU Box 4176; freshman from Brazil
- Dec. 19: Donnie Copeland, OBU Box 4041; freshman from Nigeria
- Dec. 23: Susan Beal, OBU Box 3475; freshman from Venezuela
- Dec. 30: Jeremy Conrad, OBU Box 3749; freshman from South Korea

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"Understanding and Strengthening Relationships" will provide many practical helps for pastors and staff members. This advanced seminar is open to those who have participated in the basic seminar, "Understanding People through Strengths Using the BI/Polar System."

The dates for the seminar are March 24-25, 1997. The schedule is:

March 24:	1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. - session
	4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. - dinner break on your own
	6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. - session
March 25:	8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. - session
	11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - lunch break on your own
	12:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. - session

Jimmie Sheffield, associate executive director for the ABSA, will lead the seminar. He is a certified leader for the Institute for Foundational Training and Development.

The seminar has four parts and requires 12 hours of seminar time. The four parts are: Part 1 - Refresher, Part 2 - Attitude in Relationships, Part 3 - Behavior in Relationships, Part 4 - Interpersonal Strategies.

Seminar participants will have many opportunities to explore the dynamics of relationships and develop personal strategies to improve relationships with others. Those attending will also have time to explore with other participants how they deal with relationship problems.

Cost of the seminar is \$75 which includes a notebook. Registration deadline is February 21. The only requirement is that a person must have participated in the basic BI/Polar seminar.

For more information or registration, contact Jimmie Sheffield, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 1-800-838-2272 or 501-376-4791, ext. 5103.

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Williams Baptist College WBC receives Callahan estate gift

Williams Baptist College has received its largest estate gift ever from the late Melvin and Mildred Callahan of Walnut Ridge. Williams president Jerry Swain said WBC is a portion of the Callahan estate is valued at just over \$700,000.

"This is a generous gift and will be a major step forward for any institution," Swain noted. "For Williams, it is monumental." Because of the Callahan's longstanding generosity toward Williams, the president said a new set of married student sport teams will be named for them.

Swain said the bulk of the estate gift, about \$500,000, is being set aside for scholarships. He said portions of the remainder of the gift will be used on various campus beautification projects.

Record WBC preview day - WOW Wednesday lived up to its name Nov. 30. The preview day for prospective students at Williams Baptist College easily set an attendance record. Williams admissions director Angela Filippo said 240 high school juniors and seniors were on campus for the event, eclipsing the previous record of 88 set last year. WOW is an acronym for World of Williams.

Tom Jones, WBC's vice president for institutional advancement, said WOW Wednesday was a big step forward for the college. He noted that several factors have helped raise WBC's profile, including a focus on publicity and college relations in recent years.

Eagles earn academic honor - The

Eagles from country team from Williams Baptist College was honored recently with the Academic Team Award from the Trans-South Athletic Conference. Coach Scott Turleyville said the award was presented to the men's team based on the cumulative grade point average of the runners. The team has over a 3.0 grade point average.

Ouachita Baptist University

Spring registration set - Registration for 1997 spring semester classes at Ouachita will be held Jan. 24 from 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Evans Student Center and Life Hall according to OBU registrar Judy Jones. Classes for the semester will begin Jan. 15.

Tennis team ranked third - The Ouachita Tiger men tennis team has voted third nation in the first NALA rankings of the 1996-97 academic year. It is the highest ranking ever given to a state or private institution of higher education of any size in the field of men's tennis in Arkansas.

"I think it is a high honor for the team to be recognized in this manner," said coach Craig Ward, who recently was named the 1996 College Coach of the Year by the Southern Division of the U.S.

Professional Tennis Association. Ouachita finished the 1995-96 season in a tie for fifth place in the NALA national poll.

Ouachita Sounds to perform - The Ouachita Sounds, a select music voice show choir, will perform Jan. 18 at 7:30 p.m. at Jones Performing Arts Center. The group will present a variety of musical entertainment for their fifth annual concert.

Glenda Seccrest, instructor of music, is the new director of the Sounds following professor of music Mary Shambaugh's leadership of the group since its beginning in 1991. Incorporated in this year's program is an array of Broadway, popular and sacred music.

Music auditions scheduled - The Division of Music of OBU's School of Fine Arts will host its annual music scholarship auditions for entering freshman and transfer students on Feb. 6 and Feb. 20 at Mabree Fine Arts Center.

Music scholarships from Ouachita are available to students pursuing degrees in music in areas of performance, including keyboard, vocal and instrumental. Band scholarships are also available to students who are not planning to major in the field of music.

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YOUTH

Regional youth evangelism events give youth 'Hot Hearts' for Christ

Three regional youth evangelism events in early 1997 will give youth "Hot Hearts" for Christ, according to organizers. The conferences will be held Jan. 17-18 in Texarkana, Jan. 31-Feb. 1 in northwest Arkansas and March 7-8 in Little Rock.

The Hot Heart Youth Evangelism Conference in Little Rock is sponsored by several churches in central Arkansas, including many Southern Baptist congregations. The event will feature a variety of speakers and musicians and a program focused on "change," said Eric Westermann, minister to students at Calvary Church in Little Rock and chairman of the Little Rock event.

"Hot Hearts '97" will be a celebration of worship and praise—an opportunity to laugh, to cheer and to weep," he noted. "Through music, drama and the Word, you will be awakened to the very presence of God."

Westermann said participants also "will experience God as never before—some in first-time commitments to Jesus Christ as Lord, others who are already believers will commit to live for Him more radically" and "a few... will leave Hot Hearts to become world-changers for God."

"We are anticipating a great movement of God in the lives of youth attending Hot Hearts," agreed Marty Collier, assistant minister of youth at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock. "As the Holy Spirit touches hearts, many young people will

certainly respond," he emphasized.

The Little Rock programs will include keynote speaker Ken Freeman, a youth communicator; musical performances by Christian artists Geoff Moore and the Distance and Lisa Bevil; dramatic interpretations by Tom Tomsona, and praise and worship led by Jeff Berry.

Participants also will hear testimonies from former Miami Dolphin cornerback Don McNeal and former Miss Arkansas Heather Covington. Similar programs will be held at the other two locations.

The Little Rock conference will be held at the Robinson Center Music Hall at a cost of \$12 per person. Participants must secure their own lodging and meals. For more information, contact Westermann at 501-663-8303. To register, send the registration fee to Immanuel Church youth minister Mark Gibbens, Registration Chairman, Hot Hearts—Little Rock, 1000 Bishop St., Little Rock, AR 72202.

The Texarkana conference will be held at the Four States Entertainment Center at a cost of \$10 per person. To register, contact Hot Hearts—Texarkana, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 957, Hooks, TX 75561.

The Fayetteville conference, to be held at First Church in Fayetteville, will cost \$15 per person. Send registration information to Hot Hearts—Northwest Arkansas, 3065 North College, Suite 187, Fayetteville, AR 72760 after Dec. 15.

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Elliff seeks SBC recommendations

THE CITY, OK (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention president Tom Elliff has issued a request for Baptists' input in the selection of four key SBC committees to be responsible for appointing.

Elliff invited the leaders to "encourage the people in your state convention to assist in this process" by submitting recommendations on a form available from his office. His address is Tom Elliff, First Southern Baptist Church, P.O. Box 15019, Del City, OK 73155.

The SBC committees to be appointed are the SBC Committee on Committees, Resolutions Committee, Credentials Committee and Tellers Committee.

Elliff said individuals recommended for service should possess the following qualities:

- A personal relationship with Christ illustrated by a consistent daily walk with Him.

- A clear commitment to the view that the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God.

- A Christian walk and commitment acknowledged by his or her peers.

- A deep and unswerving commitment to the work of the Southern Baptist Convention as supported through the Cooperative Program and the annual SBC offerings.

- An understanding that any responsibility with the SBC is a place of service rather than "positional glory."

"I assure you that each name submitted will receive prayerful consideration," Elliff wrote. "It is understandable, of course, that with the great number of names submitted, there will be those who, though nominally qualified, may not be chosen to serve this year but may very well be considered for subsequent appointment."

Henry leads campaign for conference centers

GLORIETA, NM (BP)—Describing Glorieta and Ridgecrest Baptist conference centers as "places of regeneration, renewal and refreshment," former Southern Baptist Convention president Jim Henry pledged his commitment to leading a capital campaign for the centers.

Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., is chairman of the campaign cabinet. Sue Lady, a member of Central Church, Johnson, is a member of the 40-member steering committee.

Solicitation of major donors capable of making large contributions will begin in January 1997.

Classifieds

Houseparents needed—Arkansas Baptist Home for Children, call Royce Aston 501-367-5358; Camden Emergency Shelter, call Mark Weaver 501-862-0095.

Seeking—Danville First Baptist Church is actively seeking youth minister with some associate pastor responsibilities. Please send resume to: Chairman, Search Committee, Danville First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 877, Danville, AR 72833.

Accepting resumes—Youth minister with burden of reaching youth for Christ. Send to WestSide First Baptist Church, 7025 Greers Ferry Rd., Greers Ferry, AR 72067.

Seeking—Full-time pastor, First Baptist Church, Hughes, Ark., Send resumes to Ray Huguely, 211 Allen St., Hughes, AR 72348.

For sale—Eagle diesel bus, 46 passengers, 79 model. Good condition. Call 501-996-4115 or 501-783-5181.

Classified ads must be submitted in writing to the ABN office no less than 10 days prior to the date of publication desired. A check or money order in the proper amount, figured at 90 cents per word, must be included. Multiple insertions of the same ad must be paid for in advance. Classified ads shall be restricted to church-related subject matter. The ABN reserves the right to reject any ad because of unsuitable subject matter. Classified ads will be inserted on a space-available basis. No endorsement by the ABN is implied.

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For a listing, call Nelle O'Bryan
at 376-4791, ext. 5155

ARKANSAS BAPTISTS

Seminary alumni elect state officers

Arkansas alumni of Southern Baptist seminaries held hatching meetings Nov. 19 at Greer Springs First Church in Little Rock in conjunction with the 1990 Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary alumni held a panel discussion and prayer session on spiritual needs of individuals, churches, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and the world. The alumni elected Sid and Ruth Carwell

to serve a third term as president and secretary-treasurer.

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary alumni elected Roland Reits of Midland, president; Angela Lowe of Little Rock, vice president; and Eddy Howell of Conway, secretary Gary Ledbetter, seminary vice president of student life, shared about the possible expansion of the seminary's physical plant and the establishment of seminary training facilities in the Northern Plains.

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary alumni elected Bob Christian of Maumelle as president; M. L. Faler of Pine Bluff, president-elect; and Mike Kinsey of North Little Rock, secretary.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary elected Bill Steeger of Ardmore to serve a second term as president. They heard a report from Daniel Alken, dean of the school of theology and vice president of academic administration, concerning increased enrollment, new computerized library facilities and the establishment of a Herschel Hobbs preaching chapel and library.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary alumni elected Jim Lagrone of Bryant, president; Butch Riddle of Ashdown, vice president; and Bill Harris of Gravel Ridge, secretary-treasurer. The seminary report was presented by Steve Lyon, professor of pastoral ministry.

Missionary notes

Ed and Greta Pinkston, missionaries to the Ivory Coast, are on the field (address BP 1424 Daloa, Ivory Coast) They are natives of Arkansas. He was born in Camden and grew up in Crossett. The former Greta McFerrin, she was born in Hill Top and lived there and in Harrison while growing up. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1966.

Robert and Sharon Pinkston, missionaries to Mali, have completed language study in France and arrived on their field of service (address BP 2017, Bamako, Mali). Son of Southern Baptist missionaries, he considers Daloa, Ivory Coast, and Harrison his hometowns. She is the former Sharon Smith of Hot Springs. They were appointed in 1995.

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Family Bible

Wise men seek Him

By Bruce A. Swihart, director,
Church Leadership Support
Department, ABCS

Basic passage: Matthew 2:1-23

Focal passage: Matthew 2:1-10

Central truth: True wisdom seeks something outside of oneself.

Christmas is a splendid time to reflect on the great truths that accompany the story of Christmas. It is possible to become so involved with the American tradition of the celebration of Christmas that we have little time to grasp its true meaning.

What do you suppose Matthew was trying to tell his readers by relating the visit of the Magi? It is quite possible he desired to show his readers that Jesus, who was born from the Davidic lineage to fulfill the role of ideal kingship, was acknowledged even in His infancy to be the King of the Jews.

The Magi were likely trained astrologers with a curiosity characteristic of scientists. Somehow they noticed a remarkable phenomenon, an unusual star. They were no doubt familiar with the widespread belief that the time was right for the appearance of a king to be born in Judea. This one was to usher in a reign of peace and would claim universal homage. They set out on a journey to satisfy their hunger.

Quite often what we spend our lives seeking for, we find. King Herod had an insatiable appetite for power. When the Magi sought information concerning "one who has been born king of the Jews" (v. 2), Herod was greatly disturbed (v. 3).

Matthew presented a contrast between "wise men" seeking something outside themselves and a man seeking to protect his own importance. Herod asked the Sanhedrin about what could be learned from Scripture concerning the birthplace of the Messiah (v. 4-6). He dispatched the Magi to Bethlehem with instructions to bring back information (v. 8). When he couldn't locate the child, he initiated a campaign to kill boys under two years old (vv. 16-18).

The Magi found what they were seeking. They were ushered into the presence of God Himself and experienced great joy (v. 10). They were humbled. Rather than seeking great treasure, "they opened their treasures" and gave. They were compelled to give gifts and to give homage (v. 11). Wise men seek something outside themselves. When they find Him, they are overwhelmed with great joy.

Life and Work

What's in a name?

By Darrell Cook, associate director,
Baptist Student Union,
Arkansas State University

Basic passage: Matthew 1:1-25

Focal passage: Matthew 1:21-23

Central truth: The name of Jesus is a promise to believers.

One of the great tests of the cooperative decision-making abilities of a young couple is choosing a name for their first child. The considerations are endless. "Will we use a family name?" "Should our child be a 'Junior'?" "Will we use a biblical name?" "Will the first and middle names sound good together?" (This is very important because both names must be used together whenever the child is in trouble.) "What are the nicknames that could spin off of this name?"

Names are important. A good name is very important in the first chapter of Matthew; there are 4⁷ names of important people listed. Some are mentioned other places in the Bible and some are not. Some are male and some are female. They were people who were given the pleasure of being in the family line of the Messiah. Their names are forever recorded as being the recipients of this blessing.

The two names that stand out the most in this chapter are the names for the Messiah himself. Joseph is told to name the child Jesus, "because he will save his people from their sins" (v. 21). The powerful promise of salvation stated throughout the Old Testament is offered once again. Jesus did many great things, but God made it clear that the central purpose for the coming of His Son was salvation.

Matthew presents another name for Jesus, quoting the prophet Isaiah, "They will call him 'Immanuel' - which means, 'God with us'" (v. 23). Just as His purpose was clear, God made it clear who Jesus was. Jesus was the very presence of God in the form of a man among men. God had placed His hand on prophets and kings before, but this was different. Jesus did not merely have the blessing of God's hand, He was the hand of God.

In His names are great promises to those who believe in Him. We know that the power and presence of God are with us because His name is "Immanuel." We know that He has secured and delivered the salvation we need because it is found in His name, "Jesus."

Explore the Bible

Our response to the King

By Bob Harper, pastor,

First Church, White Hall

Basic passage: Luke 2:1-20

Focal passage: Luke 2:15-20

Central truth: God's gift of Jesus calls for a response from all who hear the good news.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only son..." Christmas is a special time. The season demands a response from our lives. Some of us have been busy shopping for that perfect gift. Others have been baking. Still others are watching under the tree to see if they have been "naughty or nice." Sometimes we get too busy and miss the reason for the season.

Luke's account of the shepherds' first Christmas has a wonderful message for us. As we are confronted with the reality and the glory of God's movement into our world in the gift of His only son, we too are terrified. The awesome presence of God is always overpowering, but He also makes His presence an invitation for us to come to Him.

Upon hearing the angels' message, the shepherds just had to go see for themselves. Can't you just hear them? "Forget the flocks, guys, the Lord is here." Luke says they hurried off. I picture them moving more in a dead run to get there as quick as possible.

Wouldn't you have liked to have been with them? Imagine the awe and majesty of seeing the innocence and majesty of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us in the form of this baby boy. And you were one of the first ones to witness this event that would forever change the world. Wow! No wonder that "all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them" (v. 18). It was reality and they had responded to the message of God's messengers.

Isn't this really what Christmas is all about? It is the reality of a Savior who has been born for you and the response that reality demands from each of us. The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God. What will be our response? "...Whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Family Bible

The value of ceremony

By Bruce A. Swihart, director,
Church Leadership Support
Department, ARBC

Basic passage: Luke 2:21-40

Focal passage: Luke 2:21-24

Central truth: Observing certain special days give opportunity to demonstrate obedience and faith and reap great spiritual blessing.

Mary and Joseph were obedient and faithful to carry out the demands of the law. There are spiritual blessings promised to all who are obedient to the Lord. The obedience and faith of Mary and Joseph are good examples for all parents who desire to raise children who will live well-ordered, spiritual lives. Theological thinking and spiritual appreciation usually do not develop in a vacuum. Holy people usually impart values to their children that reflect the examples they set.

In this passage, we observe Jesus undergoing three ancient ceremonies. Every faithful family was responsible to see that their male child would undergo circumcision on the eighth day after His birth. It was also on that day that the boy received his name.

At another ceremony, "The Redemption of the Firstborn" (Num. 18:16), parents could ceremonially buy back their son from God for five shekels. According to the law (Ex. 3:2) every firstborn male, both cattle and human beings, was sacred to God. The law was a recognition of God's gracious power to give human life. This was to be accomplished during the first 31 days after the birth of the child.

The third ceremony, "The Purification after Childbirth," required a woman who had borne a child to come to the Temple and offer a burnt offering. This offering was either a lamb or a young pigeon as a sin offering. This was the offering that Mary brought.

Jesus was born into an ordinary home with no luxuries, where every cent was taken into account, where members knew all about the difficulties of making a living and the insecurities of life. His family knew the strain of making ends meet.

It is out of these three archaic ceremonies, out of a common home that we see the foundation of spiritual life being built. Mary and Joseph saw Jesus as a gift. Of all of God's gifts, there is none for which we are more answerable than the gift of a child. Our example of faith and obedience will be rewarded with blessing.

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Life and Work

Immovable purposes

By Darrell Cook, associate director,
Baptist Student Union,
Arkansas State University

Basic passage: Matthew 2:1-20

Focal passage: Matthew 2:7-20

Central truth: God's purposes cannot be thwarted.

There is a danger in familiarity. Sometimes familiarity leads us to lose our sense of what is precious or holy. We have only a few short chapters in the Bible about the birth and childhood of Jesus, so with each passing Christmas, it becomes easier to lose the awe and gratitude that the story should bring. It is too easy for us to miss the extent of God's faithfulness and the power of His purposes in a story we have heard countless times.

King Herod planned to find out the location of the Christ child so he could have the child killed, but God's purposes could not be thwarted. Herod had told the Magi to report the location of the child to him on their return trip so that he, too, could go and worship Jesus (v. 8). God used a dream to warn the Magi to take another route home and not return to Herod.

Herod was angry that the Magi did not return to report to him and he planned to eliminate the Christ child by having all boys age two and under in the vicinity of Bethlehem killed, but God's purposes could not be thwarted. God used an angel in a dream to warn Joseph to move to Egypt and stay there until God would reveal the time for their return. Eventually God again used an angel in a dream to tell Joseph to return to Israel.

After Herod's death, his son, Archelaus, could have carried out his father's plan to kill the Christ child, but God's purposes could not be thwarted. Joseph settled in Nazareth of Galilee because God used a dream to warn him to stay out of Judea.

Despite the painful presence of evil apparent through the cruel actions of Herod, God's purposes could not be thwarted. Even what seemed to be detours for Joseph, Mary and Jesus were used by God as part of His plan and prophecy. The prophecies, "Out of Egypt I called my son" (v. 15) and "He will be called a Nazarene" (v. 23) were both fulfilled through what seemed to be a change of plans. God's purposes could not and will not be thwarted.

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Explore the Bible

God's plan revealed

By Bob Harper, pastor,
First Church, White Hall
Basic passage: Matthew 16:21-17:27

Focal passage: Matthew 16:23-29;

17:1-5, 22-23

Central truth: Jesus begins to reveal the plan of God for His life.

Peter didn't like it. He told Jesus it would never happen to Him. No way that Peter was going to let Jesus suffer many things and die. It just wasn't Peter's plan for His Master. Peter had a hard time realizing that his plan was not as important to Jesus as God's plan was.

Jesus rebuked Peter for his lack of insight. Peter was like we are many times. His mind was not on the things of God, but the things of men (v. 23).

One thing is for sure. God's plan is different from our normal way of thinking. Jesus explained it well when He stated, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me" (v. 24). Only by losing our life for Jesus will we ever find the life that God has intended for us to have all along.

Jesus knew that He would be betrayed into the hands of men, they would kill Him and then He would be raised to life on the third day. This was God's plan. Somehow Jesus had to help the disciples begin to picture what God had in store for Him and for them.

The transfiguration was a big help. Seeing Jesus with Moses and Elijah made a big impact upon their understanding. Peter was ready to stay right there. Yet Jesus knew they must go forward with the plan of God. In the days ahead, I imagine Peter would think back to the words of God, "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased" (v. 5).

The disciples still had lots of questions and their faith had plenty of room for improvement. Their inability to heal the boy with a demon proved that. Jesus continued on with their training. We too still have questions and the Lord knows our faith needs to improve. Let's continue with God's plan and let Him train us for His glory.

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JAN 12 1997

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CLC, Clinton deny end of hard liquor advertising ban

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has joined President Clinton and alcohol watchdog groups in criticizing the American hard liquor industry for dropping its longtime voluntary ban on television and radio advertising.

The Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) recently announced it no longer would abide by a ban on broadcast advertising, in place on radio since 1936 and on television since 1948. DISCUS, a trade association representing producers and marketers of hard liquor, said it had adopted a code governing broadcast advertising by its members which seeks to "ensure responsible, tasteful and dignified advertising aimed at adults."

Such a code did nothing to allay the concerns of opponents of lifting the ban. "The decision to drop hard liquor advertising demonstrates what we already knew about the alcohol industry," said Will Dodson, the CLC's director of government relations. "They are definitely more concerned about profits than they are concerned about the welfare of society."

President Clinton called the liquor industry's decision "simply irresponsible." In his weekly radio address Nov. 9, the president said Americans' message to liquor companies should be: "You were right for the last 50 years when you didn't advertise on television, you're wrong to change your policy now. This is no time to turn back. Get back on the ban. That's the best way to protect all our families."

The major television networks—ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox—have said they will reject hard liquor ads. Some cable networks have followed suit.

Supreme Court rejects appeal of school prayer law

WASHINGTON (AP)—Mississippi has lost a bid to skirt court decisions barring government-sponsored prayers in public schools. Without comment, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to revive a 1994 Mississippi law that would have permitted group prayers at public school assemblies, sporting events and other school-related student events.

The Mississippi legislature enacted the law after a principal in Jackson was disciplined for allowing students to begin each school day with a prayer over the intercom.

After what lower courts described as a public uproar over the dispute, the legislature approved the school prayer law, as well as a resolution commending principal Bishop Knox for his "unswerving dedication to prayer in public schools."

Before the law took effect, however, it was challenged by a group of parents, students and taxpayers. Federal district court Judge Henry Wingate blocked implementation of the law, except for a provision allowing student-initiated prayers at high school commencement programs. Wingate's ruling was later affirmed by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

November yields big increase for Cooperative Program

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program gifts for the month of November totaled almost \$3.2 million more than the same month in 1995, according to Morris H. Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee.

Gifts for November 1996 reached \$13,934,056 compared to November 1995 of \$10,743,955, an increase of \$3,190,100 or 29.69 percent.

For the first two months of the SBC's 1996-97 fiscal year, CP gifts have totaled \$26,249,173 compared to the same period in the last fiscal year of \$21,681,338, an increase of \$4,567,834 or 21.07 percent.

Designated gifts were down \$71,996 for the month compared to a year ago. \$2,434,287 in November 1996 to \$2,506,283 in November 1995, a 2.87 percent decrease. For the two months of the fiscal year, designated gifts totaled \$4,150,180 compared to the same period a year ago of \$4,832,858, down 14.13 percent or \$682,677.

Former HMB interfaith director joins Freemasonry

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Gary Leazer, a former Home Mission Board official who led a 1992-93 study of Freemasonry, has announced he has become a Mason.

Leazer, formerly director of the HMB's interfaith witness department, was asked to resign from the HMB staff by president Larry Lewis in October 1993 after delivering a speech sympathetic to Masons and critical of the HMB to a regional Masonic convention in Atlanta.

Leazer initially became a point of controversy in early 1993 over a sympathetic letter he had written to a Mason while the study, commissioned at the 1992 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting was under way. He was removed from further involvement in developing the HMB report and then removed as department director.

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