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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 93, Number 14

July 14, 1994



SUPER **SUMMER '94**

Senior high school students show their enthusiasm at a rally during Super Summer Evangelism Schools held June 20-24 at Ouachita Baptist University. Events of the week resulted in 383 public decisions, 60 professions of faith and a spirit of revival among participating teens. "A Heart That Knows U" was the theme.



ARKANSAS BAPTISTS

Joyce Thomas concludes 30 years of service to Arkansas Baptists

For countless Arkansas Baptists who have called executive director Don Moore's office over the years, Joyce Thomas has been the cheerful, helpful voice on the other end of the phone. The same is true for those who called former executive secretaries Huber Drumwright and Charles Ashcraft.

In fact, Mrs. Thomas has been answering phones and providing other vital services for Arkansas Baptists off and on since 1953—when Dawson King was executive secretary. When Mrs. Thomas retired June 30, she had completed almost 30 years of secretarial service at the Baptist Building, working five years in the 1950s and returning in 1970 for another 24 years.

During her first few years on the convention staff, Mrs. Thomas recalled that the staff occupied the top floor of a two-story building. They used Royal manual typewriters and the building had no air-conditioning.

"When I came back to work in 1970, they had been in the current building a little over a year," she noted. "I remember the first time I walked in the new building. It was unbelievable. It was so much nicer than what we had before."

In addition to the improved facilities, she recalled the technological advances made during that time, moving to electric typewriters with memory and later to computers.

Noting that envelopes for statewide mailings previously were manually typed individually, she added, "There is no comparison in the amount of work we can get out in less time now. When I think about all the changes, I feel like I lived back in the Stone Ages."

Moore described Mrs. Thomas as "a model of Christian graciousness over the years. So many have felt the warmth of her love, though they may have only known her by talking with her on the telephone. She was a helper, an encourager, a friend and certainly an example of Christian conduct in every respect."

Moore said his "fonderest memories of Joyce will be of her entering into the pain and sorrow of my wife's illness with such empathy that some of our pain was taken by her. Pervading all of her work and life has been an attitude of quiet commitment and kind consideration."

Convention administrative secretary Joy Faucett noted, "I worked beside Joyce for 13 years. It was great years....Joyce never considered her job work but a ministry that God had called her to as a servant of His. She always went the extra mile to help people in every way."

Mrs. Thomas, who acknowledged she has felt "overwhelmed" by such expressions of appreciation, responded, "The Lord has blessed me so much to permit me to work here. My life has been touched so much."

In addition to her convention responsibilities, Mrs. Thomas and her husband, Jack, have been active members of South Highland Church in Little Rock since 1957. She has served as a Sunday School teacher, choir member and on various committees throughout those years.

As she looks forward to retirement and spending more time with Abby, her 5-month-old granddaughter, Mrs. Thomas reminded Arkansas Baptists to "keep their focus on the Lord and winning the lost and focus on doing bigger and better things."

Cover Story



Super Summer 3

Arkansas Baptists' 1994 Super Summer activities attracted a record 1,275 youth. The weeklong training event at Ouachita Baptist University prompted 383 public decisions, including 60 professions of faith in Christ.

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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Super Summer draws 1,275, sparks revival

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

More than 1,200 youth from five states discovered "A Heart that Knows U" at Super Summer Evangelism Schools held June 20-24 at Ouachita Baptist University. The week's events resulted in a spirit of revival with a record 383 public decisions, including 60 professions of faith in Christ.

The schools, sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention evangelism department, feature Christian witnessing training, discipleship and special training conferences aimed at Christian teens.

Event organizer Randy Brantley, an associate in the ABCS evangelism department, said Super Summer "trains Christian students from Arkansas Baptist churches to go back and become partners with their pastors in reaching out to people in their local church field and to win lost people to Christ."

He said a record 1,275 youth from 70 churches enrolled in the schools. Nearly 150 more were turned away because of space limitations.

Super Summer also offers an Advanced Leadership School "to motivate and equip students who are ready for ministry roles," he added. Participants are recommended by their pastors for the special school.

Brad Pierce, 17, of First Church, Benton, attended the leadership school. He said courses included "organizing and operating a Christian club and we got helpful hints and good advice" from leaders.

Pierce said it was especially helpful to him because "last year we were in the process of getting a Christian club started and ran into a few problems. I've been encouraged a lot here and we're going to go back to Benton and get it going. We think God is going to help us, through this week, to get things started."

Kristie Allison, 12, of First Church, Cabot, said she learned some valuable lessons during the week. She said she enjoyed "Joy Explo," a nightly rally, "because it's exciting. The sermon relates to us. It's not way over our heads like it is in church. It's on our level."

She said "learning to witness to people" was the most valuable lesson she learned during the week. "I'm usually embarrassed about that" she explained. "I learned what I can do to get into a conversation" with witnessing prospects.

An unscheduled highlight of the week began Wednesday morning as revival spread among participants and leaders.

Super Summer chairman Jim Agee, minister of youth at First Church, West



Paul Jackson, pastor of Highlands Church in Little Rock, teaches a Super Summer seminar on sex and dating.

Memphis, said the revival began during a testimony sharing time in a junior high school that led to seven decisions.

Simultaneously and without knowledge of what was happening in the junior high school, Agee said, other schools began to pray for spiritual awakening.

"This is the movement of the Lord," he emphasized. "I pray that God will send a revival in Arkansas and it will start with

teenagers. They're getting real."

"I have been associated with Super Summer for nine years and have never seen God work on the level He's worked this week," added Brantley. "God just showed up here.... We had the largest number of professions of faith and 228 commitments."

"But what to me is the big news," Brantley continued, "is that we gave a challenge to consider God's call to foreign missions in their lives. We had so many respond to the invitation to consider a full-time Christian vocation or foreign mission work (95 responded), we tried to encourage them to sit down and they would not."

Will Spicer, 14, a member of First Church, West Memphis, said he also began to sense revival among participants. "This morning people started to recognize God and God was really moving," he remarked. "People had been praying for each other and we could tell."

He said advanced school members had prayed for the junior high schools that morning and "at the same time they were praying, about 30 people came to Christ in those schools. I believe God had a part in that."

Recounting the schools' goals for the week, Brantley noted, "For the student who does not know Jesus, our goal is for them to know Him. For those who do know Christ, our goal is for them to have a vision for sharing Christ with their lost friends back home and at school."

Super Summer is gift to Ozark youth

For 24 young people from Ozark, Super Summer 1994 was more than a special time of witness training, discipleship and spiritual formation. It also was a special gift.

The 24 teens were sent to Super Summer by Jesus Ozark, Inc., an inter-denominational evangelistic organization based in Ozark. JOI sponsor George Gleason, a member of First Church, Ozark, and CEO of The Bank of Ozark, extended the invitation to attend Super Summer to nearly 120 youth who made public decisions during an April evangelistic crusade in Ozark. Gleason's invitation included an offer to pay the \$85 per person tuition.

"It means a lot to me," said Justin Yoakem, an Ozark High School sophomore, who attends Calvary Sophomore, "because I never really understood (Christian discipleship) until I came here," adding that, "I've never

been to a place like this before."

He said he wanted to attend because "I wanted to learn more about God the way I'm supposed to."

Twanna Jones, an Ozark High junior who attends First Church, said she learned "more about my relationship with God and different things like my dating life and a quiet time. I think Super Summer is a great camp. It is more focused on God, not just fun and games."

She said having her way paid made it "easier" to attend. "My mother is a single parent and it's harder for me to afford to come," she explained.

JOI spokesman Fred Chaney said the offer was made because "we don't want anything to hinder youth from growing in Christ. Salvation is free. Jesus never charged anything. And we have people who are willing to put up money to say to our children, 'We want to encourage you to live for Christ.'"

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABCS Executive Director

I saw it and sensed it. God took a convention that began with a lot of tenseness and turned it into one of mutual love, concern and respect. One of the prime examples of what I am saying is that as we moved through our reports and on to the special missions emphasis, there was increasing evidence that God had taken hold of our hearts. Our focus had turned away from the things that we have allowed to divide us toward the major things that unite us, that is, our shared commitment to get the gospel to everyone in the world. The special missions service was attended by more of our people who seemed to have more interest in world missions than I have seen in many years. Both the Foreign and Home Mission Board shared in the presentation. My estimate is that at least 500 people made decisions at the conclusion of the service.

It is of no little significance that the three top elected officers are an Anglo, Jim Henry; a Chinese, Simon Tsoi; and a black, Gary Frost. Many of our critics try to make Baptists out to be racist, bigoted and narrow. They do this to try to discredit our strong conservatism. In fact, we have done more to reach more kinds of people in America than any other group, including liberal "do gooders." Best of all, our ministries do not stop short of witnessing to folk of personal salvation found in Christ alone. Perhaps this action will make a statement about who we really are.

Our church members need to be aware that beginning in October, they will not be able to support any of our national Southern Baptist work through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. PLEASE NOTE: *Your church can continue to support all of the ministries of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention with your gifts through the Cooperative Program.* The Arkansas Baptist State Convention will not forward funds to any cause that is not supported and controlled by the state or Southern Baptist Convention. As the missions doors swing wide open we all need to give more generously to seize the opportunity.

ANN SUTTON FREEMAN

Woman's Viewpoint

Fix your eyes on Jesus



When I was a little girl, one of my favorite times of day was after lunch when my mother and I would have a special time together. She would read to me from a big Bible story book. Then we would discuss the story.

One day she was reading me a story about how Jesus is everywhere. I said, "Do you mean He is in this room?" My mother replied, "Yes." Then I said, "He doesn't look much like Himself today, does He?" I'm sure in my mind I was seeing Him only as I had seen Him in pictures.

As I have thought of this story, even though it came from the heart of a child, it applies to us so often as adults. How many times do we not recognize Jesus even though He is so very near? Don't you wish we could live moment by moment with Psalm 25:15 in our mind: "My eyes are ever on the Lord."

As we begin each new day, we never know what God has planned for us. We don't know who has a deep hurt that would love to have an encouraging word from us that the Lord has put on our lips, or who is experiencing great sorrow and we need to lift them up in prayer. Maybe some marriage is about to crumble and the Lord has chosen you to speak a healing word to that couple.

Jesus wants us to be His messenger today. He may want you to intercede in

prayer for those who are so grieved that they cannot begin to pray. How can we do these things unless we can see Jesus? By seeing Jesus, He shows us things through His eyes.

I have found several ways that I focus on Jesus. One way is by reading His Word, the Bible. Jesus is present from Genesis to Revelation. You will become familiar with His features. As you spend time reading about Him, the closer your friendship becomes.

The second way is praying. For a true friendship to develop, there has to be communication. Tell Him the innermost secrets of your heart. Let Him be your wonderful counselor. Next, be quiet enough to let Him speak to you. Then praise Him by singing a hymn. Choose one hymn a week that you read or sing all the verses daily.

When we are focused on Jesus, all things work together for good, even the things we don't understand. We do know that is that we are looking to Jesus for strength, everything is under control. You will fix your eyes on something or someone - make it Jesus! Does He look like Himself to you today?

Ann Sutton Freeman is a homemaker and the mother of two daughters, Jennie and Sarah. An active member of Immanuel Church, Little Rock, she and her husband, Bill, teach young married couples in Sunday School.

Personal perspectives

'I pray that God will send a revival in Arkansas and it will start with teenagers.'

—Jim Agee, 1994 Arkansas Super Summer chairman

'When I became a Christian, I surrendered my life to God and I wanted to do whatever He wanted me to do. And He wants me to go to the mission field and I want to do it.'

—Karen Pearce, newly appointed missionary to Romania

Lessons from the Simpson saga

Innocent until proven guilty. That has a reassuring ring to it, doesn't it? It certainly is a right you or I would demand if we were accused of criminal behavior. So what happened in the O.J. Simpson case? Why has the world determined his guilt even before his trial has begun?

Despite the preliminary evidence and unprecedented media coverage, Simpson deserves the right to maintain his innocence unless found guilty in a court of law.

If you're like me, you have been overwhelmed by the endless barrage of pre-trial news coverage in this case. Who can stand even one more newspaper article or television report on the subject? But if you'll indulge me, I believe there are valuable lessons to be learned from this unfolding tragedy.

The first lesson is about heroes. I remember the shock I felt when I first heard O.J. was a suspect in the brutal slayings. Growing up as a sports fan in the 1970s, I considered the Juice one of my heroes. I loved to sit in front of the TV on Sunday afternoons and watch him gracefully zigzag past befuddled defenders. He was unquestionably one of the most talented football players of all time.

Yet in hindsight, it is clear that being a media superstar is not the same as being a hero. Whether it's O.J. Simpson, Magic Johnson, Michael Jackson or any other public personality, talent should not be confused with legitimate hero status. As numerous commentators have emphasized in recent weeks, true American heroes are those dedicated men and women who are faithful to their marriages, families and jobs and maintain strong moral principles day in and day out.

From a Christian perspective, we can add that true heroes of the faith are those individuals who rear their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." One real key for parents is to not place undue

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



By TRENNIS HENDERSON

emphasis on media "heroes" who may disappoint or disillusion our children.

Lesson number two is about our nation's growing epidemic of domestic violence. As tragic as Simpson's plight is, the greater tragedy is that Nicole Simpson and Ronald Goldman were innocent victims murdered by a savage killer.

A still greater tragedy is that hundreds of homicides and thousands of violent domestic disputes occur every year across the nation. Last year in Arkansas, more than 14,000 violent crimes were recorded, including 246 murders and nearly 10,000 cases of aggravated assault.

Much has been made of the legal system's apparent failure to effectively intervene in repeated domestic disputes between the Simpsons. If Simpson is convicted of his former wife's murder, haunting "what if" questions will circulate endlessly concerning ways her death could have been averted.

The fact remains that many domestic clashes throughout the state and nation escalate into murder. A recent study indicated that more than 12 percent of all homicides in Arkansas are committed by a victim's spouse, former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend.

Does the system sometimes fail? Yes. A more pressing question for Arkansas

Baptists and all Christians may be: Is the church failing in this area? Tragically, that answer also often is yes.

Fortunately, there are opportunities to make a difference. "LIFE Support" resources from the Baptist Sunday School Board, professional Christian counselors, church-sponsored crisis support groups, local crisis hotlines and other resources are available to help concerned Christians intervene and offer support to hurting families before violence erupts.

It is one thing merely to be appalled by society's escalating violence. It is quite another to reach out in the name of Christ to help become part of the solution.

A third lesson concerns the media itself. Long before the Simpson crisis, the media was inundated with news of the Menendez brothers, Amy Fisher, David Koresh...even Tonya Harding. The tabloid mentality of innuendo and sensationalism apparently has blinded much of the secular media to the importance of objective, balanced news reporting. I generally am a defender of the freedom of the press but the coverage in the O.J. case moved swiftly from news to sadistic entertainment.

As a Christian journalist, I am reminded of the apostle Paul's admonition to "speak the truth in love." That means avoiding rumors and half-truths and relying instead upon fair, factual reporting methods in all news coverage. I am convinced that all news Arkansas Baptists desire and expect from their state Baptist newsmagazine.

As O.J.'s sad saga continues, take a moment to evaluate your own personal priorities. Make a commitment to affirm the real heroes in your life, become part of the solution to society's growing ills and remember to always "speak the truth in love."

May we all learn lasting lessons from this troubling tragedy and pray earnestly that such senseless scenarios cease.

Heartfelt thanks

With all my heart I want to thank the Southern Baptists for the confidence that they've shown in me. When I felt led of God to allow my name to be placed in nomination, I said I was going to trust the sovereign will of God and the desires of the messengers. I also want to thank so many who have been in prayer for my family in the loss of my father.

I will be sharing more information as we look to the future. I have not made any promises or appointments at this time. I am prayerfully asking God to guide me and I will consider all options. Please keep me, our officers Simon Tsoi and Gary Frost,



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

and our beloved SBC in your prayers and before your people. I believe our best years are before us.

Jim Henry
Orlando, FL

Honored by nomination

It was an honor for me to be nominated for president of the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando. To each of you

who voted for me, my heartfelt thanks. To those of you who voted for Jim Henry, he is my friend, a good and godly man, who has my prayers and full support as he leads us in these days. As chairman of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, I will work with Jim Henry as he leads us.

Let us unite and rally around the Lordship of Christ and our Cooperative Program and together be light and salt in a dark world.

It is a blessing to be a Southern Baptist and I join with you in praying that God will visit us with great revival.

Fred H. Wolfe
Mobile, AL

National Acteens gathering attracts thousands of teens

BIRMINGHAM, AL (BP)—Almost 14,000 Southern Baptist teenage girls and their leaders filled the coliseum at Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center for four days of experiences in contemporary missions.

The occasion was the fifth National Acteens Convention, held every five years under the auspices of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

Program planners drew on pageantry, missionary testimonies, an Acteens birthday party, and 37 conferences on topics of interest to teens to communicate the Christian message.

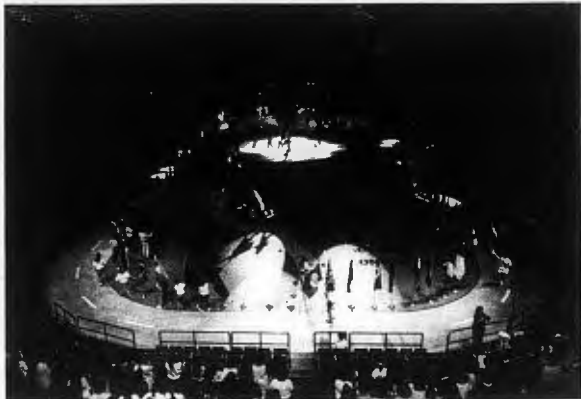
To show their concern for others, the girls brought 5,000 stuffed teddy bears and 7,000 pairs of canvas shoes for needy children.

The teenagers opened the convention in downtown Birmingham by learning a new song, "Heart of the Journey," sung by Michele Wagner of Cleveland, Ohio, a contemporary Christian singer. The song served as the theme of the convention.

A procession of flags of 126 countries where Southern Baptist missionaries live and worked led to a challenge for the girls to commit themselves to take the Christian message to others.

At the closing session the girls witnessed the commissioning of Lori Fitzsimons as a new home missionary, and Sharon Williams as a new foreign missionary.

At a conference on homosexuality, Lane Powell, professor of human relations at Samford University in Birmingham,



Thousands of Acteens enjoy the pageantry of the 1994 National Acteens Convention.

reminded the girls while homosexuality is a sin in the Bible, Christians should show compassion just as Jesus did in dealing with outcasts.

In a conference on dating, leaders advised the girls to take a close look at what they plan to wear on dates to avoid sending the wrong message to boys, stay away from R-rated movies and avoid compromising situations.

The girls were challenged to overcome fears and include people with AIDS within their sphere of Christian witness.

Since AIDS spreads most commonly through sexual contact, churches need to talk boldly, honestly and comfortably about

sexuality, said Fred Loper of Oklahoma City, a home missionary and physician.

Between specialized conferences and general sessions, the teenagers flocked to a large exhibit hall designed as a city where they personally interviewed missionaries while making videotapes and audio cassettes for use later in their churches.

The Acteens, who were asked to bring postcards from home, mailed more than 13,500 postcards to President Bill Clinton, offering him messages of encouragement and promises of prayer support.

Convention leaders said 600 girls made commitments to missions service and another 900 asked for special counseling.

Convention widens world view for Arkansas Acteens

"The most exciting thing about the National Acteens Convention is for the girls to realize that Acteens is larger than the church, association or state — it's bigger than they could imagine," noted Angela Lowe, Arkansas Acteens director.

The National Acteens Convention (NAC) attracted almost 14,000 participants. A total of 357 participants went from Arkansas, with 180 riding on five buses coordinated by Lowe.

"The bus trip, which was an eight- to 10-hour day, gave the girls a chance to visit and meet Acteens from across the state," Lowe explained.

Some Acteens groups worked very hard for the chance to go to the convention. A group of Acteens from Trinity Church in Mabelvale, under the leadership of Yoleah Appling, began fundraising efforts in February. They sold 300 dozen cookies, held a walkathon, a giant yard sale and a baby sitting project.

Appling said NAC magnified the missions experience for her group. "This gave them a chance to become more aware of the world beyond where they live. It has shown them that even a small church like ours can make a difference."

But girls were not the only ones learning more about the Acteen experience at the convention. In addition to an Acteens

leaders track, NAC also featured a track for youth ministers. Mark Gibbons, youth minister at Immanuel Church in Little Rock, had been at his current position for only two months before attending the convention.

"It helped me understand more about the role of Acteens, and even a little more about Woman's Missionary Union as a whole," he commented. "I was able to build relationships with the girls. Watching them grow in their knowledge of service was wonderful."

In addition to conferences, the "Destinations" missions fair, was popular with the girls, according to Robyn Scivally, a 14-year-old Acteen from Calvary Church in Little Rock.

Scivally interviewed a missionary from Argentina on videotape, and took the cassette home. She learned an African handshake, found out about her spiritual gifts and how they could be used in a vocation, and learned more about Activators and Studiaid.

Lowe confirmed the worth of the convention, which often is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for participants, since it is held only once every five years. "There was no trouble getting them to attend Bible study and conferences," she added, noting that NAC "shows the power of positive peer pressure."

Children's Home celebrates 100 years

Monticello event honors Arkansas Baptists' 'continuity of caring'

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate editor, Arkansas Baptist

Celebrating "a century of caring," the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries highlighted 100 years of ministry June 11 at the Children's Home at Monticello. About 300 people, including employees, community leaders and former residents, attended the event.

The Monticello celebration is one of 10 anniversary celebrations being held this year throughout the state. The centennial celebration will culminate during the Arkansas Baptist State Convention annual meeting in November.

"This is a special day for us," said Royce Aston, director of the Monticello Home. "It recognizes a continuity of caring — that there have been people here and across the state who have cared enough about the welfare of children to make a commitment to care for as many children as we can for as long as we can."

Monticello mayor Harold West said the home "has been with us through ups and downs and has produced young people that have become an integral part of our ups and downs. We thank you for their contribution."

Johnny Biggs, executive director of the statewide ministry, said that 100 years of caring "is a wonderful accomplishment for Arkansas Baptists." He added that the process used in determining past needs remains in use today.

"When discussing needs for the Children's Home when it began, a group of men from First Church, Monticello, got together and prayed for God's will to be done," Biggs recounted. "Now, as we have expanded to 22 locations, when we find a need we go through that same process."

Larry Toller, business director for the Children's Home, reviewed historical highlights of the ministry that began with Hannah Hyatt's vision of caring for orphans "for training for the betterment of their souls and bodies."

The Monticello site was an inheritance donated by Hyatt to Arkansas Baptists in 1894 for use as an orphanage. Toller noted the home expanded to accept "neglected children as well as orphan children."

Toller noted that the ministry has grown to include six emergency receiving homes, Baptist Boys Ranch for boys recovering from substance abuse, the Group Home for Boys in Jonesboro, Promise House for pregnant girls in El Dorado and five area offices providing counseling and other services.



Arkansas Baptists, community leaders and former residents of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Home gathered June 11 at the home's Monticello campus to celebrate the statewide ministry's 100th anniversary.

"During the past 100 years, thousands of children have experienced the result of Hannah's vision at the Arkansas Baptist Home for Children," Toller emphasized. "Thousands and thousands of children and families were ministered to because Hannah cared and Hannah gave."

"This campus is more than buildings of brick and stone. It is building blocks in the lives of those who have found love here."

— Jeff Cheatham
Children's Home trustee

Children's Home trustee Jeff Cheatham, director of missions for Arkansas River Valley Association, told participants that Arkansas Baptists "have never and will never forget the sacrifice and generosity of Hannah Hyatt."

"This campus is more than buildings of brick and stone," Cheatham said. "It is building blocks in the lives of those who have found love here and were given a

second chance to make life meaningful."

Cheatham paid tribute to Arkansas Baptists' support of the home and other ministries. "At one time the Children's Home sent an 18-wheeler across the state each fall to collect food, clothing and money for the children. Because of the generosity of Arkansas Baptists, that day is gone forever," he said, citing \$2.4 million in gifts to the ministry in 1993.

He also recognized members of Arkansas Baptist Woman's Missionary Union. "They have supported this ministry as if it were a mission field," he affirmed.

Cheatham led in dedicating a time capsule to be opened at a 125th birthday celebration to be held in the year 2019. He said the contents will include historical photographs, newspaper articles, supply and employee records and a message from Don Moore, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

"The capsule is a piece of time," said Biggs. "When it is unearthed in 25 years it will show how God has blessed this ministry and the people involved in it."

Moore, in the taped message that will be viewed in 25 years, commended the work of the Children's Home and Family Ministries "because I don't believe there is any ministry that Arkansas Baptists do that is more like the ministry of Jesus than you perform."

Independence Association sends *Two Batesville ministers and wives*

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Mixed emotions were evident on a recent hot Sunday afternoon at Calvary Church in Batesville. Members of Independence Association gathered June 26 to celebrate an associational "first" and to say goodbye to four of their own who answered God's call to foreign missions service in Eastern Europe.

The commissioning service honored two Batesville pastors and their wives appointed simultaneously as missionaries by the Foreign Mission Board. Commissioned were Keith and Jane Byrd as missionaries to Belarus and Preston and Karen Pearce as missionaries to Romania. Byrd has served as pastor of Calvary Church and Pearce has been pastor of Fellowship Church,

both since 1990.

Describing the double commissioning as a "first" for the association, director of missions Danny Veteto expressed appreciation to the Calvary and Fellowship congregations "for the nurture and support you have shown your pastors before sending them out into the field."

Jack Kwok, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention cooperative ministries

department, led participants in a responsive commissioning reading that mirrored the lives of the four:

■ *"We have heard the voice of the Spirit of God, 'Set apart these Christian fellow laborers for the work to which I have called them.'"*

The call setting apart the two couples to foreign missions came through channels as distinctly different as the two families: Keith has been in the pastoral ministry for more than 20 years and has two college-age children. Preston is a recent seminary doctoral graduate with two toddlers.

Preston said he and his wife, Karen, both had felt called to missions during college and seminary. Subsequent missions trips to Mexico, Brazil, Kenya and Romania confirmed the call.

■ *"The Christian calling is dynamic and evolving, a decision based on facts, for all Christians..."*

The result of Keith and Jane's call was reached over years of inquiries and disappointments.

"I felt I was being called to missions, but when I inquired at the mission board, they first told me I didn't have enough education," Keith recalled. "Then a little later when our son was born with health problems, they said he could not go. Later when he was pronounced healthy, he was too old. Then they told us by the time our kids left home, we would be too old."

Jane said she personally struggled with her call to missions. "I didn't come to Batesville to prepare to be a missionary. I came here to spend the rest of my life. This time of call for me was one where God has had to take me a long way and show me visibly what He wants me to do."

She said her call was confirmed when she was given a Russian-language Bible during Foreign Mission Board interviews. "At that moment, my call went from my head to my heart. I had to go serve those people in Belarus because I had been handed something so freely that those people had not been able to have."

Surprisingly, the Peaces learned of the Byrds' call not at Batesville, but at a Jericho missions conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Center.

Both Preston and Keith said their friendship was helpful during the Foreign Mission Board's candidate selection process. "It has been so wonderful to have the Byrds to fellowship with," Preston noted. "I can't imagine what it would be like to go through this by ourselves. It seems like we were getting together once a week talking about things and praying. It has been so encouraging having them around."

■ *"...in the context of the Christian community, immediate and current, to a lifestyle of discipleship."*

In many ways, both couples have already lived a lifetime of discipleship. Each of them has sought to enhance that discipleship through education and service.

Preston, a Belcher native, received the bachelor of science degree from Louisiana Tech University in Ruston and the master of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from Mid-America Seminary in Memphis.

He has served as an activities director, minister of youth, evangelism intern and college and career minister in Southern Baptist churches, including Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, La., and Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis.

Karen earned the bachelor of arts degree in journalism from Georgia State University in Atlanta and the master of arts in religion and



Independence Association director of missions Danny Veteto congratulates Keith and Jane Byrd.

"What am I going to do in Belarus? Same thing I'm doing here. Telling people about Jesus."

— Keith Byrd
Missionary to Belarus

four to foreign missions service

prepare to serve in Eastern Europe

education degree from Mid-America. She has been news anchor/disc jockey for KAAB-KWOC Radio, a Christian station in Batesville.

Keith, a Norfolk native, received the associate of arts degree from Williams Baptist College, the bachelor of arts degree from Ouachita Baptist University and the master of divinity degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Active in associational and state work, he currently is on the state Baptist Student Union steering committee and has served in several associational roles, most recently as Discipleship Training director. He served in the Big Flat area as pastor for two mission congregations of First Church, Mountain Home.

Jane, also a Norfolk native, attended Ouachita and Midwestern and has served as Sunday School director for two associations. She said being the wife of a small-church pastor was good training for missions service. "I played the piano, taught Sunday School and did everything from typing to mowing the yard to vacuuming the church. I know the ins and outs of how churches work."

■ "We send you forth, dear friends, to your place of service, assuring you that our prayers follow you."

Just as the call to foreign missions came in different ways for the two couples, their duties on the mission field also will be diverse. Keith will serve primarily as a church starter in rural areas; Preston as a teacher in a large city.

The Byrds' place of service will be Belarus, one of the Commonwealth of Independent States of the former Soviet Union. He will start and develop churches and teach in a Bible college and they will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries. They will work in the area of Pinsk, near the Polish border.

"What am I going to do in Belarus?" Keith asked. "Same thing I'm doing here. Telling people about Jesus."

He noted that FMB reports indicate that no Southern Baptist missionary has ever been to Pinsk. "We will be the first Americans many of these people have ever seen."

He said they asked for Eastern Europe because "Belarus was on the FMB's 'Ten Most Wanted' list." Noting that "we are, somewhat, products of the Cold War," he added, "It seems inconceivable that we will be in Moscow (for language training) and be allowed to share our faith there and in Belarus."

The Pearces will serve in Romania, where he will teach at the Baptist Theological Institute of Bucharest. They also will be involved in outreach ministries. "I will have a shot at the minds of the leaders of the next generation," Preston said of his teaching position. "We have seen, where we are going, decades of atheistic oppression that created a hunger to know God.

"I didn't feel like the Lord needed me to be a pastor in a different culture," Preston said of his call. "But if there was a way I could help pastors, if I could give them the foundation they need to start churches... that was it."

Karen also plans to use her experience in broadcasting and journalism to help establish Christian radio stations in Romania.

■ "As we commission you for this unique ministry, let us remember that we have all been commissioned to a great task."

For some of their church members, it is difficult to focus on the greater good; many only see themselves losing a pastor and family.

"When I first learned they were going, I was sad," recalled Calvary member Nell Aaron. "But then I realized that they had worked toward this goal for so long. I was happy for them and felt proud that we were able to be a part of helping them on their way."

"We gladly release them and are excited for them," she commented. "But it's hard to think they are going to go into a land like Belarus."

Keith told his congregation it was hard to leave Calvary. "I have been there in good times and bad times. I have married and buried those that are closest to you. You are a part of me, my family; I didn't want to leave."

■ "Therefore, go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; then teach these new disciples all the commands I have given you."

Answering the command to go is hard, both couples admit. They anticipate having to give up family and conveniences when they leave.

"I think I will feel a sense of panic," said Jane, "as our kids watch us get on the plane."

"I've heard so many people say, 'You're sacrificing so much to go,'" commented Karen. "But I don't think so. When I became a Christian, I surrendered my life to God and I wanted to do whatever He wanted me to do. And He wants me to go to the mission field and I want to do it."



Preston and Karen Pearce receive a certificate of appreciation from director of missions Danny Veteto.

"We have seen, where we are going, decades of atheistic oppression that created a hunger to know God."

— Preston Pearce
Missionary to Romania

Accused attackers of American accept Christ

COBAN, GUATEMALA (BP)—Eleven Guatemalan men arrested in the near-fatal attack on an American woman have found freedom behind the bars of a Coban, Guatemala, jail.

The men are among about 130 Guatemalans awaiting trial before a Guatemalan judge for nearly beating June Diane Weinstein to death March 29. Weinstein, an environmental consultant from Fairbanks, Alaska, was assaulted during a Holy Week procession in San Cristobal Verapaz, near Coban.

The attackers reportedly struck Weinstein with machetes, clubs, sticks and stones after a peasant woman accused the American of trying to steal her 8-year-old son. The child later showed up unharmed.

Within a month of their arrests, 11 of Weinstein's accused attackers accepted Jesus Christ as Savior at the Coban jail where they are imprisoned. They and 20 other prisoners — also new Christian believers — formed the Maranatha Baptist Church in April with the help of Guatemalan Baptist leaders.

Members of Coban's The Light Baptist Church, which meets in a sanctuary built by Arkansas Baptist volunteers, played a key role in planting the prison church. So far, 39 prisoners have been baptized after becoming Christians and another 19 new Christians await baptism.

Prayer for Muslims brings results in Africa

ORLANDO, FL (BP)—Earlier this year during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, Southern Baptist foreign missionaries and many supporters back home prayed for the Muslim world.

When Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board president Jerry Rankin and his wife, Bobbye, recently visited Africa, they saw firsthand the results of these prayers.

In one West African country where 90 percent of the people are Muslims, the missionaries committed themselves to 78 hours of intercession for Muslims.

In another strong Muslim country, eight missionaries, who hadn't had any baptisms the year before, "had just spent the week before we met them in their prayer retreat," Rankin said. They had been studying "Experiencing God" and were praying earnestly for God to indicate He was at work in their country.

As one of the missionaries went for a walk one afternoon, a man approached and asked why he was there. When he explained he was a missionary, the man replied he had heard of Jesus Christ and wanted to know about him.

The missionary told him about the gospel message and the man quickly accepted Jesus as Savior. Then he asked the missionary to go with him to his village so his family could also know about Jesus. Fourteen people in the village prayed to receive Christ.

Rankin said the missionaries returned with "a renewed vision and an awesome sense of a powerful God who answers prayer and is moving to bring a lost world to redemption."

Southern Baptist missionaries evacuate Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI (BP)—Southern Baptist missionaries Mark and Peggy Rutledge recently evacuated Haiti as economic and political conditions continued to deteriorate there. International Service Corps volunteer Ed Brentham and journeyman Todd Lane also have left the island nation.

"It's one of those times when our being here may jeopardize our Haitian Baptist colleagues," Rutledge explained. "If the intensity with which people start to dislike Americans or foreigners as a group builds, then actually we can become a noose around our brothers' and sisters' necks."

That possibility — plus the inability to get funds into Haiti because of a U.S. freeze on bank transactions there — were major factors in the couple's decision to leave.

An overall shortage of money appears to be hitting Haiti, Rutledge said. Banks are limiting the amounts of withdrawals and exchanging money is difficult.

The missionaries hope to return as soon as they can. "If we can work out the difficulties we're facing, we'll be back in here," Rutledge emphasized.

Baptists, UN sign contract for Rwandan work

KARAGWE, TANZANIA (BP)—A one-month contract signed in mid-June by Baptists and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees is setting the stage for possible long-term Baptist involvement with displaced Rwandans. The Baptists' first assignment will be to survey "at risk" groups in refugee camps in Tanzania.

"After this initial project is completed the U.N. can decide if they want to work with us and we can decide if we want to work with them," explained Southern Baptist missionary Larry Randolph. "Either way we are committed to ministry with the refugees, either inside the camps or outside."

Randolph joins 10 other Southern Baptist missionaries forced out of Rwanda by the blood bath set off there by ethnic hatred and civil war. After evacuating Rwanda they voted as a group to move to Tanzania to aid some of the thousands of Rwandan refugees who have fled there.

Baptist Relief Services, the organization contracted by the United Nations to survey the camps, consists of the Rwanda missionaries, their Baptist and missionary colleagues in Tanzania and Florida Baptists, who are engaged in a missions partnership with Tanzanian Baptists.

By the end of July the missionaries hope a long-term relationship will be taking shape. A dual approach might emerge, with Baptist Relief Services working inside the camps while Tanzanian Baptists offer an evangelical witness through churches outside the camps. That could include worship services, literacy classes, vocational training and recreational programs.

Permit problems imperil work in Zambia

LUSAKA, ZAMBIA (BP)—Southern Baptist mission work in Zambia faces serious disruption or even suspension following aggressive action by Zambia Baptist convention leaders to have missionaries' work permits denied.

After months of appeals and negotiations, a decision by the Zambia immigration office not to renew work permits for missionaries Joe and Gloria Turman and Lonnie and Fran Turner led the Baptist Mission of Zambia to file an appeal June 22.

The central issue in the dispute is the Zambia convention's request to approve all renewals of work permits for Southern Baptist missionaries, although the mission is a separate legal entity registered with the Zambian government. Unlike most other African countries where Southern Baptist missionaries work, the Zambia mission has for years sought convention approval for any new missionaries assigned to Zambia. But renewal of permits for established missionaries has never been a part of the working agreement with Zambian Baptists.

The conflict has caused serious breaches in the Baptist Convention of Zambia. In protest of the elected leaders' actions, many churches have announced plans to withdraw from the convention and have suspended financial support.

"Our position is very clear," said John Faulkner who directs Foreign Mission Board work in Eastern and Southern Africa. "We want relationships to be restored and we want to continue to work alongside Zambian Baptists in every possible way to advance the cause of Christ in that country...I urge all Southern Baptists to join me and the missionaries and Zambians in praying earnestly that God's will and God's solutions will be clear to all of us."

Court draws line on abortion clinic buffer zones

WASHINGTON (ABP) — When the U.S. Supreme Court weighed free-speech rights against the right to privacy June 30, the difference came down to a matter of feet — 264 feet to be exact.

The nation's highest court ruled 6 to 3 that protesters may not closely approach persons on public sidewalks and streets that are within 36 feet of abortion clinics. But the court said that judges could not enforce a buffer zone prohibiting protesters from approaching patients and clinic staff that are 300 feet from clinics and their residences.

The court examined the two buffer zones created by a judge that limits anti-abortion activities at Melbourne, Fla., abortion clinic. Protesters were forbidden by a 1992 injunction from trespassing on or blocking clinic property, as well as physical abuse of patients and clinicians. But in April 1993, the court took further action, amending the injunction to create 36-foot and 300-foot buffer zones where speech is limited.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist, in writing the majority opinion, said, "On balance, we hold that the 36-foot buffer zone around the clinic entrances and driveway burdens no more speech than necessary to accomplish the governmental interest at stake."

But the court also held that prohibiting free speech in public areas, such as streets and sidewalks, from 300 feet away was going too far.

The record does not contain sufficient justification for so broad a ban on picketing, the court said, adding that limiting the time, duration and number of pickets outside a smaller zone could protect those coming and going from the clinic.

Michael Whitehead, general counsel for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission charged that, because the case involved abortion, the court used a double standard, applying a more restrictive test than in other free-speech cases.

"Today it applies only to pro-life protesters, so there is little outrage from civil libertarians," he said. "But the exception will grow like a breach in a levee."

Little Rock 'rescue' efforts generate diverse reactions

By Trennis Henderson
Editor, Arkansas Baptist

As Operation Rescue efforts in Little Rock attracted media attention last week, a few Arkansas Baptists endorsed the anti-abortion activities while others distanced themselves from the national campaign's methodology.

Arkansas Baptists have repeatedly adopted resolutions affirming the sanctity of human life, including a resolution adopted last fall which called on "all Christians everywhere to work for the passage of legislation that will serve to reestablish respect for and protection of human life at all stages."

While agreeing with the philosophy which motivates pro-life activists, several observers said they differ with the specific approaches employed by Operation Rescue, Rescue America and the Pro-Life Action Network which picketed Little Rock abortion clinics last week.

'Changing hearts and minds'

Larry Page, executive director of the Arkansas Christian Civic Foundation, said he "can't condone or support" the recent rescue efforts although he views the activists as "kindred spirits" in the desire to protect the lives of the unborn.

Page noted that the CCF emphasizes "education, changing hearts and minds about the life issue. We're in it for the long haul, seeking a societal change in a comprehensive way which takes longer.... You don't necessarily do that by handcuffing yourself to the door of an abortion clinic."

Although he has "no qualms about peaceful picketing and prayer rallies," Page added, "Blockading and trespassing we do not condone—that's not part of our agenda."

"Our part of the remedy is different," he emphasized. "Even though I know their heart, I can't condone or support it or encourage anyone to do it."

Paul Sanders, pastor of Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock, noted, "Our main task as believers is to introduce people to the Lord Jesus Christ who can change their hearts."

Affirming that he is "totally against abortion," Sanders said people obviously express pro-life view in a variety of ways.

Noting that "one abortion a year is too many," he said anti-abortion efforts "are fine as long as they don't violate civil law. I'm not sure that violating civil law helps

their cause or the cause of Christ," he added. "Satan uses a lot of situations like that to hinder the witness of Christians."

Despite personal concerns about specific approaches used by pro-life activists, Sanders declared, "I would sure rather come down on the side of those who are overly zealous in pro-life efforts than those who are overly zealous in the taking of babies' lives as a method of birth control."

Theresa Qualls and Reg Hamman are among Arkansas Baptist laypeople who voiced support for the public protests.

Qualls, director of the Friends of Life, a pro-life activist organization based in Cabot, said one of her goals is "to see the church of Jesus Christ awakened from spiritual apathy and brought to its knees in repentance of that apathy."

Noting that she would be willing to risk arrest in order to intervene to prevent an abortion, she added, "You have to become aware of what is happening to children in the womb. Four thousand unborn children a day are brutally torn apart in their mother's womb and nobody seems to care."

Insisting that ministry is at the heart of the pro-life movement, Qualls said, "I've never had more opportunities to share about Jesus Christ than during sidewalk counseling.... Abortion is the secondary issue."

Hamman, who said he planned to participate in one of the effort's evening rallies, attributed "the lack of local response" to indifference and confusion about "who Operation Rescue really is."

Charging that "the liberal media has distorted the heart of what these people are trying to do," Hamman added, "I applaud these people for the stand they are taking and for the increased awareness."

Lieutenant Governor Mike Huckabee, an outspoken pro-life advocate, said he chose not to participate in the Operation Rescue efforts. "I prefer to use legal means and legislative means to try to stand up for unborn children and to work within the system," he explained. "I can respect others' methods without participating in them or necessarily agreeing with all their methods."

Noting that "Arkansas is on record as being a pro-life state with no tax monies used to fund elective abortions," Huckabee said he doesn't believe rescue efforts "are going to change people's minds about the issue" of abortion.

Church news

Berry Street Church in Springdale broke ground May 22 for a facility that will house a 400-seat auditorium, senior adult classrooms and a nursery. The cost of construction is estimated at \$400,000. Participating in the service were Harold Gateley, director of missions for Washington-Madison Association; deacon and charter member W. L. Layman; pastor Richard Perry; and former pastors Burton Miley of Springdale and James Criswell of Sient Grove.

Pine Bluff First Church has purchased a new bus for its outreach activities. A gift from the estate of S.A. and Lena Mae Lawhorne covered a portion of the cost. John McClanahan is pastor.

Harrison First Church honored pastor Jim Perkins and his family June 19 with an evening reception in recognition of five years of service. They were presented with a money/card tree.

New Hope Church, founded on July 20, 1844, and located on Highway 117 between Black Rock and Smithville, will celebrate its 150th anniversary July 16-17. Saturday festivities, beginning at 5 p.m., will include a program of song and religious comedy presented by parson Bob Deeds and three other Christian performers from Wildemess Church in Silver Dollar City that will be followed by a churchwide picnic. Sunday events will include registration at 9:30 a.m., Sunday School at 10 a.m., worship services at 10:45 a.m., a noon potluck meal and a 2 p.m. service that will conclude with the dedication of a commemorative monument at 4 p.m. Speakers will include former pastor Jim Bynum of Abilene, Texas; Forrest Bynum, pastor of First Church in Norfolk; and H.E. Williams, president emeritus of Williams Baptist College. Juanita Phillips and Geraldine Davis are contact coordinators for the celebration.

Rogers First Church music and education ministries have announced a music and arts camp for children and youth in grades one through nine Aug. 8-12. "Light the World with Music and the Arts" will be the theme for the camp that has been planned to help children and young people develop their interests and talents and help prepare them for further involvement in area churches, schools and community activities.

Marianna First Church launched "Sunday Night Live" as a new children's program July 3 with Becky Glover and Nancy Greer as coordinators.



Ordinations

Liberty Church in Dutch Mills licensed Jimmy Hull to the gospel ministry June 12.

White Hall First Church ordained Mark Burgos, Tony Crowson, David Lunsford, Tom Reed and Jeff Wentz to the deacon ministry June 19.

Oseola First Church ordained minister of youth Gregory S. Love to the gospel ministry June 26. Love has accepted the call to become pastor of a church in Newbern, Tenn.

Stamps First Church ordained Steve Bleifus, Mark Grimmett and Kelly Williamson to the deacon ministry June 26.

People

Tom and Kay Cox of Mountainburg led their first partnership evangelism team to Indonesia June 22-July 8. The 17 team members, representing Southern Baptist

churches in Arkansas, California, Iowa, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Idaho and Kansas, worked in 10 churches in the Jakarta area. The mission trip was an approved project of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church in Springdale, has been selected to serve as pastor-advisor for the Arkansas Baptist Evangelists Association for the remainder of this year, filling the position vacated by Ronnie Mayes of Beebe who has joined the staff of Mid-America Seminary. Floyd will work with other association officers that include Tom Cox of Mountainburg, president; Shelby Bittle of Jacksonville, vice president; and Johnny Jackson of Little Rock, secretary-treasurer.

Staff changes

David Stephan has accepted the call to join the staff of First Church in Mountain Home as minister of music. He will move there from Jackson, Tenn., where he has been a staff member of Calvary Church for 16 years. Stephan, a native of Trumann, is a graduate of Union University in Jackson and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Carol, have two children, Julie Ann and Jeremy.

Ronny R. Noles began his ministry as director of missions for Caddo River Association July 10, going there from Lake



University Church in Fayetteville broke ground May 15 for a new \$5.5 million worship complex to be constructed in the center of the church's 13-acre campus. The facility will house a 1,500-seat worship center, music ministry facilities and a fully equipped children's education suite. The groundbreaking ceremony included representatives from various age groups and ministry areas. Construction, which began in June, is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 1996. H.D. McCarty is pastor.

Ouachita Church in Mount Ida where he has been pastor for the past six years. A native of Jesselville, he previously was pastor of Cedar Glades Church, Mount Tabor Church, Refuge Church and Peary Church. He and his wife, Wanda, have two married daughters, Ronda Foley and Deanna Jones, and one grandson, Davey Foley.

Ray Higgins will begin serving July 17 as pastor of Second Church in Little Rock. Higgins will come to Arkansas from Fort Worth, Texas, where he has been assistant professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He formerly was pastor of Purmeia Church in Purmeia, Texas; special projects coordinator for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission; and youth minister for



First Church in Walnut Ridge. Higgins is a graduate of the University of Arkansas, Southwestern Seminary and Baylor University. He is married to the former Judy Goff of Star City. They have two sons, Adam Tyler and Ryan Spencer.

L. B. Atchison resigned June 1 as director of missions for North Arkansas Association following more than nine years of service. He previously was director of missions for Covington and Jefferson Davis Associations in Prentiss, Miss. In addition, he has served as pastor of churches in Texas and Mississippi. Atchison, a graduate of East Texas Baptist University, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Luther Rice Seminary, is residing in Little Rock.

Ken Blackwood resigned June 26 as pastor of First Church in Marvell to become pastor of First Church in Cuthbert, Ga. He and his wife, Alison, and their children, April and Allen, were honored by the church with a farewell reception.

Maury Glynn Gill has joined the staff of First Church in Fort Smith as minister of education. A native of Memphis, he is a graduate of Mid-America Seminary and Memphis State University. Gill previously served on the staff of Calvary Baptist Temple in Savannah, Ga., and Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis. He and his wife, Nan, have three sons, Micah, Matthew and Marcus.

V.L. Harris resigned June 26 as pastor of South Side Church in Paris due to health reasons. Harris, who observed his 45th anniversary in the preaching ministry, was presented a monetary gift by the church.



Eagle Heights Church in Harrison celebrated "I Love My Church Day" June 5 by dedicating a new 11,000-square-foot facility that provides office space, a nursery and an educational suite. Building committee chairman Mike Greenhaw and fund-raising chairman Garret Foute assisted pastor Stanton Cram in the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director Don Moore preached the dedication message which was followed by a churchwide potluck dinner.

in addition, he closed his ministry with the church by baptizing two of his granddaughters and two other candidates. Harris and his wife, Nelle, who are moving to Texas, were presented jewelry as farewell gifts and were honored at a dinner-on-the-grounds. Nelson Wilhelm, director of missions for Concord Association, was the featured speaker.

Todd Jones has joined the staff of Stamps First Church as minister of youth. He is a sophomore at Ouachita Baptist University.

Charles Bird began serving June 12 as bivocational pastor of Havana Church. He and his wife, Susie, reside in Danville where he is manager of Crow Burlingame Co.

Mike Sanders has resigned as pastor of Brookside Mission in Faulkner Association to complete the requirements of an architectural degree at the University of Arkansas.

Bob Proctor has accepted the call to serve as minister of youth and outreach for First Church in Green Forest. He is a graduate of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., and his wife, Kim, will graduate from there July 29.

Brian Powell of Fort Smith began serving July 10 as pastor of Rock Creek Church. He previously served as minister of youth and children at First Church in Arkoma,

Okla. Powell, a graduate of Westark Community College, is currently completing the requirements for a degree in business administration at Arkansas State University through Westark. He and his wife, Shella, have two children, Amy and Andrew.

David McClung is serving First Church of Mansfield as summer youth director and associate pastor. He is a student at Williams Baptist College.

Troy Harris is serving as interim bivocational pastor of Prosperity Church at Hampton rather than bivocational pastor as reported in the June 30 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*.

Obituaries

Mark D. Walker of Little Rock died June 21 at age 33 as a result of cancer. He was the son of James and Mary Vanzant Walker of Little Rock. His funeral service was held June 24 at Archview Church in Little Rock where he was a member and his father is pastor. Other survivors are his wife, Kimberly Beckman Walker of Little Rock; and a sister, Melissa Walker Luckett of Dallas. Memorials may be made to Cowhoy's Dream, #49 Sunset Circle, Cabot, AR 72023.

Training for preschool teachers offered at Sunday School Convention

Teachers of preschoolers can learn how to teach better, said Pat Rattton, by attending preschool conferences during the State Sunday School Convention September 23-24 at Geyer Springs First Baptist Church.

In addition to preschool conferences, the convention will have conferences for age-group leaders, pastors, ministers of education and Sunday School directors.

Rattton, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department, said the convention will offer base and special-interest conferences for teachers of preschoolers. She said training is important in order to "know how to teach Bible truths to preschoolers by using developmentally appropriate methods on the preschoolers' learning level."

The Friday evening program will feature age-graded conferences for teachers of younger, middle and older preschoolers,

as well as for preschool division coordinators and teachers in smaller churches.

Rattton said the conference for smaller-church teachers is especially appropriate for Arkansas because "the majority of our churches are smaller."

Training for Sunday School general officers, teachers of all age groups and church architecture also will be offered at the close of the Friday evening session.

Saturday morning special interest conferences will include: "Beyond Babysitting" (small child education); "Cradle Roll" (ministry to young families who do not attend church); "Guidance and Discipline"; "Safety/Security/Hygiene"; "Helping Preschool Teachers Grow Spiritually"; "Ministering to Preschoolers and Their Families"; "Using the Bible All the Time"; "Preparing Preschoolers for Worship"; and

"Responsibilities of Preschool Teachers."

Preschool conference leaders will include Linda Myers, minister of preschoolers at First Baptist Church, Hendersonville, Tenn.; Rachel Coe, editor of materials for two- to three-year-olds for the Baptist Sunday School Board; Belvin Cox, lead consultant of the BSSB's preschool department; Ivetta Black of Little Rock, who has taught in several smaller-church preschool classes; and Rattton.

The general conference will feature Bill Taylor, executive pastor/minister of education and administration for North Phoenix Baptist Church, Phoenix, Ariz.

The convention will begin on Friday at 6:30 p.m. The base conference will begin at 7:45 p.m. and conclude at 9:15 p.m. Saturday preschool conferences will begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 12:45 p.m.

There is no cost for the convention. Participants are responsible for their own meals and lodging. For more information, contact the ABSB Sunday School department; phone 376-4791, ext. 5128.

Classifieds

Free — 100+ burgundy 1975 Hymnals 836-5382.

Secretary wanted — Family Life Center receptionist/secretary to family life minister and youth minister. 35 hr/wk. Computer experience helpful. Send resume to Ross Burton, Calvary Baptist Church, 1901 North Pierce St., Little Rock, AR 72207.

Music/youth minister — Contact Music/Youth Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box "O", Hazen, AR 72064.

Needed — Part-time minister of youth. Clear Lake Baptist Church, 3700 East State Hwy 148, Blytheville, AR 72315; phone 763-9216.

Youth/music — Earle Baptist Church, P.O. Box 674, Earle, AR 72331, is now accepting resumes for Youth/Music minister.

Plant wanted — paid position. Bingham Road Baptist, LR. 888-2140.

Christian Hawaiian Paradise Adventure — Two Islands, November 8-15, escorted by Rev. Randy and Nan Maxwell. Call 223-9429 or 225-3991.

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.

BIG 12TH ANNUAL SOUTHERN GOSPEL SINGING

Friday, August 5, 1994 through Saturday, August 13, 1994

Lester Flatt Memorial Park — Vilonia, AR

TALENT: Wendy Bagwell and The Sunliters, Nelona, Bishops, Florida Boys, Perfect Heart, Palmetto State Quartet, Primitive Quartet, Gov. Jimmie Davis, Dixie Melody Boys, Countrymen Quartet, Free Spirit Singers, McKeithens, Happy Rhythms, Sounds of Life, Scrap Iron Quartet, plus more groups to come!

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Agencies vary on timing to refuse CBF funds

ATLANTA (BP)—While Southern Baptist agencies appear unanimous in following a Southern Baptist Convention motion to reject money channeled through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, leaders are not in agreement as to when that directive takes effect.

The Foreign Mission Board, Radio and Television Commission and Southern Seminary have already stopped accepting money from the CBF. Meanwhile, the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Midwestern Seminary will wait until the action is addressed by those agencies' trustees.

No agency head said he expects his board to reject the motion. At issue, however, appears to be a section of the SBC bylaws regarding who has the authority to implement such a directive and when it will be done.

"I'm certain that our board (of directors) will want to comply fully," with the SBC motion, said HMB president Larry Lewis. But "the only group that has the authority to act on this issue is the board itself."

"Some have questioned whether the convention can order an agency directly in light of bylaw 28," said Lewis. Bylaw 28 states that motions dealing with an agency's internal operations or programs "shall be referred to the elected board of the agency for consideration..."

Brotherhood Commission president James Williams agreed with Lewis that trustees must act upon the motion.

"Our trustees will consider this matter

in their Oct. 21-22, 1994 meeting," he said in a two-paragraph statement. "It is our interpretation that, in accordance with convention bylaw 28, the trustees of each agency must make that decision."

Members of the Southern Baptist Education Commission voted June 27 to comply with the motion, adopting a reduced budget for 1994-95 to compensate for the projected \$8,000 in lost income.

Prior to the vote, Education Commission executive director Stephen Carleton told trustees that in spite of the loss of income which would entail some hardships for the commission, he felt the agency should be a team player and comply with the wishes of the convention.

But FMB vice-president for finance Carl Johnson called it "redundant" for trustees to act on the motion. "The convention has taken action for us," he said. "We have asked CBF not to send us any money they receive after June 16," the last day of the Orlando convention.

FMB president Jerry Rankin expressed gratitude June 21 "for the faithful support of many churches" that gave money to the FMB "for whatever reason" through the CBF. But he said the vote by SBC messengers directing agencies to refuse funds channeled through the CBF is "appropriate in defining and clarifying procedures" for supporting SBC causes.

In a June 20 letter to missionaries overseas, Rankin said he believed the convention action would "counter fragmented and divisive funding channels

and strengthen the established, unified procedures for cooperating Southern Baptist churches to support the FMB and other agencies."

Marty Blankenship, director of seminary relations and development for Midwestern Seminary, said she didn't expect any change before the fiscal year's end, July 31. "My assumption would be that it would be something that our trustees will deal with in October."

Jack Johnson, president of the Radio and Television Commission said the motion has already taken effect at that agency. "To my knowledge there was no time stipulation; no grace period," he said. "As far as I'm concerned, any money that is sent will be returned to the CBF." Regarding the bylaws, Johnson said, "When the convention makes a directive, that supersedes anything else."

Likewise, Al Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, said the school is already rejecting CBF money. "Since the SBC took this action, I must assume that it intended that action to take effect immediately."

CBF communications coordinator David Wilkinson called the SBC action "tragic, regrettable and an infringement upon the spirit of the autonomy of the local church."

"In essence, it instructs churches about how they must give their money," he said.

Mohler, however, said the motion respects church autonomy by directing SBC agencies, not congregations.



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NATION

Southwestern search committee to nominate Hemphill as president

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—Kenneth S. Hemphill, Southern Baptist church growth specialist and former Virginia pastor, is the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary search committee's nominee for president, Baptist Press has learned.

Hemphill, 46, if elected by the seminary's 40-member board of trustees at a special called meeting in Fort Worth July 29, will succeed Russell Dilday, who was fired by the trustees March 9 as president of the world's largest seminary.

Miles Seaborn Jr., chairman of the trustees' search committee, told Baptist Press the committee came to a "total and excited unanimity" about the nominee but declined to identify the selection prior to the mailing of letters to all the trustees. Seaborn is pastor of Birchman Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

Baptist Press learned Hemphill is the committee's unanimous choice following a search which included a number of well-known Southern Baptist leaders. He would become the seminary's seventh president.

Seaborn said following the July 29 meeting that the candidate, trustee board chairman Ralph W. Pully Jr. of Dallas and Seaborn will jointly release a statement and hold a news conference.

Hemphill is currently director of the Southern Baptist Center for Church Growth, a cooperative venture by the SBC Home Mission Board and Baptist Sunday School Board. Prior to that new position, which he took in August 1992, Hemphill had been pastor of First Baptist Church in Norfolk, Va., 11 years.

He earned a doctor of philosophy degree from Cambridge University in Cambridge, England, and a master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also has a bachelor of arts degree from Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C.

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Two Christian leaders murdered in Iran

TEHRAN, IRAN (BP)—Two of Iran's Christian leaders have been murdered in a continuing campaign by Islamic militants to exterminate Christianity in Iran. Another Iranian Christian, a resident of the United States, has been reported missing.

The body of Mehdi Dibaj, an Assemblies of God minister, was found in a park in western Tehran, according to a July 5 statement from IRNA, Iran's official news agency. Police said they discovered Dibaj's body while seeking the killer of Tatos Michaelian, 62, pastor of a Tehran church and chairman of the Council of Protestant Ministers in Iran.

Dibaj and Michaelian became the second and third Christian leaders to be murdered this year in Iran. Haik Hovsepian-Mehr, superintendent of the Assemblies of God, was murdered in January.

Dibaj, 59, had not been seen since July 1, when he left a Christian conference in a Tehran suburb to go to his daughter's home. He never arrived, according to Christian sources who monitor church matters in Iran from outside the country.

Michaelian was killed some time after he left home June 29, the sources said. Michaelian's son, Galo, and other relatives were summoned by Iranian authorities to identify the body July 2. They said Michaelian had been shot several times in the head.

Dibaj made international headlines last December when Iranian authorities announced he would be executed for the "crime" of abandoning Islam. But following an international outcry, including a protest by the U.S. State Department, he was released from prison Jan. 16.

At that time government officials said his release was conditional, pending an ongoing investigation. He had spent 10 years in a prison in Sari, a city in north-eastern Iran. During the time in prison Dibaj was tortured and spent two years in solitary confinement in an unlighted, 9-square-foot cell.

Meanwhile, Christian leaders identified another missing believer as Hassan Shahjamali, an Iranian Muslim convert to Christianity and U.S. resident. Shahjamali went to an airport in the Iranian city of Shiraz to board a flight to Tehran July 1.

But he never arrived in the Iranian capital.

Shahjamali traveled from the United States to Iran in May to visit his family, encourage Iranian Christians and share the gospel with interested Iranians.

Iranian Christians said they assume Shahjamali is being detained by the Iranian government.

In a related development, two other church leaders in Ahwaz were being detained by police July 4, sources said.

Michaelian spoke June 26 at the Assemblies of God church formerly led by Hovsepian-Mehr. Dibaj also was a member. In his message, Michaelian stressed that Iranian Christians should be neither perplexed nor afraid of martyrdom for their faith, but rather should prepare to face it.

Christian workers reported that Iranian authorities had threatened several times to kill Michaelian, senior pastor of St. John Armenian Evangelical (Presbyterian) Church in Tehran. He was a former executive secretary of the Presbyterian Synod of Iran and former general secretary of the Iranian Bible Society, which was closed by Iranian authorities in 1990.

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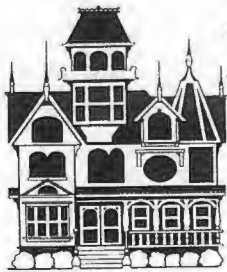


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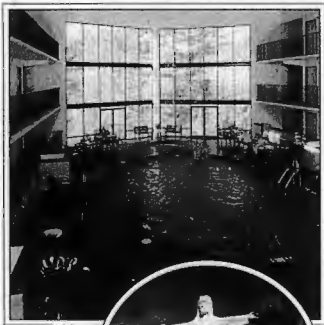
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YOUTH

Hart of the Hills offers National Baptist youth 'Wild, Wild West' camp

National Baptist youth will be invited to return to the days of yesteryear when the "Wild, Wild West" arrives at Hart of the Hills camp this summer. The camps will be held at Camp Paron July 25-29 for young men, ages 9-14, and Aug. 1-5 for young women, ages 9-15.

Hart of the Hills is the annual National Baptist youth camp held in cooperation with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's cooperative ministries department.

Department director Jack Kwok said the "Wild, Wild West" theme is a departure from the camp's typical program. "This is the first time we have used a western theme and it will be reflected in the activities, such as making moccasins and crafts, learning about native Americans and wearing western clothes."

He said the program also will highlight popular basic activities, such as worship, devotions, singing, study, recreation, hiking and swimming.

Each camper must bring sheets, a pillow, bathing suit, personal hygiene items, notebook, pen and Bible. Campers also are encouraged to bring a camera and athletic equipment.

Bus transportation will be available from 13 locations across the state. Contact Kwok for a list of area representatives in charge of bus scheduling.

The cost is \$40 per person, including a \$5 non-refundable registration fee. The cost includes all meals, lodging, insurance, a missions study book and bus fare.

Registrations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. To register, send the \$5 registration fee to Kwok at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. For more information, contact Kwok at the ABCS cooperative ministries department; phone 376-4791, ext. 5159.

Missionary notes

Robert and Kay Cartwright, missionaries to Burkina Faso, are on the field (address: Mission Baptist, 01 BP 580, Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso). Both consider Bella Vista their hometown.

Truman and Carol Chatman, missionaries to Uruguay, are in the States (address: 2013 Timber Ridge Rd., Jonesboro, AR 72401). He is a native of Poplar Bluff. The former Carol Hill, she was born in Walnut Ridge and considers Imboden her hometown. They were appointed in 1984.

Supreme Court strikes down school established for religious community

WASHINGTON (ABP) — New York lawmakers crossed the line separating church and state when they established a special public school district for a religious community, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 27.

The 6-3 ruling struck down the school district formed to provide special education for students in the village of Kiryas Joel, whose 8,500 inhabitants are members of the Satmar Hasidic Jewish sect.

Most of the village's children attend private Hasidic schools. The disputed public school district resulted from the need to provide special-education services for the village's handicapped children.

In 1985 the Supreme Court ruled that tax-supported special education could not be provided on religious school campuses. The special-needs children began attending classes in the nearby Monroe-Woodbury public school system. But the experience was traumatizing, the Hasidic parents said, because the children were accustomed to the insular lifestyle of the Hasidic village, where distinctive dress is worn, Yiddish is the primary language, and media exposure to the outside world is shunned.

To solve the problem, New York created the special district encompassing Kiryas Joel. The Supreme Court said New York officials could have provided special education in a number of permissible ways but not the way it chose.

Six justices agreed June 27 that the district violated the church-state separation

required by the First Amendment.

The majority opinion written by Justice David Souter said the action of the New York legislature allocated political power on a religious basis and did not ensure governmental impartiality toward religion. The First Amendment bars government from enacting laws that either establish religion or prohibit its free exercise.

Souter's opinion was joined by Justices Harry Blackmun, John Paul Stevens and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and in most parts by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote separately to say he would invalidate the district solely because "New York created it by drawing political boundaries on the basis of religion."

Three dissenting justices — Chief Justice William Rehnquist along with Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas — would have upheld the school district.

Writing for the three, Scalia said the nation's founders would be astonished to see the establishment clause employed to prohibit accommodation of religion.



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Youth ministers can "make an eternal difference" in the lives of their youth through Disciple Youth materials, noted Robert Holley. The Disciple Youth/Disciple Now Workshop offered August 5-6 at Williams Baptist College can help ministers teach the curriculum more effectively, he added.

Holley, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's discipleship and family ministry department, said the workshop will be held in conjunction with Junior High Jamboree and is open to pastors, youth ministers and laypeople with youth duties.

"Disciple Youth is an in-depth, 13-week discipleship and evangelism training experience," he explained. "It focuses on the personal disciplines of discipleship and evangelism through prayer, personal Bible study, witnessing, giving and ministering."

He said Disciple Now is a weekend discipleship retreat "that focuses on the disciplines of discipleship. Its goal is to

bring youth to a closer walk with God, or an initial commitment to Christ as Savior."

Leading the workshop will be Jimmy Myers, youth minister for Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, and co-author of *Help! Peer Pressure*.

The Friday program will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude at 9 p.m. Saturday's session will begin at 8 a.m. and conclude at 10 a.m.

The cost for the workshop, which includes a complete set of Disciple Youth materials, is \$45 per person. The cost for participants who already have materials is \$30 per person.

Participants are responsible for their own meals and lodging, but rooms are available on the Williams campus at an additional cost through Junior High Jamboree staff.

To register or reserve lodging, contact the ABCS discipleship and family ministry department; phone 376-4791, ext. 5160.

To reserve lodging only, contact the ABCS evangelism department at 376-4791, ext. 5132.

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Convention Uniform

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By J.R. DeBusk, pastor, South Side Church, Pine Bluff

Basic passage: Exodus 32; 34:1-10

Focal passage: Exodus 32:1-14, 21-34

Central truth: Believers are called to firm allegiance to God.

Within this passage we have four vivid illustrations of individuals or groups who faced the issue of fidelity to God. In two instances there was failure, but with two others, steadfast faithfulness prevailed.

Moses had been on the mountain with God for 40 days. The vast majority of the Israelites became impatient. They were not willing to wait any longer. Their desire was for a more manageable deity (v. 32:1). They were unwilling to live with the sovereignty of God. We would be wise not to fashion our views of God according to our whims and desires.

Aaron found himself in the position of having to choose between standing up for God or being bullied into following the crowd. He not only was swayed by the idolatrous multitude, but he also led them in the improper and immoral worship the following day (vv. 32:2-6). When Aaron was confronted by Moses, he refused to accept any responsibility for his sin (vv. 32:21-24).

When Moses learned of the apostasy of the nation, he remained steadfast to the covenant which God had established with Israel (vv. 19:3-8). The Lord was willing to destroy the Hebrews and start again with Moses (vv. 32:9-10). This is reminiscent of Abraham's call. Moses' feelings were so strong in favor of the covenant that he interceded for the nations (vv. 32:11-14). He was willing to ultimately be erased from the Lord's book (v. 32:33).

The final example within this passage is the Levites. When Moses asked, "Who is on the Lord's side?" the Levites came forward. Apparently they had remained pure and faithful to their commitments. Now they took their stand with Moses and the Lord.

For most people the challenge of faithfulness to God is not as dramatic as the events of Exodus 32. Yet, the temptation to falter is just as real. Our purpose must be to remain faithful and pure through little choices, as well as the big decisions.

Life and Work

Temporal, yet eternal

By Jeff Cheatham, DOM, Arkansas River Valley Association

Basic passage: II Corinthians

4:10-5:10

Focal passage: II Corinthians

4:18-5:10

Central truth: Focus on the eternal goal of pleasing the Lord rather than the temporal goals of this life.

One of life's most startling events is when a person faces their mortality for the first time. This may come as the result of an illness, accident, unexpected death of a family member, friend, etc. At one time everybody feels they will live forever and when that myth confronts reality, the reaction depends upon one's spiritual strength and their hope of immortality.

Paul shared with the Corinthians the afflictions he had endured for preaching the gospel. He called them "light" because they were brief. With his eyes fixed on Christ, they could not destroy his calling, message, vision or hope. Paul knew victory came from God and the personal relationship with Him through Christ (v. 4:18).

Paul described how his victory is achieved. He compares the physical body to a tent that can be easily moved from place to place. When the body has reached its limits of afflictions, time and disease, God will remodel it with heavenly materials that will last forever. The physical body was not designed to eternally house the soul. At death, the physical body rests from its labors and waits for the time when God will fashion a glorified body capable of dwelling with Him in heaven. Paul did not desire death as an escape from the trials of his ministry, but to exchange his worn-out physical body for his eternal one and keep on serving the Lord on earth.

The promise of a glorified body is the result of two things (v. 5:5): First, God Himself prepared the new body and it is guaranteed to fit. Second, the presence of the Holy Spirit is the downpayment that this will occur.

The assurance of this new body gave Paul a boldness in his preaching. He lived in anticipation of glorious things to come. He longed to be with Christ, but knew he still had things on earth to do for Him. As long as he lived, Paul considered himself an exile in a hostile country.

There will be recognition for service. Paul reminds us that we all stand at the judgment seat to give an account of our service and receive our reward.

Bible Book

Seeking after God

By Jack J. Bledsoe, retired DOM, Carey Association

Basic passage: Job 22:1-28:28

Focal passage: Job 23:3-7

Central truth: God is near to those who seek Him.

From this side of the New Testament we have come to a more complete understanding of who God is and how we can come boldly into His presence through our Savior, Jesus Christ. We are urged to draw near to God and He will draw near unto us. The great invitation of God to salvation, blessing and fellowship offers an open door of opportunity for every believer.

Job did not possess access to that door of opportunity in the same way you and I have today. He was limited by being an early participant in God's progressive self revelation to man. To Job and his contemporaries God inhabited some far away place and man was isolated from Him.

Job's so-called friends continued to remind him that God lived so far away that He could not concern Himself with the mundane affairs of mere mortals. Clouds and thick darkness marred His vision and He could not concern Himself with sinful men and their problems. They continued to insist that Job confess his sins and live a righteous and upright life. Perhaps God would notice and respond, but they offered little encouragement.

In verses 22:3-6, Job voices the desire that he might know where to find the Almighty, in order that he might come before Him and present his case personally. He was convinced that should such an opportunity be given to him that God would exonerate him from all his troubles and suffering.

God has now fully revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ and has left a written record of that revelation in the New Testament. The presence of the Holy Spirit, indwelling the believer as the presence of the living Christ, is our guarantee of the presence, love and power of God. You and I never need to ask whether God is concerned about us, for we intimately experience Him day by day. He knows, He cares, He lives. What a revelation.

Keep the faith.

Convention Uniform

The place of worship

By J.R. DeBuck, pastor, South Side Church, Pine Bluff
Basic passage: Exodus 25:1-9;
 29:38-46; 40:16-38
Focal passage: Exodus 25:1-9;
 29:42-46; 40:34-48
Central truth: God's purpose is to intimately relate to men.

From the time Abraham was called from Ur of Chaldees, he and those who followed him worshipped the Lord. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob built altars for worship. Now the Lord had redeemed the Hebrews from Egypt. To continue on their journey to the Promised Land, they needed a special place to meet with God and worship.

Moses ascended Mount Sinai and there, for 40 days, he received detailed instructions for building a place of worship (chapters 25-31). God designed a portable worship center, a tent, the Tabernacle.

God's initial instructions concerning the worship center were that the Israelites were to raise the contributions which were needed for the Tabernacle. The people were to give willingly from their heart (v. 25:2). Giving is a fundamental exercise in worship and obedience to the Lord.

The purpose of the Tabernacle was that God might dwell in the midst of His people (v. 25:8). This tent was to be a "sanctuary," a place separated for God's holy intentions.

The Tabernacle was a place where God continually reaffirmed His covenant with Israel. The series of "I will" and "I am" statements in verses 29:42-46 promise the Lord's constant presence and blessing for His covenant people. The Lord has a desire to affirm His presence in the lives of His people.

Finally, the day came when the construction was complete and Moses put the finishing touches on the Tabernacle (v. 40:33). In the dedicatory event the glory of the Lord filled the tent. The Lord placed His divine stamp of approval on the Tabernacle. Here now was a place for God to dwell with His people and a place for the people to meet with the Lord.

The New Testament reminds us that the Lord eventually came in the flesh, not just cloud and smoke. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Jesus is tabernacled in our hearts. We no longer need a tent; He dwells within us.

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Life and Work

Sinful, yet reconciled

By Jeff Cheatham, DOM, Arkansas River Valley Association
Basic passage: II Corinthians 5:13-6:2
Focal passage: II Corinthians 5:13-6:2
Central truth: God issues an urgent plea for all persons to be reconciled to Him through Christ's death on the cross.

George Eliot said, "What makes life dreary is the lack of motive." Motivation! It's the energy that drives an athletic team to beat an opponent when everyone said it couldn't be done. Motivating athletes is one of the secrets of a successful coach. A coach who can take a group of "nobodies" and turn them into champions is a hero!

What is the motivation for living the Christian life? Paul's critics questioned his calling as a preacher of the gospel and his care for the believers at Corinth. Because of his zeal, Paul was viewed by his enemies as a fanatic, madman, or even a drunk (v. 5:13). Whatever the appearance, Paul was motivated by his zeal for God, his love for Christ and love for the Church. His motivation was based on two principles:

■ **The compassion of Christ** (v. 5:14-15). It was Christ's love that controlled and motivated Paul's life. He was not pursuing personal wealth, favor or pleasure. His lifestyle was one of self-denial and hard work with few earthly rewards. He did not view this as a sacrifice but as gratitude for the one who had completely changed his life. Christ's death on the cross was proof of His love for the human race. Christ did not die a martyr's death. His death was a sacrifice providing the way to be reconciled with God. His death touched lives then as it does today. Christ died that men should cease to live for themselves and begin to live for others.

■ **His calling** (v. 5:16-6:2). Not only did reconciliation bring peace, it brought Paul a new mission: He was to share what Christ had done for him. He was a new creature and saw things from a new perspective. Equipped by the Holy Spirit, he had a new kind of energy and saw people's spiritual needs as never before.

Paul was an ambassador for Christ (vv. 5:18-20). He represented the interests of the Kingdom to an alien land. He protected his Lord's interest and proclaimed the benefits of His heavenly citizenship. Paul's dedication to Christ is a model for us.

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Bible Book

Elihu to the rescue

By Jack J. Bledsoe, retired DOM, Carey Association
Basic passage: Job 29:1-37:24
Focal passage: Job 33:1
Central truth: Suffering is not just punitive; it is also corrective.

In chapters 29-31, Job longed for the good old days, when in his righteousness before God he was respected and admired among his contemporaries. He extolled the virtues and rewards of godly living before Satan brought him low, although Job did not know that Satan was the culprit. In these verses his affirmations put to silence his three friends, who sat silently and watched. They had nothing to offer.

But beginning with chapter 32, a new voice was heard. Elihu dared to come to Job's rescue with a fresh wind of understanding that he claimed to have from God. He did not reprove Job. He complimented Job's affirmation of spiritual integrity and offered to be the daysman, or go between, for Job in his searching after understanding of all that had befallen him.

Hearing Job's lament, the youthful Elihu silenced not only Job, but also ordered the three friends to listen to his inspiration from God. He introduced some new factors into the discussion of Job's suffering:

■ **A new approach.** Elihu believed himself to be so inspired of God that he was able to introduce a new approach. He offered to be the brother of Job, rather than his critic. He sought to sit with Job in human sympathy, yet speak with authority from God.

■ **A new answer.** Elihu insisted that man has no right to require an explanation for suffering from God because in suffering God is seeking to educate man to a higher plane of spiritual living. The government of God is sovereign and gracious, righteous and impartial. God knows all the facts and human inquiry is fruitless. Elihu urged Job to be grateful and accept the instruction of God through suffering.

■ **A new purpose.** Elihu sees a different purpose in suffering than does Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. Suffering is not just punitive. It is corrective and restorative. It is not just the Judge's rod, it is the Shepherd's goad, leading into right action.

The concept that suffering restrains, refines and restores man, introduced by Elihu, is a step closer to the teachings of the New Testament. There is still One in control. Listen to Him. Keep the faith.

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NEWS DIGEST

National CP gifts remain 3 percent above 1993 pace

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for June were up 4.34 percent above the previous year which kept total CP receipts for the year at more than 3 percent above 1993, according to Morris H. Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee.

The June total was \$10,886,499 compared to June 1993 of \$10,433,816 or an increase of \$452,682. For the nine months of the fiscal year, total CP receipts stand at \$106,599,758. The year-to-date totals for CP stand at 3.15 percent above the previous year-to-date totals for a \$3,256,031 increase.

Designated gifts for the year, \$119,209,105, stand at 1.32 percent (\$1,552,457) ahead of last year although the June 1994 total of \$11,770,875 was 5.26 percent below June 1993 of \$12,423,898.

House opposes EEOC religious harassments guidelines

WASHINGTON (ABP)—The U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a measure that would prevent the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission from implementing proposed guidelines on religious harassment in the workplace.

Religious and civil liberties groups had criticized the EEOC guidelines as vague and open to misinterpretation. Southern Baptist Convention messengers adopted a resolution last month opposing the guidelines and urging separate treatment for concerns about religious harassment.

The legislative amendment, offered by Reps. Charles Taylor, R-N.C., and Frank Wolf, R-Va., was attached to a spending bill and stipulates that none of the funds available in the bill may be used to implement the guidelines as proposed. The House approved the amendment by a 366-to-37 vote.

BSSB's ethnic and black department, Glorieta cut staff

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Nine positions were eliminated from the Baptist Sunday School Board's ethnic and black church growth department effective July 1 and four positions are being eliminated at Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center.

Ramon Martinez, ethnic and black church growth department director, said five persons will be reduced there, and four positions are vacant. Concepcion "Chuck" Padilla, a 14-year employee of the board and field services coordinator in the department, will take early retirement. One professional employee will be reassigned and three others will receive severance pay and outplacement assistance.

Three support staff positions and one management position have been eliminated at Glorieta. Two of the three support staff persons are eligible for early retirement. The manager and third support staff person will receive severance benefits and outplacement assistance.

The latest cuts follow earlier announcements that the BSSB has eliminated its church recreation program area and cut four National Student Ministry positions.

ATS renews Southeastern Seminary's accreditation

WAKE FOREST, NC (BP)—Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's probation problems ended June 28 when the seminary received official notice that the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) has reaffirmed the accreditation of all degree programs and re-established the seminary as a member in good standing of the association.

"We have addressed all the concerns which ATS identified two years ago, and we have gone through a one-year academic cycle since making the requested changes," Southeastern president Paige Patterson said. "Everyone has put significant effort into meeting the requests made by ATS, none of which were unreasonable."

The seminary's regional accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), reaffirmed Southeastern's good standing last December.

Gregory writes book about FBC, Dallas, experiences

DALLAS (BP)—Joel Gregory has announced he is writing a book about his experiences at First Baptist Church of Dallas where he resigned a 21-month pastorate Sept. 30, 1992.

Too Great a Temptation: The Seductive Power of America's Super Church is the title of the book to be released in early October by The Summit Group, a Fort Worth publisher that Gregory said contacted him about writing it.

"No one wears a black or white hat; we all wear gray hats," Gregory said. "There is a seductive power in the situation that is explored in the book."

The book will deal with the superchurch, not strictly First Church, Dallas, and will confront the question, "Is this what Jesus Christ came to found as the church in the world?" Gregory said. He added that he felt Jesus had something more simple in mind.