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12-19-1974

December 19, 1974

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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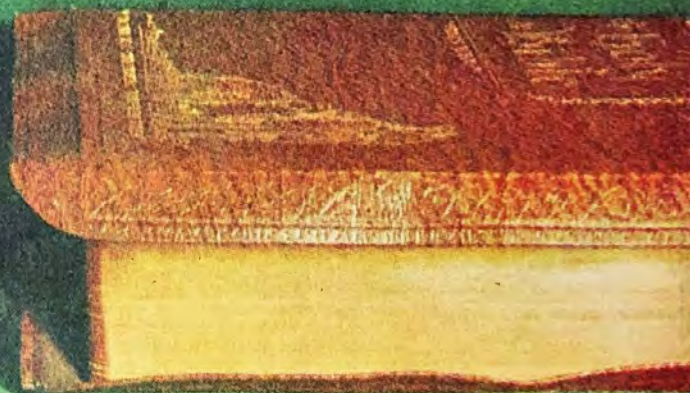
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December 19, 1974
Arkansas Baptist
NEWSMAGAZINE





I must say it

Charles H. Ashcraft / Executive Secretary

Noble families-great nations

Evidence is overwhelming that the stability of nations as well as the outcome of God's purposes rests heavily upon good families. Pastors will do well to emphasize the worth of the Christian home if they wish to make a permanent contribution to lasting values.

The family was God's idea. He vested his dreams within the home structure. No one was his advisor when he likened his kingdom to a family, choosing his own title as Father, and referring to Jesus as his Son. The term "brethren" declares firmly that his church is a family.

It is difficult to proceed very far into the inner workings of any worthwhile project without becoming aware of the contribution of great families. In the field of missionary conquest the names of Maddox, Taylor and Bratcher, among others, remain a refreshing testimony as to the importance of noble families.

While the notion of dynasty complexes are to be forever discouraged we are indebted to certain great families for statesmen, educators, clergymen and doctors. The myriad of non-professional people are not without notice in our recognition of great families and their contribution to our society.

Some very wise people have surmised that a great nation is impossible without great homes and I agree. The stability and strength of the nation will not exceed the strength and stability of its citizens, and such citizens come from stable homes and secure families.

Convictions such as these are fast fading from the hopes of many but not from the committed, dedicated people of the church. Such a thrust as has never been made in America will greet us at the opening of the Third Century of our nation as greater and stronger voices will be calling us to rebuild the decaying structures of the home on an even more secure foundation than ever.

Marriage ceremonies will be revised and church weddings will come back in style. Pre-marriage counseling will become a standard procedure and pre-marital sex will diminish on the American scene.

Sons and daughters will again appreciate the heritage of noble parents and grandchildren will arise to call them blessed. The concepts of integrity, honesty, straight-dealing, fair play, decency and self-respect will emerge with even a newer more refreshing, wholesome flavor than ever, just you wait and see.

Better than wait and see, join in and help us reverse the tides in favor of strong Christian families.

I must say it!

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The employees of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention who work out of the Baptist Building have signed our annual Christmas greeting page to express to our readers their wishes for a happy celebration of Christ's birth.

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Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

VOL. 73 DECEMBER 19, 1974 NO. 50

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J. Everett Sneed

The incarnation

In a few short days Christmas will be only a memory. As we view our gifts, our minds will flash back to Christmas. Or perhaps, we may enjoy some photographs recalling the spell of this special day. But the event of the incarnation should be too magnificent to confine to a season.

The incarnation established that Jesus was a historical person. Some contemporary theologians offer what they call the "existential interpretation" of Christ. According to this theory it is unimportant whether the events surrounding the birth and life of Christ are historically true. They declare that the only thing that matters is our personal encounter with the living Christ.

It is true that we do have a living Saviour and without him we would not have eternal life. But the living Christ cannot be divorced from his virgin birth. The two events are but one. His coming to us now is the extension of his coming then. John tells us "The Word was made flesh, and dwelled among us..." (John 1:14). Again the evangel declares "In Him was Life" (John 1:4). Thus, the incarnation establishes that Jesus was both God and man.

The incarnation further shows man's capacity for God. In the Word becoming flesh, we do not find any indication that the presence of God perverted nature or kept him from being truly human. The relationship of God in Christ was natural. Thus, man has a capacity for fellowship with God which has its supreme expression in Christ. Jesus revealed to us that human nature is

spiritual in its construction and man has a capacity for God.

The incarnation also reveals what man should be. In his flesh Jesus demonstrated exactly how we should live. Peter says "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21). Jesus Himself instructed his followers "For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." (John 13:15)

Above all the incarnation declares God's love for man. The Bible tells us that "God is love." (1 John 4:8) So much did he desire good for us that he gave his son as a sacrifice for our sins.

God's love also desires to possess man. Since man has alienated himself from God, it was necessary for God to provide a way by which man could regain the relationship. This could only be accomplished through the incarnation and sacrifice of Jesus. The desire of God to possess man is stressed by Paul to the Christian believers as he said "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price..." (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

After the Christmas season has passed, we should still meditate on the incarnation. By making this truth our guide, we will discover strength for every occasion.

Guest editorial

Training for soul winning

One of the most important days on our church calendars is Witnessing Commitment Day. Jan. 12, 1975, is the date on the Southern Baptist Convention calendar for this annual observance. Many churches in our state will be participating in this emphasis on that Sunday. Other churches may use another Sunday in January or February for this endeavor. Regardless of the date chosen, the imperative is to challenge our people to a real concentrated effort in reaching the multitudes of lost people in Arkansas.

In the past years one of our errors has been in challenging our people to become involved in witnessing and soul winning and then failing to give them adequate training and direction in this venture. The wise pastor will both challenge and motivate his people to commit themselves to reaching the lost and then offer to them training and instruction to properly engage in their task.

The year of 1976 will see the most massive evangelistic undertaking in Arkansas that we have ever attempted. The Life and Liberty Campaign of that year has a priority goal of fulfilling the Great Commission in Arkansas in those 12 months. The plan is to confront every person in our state with the gospel of Jesus Christ. To do this 100,000 Baptists, white and black, will be enlisted, trained, and sent into every part of our state to

carry the good news of salvation.

It is my prayer that every pastor and church will observe Soul Winning Commitment Day in January of 1975. Then I believe it would be profitable to have some type of training in each church as soon as possible after that commitment day. If your church has not had a WIN school, I can assure you that such a school would be a tremendous blessing to your soul winning efforts. Trained leaders are available upon request through the State Evangelism Department office.

Some churches may prefer to use other types of training such as Campus Crusade methods of the Kennedy evangelism explosion method, etc. The important thing is not the method but the actual providing of good, clear, helpful instruction for all interested in witnessing and bringing people to a saving knowledge of Christ. Too often the zeal of our people is lost before they are trained and given opportunity to witness.

In closing let me urge each church to have Witness Commitment Day in January, have some type of training sessions soon afterwards, and engage in personal and mass evangelism efforts in your local community in the spring months of 1975. May the Lord give us his power and direction in this task! — Johnny Jackson, State Leader for Training, Life and Liberty Campaign



One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant / President OBU

The crisis of the changing and the unchanging at Christmas

Children are the real conservatives and traditionalists at Christmas time. I never cease to marvel at how our three offspring can crusade for change 11 months out of the year but be so staunchly in support of the status quo during the Christmas season.

It seems that Christmas is not Christmas to them without the same kind of food, the same kind of tree and house decorations, and the same combination of family rituals and traditions. With our two daughters through college and married and with our son halfway through college, one might expect change to come more easily at Christmas. However, three tradition-oriented children continue to insist that giant stockings filled with goodies can be tolerated one more year, and their loving mother always gives in.

The real crisis for 1974 in the Grant household revolves around the issue of the artificial (permanent) tree versus the real thing. In previous years our efforts to shift to an artificial tree have been met with a solid front of opposition. You might say that Carolyn, Shirley, and Ross have "stonewalled" it when it comes to having an artificial tree. They insist that it is prohibited not only in the American Constitution but also in both the Old and

New Testaments.

Betty Jo and I have recently organized a parents' lib movement, have taken the bull by the horns, and purchased an artificial Christmas tree. We did it while Carolyn was in Raleigh, North Carolina, Shirley was in Siloam Springs, and Ross was in the dormitory at Ouachita. It remains to be seen whether this was an act of parental bravery or foolhardiness.

Some things will remain unchanged this Christmas and I hope they will never change. We will have a family devotional together with scripture, music, sharing, and prayer, a tradition for us on the night before Christmas.

In addition to such unchangeables as Christmas food and the exchange of gifts, there is one other part of Christmas that I hope will forever remain unchanged. This is the emphasis on sharing the Good News of God in Christ through worldwide missions. The annual Christmas offering for world missions, which bears the name of Lottie Moon, deserves a permanent place in Christmas celebration. Generous support each year for this offering will help to increase the number of people around the world who know the miracle of Christmas and celebrate the Good News.

Letter to the editor Thanks for sympathy

We would like to take this means to express, in a small way, our appreciation for the services, kindness and expressions of sympathy of so many from all over the state in the home going of our beloved wife, mother and grandmother, Erma Lee Hart.

For over three years she fought a battle against a foe that you cannot defeat—the flesh. No Christian martyr ever faced a lion in the arena with greater Christian radiance and courage. The martyr's battle was for a moment, her's was for many months, and yet everyone whose life she touched during that time went away blessed. Because she did not walk the valley alone, to her she was not facing the "sunset", but the dawning of a new day as bright as the promises of God.

And while we were saying "goodby" on this side, Jesus and a great host of God's children were saying "Welcome Home" in the beautiful land of no sorrow, death tears and pain.

Especially do we thank Dr. Jack Wright, Dr. William Ross, their staff and nurses, and all the personnel at the new Baptist Medical Center. We thank God for this great institution.

And most of all Rev. James Hill, Dr. S.A. Whitlow, Dr. T.K. Rucker, and Carolyn Verbel for the Christian comfort and assurance they brought to our whole family. - The Clyde Hart Family

Seminary alumni elect officers

At the annual meeting of the Arkansas Chapter of the Golden Gate Seminary Association held at the New Baptist Hospital Cafeteria Nov. 10 during the Arkansas Baptist Convention, James Threet, pastor of the Johnson Baptist Church, was elected president; W.V. Garner, pastor of Immanuel, Texarkana, was elected vice-president; and Dan Threet, pastor of Glendale, Booneville, was elected secretary-treasurer.

News briefs

- Imboden Church has ordained four men to serve as deacons. They are Marvin Woodson, Lavon Young, Dallas House Jr., and Glen Fooks.
- Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Polk, oldest members of Tennessee Church, Hope Association, celebrated their 53rd wedding anniversary Dec. 13.
- First Church, Pocahontas has licensed to the ministry William L. Davis.
- Pleasant Hill Church, Rogers, honored Mrs. Dovie Andrews for more than 50 years of service and attendance with a program held Nov. 24.



Woman's viewpoint

Iris O'Neal Bowen

O, Little Lamb, asleep

O, Little Lamb, with other lambs, asleep,
What are your mother's thoughts, and does she weep,
Weak from the journey into Bethlehem,
Torn with the pain of childbirth, in the dim,
Unlighted stable, lately found, that she
Might bring to birth this child of purity?

O, Little One, does Mary bow in prayer
Under the watchful eye of Joseph there,
Holding you close, as any mother would,
Asking that she might keep you if she could?

Does Mary know, while silver stars bow down
That some day you, as king, will wear a crown;
"King of the Jews", the crown laced thorn on thorn,
But every bit a king? Do tears adorn
Her pallid face? Does she not long to keep
You, Little Lamb, forever there, asleep?

Radio-TV Commission seeks funds to update production facilities

A low-key campaign to help raise funds for a television production studio that will enable Baptists to mount a massive televised effort for God was launched Dec. 4 at the Little Rock Club.

Some 35 religious and civic leaders from Little Rock and Central Arkansas attended the luncheon for the Little Rock Second Step Campaign of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

Jess P. Odom, president of Jess Odom Enterprises, Inc., Little Rock, was host. Odom represents Arkansas on the Radio and Television Commission's board of trustees.

"The Second Step Campaign, designed to raise \$3 million over a two-year period is drawing to a close," he said. "Because of the Dec. 31 deadline set by the Southern Baptist Convention there is not time for a full-fledged effort in this state.

"But Arkansas Baptists identify with winning causes and they want to be a part of the Radio and Television Commission's unique and outstanding ministry of spreading the Gospel over the airwaves of the world."

Odom introduced Dr. Paul M. Stevens, president of the Radio and Television Commission. Stevens said the Commission's goal, with its new facility (to be built in Ft. Worth), will be to produce programs competitive with the best commercially-produced programs on television, and to offer them to channels across the nation without charge.

"Our target is the one-third to one-half of adult Americans who are not necessarily opposed to religion... people who are good citizens and who care about their families but, when it comes to God, they just don't care."

He said the four half-hour radio programs, syndicated television series, and spot announcements produced and distributed by the Radio and Television Commission have been so well accepted by industry leaders that, in 1974, "broadcasters gave Baptists 9 1-2 million worth of free air time."

"In 36 years, the Radio and Television Commission has grown from a dream in

the minds of people willing to pioneer for God into an organization whose messages today reach some 100,000,000 people a week," Stevens declared.

Arkansas Baptists are already contributing to the work of the Radio and Television Commission through the Cooperative Program, he noted, outlining some of the ways the Commission's work has grown.

"Mail response, requesting help from the professional counselors in our counseling program has doubled, indicating a growing need on the part of our audience," he said. "And we get calls everyday asking for additional quality television programming."

Stevens said the industry has moved from film to videotape. "Baptists don't own any videotape equipment. The new television studio, to be built with money from the Second Step Campaign, will have this equipment in it. It will enable Baptists to reproduce films at considerable savings, which will stretch our Cooperative Program dollar."

He said the campaign began after "an anonymous donor gave us \$500,000 stipulating that it be matched. A survey of our capital improvement needs showed that we needed more than that sum for adequate facilities, so the SBC Executive Committee, for the first time in its recent history, gave an agency permission to conduct a campaign."

Stevens said the effort is "a one-time

appeal to help us secure the necessary equipment to really do the work Jesus assigned Christians. For the first time in history, Christians have the opportunity—through the broadcast media—to carry the Gospel to every land."

Among those at the luncheon was Dr. Charles Ashcraft, Executive Secretary of the Arkansas Baptist Convention.

"When I was doing pioneer missions in Utah and Nevada I discovered that Baptist Radio and Television Commission programs were known by people who wouldn't attend church and who didn't want a Baptist church in their town," he told friends privately.

"And when we knocked on doors to tell them about Baptists, they'd give us their attention because they knew something of our work through the Radio and Television Commission shows."

Radio-TV Commission staff members attending included Dr. Alvin 'Bo' Huffman Jr., Executive Vice President, and Robert L. Cargill, Vice President of Financial Resources.

Huffman thanked the guests "for what you have done for the Commission in the past, through the Cooperative Program, and for what you are about to help us do in the future—share Christ with people whose faces you'll never see, whose names you'll never know." Huffman, originally from Blytheville, is a former Little Rock resident.



Gathering to kick off the fund-raising campaign were Robert L. Cargill, Commission Vice President for Financial Resources; Paul M. Stephens, president of the Commission; Jess P. Odom, Arkansas representative on the Commission; Executive Secretary Charles Ashcraft; and Alvin "Bo" Huffman Jr., executive vice president for the Commission.

No paper next week

There will not be an *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* published for Thursday, Dec. 26. This is one of two weeks each year when there is no paper. Sunday School lessons which would be carried in the Dec. 26 issue are included in this Dec. 19 paper.

Doctrinally speaking

The record of revelation

by Ralph W. Davis
(25th in a series)

Davis

We have in the Scriptures the record of the revelation of God to his people. What he has done has been recorded in Holy Writ. "Revelation" is supernatural communication of truth. "Inspiration" is the divine guidance that is given the writers who record the truth.

Revelation came before inspiration. It was necessary for the writers to have a message (revelation) before they could write the message (inspiration).

What is the Bible? It is the authoritative record and interpretation of God's revelation in Jesus Christ for the redemption of man. This record meets the fundamental spiritual needs of man in his relationship with God. It is a book of religion. Hobbs quotes Daniel Webster as saying, "The Bible is a book of faith, a book of doctrine, a book of morals, a book of religion, of special revelation from God." (*Fundamentals of Our Faith*, p. 7.) It tells of man's creation and his fall. It tells how God hates sin and loves the sinner. It tells of God's dealings with his chosen people. It tells of man's failure to save himself. It tells how God became man that he might be both "just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." (Romans 3:26) It tells about the atonement, resurrection, ascension, and

coming of the Holy Spirit. "The Bible lays no claim to being a book of history, science, or literature. It does not tell men all they want to know, but it does tell them all they need to know." (Hobbs, p7)

The Bible is a divine-human book. It is not a human product breathed into by the Holy Spirit and thus heightened in its quality; it is a divine product produced through the instrumentality of men. As a divine-human book it was written by men who faced actual problems of their day. The record of revelation is historical and experiential. It did not drop down out of heaven. It grew out of historical situations--out of real life--and only thus can it help people who live in real life situations in any period of history. Thus the truths we find in an ancient book can be applied to the problems of our own day. That is why it is so important that we first understand what the Bible "meant" to the people of the day when it was written if we are to understand what it "means" to us today. When it was first written it declared God's message to people of that day. Only as it met their needs does it meet the needs of all men of all races, all nations, and all persons irrespective of their social or economic status. The thing that makes the Bible different is that God has spoken through its pages. It is the record of God's revelation to men of all periods of history.

Next issue: Progressive revelation

people over the state grasped the importance of this program for the first time.

Now we want to get the work down to the associational level, and we are hoping to do this within the first quarter of 1975. During 1975 we hope to do a major work in the field of enlisting and training our personal workers as well as maintaining a great thrust in prayer.

If you still do not have an overall picture of our campaign strategy, you may write directly to me, to Don Moore or Mrs. Nadine Bjorkman in the Baptist Building and we will see that you get our little brochure spelling out the program in an understandable way.

The thing that we would like to stress with all of our associations and pastors at this time is that of getting your evangelist for the crusades scheduled in the spring of 1976.

Each association should decide upon the week that all of the churches in the association will be having a crusade in their church and then each pastor should engage an evangelist now. Don't wait

David Pinkston, MK,
named to Who's Who

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast--David Pinkston, son of Southern Baptist missionaries Mr. and Mrs. D. Edwin Pinkston, has been named to "Who's Who Among American High School Students, 1973-74."

Pinkston attended Harrison High School in Harrison, Ark., last year while his parents were home on furlough. He is now a senior at Ecole Baptiste (Conservative Baptist High School) in Bouake, Ivory Coast. He plans to enter Ouachita Baptist University after graduation.

In addition to having his biography published in the book, he will compete for one of 10 scholarships given by the publishers and is invited to participate in the firm's annual "Survey of High Achievers."

Deaths

John Paul Whitlow, 65, interim pastor of North Point Church, Pulaski County, died Nov. 18. He was the brother of S.A. Whitlow, a former executive secretary of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and the father of June Whitlow who works with the SBC Woman's Missionary Union, Birmingham, Ala. Whitlow had served as pastor of First Church, Hazen, from 1962-66.

Mrs. Winifred M. Martin, 66, Springdale, died Dec. 6. She was a member and Sunday School teacher at Caudle Avenue Church.

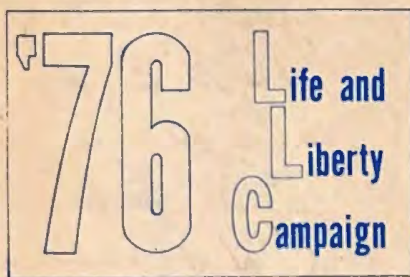
two or three months before the meeting to try to get a man that the Lord can use in your church.

The eastern half of our state will be in these crusades during March 21 through April 4, 1976. The western half of our state will be in crusades April 11 - April 25, 1976.

Also remember and start planning for the great Life and Liberty Rally in the War Memorial Stadium in Little Rock on July 30, 1976.

Our country needs a revival. There is corruption in high places such as we have never known before. Inflation, the energy crisis and low moral standards are like Goliaths against us and only the power of the Lord can bring about a spiritual awakening and a wellbeing for our nation.

Let's get our priorities in order. There is nothing more important than this all-out evangelistic thrust in an effort to bring revival to our nation. Pray, witness and proclaim the gospel every chance you get. There is so much depending upon you.



by R. Wilbur Herring

During our recent state convention, Alvin Pitt, Johnny Jackson and H.D. McCarty did a superb job in presenting our three-fold thrust for the '76 Life and Liberty Campaign. So many of you were kind enough to comment favorably upon our



Dr. Herring

presentation. It seemed as if many of our

Leavell named President of New Orleans Seminary

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Landrum P. Leavell, II, the pastor of First Church in Wichita Falls, Tex., has been elected president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, effective January 1, Robert S. Magee, president of the seminary's trustees, announced here.

Leavell, 48, succeeds former New Orleans president Grady C. Cothen, who resigned last spring to become president-elect of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. Ray P. Rust, executive assistant to the president at the seminary, has guided the school as acting president since March 1, 1974.

The new seminary president-elect is the son of a Baptist minister and is the second Leavell to head New Orleans Seminary. He follows in the footsteps of his uncle, Roland Q. Leavell, who steered the seminary from 1946-58.

A native of Ripley, Tenn., Landrum Leavell, II, grew up in Newman, Ga., where he was graduated from high school in 1944. He earned the bachelor of arts degree in 1948 from Mercer University, Macon, Ga.

Following his ordination as a Baptist minister, also in 1948, Leavell enrolled in New Orleans Seminary, receiving the bachelor of divinity degree in 1951 and the doctor of theology degree in 1954.

Prior to becoming the pastor of the Wichita Falls church, Leavell served as pastor of churches in Pike County, Crosby, Charleton and Gulfport, all in Mississippi. He moved to Texas in 1963.

Active in denominational affairs, Leavell headed the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors Conference, 1970-71, served as first vice president of the SBC, 1967-68, and delivered the convention sermon in 1967, when the SBC met in Miami Beach. He chaired the trustees of the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, 1968-70, and is a current member of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, having served also from 1961-63.

On the state level, he has served two terms as president of the Baptist General

Convention of Texas and been a member of several Texas convention committees.

In Wichita Falls, he has played an active role in community affairs, having served on the local child welfare board, the United Fund board and the mayor's citizen's advisory committee. Leavell has written several books, his latest is *God's Spirit in Youth*.

He received the George Washington Honor Medal Award from the Freedoms Foundation, Valley Forge, Pa. for a sermon in 1968, titled, "America at the Crossroads."

He is married to the former Jo Ann Paris, of New Orleans. She is a graduate of Ward-Belmont School in Nashville, and of Newcomb College in New Orleans. They have four children, Landrum P. III, Ann, Roland Q. II, and David.



NEW ORLEANS PRESIDENT—Landrum P. Leavell II, pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Tex., has been named the new president of New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary, effective January 1.

Changes in boards

Three changes should be made in the listing of Arkansas Baptists who were named to boards at the annual meeting of the state convention Nov. 19-21. This information was carried on page 8 of the Dec 5 issue.

The representative on the executive board from District six should have been listed as Mrs. L. Clyde Carter of Stuttgart.

Eddie Simpson of Dermott should have been listed as a new member of the board of the Christian Civic Foundation, for a term to expire in 1977.

Since the messengers did approve enlargement of the board of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, those persons listed for proposed terms should have been listed as elected to the board.

Al Sparkman served as chairman of the nominating committee.

Staff changes

J.D. Passmore has returned to Arkansas to serve as pastor of Witt's Chapel Church. For the past 18 months he has served as Director of Missions for Texas County Association in Missouri. Passmore has served Arkansas churches at St. Joe, Hope, Harrison, and Corning. He served in pioneer mission work in the Northwest United States for seven years. Passmore is a graduate of State College of Arkansas and has done graduate work at Southwestern Seminary, Ouachita University, and Central Washington State College. He is married to the former Helen Holland of Perryville. They are the parents of four children.



Passmore



Pennington

Curtis E. Pennington has retired from the pastorate of Ebenezer church, Warren. He will reside at 519 Gibson Street, Benton, 72015. His phone number will be 778-6227. Pennington plans to serve as interim pastor, supply preacher, revival preacher, or revival singer.

James Harris has joined the staff of First Church, Lavaca, as minister of music and youth. He and his wife, Sandy, are the parents of two daughters.

Rick Hyde is the new pastor of Shady Grove Church, Manning. He is a senior at OBU, where he is a religion major. He has served as a summer missionary to Colorado and New York, as well as being a pastor and associate pastor.

New subscribers:

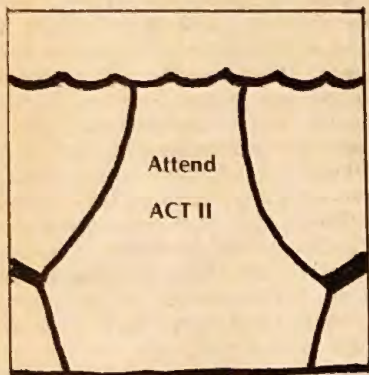
Church	Pastor	Association
New budget:		
Lambrook, Elaine	Lester Aldridge	Ark. Valley
Boydell	James R. Dickerson	Delta
Oak Cliff, Ft. Smith	Jack Bettis	Concord
Three month free trial:		
New Hope, Greenwood		Concord

OBU grad program being evaluated

ARKADELPHIA—A recent evaluation of Ouachita University by a team from the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools was "very encouraging," according to Dewey Chapel, dean of the graduate school.

The team inspected OBU to determine whether or not to give final accreditation to the graduate program. Dr. Chapel said the evaluation was "one of the most thorough the school has ever had of any of our programs. They talked to students from all areas of campus life and even went to Henderson State College to examine the cooperation between HSC and OBU. I don't think we have any problems that would jeopardize our accreditation."

A report on the evaluation will be sent by the team to North Central and to OBU President Daniel R. Grant. During the April, 1975, meeting of North Central, Ouachita will have a chance to reply to the report and a review group will then vote on the accreditation of the graduate program.



A Christian message aimed at unbelievers

Baptists, concerned about a world in need of God, use the ministry of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission to spread the Gospel.

The Radio and Television Commission "aims the Christian message at the individual who has slipped through the fingers of institutional religious teaching," said Dr. Paul M. Stevens, Radio and Television Commission president.

"These people are following a course of life which indicates a blithe unconcern to the possibility of God being alive or dead. We want them to know he is alive, with a better way for their lives."

Did you know....

that the Cooperative Program supports 163 missionaries in East Africa?

National pageant of peace features three nativity scenes

by W. Barry Garrett
and Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)—Not one, but three nativity scenes will appear this year near the national Christmas tree in the nation's capital.

A court ruling last year removing the government from sponsorship of the religious aspect of the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace here has opened the door to another problem. How many private groups should be issued permits for nativity scenes at the national celebration?

This year permits have been issued by the National Park Service to three private groups. No one knows how many will apply next year.

The three are the Christian Service Corps, the American Christian Heritage Association and an American Legion post in suburban Hyattsville, Md.

Until last year, the national Christmas Pageant of Peace, an annual observance sponsored by the government, had included the nativity scene as one of its displays. The best-known portion of the Pageant of Peace consists of the national Christmas tree which is illuminated each year when the President of the United States pushes a button.

In September 1973, however, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia reversed a lower court decision in ruling that the government may not sponsor the nativity scene because that excessively entangles the government in religion in violation of the First Amendment.

Subsequent to that decision, the National Park Service issued a permit to a group called the American Christian Heritage Association to erect a nativity scene on the Ellipse but outside the circular area where the Pageant of Peace is located annually (...the area between the Washington monument grounds and the south side of the White House).

This year, three groups requested and received permits to sponsor Christmas observances in Washington on federal property.

The American Christian Heritage Association is back again with a nativity display similar to last year's. The organization, which has been incorporated, is headed by a board of directors of three persons. It lists no other members.

ACHA's executive director, Vaughn E. Barkdoll, is a layman who belongs to the First Church of Riverdale, Md., an independent church belonging to no larger Baptist body.

American Legion Post No. 3 of Hyattsville, Md. is planning a nativity scene consisting of plastic figurines at the corner of 15th Street and Con-

stitution Avenue, across the street from the Washington Monument on the southwest corner of the Ellipse.

The post's project leader, Francis X. Geary, told Baptist Press that when his group applied for a permit from the park service, they were unaware that other, larger groups had already been granted permits.

Nevertheless, the group decided to go ahead with its modest display as a protest against Madalyn Murray O'Hair, who, in Geary's words, "ruled against" a Christmas celebration.

(NOTE: Madalyn Murray O'Hair was not involved in this case. The suit was filed in 1969 by Thomas B. Allen, an Episcopal priest, George Malzone, a Catholic priest, James E. Curry of the National Capital Humanist Society, Edward L. Ericson of the American Ethical Society, and Eugene Lipman, a Jewish Rabbi.)

In contrast to the American Legion group, the Christian Service Corps is a relatively well-organized group based in Washington which boasts on its board of directors such notable personalities as U.S. Senator Mark O. Hatfield, Sen. and Mrs. Howard H. Baker Jr., Mr. and Mrs. David Eisenhower, Mrs. Mamie D. Eisenhower, Congressman and Mrs. Albert Quie, Mr. and Mrs. Sargent Shriver Jr., Mayor and Mrs. Walter E. Washington, Rev. and Mrs. Tom Skinner and Mr. and Mrs. George Allen (he is the head coach of the Washington Redskins football team).

The CSC is sponsoring a live Christmas nativity drama on the grounds of the Washington Monument during the week preceding Christmas.

A spokesman for Robert N. Meyers, president of the CSC, told Baptist Press that the project has attracted wide financial support. In addition, the U.S. Steel Corporation is erecting a permanent structural foundation for the nativity drama, the Westinghouse Corporation is providing the electrical system, and an unnamed architectural firm is providing six different stage settings. All these services have been donated to CSC.

In spite of the plans of the three groups, many concerned religious people continue to protest the U.S. Court of Appeals decision of last year, many apparently having been made aware of the action only recently.

Irving Tubbs, a National Capital Parks Service official in the special events office told Baptist Press that in the past several weeks, a "few hundred" such letters have been received and answered. "Every one must be answered," he said.

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For all 1974 issues of the ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWSMAGAZINE. Refer to it when you are needing facts, figures and inspiration for your own enlightenment or the enlightenment of others on what we Baptists are doing and endeavoring to do. We suggest that if you are not already keeping a permanent file of the paper that you start doing so with this issue. We plan to give you a complete index in the closing issue of each year's paper.

Key to listings: The first numeral is the number of the month, as 10 for October, the second number indicates the date in the month the issue was published and the third is the page number. Key to abbreviations: (E) editorial, (GE) guest editorial, (IMSI) I must say it, (L) letter to the editor.

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Foreign mission briefs—

Singapore—A weekend prayer retreat for Baptist women here will be an annual event because of the success of the first retreat recently. Mrs. Patsy Lum, women's director of the Singapore Baptist Convention, reports that 47 women, both Americans and Chinese, met for the retreat. "Warm Christian fellowship overcame the language barrier," according to Charles H. Morris, missionary press representative.

Penang, Malaysia—The girls' choir of the Malaysia-Singapore Baptist Theological Seminary sang the opening number at a Women's Day celebration here. The wife of the governor opened the Malaysian section of world-wide Women's Day. Southern Baptist missionary Mrs. Bill Clark Thomas of Kentucky directed the girls.

Claremont, Calif.—Charles H. Morris Jr., son of Mr. and Mr. Charles H. Morris, Southern Baptist missionaries to Malaysia, received the doctor of philosophy degree in international relations from Claremont (Calif.) School of Graduate Studies here. He also recently received an appointment as a foreign service officer with the U.S. State Department beginning Nov. 1.

Tukuyu, Tanzania—An African adaptation of WIN (Witness Involvement Now) has proven highly successful in the Rungwe-Kyela areas, according to Mrs. Douglas M. Knapp, Southern Baptist missionary. Two teams covered the area in six days in a concentrated effort to teach the church members how to witness effectively in preparation for the coming revivals. Over 12,000 gospels of John in Nyakyusa were passed out with verses marked to lead a person to Christ. The week's total number of decisions came to 281 and the highest one-day total was 56.

Zaria, Nigeria—Highlighting the 13th annual Baptist Pastors' Conference held recently in Kaduna was L.E. Green, a Baptist leader from the United States. Green has served as a member of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. The 338 delegates were from seven states.

The SBC 'pioneer movement:' the move west

by Everett Hullum Jr.
and Kim Watson
for Baptist Press

Much of what the Southern Baptist Convention is today is the result of what is generally known as the "Pioneer Movement" — the missions thrust, beginning in the early 1940's, into the states outside the old South.

The move westward represents a dynamic episode in the SBC's journey to 12.3 million members in 33 state conventions covering 50 states.

With the SBC feeling its own "manifest destiny," voices called for continued expansion from the 19 state conventions which developed between 1845, when the SBC was founded, and 1928, when the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention began and the SBC counted some 3.7 million members.

"Southern Baptists are convinced that a northward migration will be lost to the Baptist cause if they are left to themselves, explained an authority at the time. "This deep conviction, under God, for an adequate evangelizing of America is a potent motivating force among them."

Yet the Pioneer Movement in 1942 was little more than a wink of the Convention mind. Then, the SBC was a parochial, isolationist denomination, loosely structured, theologically and ecclesiastically insecure, and largely ignorant of all religious conditions nationwide.

Until 1942.

In that year, with the Convention's acceptance of California as a state convention, what would become the most rapid religious expansion in U.S. church history lurched into gear.

Two events gave it immediate emphasis:

First, a \$2.5 million debt that had saddled the SBC's Home Mission Board for two decades was paid off in 1943, freeing funds for new work.

Second, in 1944, a new executive secretary came to direct the 25-church, 14-year-old Arizona Southern Baptist Convention. At that point the movement began advancing on dual axes — California and Arizona — and its story became intertwined with the story of a lean, clear-eyed, weathered Texan—Willis J. Ray.

Willis J. Ray came to Arizona in 1944, after working in evangelism for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

When Ray arrived, the temperature in Phoenix was 117 degrees and he wondered if he "was in the wrong place." But his first preaching experience in his new state reassured him. At West Van Buren Church in Phoenix, Ray preached to 13 people and 12 of them joined the church. One became its lay preacher.

Because the convention was

struggling, Ray initiated a trust fund — challenging the convention to set aside \$25,000 to "tie up church property" and serve as seed money for growth.

With this money and twice as much faith, Ray began to answer the first calls coming to him to begin work throughout the Western states.

There wasn't any time to wait, remembers Leroy Smith, who drove 65,000 miles a year for Willis Ray, starting churches from Utah to South Dakota.

The first contact outside Arizona came from a man Ray had known in Texas. Harold Dillman, a Utahan, was moving back to Roosevelt and wanted to begin a Southern Baptist mission there.

While Ray was still in Texas, Dillman had sought \$400 for support — and Ray, who'd been working with 165 churches in Texas — couldn't raise it. Now, Dillman needed \$2,000 to form his mission, meeting in a ladies club building, into a church.

Ray dove into the trust fund and the first Baptist church in Utah was begun. It affiliated with the Arizona Convention.

About the same time, Charles Shipp, a Southern Baptist pastor serving in a Northern Baptist church in Idaho Falls, Idaho, was fired because his sermons angered some of the deacons. One told him, "Sir, you don't preach like that in this church."

"They were warm, spiritual messages," Ray says.

The result was that about 30 people left the church with Shipp, who wrote the Home Mission Board for assistance. He was referred to Ray, who visited. "And that," says Ray, "was the beginning of Southern Baptist work in Idaho."

Oil field workers, moving into Wyoming from Oklahoma, started SBC work there. Again, they got in touch with the Home Mission Board, which forwarded their request to Ray. In 1947, he visited the key family in their apartment and helped them find a pastor. Again, the work affiliated with Arizona.

Meanwhile, the same family — the Kings — moved to Billings, Mont., where they were again instrumental in organizing the first Baptist church in the state. The work continued, and the Arizona convention stretched into the Dakotas.

A chaplain in the military started a church in Rapid City, S.D., in 1949. Work in Western Nebraska also began about that time. Both states affiliated with Arizona.

New Mexico Baptists were already working in southern Colorado when Ray received his first request from the state. He passed it on to New Mexico.

But the second request, from the Colorado Springs-Denver area, resulted in another state tying with Arizona.

The Bryant brothers, W.C. and D.A., had come from Texas to serve as pastors of churches in Colorado. With a few others, they wanted to form an association of churches. Ray agreed to help, and the first association formed at a meeting in Denver.

By this time, work in nine states related back to the Arizona convention, which had almost tripled in size.

By the mid-1950s, the Arizona convention covered one-fourth the land area of the continental U.S. — from the Mexican border to Canada — and the Home Mission Board leaders, Ray and others knew it had to be broken up. Caretaking was too expensive and time consuming. In 1974, it covers Arizona and southern Nevada and has 232 churches with 81,638 members, according to the 1974 SBC Annual.

The Colorado convention was formed, drawing off four of the northern-most states; it began with more than 65 churches and 10,000-plus members — where none had been 13 years before.

And Ray was offered the job of executive secretary. He accepted and was Colorado's leader until his retirement in 1962. Today, the convention covers only Colorado, as other conventions have organized.

During these same years, the California convention had been growing fast. By 1950, it had more than 250 churches and 34,000 members.

Northward, thanks to early work by such men as Leonard Sigle, a Northwest convention had been formed in 1948.

The need for expansion into the West and the vision of those who pushed for it are graphically evident in 1974 statistical tables of current state conventions in the SBC Annual.

The California convention, which includes northern Nevada, now has 916 churches and some 280,000 members; The Utah-Idaho convention, 67 congregations and 10,500 members; Colorado, 134 churches and 46,000 members; Kansas-Nebraska, 200 churches and 60,000 members; Northwest (covering Washington, Oregon, parts of Canada and northern Idaho), 240 churches and 46,500 members; and Northern Plains (covering Dakotas, Montana and Wyoming), 88 churches and 15,000 members.

Baptist work in Alaska and Hawaii began before either area had achieved statehood. The first Southern Baptist church in Alaska was First Church, Anchorage, organized in 1943. The Alaska Baptist Convention was organized

WILLIS RAY, one of the key leaders in the Pioneer Movement, stands on the porch of his retirement home in Payson, Ariz. Ray came from Texas to serve as executive secretary of both the Arizona and Colorado conventions and gave direction to Southern Baptists' expansion westward. (HMB Photo by Toby Druin)

Annie Armstrong Offering total tops \$8 Million

ATLANTA (BP)--Annie Armstrong Easter Offering receipts for 1974 have passed the \$8 million mark, Arthur B. Rutledge, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, announced here.

Reporting to the board's directors in their final meeting of 1974, Rutledge said the offering total had reached \$8,070,816--some \$1,237,000 more than had been received at the same date a year ago in the annual offering for home missions.

He praised Southern Baptists for their response to the offering and for giving through the SBC's Cooperative Program unified budget, which is running some 13.5 percent ahead of the 1973 pace.

Home Mission Board directors accepted the resignation of one department director, appointed six missionaries and 10 missionary associates and approved a new series of photo-text books.

M. Thomas Starkes, director of the department of interfaith witness, resigned, effective Jan. 15, to accept a position as instructor in religious studies and assistant Baptist campus minister at Southwest Missouri State University.

A native of Eastland, Tex., and a graduate of Wayland Baptist College, Southern Seminary and the University of Iowa, Starkes has been associated with the Home Mission Board and the department of interfaith witness since 1967. He became director of the department in 1971.

Missionaries appointed were Floyd and Betty Collins of Livonia, Mich., as area director of missions in the Macomb-Oakland, Mich., area; Darrell and Mildred Evenson of Las Vegas, Nev., as superintendent of missions in Oregon; and Andrew and Josie Villarreal of McAllen, Tex. (changed from missionary associate to missionary). He serves as Spanish pastor of Emmanuel Church in McAllen.

Appointed missionary associates were Eliseo and Alicia Aldape of Lubbock, Tex., as Spanish pastor of Arnett Benson Church, Lubbock; Sally Harper of Herford, Tex., as full-time student missionary in Kansas City, Mo.; Michael Haywood of Hampton, Va., with Christian social ministries in Newport News, Va.

Also, Dale and Sonja Miller of New Orleans, La., with Christian social ministries, New Orleans; Ivan and Elena Ramirez of Mill Valley, Calif., as Spanish pastor, First Southern Baptist Church, San Francisco; Kenneth Schmidt of Oakland, Calif., as director, Telegraph Baptist Community Center, Oakland, Calif.; and George Watson of Kansas City, Mo., as full-time student missionary in Kansas City.



in 1946 with messengers from three churches. In 1974, it has 37 congregations and almost 13,000 total membership.

SBC foreign missionaries sparked Hawaii Southern Baptist activity after the close of mission fields in the Orient in the 1930s and 1940s. The Hawaii Baptist Association, organized in 1943 with five churches, became a convention in 1945, and the Home Mission Board assumed direction of the effort there after statehood, which came in 1959, although the Foreign Mission Board has gradually phased out funds and missionary personnel—a process which will be complete in 1975. The convention now has some 32 churches and 10,000 members.

Work in Minnesota and Wisconsin, currently affiliated with the Texas

convention, now has 40 churches and 5,800 members, and work in Iowa, sponsored by the Missouri convention, has 42 churches and 6,000 members. Such areas are maturing into strong points of Baptist outreach and may one day become conventions.

The "Pioneer Movement" shifted into phase two in 1950 when, in spite of old line states' objections, the SBC moved to "serve as a source of blessing to any community or any people in the United States."

Thus, the door opened again. This time wider. Where once the support was in the hundreds, now it would soar into the millions. And Southern Baptists' attentions, confronted with the nationwide challenge, began swinging eastward.

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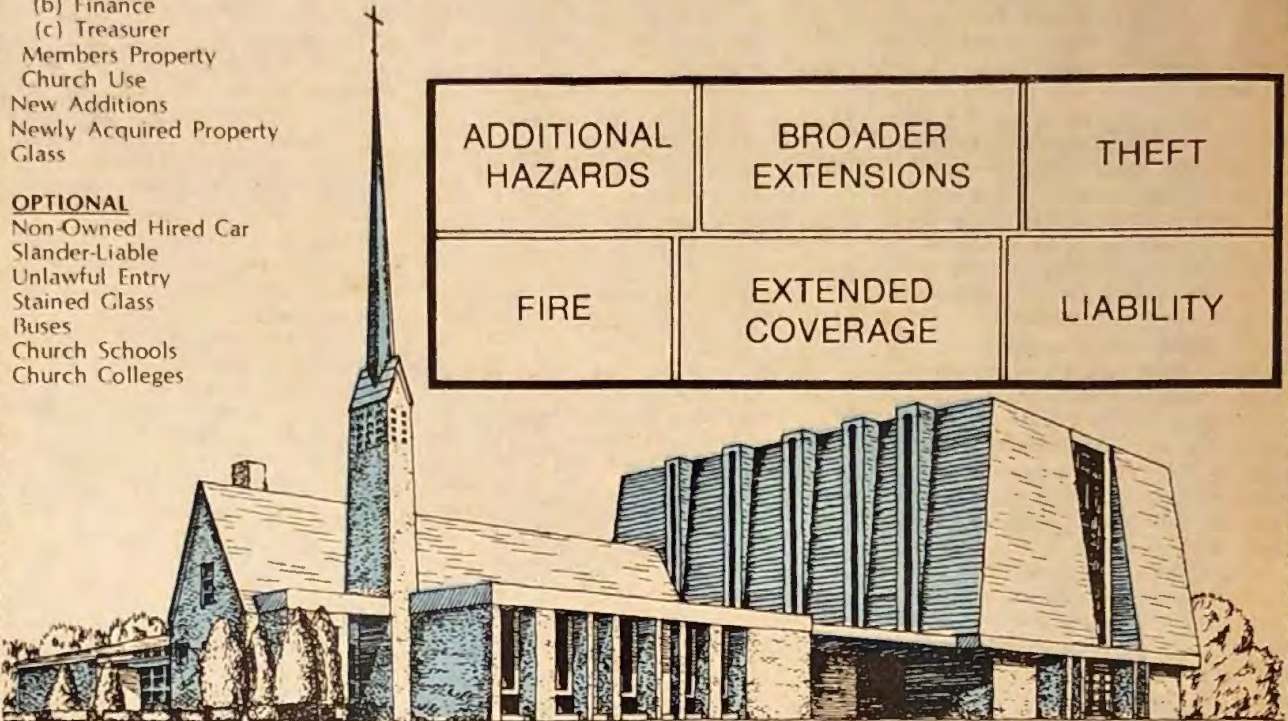
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Interpreting Christ's coming

Matthew 1:17-23
Galatians



Reed

Which is easier—to interpret something that is going to happen or to interpret something that has already happened in a previous generation? Joseph had to be well prepared intellectually and spiritually for receiving the news

about his betrothed wife. The Galatians were being confused in doctrine so much they were resisting the true message of God. Interpretation is easy only when there is preparation and eagerness to know the truth. Most of the time today we are in the role of trying to get people like the Galatians to believe.

Disastrous discovery

It is difficult to get the impact of a morally shattering discovery in a time as today when there is so loose an attitude toward marriage. Who would speak out today in support of a law that would require the stoning to death of one bearing a child out of wedlock? Today, many marriages take place because a child has already been conceived. It is urgent that we have an attitude of understanding and seek to minister to every person in his or her need, but it is tragic that we do not know how to feel the disaster of such moral tragedies in God's sight.

Reading about a truth and knowing what was the experience in the life of people because of the law does not make us able to feel as they did. How could Mary and Joseph accept what was happening to them? What were their families going through? The thought that I am struggling with here is that God had to come through clear and strong with this betrothed couple so they could be submissive and responsive to his will.

The seeming disaster lost its impact when the event was seen in its divine context. The unfolding of God's plan of redemption would be the occasion for a public celebration when every truth could be made known. The character of Joseph was essential in his receptiveness of God's messenger and in his care for Mary in the months prior to Jesus' birth. He would be caretaker and protector in the physical and social setting. The help of God's special messenger would sustain Mary and Joseph regardless of anything else that might come into their lives during this period of waiting.

A son who is God

The social impact was devastating. But what about the divine revelation in this happening? A son born to woman who is God in the flesh—human but divine! The devoted who were anxious for this to happen were not prepared for it to happen this way. Surely the angels who came as messengers had to remain as guides for the nine months to help in every experience and to prepare for every unfolding event.

The overwhelming significance of this event is felt when we come to full realization that it is our responsibility to interpret this God made flesh to every living soul daily.

Show the world that there is only one way

We can identify with the problem Paul was having in getting the Christians at Galatia to understand the Gospel message. In a day when doctrines about God are legion, we have a task which compares with the size of the task of helping Mary and Joseph understand their role in God's plan of redemption.

Many Christians, some even members of our churches, have not accepted the fact that there is only one plan of salvation. There are multitudes—including the majority of our own members—who cannot interpret their own experience to someone else. The experience of so many is weak and knowledge does not exist in the majority

for interpreting the Gospel message of the one way to be saved.

In a sense we have conquered disease, outer space, and social barriers. Now the communication media is on a new threshold. It is conceivable that in this generation someone will speak to virtually every inhabitant of the earth at one time. When this happens, what will be the first words? Missionaries tell us that the transistor radio is becoming common in remote places. The broadcast by satellite makes it possible to communicate across space and time zones. Can we as Christians meet the challenge of telling every person in the world about their need for Christ as Savior and Lord? What is the greatest limitation of today? It is that Christians do not have a personal experience and knowledge of the scriptures strong enough to interpret these to the understanding of another person that his only hope is in Christ.

Your tithes and offerings are needed at Christmas and every other day of the year to support missions. An even greater need is your life as a personal witness to interpret the reason for Christ's coming so that the lost person in your daily world will be saved. He has only one hope and that is that you are the kind of Christian who can help him to see the only way of salvation for his soul.

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SEASON'S GREETINGS

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Man of compassion

Luke 4:17-21, 5:18-25



Overton

This unit of study is entitled: "The Living God Seeks Man Through the New Man Christ." The four lessons present four portraits of Jesus. These will be taken from each of the four gospels. This week's lesson presents Jesus as "The Man of

Compassion" as we look at two passages from Luke's Gospel, 4:17-21 and 5:18-25.

In our first passage, Jesus has returned to Nazareth following the temptation experience. In this time of testing Jesus was tempted to take a short cut to accomplish his purpose in the world. Satan had presented attractively the idea that Jesus would not have to suffer to win men. Satan would give Jesus the kingdoms of the world for only a moment of worship of him. Another temptation was to satisfy the personal needs by use of his divine power. The other was that he gain a following by a demonstration of his power in working miracles.

Now Jesus comes to Nazareth where he grew up. On the sabbath he is found in the synagogue. Here, as was the custom, he is invited to address the people. His fame as a teacher had preceded him.

He takes the scroll of Isaiah. Rolling off one stick onto another, he locates the passage which is found in our Bible at Isaiah 61:1-2. It must be remembered that the scroll Jesus used had no chapter and verse divisions as in our Bible. What he read described the work of the Messiah. When he had finished reading, he sat down to tell the people the passage was fulfilled in him and what he had come to do.

They were astounded at his teaching and the graciousness of the words which promised freedom and healing. But their concepts of the Messiah's coming and the work he would accomplish among them was wrapped up in their nationalistic spirit. Now they wanted to see some proof of what he promised. They wanted to see a miracle. Would Jesus yield to their pleadings when he had denied this route when tempted by Satan? Would he, for the sake of a following in his own home town, do what he had refused to do when presented with this same temptation by the devil?

The verses which follow our text in chapter four answer this question. Jesus never performed a miracle for his own solely personal benefit. Here he refused

because they were interested only in seeing him perform a miracle. Was he less compassionate for his own home town folks than those in other areas? Most assuredly the answer is, "No!" But they had no faith in him and were interested only in the show.

Jesus interpreted the Old Testament teachings concerning the Messiah far differently from that of his own people. They looked for a conquering hero. He came as a suffering servant. He presents in today's scripture lesson this idea.

The words, Messiah and Christ, mean "the anointed one of God." This is the one the Jews had been looking for for centuries. Here in this passage Jesus says that he is this anointed one. Rather than a conquering warrior, he was one who would minister to the ills of the people. The passage in Isaiah is a description of the Suffering Servant.

Jesus' ministry is to open blind eyes; to set free those held captive by sin; to free those bruised by the chains of bondage; to proclaim good news. His life story in the gospels record many events of healing and ministry to the needs of the people. The message sent to John the Baptist in prison to assure him that Jesus was the Messiah was: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind are seeing and the crippled are walking, the lepers are being healed and the deaf are hearing, the dead are being raised and the poor are having the good news preached to them" (Matt. 11:4-5) (The New Testament, a Private Translation in the Language of the People, Charles B. Williams)

The purpose of the miracles of Jesus had more than a mere healing or saving of the physical body. There was a deeper and more significant spiritual teaching to be found in them. This is illustrated by the story in the second part of our scripture text for today. (This story is also told in Mark 2:1-12 and Matthew 9:1-8.)

Four men came bringing their paralyzed friend to Jesus. Because of the crowd they were unable to get to him through the door and so took him upon the tile roof and moved back the tiles until they could lower their friend to Jesus.

And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee (v. 20). This wasn't what the friends expected and also caused a big stir among the scribes and Pharisees who were present.

Jesus then reminded them that it is just as easy to say, "Your sins are forgiven," as it is to say, "Rise, take your bed and go home." But as a demonstration of the

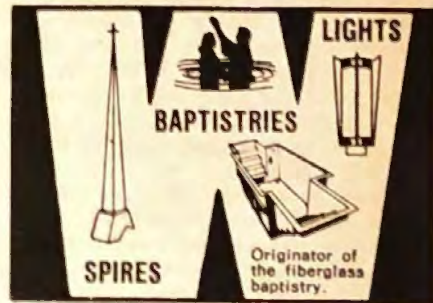
ability to forgive sins, he healed the man of his physical illness.

This does not mean that Jesus was not particularly concerned about the physical hurt of the man. Rather, it is to say that Jesus demonstrated his concern for man's greatest illness by a concern for his physical hurt. The one complemented the other and each was important to Jesus.

Matthew 9:36 reveals the heart of Jesus. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted (were tired and lay down), and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."

Jesus demonstrated by his concern for man's physical illness his deeper concern for their spiritual wellbeing. So we, in ministry to the physical, mental and emotional needs of men may make a way for us to exhibit a concern for their deeper spiritual needs. To seek to present the claims of Christ for salvation of the soul and to ignore the glaring physical needs of the individual is to miss the Jesus way. We must minister in compassion to the whole man, that through a loving concern for his physical needs and an attempt to meet those needs we may win his confidence that what we present in the claims of Christ for his soul's needs are also genuinely our concern.

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Rejoicing in his coming

Luke 2:1-20



Robertson

The most beautiful music ever heard on earth was the hymn sung by the angels when Jesus was born. It would have been a wonderful experience if you and I could have been there with the shepherds that night. The hymn

which the angels sang was one of rejoicing and praise. The New American Standard Bible has this description: "And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God." (Luke 2:13) We do not know the tune but the text is "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men." (2:14)

Rejoicing amid difficulties

Although there was rejoicing when Christ was born, there were also difficulties. Mary and Joseph faced hardships which none of us can imagine. We travel on fine interstate highways, not rocky pathways. We ride in cars, not on a donkey. We stay in a motel when we travel, not a barn. Our children are born in hospitals, not a stable. Since we are so used to the advantages of this century, it is hard for us to relate to the hardships of the first century.

Mary and Joseph traveled the 80 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem during the last days of Mary's pregnancy. The journey was necessary because of the Roman Empire Census. This census was taken every 14 years for taxation purposes. Each family had to return to the hometown of their ancestors. For Joseph, that was Bethlehem.

Travel accommodations in the first century were very limited. The travelers usually would take their food with them. Feed for the animals was provided by the innkeepers. When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, all the rooms in the hotel were full.

The story of the birth of Jesus is told in simple language. In two short verses (vs. 6-7) we are told of the child's birth. Mary may have been unattended, since the language implies that she wrapped the babe in the swaddling clothes. Barclay describes swaddling clothes as being a square of cloth with a long, bandage-like strip from one corner. The baby was wrapped in the square and the strip was wrapped round and round him. Mary then placed the baby in the place where the animals were fed.

Rejoicing among the angels

The birth of Christ was proclaimed by

an angel to a group of shepherds. The description told of the child's function, office and dignity (v. 11.) His function was to be the "Saviour" of the lost. His office would be that of "Messiah" or "King" over God's chosen people. His dignity is seen in the word "Lord", a word used in reference to God himself.

The angel was joined by a heavenly choir which sang praises to God. It was common in that day for local musicians to gather at the home of a new born child and greet him with music. Jesus' birth may not have been celebrated by local musicians but a choir came from heaven to lead in the rejoicing.

Rejoicing among the shepherds

Shepherds were despised by the good religious Jews of the first century. The shepherds were not able to keep the details of the ceremonial laws. Their occupation kept them from observing many of the Jewish rules and regulations. Even in sections of our own nation today the word "shepherd" is sometimes spoken in contempt.

The first announcement of the birth of Christ was not made in Caesar's palace, Herod's mansion or the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. It was made to the shepherds as they watched their sheep in the field.

The shepherds were given a "sign" which told of a babe, swaddling clothes and a manger. Men would have not expected to find the Messiah in such circumstances. The shepherds went to investigate. They found Mary, Joseph and the baby just as they had been told. There was no way the shepherds could keep it to themselves. They proclaimed the news everywhere. (v. 17) The shepherds returned to the fields praising and glorifying God.

The shepherds were filled with a joy that continued as they returned to their responsibilities. The experience of the shepherds as they visited the birthplace of Jesus must have been a time of exhilaration. It verified the message of the angel. It confirmed their faith and filled them with a spirit of thanksgiving and praise. It sent them on their way rejoicing and witnessing.

Mary was somewhat bewildered by all that had happened. (v. 19) She seemed to have difficulty comprehending that she had borne the Messiah. She was pondering or trying to put together all that had taken place. She kept her secret, awaiting the child's growth.

Conclusion

The joy and celebration of Christmas have continued throughout the centuries. The celebration has not always been free of pagan elements. There have

been times when despair and pessimism have dampened the celebration. The angel's declaration of "peace on earth" sometimes appears to be a falsehood. As modern man hears the news of the world, there appears to be little to celebrate. It seems that the message of the angels was only an illusion.

The angels were not mistaken. Jesus is the Prince of Peace and we who know him know his peace in our hearts. This peace and joy should be evident in our celebration at Christmas.

The Christmas traditions of Christian families should reflect the message and Spirit of Christ. Time should be taken to share the precious story of Jesus. This writer recalls the years when his family would gather at Grandmother's house on Christmas day. An older uncle would gather the children in the living room. The story of the birth of Christ would be read, some carols sung and a prayer of praise offered for the special day. Impressions were made there that can never be erased.

It all began in a simple manger. The birth of Jesus didn't cost much. There were no doctor or hospital fees. There was not a lot of outward beauty, just a stable, some straw, and a star in the sky.

Although the birth of Jesus did not cost much, the price of the incarnation proved to be very great. God gave his only Son for us. That's the best news that has ever been proclaimed.

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Responding to his coming

Dec. 29, 1974

Matthew 2:1-23



Robertson

In the first three lessons of this unit, we have noted the response of people to the coming of Christ. Mary and Joseph responded by accepting God's will for their lives. The angels responded with a song of praise. The shepherds re-

sponded by praising and glorifying God and by sharing the good news with others.

There are only two basic ways of responding to the coming of Christ. A person can accept Christ, or he will reject him. The responses may be expressed in countless ways, but they are still the same response. In this week's lesson, we have examples of how some have responded to the coming of Christ.

The response of the wise men

The wise men responded to the coming of Christ by accepting him for who he was. They came to worship Jesus because they believed that he was born to be the King of the Jews, the Messiah. (Matt. 2:2) Matthew refers to these men as Magi, who were mysterious visitors from somewhere in the East. We are not sure of their names nor do we know how many there were of them. The traditional number three is apparently drawn from the number of their gifts.

Who were the Magi? No one seems to know for sure, but Matthew tells us that they were from the East. That may mean that they were from Persia where there was at one time a priestly tribe of teachers of religion and science. This group had great influence and power. They had developed an advanced system of astronomy. They were also specialists in medicine, divination and religion.

It may have been that these Magi belonged to an old Persian class of high position and influence. The visit of the "Magi from the East" would be esteemed by the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem. The coming of the "Magi" to announce to Herod's household the birth of the King is a most impressive tribute to the baby born in a lowly stable.

There is no way to know how far the wise men traveled. They may have traveled by camel, and the trip would have been uncomfortable and dangerous. The group left the comfort and safety of their homes and traveled under the adverse conditions of that day. The depth of their sincerity is attested by the earnestness of their search. The

depth of their wisdom is seen in the fact that they realized that tribute to God is more important than the pleasure and security found in material prosperity.

The response of the wise men is only one example of how people throughout Christian history have accepted Christ as the Messiah. Such a response is the proper one.

The response of Herod

Herod is representative of those who reject Christ. Not all who reject Christ are as dangerous or hateful as Herod, but their response is basically the same. They refuse to allow him to be king, lord or saviour in their lives.

Herod was called, "Herod the Great", and in many ways he was great. He had been able to bring about a degree of peace and order in Palestine. He had built a fine temple in Jerusalem. He once gave generously to help bring about relief during a famine.

But Herod had his problems. He was insanely jealous. He had murdered his wife, his mother-in-law, and two of his own sons in a jealous rage. At the time of his death, he had a group of prominent leaders in Jerusalem put to death to make sure there would be mourning at his death.

One of Herod's greatest crimes was the slaughtering of all the baby boys in Bethlehem who were two years old or younger. (v. 16) Herod had told the wise men to bring word to him concerning the location of where Jesus was, but they were warned by God in a dream not to follow Herod's instruction. The wise men went home without informing Herod. Jesus was hurried to Egypt by Joseph and Mary, where he remained until the death of Herod. (v. 12-15)

Herod's unwillingness to accept Jesus as the Messiah was an act of great selfishness. This selfishness was the cause of unbearable sadness in Bethlehem. Matthew describes the bitter grief brought about by Herod's response to the birth of a new King.

Conclusion

There is a prominent movement in our society toward a greater expression of selfishness. There are those who would tell us to be our own best friend, regardless of the effect it has on others. This kind of selfishness was carried to the worst extreme by Herod. He was his own best friend, but at the same time he was also his own worst enemy.

The Magi are an example of self-giving. They made the difficult journey to Bethlehem in order that they might present presents to the new king. They came to worship him. They realized that

a right relationship with God was more important than the self-gratification that comes through the pleasures, security and comfort provided by material wealth. This is a great contrast to those today who show their shallowness by placing their trust in physical possessions rather than acknowledging Christ as saviour and lord of their lives.

A person can respond to the coming of Christ in only one of two ways. He can accept Christ as the Magi did, or he can deny Christ as Herod did. The rejection of Jesus does not mean that one will commit the atrocities which Herod committed. All that a person must do to reject Christ is to fail to accept him. That simple rejection places a person in the same category as Herod.

The Magi are an example of those who accept Christ for what he is. They responded to Christ by accepting him as the Messiah. Not all of those who receive Christ as Saviour will do so in the same manner, but all must accept Christ as the divine Son of God, the Saviour, the Messiah.

The celebration of the coming of this Saviour is what Christmas is all about. Accepting this Saviour is a revolutionary experience. It changes us from what we once were and makes us new creatures.

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Ireland's Thompson to retire in August

BELFAST (BP)--Joshua Thompson, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Ireland, plans to retire from his post Aug. 31, 1975, a news release from the Union states.

Thompson will complete 25 years in the Union administration by year end 1974. He plans to return to pastoral work, the release noted.

A committee has been appointed to recommend his successor, to be announced at the Union's annual assembly in May, 1975.

A spokesman for the Council of the Baptist Union of Ireland was quoted as saying the news of Thompson's retirement was received with deep regret and "consternation" by the council and the churches.

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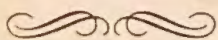
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A smile or two

A group of men were having orange juice and sugar cookies in the recovery room of the Red Cross Blood Center after having donated blood. The conversation turned to national origin, and one of the men happened to be an Indian. "Are you a full blooded Indian?" asked one of the men. "Well, no" admitted the Indian, "Right now I'm a pint low." --The Wooden Barrel

One night after a performance in the twilight of her career, Ethel Barrymore listened impatiently to an usher who had come to the dressing room to say, "There are two women outside who say they went to school with you."

"All right," said the great actress, in resignation. "Wheel them in."

Attendance report

December 8, 1974							
Church	Sunday School	Church Training	Church Adds.	Church	Sunday School	Church Training	Church Additions
Alexander, First	85	54	4	Life Line	590	147	8
Alma, First	368	97	2	Shady Grove	93	98	
Alpena	70	38		Sunset Lane	199	90	7
Augusta, Grace	103	58		Woodlawn	131	63	
Bentonville, First	259			Magnolia, Central	623	166	1
Berryville				Monticello			
First	167	57		First	323	63	
Freeman Heights	129	56		Second	319	89	
Rock Springs	93	71		Murreesboro	140	62	
Booneville, First	253	218	2	North Little Rock			
Cabel, Mt. Carmel	228	110	4	Calvary	456	127	
Camden, Cullendale	525	153	2	Gravel Ridge	222	103	1
Concord, First	107	32		Levy	439	98	
Conway, Second	302	57		Park Hill	795	30	
Crossett, Mt. Olive	368	188	4	Paragould			
El Dorado, Trinity	159	74		Calvary	230	161	
Fl. Smith				East Side	221	116	
First	1371	454	7	First	477	115	1
East Side	260	107	5	Paris, First	384	78	
Grand Avenue	783	273	4	Pine Bluff			
Moffett Mission	41			Centennial	146	67	
Temple	144	88		East Side	200	133	3
Trinity	170	67	2	First	696	121	1
Windsor Park	695	180	2	Green Meadows	70		
Garfield, First	87	24		Second	131	54	
Gentry, First	169	63		South Side	673	139	1
Grandview	80	59	4	Tucker	13		
Greenwood	303	103		Oppelo	18	11	
Hampton, First	131	74		Rogers			
Hardy, First	130	41		First	539	145	
Harrison, Eagle Heights	310	145	5	Immanuel	459	122	4
Helena, First	255	64		Russellville			
Hope				First	546	92	3
Calvary	178	61		Second	157	74	
First	454	96	3	Sheridan, First	272	83	1
Hot Springs				Springdale			
Grand Avenue	496	212	10	Berry Street	110		
Memorial	125	63		Elmdale	368	116	
Jacksonville, First	431	120	2	First	1188		3
Jonesboro, Nettleton	226	83		Van Buren, First	563	28	2
Kingston, First	47	44		Vandervoort, First	58	34	
Lavaca, First	328	106		Walnut Ridge, White Oak	77	61	1
Little Rock				West Helena			
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Advice to young

Plan now to insure a happy retirement

by E. Lee Sizemore
For Baptist Press

"I don't know what to do with him, Hazel. He is always underfoot these days. If I had known that Ed's retirement would mean this, I would have encouraged him to ask for an extension."

"A sad thing about so many companies' retirement plans is that they lead their employees to believe the future is all blue sky. But those employees are shocked to find out--after they're retired--that those retirement fund figures included projected Social Security benefits. The retired person usually ends up with about 33 percent less income than he anticipated. Some never recover from that setback before they die."

Two persons with different perspectives said these things about retirement. The first was talking about her recently-retired husband. The latter, a counselor for the aged, was speaking to a group at the first National Southern Baptist conference on Aging held recently in Nashville.

From insights brought out in the Conference on Aging, one thing became quite clear: Just as the aging process begins at birth, planning for retirement must begin early in life, too.

For example, one retired person participating in the pre-retirement planning work group at the conference emphasized time and again that a person doesn't change his life overnight when he retires.

"I grew flowers as a hobby before I retired," he said. "Now I'm still doing it--

and I really enjoy it, too. But, you know, I bought all this fishing gear and talked about how I was going to spend a lot of time out there in my boat when I retired, but I ain't gone fishing yet. And I have been retired five years!"

One writer suggests there are five major areas of concern in pre-retirement planning. Taking the stance of "we-are-products-of-our-past," let's consider this writer's suggested areas: finances, physical fitness, place of residence, use of time and mental attitude.

Finances--Many persons retire without an accurate knowledge of their financial status. The federal government has made great strides in upgrading Social Security benefits. But at least two sad facts remain: Social Security benefits do not keep up with inflation, and approximately one-fourth of the nation's 21,000,000 senior adults live in poverty.

Planning realistically for one's finances during retirement is best begun early. Whether young adults admit it or not, their spending habits will follow them throughout their lives. If a person uses poor judgments in his management of money when he is 25, he will probably be making the same mistakes when he is 65, 75, or 85. It is awfully hard to teach an old dog new tricks--especially when the new tricks are almost the exact opposite of his old ones.

Wise is the young adult who consults a financial counselor concerning his pre-retirement financial management.

Physical Fitness--A 55-year-old professor and his 30-year-old colleague were chatting in the older man's office one morning. The older man suddenly leaned across his desk, clutching his chest and gasping for breath.

After helping him to lie down, the younger man insisted that his friend go to Houston to see a famous heart specialist. The result of that appointment in Houston was a strict diet and exercise regimen.

Now 72-years-old, the retired professor is still walking two miles a day, looks younger than many 50-year-old men and was recently seen to bound up two flights of stairs, two steps at a time.

Just as his spending habits follow a person into old age, his physical fitness practice will, too. The armchair golf pro is not going to be able to play 18 holes the day after his retirement dinner, without some ill effects.

The person who exercises at least three times a week and eats wisely, according to his age, will have a much

better chance for good health and retirement.

Place of Residence--Florida and California are looked upon by many near retirement age as the ideal places to live after retiring. Sadly, this is not true for many persons.

Unless a retired person is--or learns to be--the kind who meets people easily, then retirement in a new community can be a very lonely experience. Persons who are physically and financially able to retire in a neighborhood full of old-time friends and business acquaintances will probably adjust easier to the later years.

Of course, pre-retirement planning is vital in adjusting one's needs for housing after the children are gone and before the large house becomes a burden to maintain. In any case, plans for a change in residence, whether necessary or desired, should be made well in advance of retirement.

Use of Time--Retired persons in Trailer Estates, Bradenton, Florida, generally fall into two categories an observer notes: Those who are superbusy, and those who live almost totally in reclusé, coming out to do only a minimum of shopping.

The statement made by the retired person to the Conference on Aging has more truth in it than one glance reveals. If he had not learned how to grow flowers during his working years, what would he have done with his time during retirement?

It seems logical to assume that those who have totally absorbed themselves in their work have little to look forward to in retirement.

By the same token, those who have developed outside or avocational interests during middle adulthood can look forward to many sunny days of fulfillment during retirement. Many find fulfillment in either gardening, crafts, woodwork, businesses of their own, volunteer work or traveling.

Mental Attitude--Probably this should read "Mental and Spiritual Attitudes."

As one expert on aging has said, "The sweetest people in the world are those senior adults who have come to know the Lord in a personal way, the sourest are those who cannot call on His name."

Those senior adults who view life as a gift from God to be enjoyed to its fullest are usually those who are still making a valuable contribution to society, whether they are productive or bedridden.

But again, the mental and spiritual attitude adopted in earlier adulthood is usually carried over into retirement.

The tepid church-goer at age 50 is not going to find more motivation to leave his second cup of hot coffee on Sunday morning at age 70.

A prescription for happiness in retirement: Middle-aged and younger adults, start laying the foundation now for those buildings you want to build during retirement, for the construction materials may not be available later. (BP)

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