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December 26, 1996

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 95, Number 26

December 26, 1996

**'WHOM
I HAVE
CREATED
FOR MY
GLORY'**

ISAIAH 43:7



SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

Observe
Sanctity of Human Life Sunday
JANUARY 19, 1997

Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

JAN 02 1997

SBC RESTRUCTURING

NAMB structure announced, first workers accept severance

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The organizational structure of the Southern Baptist Convention's new North American Mission Board will follow the "process model," according to the Implementation Task Force.

After months of study and dialogue with consultants and a "wide range of Southern Baptist leaders," the ITF determined the most effective method of organization for NAMB was a "process model," according to David E. Hankins, chairman of the NAMB transition communications team and vice president for convention policy for the SBC Executive Committee. The model was approved at an ITF meeting in Atlanta Dec. 10.

The North American Mission Board will officially be established following the June 1997 annual meeting of the SBC in Dallas. NAMB is the new agency resulting from the merger of the Home Mission Board, Radio and Television Commission and Brotherhood Commission.

The "process model," according to ITF members, begins with the mission statement and builds the organization around the processes that contribute to accomplishing that mission.

NAMB's mission statement, as adopted in the "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring plan, is, "To proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, start New Testament congregations, and minister to persons in the name of Christ and to assist churches in the United States and Canada in effectively performing these functions."

The "process" organizational model centers on the two primary processes: evangelism and church planting, Hankins said.

"A significance of the organizational model for NAMB is that it is a 'matrix' design rather than a hierarchical design," Hankins said. "The advantages of the matrix, or grid, organization are increased

cooperation, communication, flexibility and rapid response."

An evangelization group will give leadership to SBC churches in direct evangelism strategies such as witnessing to various faith, cultural and age groups. The group also will provide strategic assistance to event or mass evangelism. The church planting group will develop the process for achieving the objective of starting New Testament congregations.

In the NAMB model, Hankins said, the two primary processes are assisted in their tasks by three support areas: the media and mission education group, the strategic planning and mobilization group, and the business services group.

In related action, five employees of the Radio and Television Commission have accepted severance packages in anticipation of next year's merger into the NAMB.

The action by three RTVC clerical workers and two printers was announced Dec. 4, according to RTVC president Jack Johnson. He emphasized the action was not the result of any outside pressure but a recognition by those employees that there would be a sizeable reduction in the number of employees in the merger.

A spokesman said the RTVC had earlier planned to shut down the print shop. One person in the shop will continue to do printing for the RTVC on a contract basis.

A Brotherhood Commission spokesman said 21 employees had left the agency since February 1995 when the SBC restructuring was announced. Mike Day, associate to the president of the Brotherhood Commission, said there have been no layoffs and no requests for the severance packages at this point.

HMB president Larry Lewis said he does not anticipate staff reductions before the end of the year. He said every effort will be made to find places of service within NAMB for those whose positions are eliminated.

Cover Story



Sanctity of Life Sunday

Southern Baptists will observe their annual Sanctity of Human Life Sunday on Jan. 19, 1997. The annual emphasis will highlight the theme, "Whom I have created for My glory" (Isa. 43:7).

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Trevan Henderson..... Editor
Ranell N. Dilday..... Associate Editor
Colleen Beckus..... Assistant Editor

Mille Gill..... Executive Assistant to the Editor
Becky Hardwick..... Business Manager
Erwin L. McDonald, Litt. D. Editor Emeritus

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Board discusses OBU reconciliation process

By Trennis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Although it wasn't listed anywhere on the agenda for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board's Dec. 10 meeting, the convention's reconciliation agreement with Ouachita Baptist University became a major topic of discussion.

As Executive Board president Chuck McAllister prepared to adjourn the otherwise routine meeting, board member H. D. McCarty was recognized and voiced "concern about what we're going to do about the Ouachita situation."

Following an 801-456 vote last month by state convention messengers to clarify Ouachita's trustee selection process, "we have some great tension still in the convention," noted McCarty, pastor of University Church in Fayetteville.

"Let's use this tension to bring us together," he urged, "rather than having two sides out there fighting against one another and spreading stuff that shouldn't be spread."

McAllister responded that the convention action gives the Executive Board an opportunity "to communicate with Ouachita and to work out whatever circumstances may arise" as the two entities work together to implement the reconciliation agreement.

"This is a good faith arrangement," McAllister emphasized. "I don't think we need to require anybody to do anything other than to work together."

ABSC executive director Emil Turner pointed out, "The agreement that the convention adopted leaves in the hands of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention far more control and influence than any other state convention that's ever faced this issue."

Explaining that the convention's action "does not turn over of an institution; it maintains a relationship with the institution in a constitutional way," Turner said the next step in the process is for the convention's constitution and bylaws committee to "propose revisions in our constitution and bylaws to make the agreement reached at the convention a constitutional agreement."

Reminding fellow board members that "messengers spoke with a majority voice to let reconciliation take its course," James Guthrie, pastor of Beech Street Church in Gurdon, added, "We need to remember that they're the ones that have the final say."

Ouachita president Ben Elrod said he believes the proposal adopted by ABSC messengers "is a very good agreement."

"There is a process set in motion" by

Board elects two to ABSC staff

Staff members for positions in missions and Baptist Student Union work were unanimously approved Dec. 10 by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board. Eddie C. Jones Sr. was appointed as a black church planter strategist, field consultant Teresa "Bit" Stephens, who has been serving as a BSU special worker at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, was elected as full-time BSU associate for the Conway campus.

Jones, who started the first black Southern Baptist church in Mississippi, currently is pastor of Victory Temple Baptist Church in Greenville, Miss. He was commissioned as a Home Mission Board church planter in 1987 and received the church planter of the year award in 1990. He is a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and International Seminary.

According to Jimmy Barrentine, director of the ABSC missions department, "For the first time, we're in a position to help black church starts. This does not indicate a rejection of our relationship with National Baptists. We're strictly talking about new Southern Baptist churches."

Noting that Jones "has very strong church-starting skills" and "works with churches to keep them on a growth track," Barrentine added, "To have him here in Arkansas is a blessing from God." He said missions associate Jack Ramsey, who was instrumental in the search process, "put a lot of time, effort and prayer into finding the right person."

Jones, who noted that he began his church-starting efforts by "just loving people and telling them about Jesus," said he believes his ministry experience in Mississippi "will be something I can implement in Arkansas." He said he also will seek to "challenge others called by God to start churches."



Eddie Jones

Teresa Stephens

Stephens, who emphasized that God "has called me specifically to serve in collegiate ministry on a local college campus," has served at UCA since January 1995. She previously was a BSU special worker at Southern Arkansas Tech as well as a minister to youth at Hillside Church in Camden and Amboy Church in North Little Rock. She is a graduate of UCA and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Explaining that the UCA position was upgraded from a special worker position to a full-time Executive Board employee because of "tremendous growth in the number of students and the number of programs," ABSC student ministry department director David James added, "We had to have the right person" to fill the position. "We could not have had a better person than Bit to show the validity of the need."

Stephens "is giving strong attention to freshmen leadership and our Thursday worship experience," James said. "She is deeply committed to her work with the Lord and brings a very optimistic and encouraging atmosphere to our ministry. She's a people person."

Sharing her testimony with Executive Board members, Stephens said she is "excited about sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm thrilled to see the Lord working in students' lives."

the convention action, he added. "We just need to implement what we voted to do."

Noting that any constitution and bylaw changes must be voted on by messengers in 1997 and again in 1998, McAllister said, "I am convinced that when Arkansas Baptists are given the information and understand what the issues are," they will vote "in a way that will promote the harmony of this convention and its relationship with Ouachita Baptist University."

In other action, board members

amended the convention's annuity plan to clarify that non-managerial staff at ABSC camps and assemblies are not eligible for retirement benefits provided for full-time employees.

Executive Board members also voted to approve committee assignments for the coming year. Chairmen of the board's standing committees are Ed Simpson, finance committee; J.R. DeBusk, program committee; and Ben Rowell, operating committee.

A PASTOR'S HEART



By EMIL TURNER
ARBC Executive Director

Jerry Clower tells a story about how his brother would jump into bed every night. Running down the hall, he would leap from the doorway, across the darkened bedroom and land in the bed.

It became a habit then a ritual. Every night at the same time, you could hear him running down the hall, then silence as he went airborne and finally, the "thump" of the landing. Unknown to the boy, one day his mother rearranged the bedroom. The bed was no longer in its familiar place. At bedtime the ritual began. Take off and flight went smoothly, but the landing was very different.

"Preacher, what's your point?" you ask. Change is usually uncomfortable. But, it is a part of life. No doubt, your 1996 is ending very differently from its beginning.

The 1997 year will involve changes for our state convention (OBU, restructuring, new personnel), for your church and for your own life. Your personal walk with God will do two things for you that can help you manage change this next year.

First, it will give you the stability necessary to keep your perspective. Secondly, your walk with God will reveal your own need to change. None of us have become so perfect that we need not change. Jesus makes us new creatures. Every day.

■ Have you read *The Moral of the Story* by Jerry Newcombe? (Broadman & Holman, 1996). This is an excellent collection of stories that illustrate biblical truths. My favorite section deals with the seven deadly sins.

Executive director's schedule:

Dec. 30 Joy Expo, Little Rock
Jan. 7 New trustee orientation,
Baptist Building

REX HORNE

President's Perspective

Happy New Year!



A new year is just before us. For some, it is a time of resolutions. The resolutions offered are not always followed with much resolve. Some are valid, while others are trivial. These resolutions range from weight loss to time management to reading the Bible in its entirety in the course of the year.

New, most often in our thinking, has to do with age: a new car, new shoes, new job and even a "new" baby (what other kind is there?).

The word new is a wonderful, biblical word. The expressive language of the New Testament gives great insight. One of the New Testament words for new is most often not about time, but quality. Vines Expository Dictionary defines new as "that which is unaccustomed, not new in time, but new as to form or quality, of different nature from what is contrasted as old."

The Bible is full of people being made new through faith in Christ. John, one of the sons of thunder, became the apostle of love. Saul, the persecutor and arch enemy of the church, became the great missionary who went house-to-house with tears, presenting the gospel. The defector, Mark, was made a proclaimer of the gospel in a book bearing his name. Thomas, the doubter,

became a martyr. James, first an unbelieving brother of our Lord, became a leader of the early church.

You, too, have a testimony of the grace of God, the power of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit transforming you to a new person. You have experienced the new birth, you are a new creature, and yet you are still being molded into the image of Christ.

Charles Swindoll writes, "Though I have walked with God for several decades, I must confess I still find much about Him incomprehensible and mysterious. But this much I know: He delights in surprising us. He dots our pilgrimage from earth to heaven with amazing serendipities."

I pray God's plan for you will be seen as exciting and fulfilling. After all, no day, year or person is exactly the same. "And He that sat upon the throne said, behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). The Lord has given us a new year. He is making us new people, different from what we used to be and distinct in our devotion to the Lord.

Happy New Year... and may Christ make a happy new you (and me)!

Rex Horne, pastor of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.



Prayer focus

- Pray that there will be a deep burden for missions developed in churches.
- Pray that people will see the value of the April 8 Foreign Mission Board appointment service in Little Rock as a tool to highlight missions involvement.
- Pray that the new missionaries will be responsive to God's leadership as they enter their field of service.

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:36)

Variety of events impact Baptist life in '96

From Bill Clinton to Billy Graham, well-known Southern Baptists were in the news throughout 1996. In Arkansas news, Mike Huckabee became the state's 44th governor and voters overwhelmingly defeated a proposal to expand gambling in the state. In denominational life, new state convention executive director Emil Turner completed nearly a year of service and Arkansas Baptist messengers adopted a "good faith" proposal to reconcile differences between the convention and Ouachita Baptist University. The following excerpts from the pages of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine recount those and other events that impacted Baptist life in '96.

JANUARY: Evangelist Billy Graham has announced plans for a Global Television Series to take the gospel to more than 2.5 billion people in more than 160 countries on a single day...Arkansas Baptists will pray for awakening in their churches during a statewide Day of Prayer for Spiritual Awakening emphasis. Billy Kite, director of missions for Ashley County Association, has received the national exemplary director of missions award for bivocational ministries...Arkansas Baptists contributed a record \$16 million through the Cooperative Program during the past year.

FEBRUARY: Frank Lady, second vice president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, has died at age 66 of an apparent heart attack. State convention evangelism department director Clarence Shell, who retires this year following 27 years of convention ministry, was honored during the Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference. Don Moore, state convention executive director since 1982, officially concluded his statewide ministry role Feb. 29. More than 350,000 True Love Waits commitment cards were displayed during a national rally at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta.

MARCH: Arkansas Brotherhood and Woman's Missionary Union leaders have issued a call to collect 500 cases of food to aid relief efforts in famine-stricken North Korea. Initial recommendations for implementing the sweeping restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention have been approved by the SBC Executive Committee...Chuck Kelley has been unanimously elected as the eighth president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary...Members of the Arkansas Baptist Men's Disaster Relief Unit based in Batesville were called into action, providing up to 750 meals for victims of a tornado that hit the northern part of the state...Arkansas native Jim Heflin has accepted the call to become general secretary of the European Baptist Convention.

APRIL: The U.S. Supreme Court has reversed two lower courts' rejection of Amendment 68 to the Arkansas Constitution, ruling that the amendment could properly restrict funding of abortions in state-funded programs outside of Medicaid...Emphasizing the need to provide a "response-driven organization" to benefit local churches, ABCS executive director Emil Turner shared his ministry vision with the state convention structure study committee...Leaders of the Christian Civic Action Committee have drafted a proposed constitutional amendment seeking to ban all gambling in Arkansas, including horse racing and dog racing.

MAY: More than 40 Arkansas Baptist disaster relief volunteers were activated for feeding, clean-up and child care duty following a devastating tornado that hit Fort Smith and Van Buren...Evangelist Billy Graham and his wife, Ruth, received the Congressional Gold Medal award May 2...Seeking to make limited resources available in other areas of the world, SBC Foreign Mission Board leaders have announced plans to reduce the number of missionaries in Japan by 30 percent over the next three years.

JUNE: A team of 28 volunteers from Arkansas and Oklahoma witnessed more than 600 public decisions during a 10-day mission trip to Romania as part of the European Baptist partnership...A racial reconciliation task force is exploring ways to eradicate racism within the Southern Baptist Convention...SBC messengers gave or pledged more than \$280,000 to help rebuild African-American church facilities burned by arsonists...Former Arkansas Baptist pastor Tom Elliff was elected SBC president by acclamation; Springdale pastor Ronnie Floyd was elected Pastors Conference president.

JULY: Robert Husmen of Elway has been convicted of apostasy for converting from Islam to Christianity. International pressure is mounting to guarantee he is not executed for his faith. W.O. Taylor, age 105, the oldest preacher in the SBC, died July 7 at his home in Melbourne. Mike Huckabee, former president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was inaugurated July 15 as governor...Opponents of gambling in Arkansas have submitted more than 66,000 signatures on petitions seeking to outlaw all legalized gambling in the state.

AUGUST: An estimated 8,000 Southern Baptist volunteers witnessed, distributed tracts and provided hospitality ministries during the centennial Olympics in Atlanta. Baptist camps in Arkansas attracted thousands of campers during the summer of '96, resulting in hundreds of decisions by children and teenagers. President Clinton has signed a measure that sets up a commission to study the effects of gambling on crime, families and the economy.

SEPTEMBER: State convention leaders have launched a concentrated prayer emphasis to precede the 1997 Foreign Mission Board appointment service to be held in Little Rock...The SBC Foreign Mission Board has gained a new opportunity to work with the China Christian Council, the Chinese government's official body for churches and ministries in China...Home Mission Board president Larry Lewis will retire Jan. 1 to work with Mission America, a ministry network of 100 evangelical organizations...Leaders of the Christian Civic Action Committee have opted against contesting a pair of lawsuits that challenge the organization's proposed anti-gambling amendments.

OCTOBER: More than 1,350 Sunday School workers were urged to "Carry the Light" during the recent Arkansas Baptist State Sunday School Convention...The state's first Spanish-speaking theological training center has opened in DeQueen with 11 students...Trustees of Ouachita Baptist University have voted to resume responsibility for naming their own successors. Convention leaders responded by voting to escrow Ouachita's Cooperative Program funds and establish a five-member "reconciliation committee."

NOVEMBER: Arkansans soundly defeated a proposed constitutional amendment that called for expanding legalized gambling in the state...Arkansas Baptist messengers voted 801-456 to approve a compromise between the state convention and Ouachita Baptist University...Rex Home has been re-elected by acclamation as state convention president...Convention messengers adopted a 1997 Cooperative Program budget of \$17,595,000 and voted to extend the European Baptist partnership through the year 1999.

DECEMBER: A severance benefits package has been approved for employees of three SBC agencies who will not be employed by the new North America Mission Board...Gov. Mike Huckabee recently proclaimed "Point of Grace Day" in Arkansas in honor of the popular contemporary Christian recording artists...Arkansas Baptists reported a record number of new church starts in the state during the 1995-96 year.

'Life-changing' pilgrimage

Tour of the Holy Land 'touches the heart' of American Christians

By **Trennis Henderson**

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

The Promised Land... The Holy Land... A land flowing with milk and honey. Whatever the title or description, the earthly home of Jesus Christ holds special meaning for 20th century Christians.

"Anyone who believes in God has a wish to come to the Holy Land," declared Shabtai Shuv, director general of the Israel Ministry of Tourism. "There is only one Holy Land, only one Via Dolorosa. There is no substitute."

While up to half a million U.S. citizens visit Israel each year, such a pilgrimage remains only a dream for most American Christians. Despite the obvious appeal of a trip to the Holy Land, concerns over cost, travel and safety are among the issues that keep most folks at home.

In an effort to respond to such concerns, the Israel Ministry of Tourism recently established the Israel Christian Advisory Council to help encourage Christian travel to Israel. Accompanying the 17-member council on a one week tour of Israel was a team of eight Christian journalists including four Southern Baptist editors.

As a member of the press tour in my role as editor of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, I had the opportunity to visit a number of biblical sites, interview

Israeli leaders and observe the area's modern-day culture. Among my observations during the working tour were:

■ It is truly a life-changing adventure to personally experience the words of the hymn, "I walked today where Jesus walked." After having the opportunity to stand on the Mount of Olives, visit the Garden Tomb, sail on the Sea of Galilee and explore the Mount of Beatitudes, it is impossible to read familiar Bible passages without a new sense of appreciation and awe.

A trip to Israel is primarily a spiritual pilgrimage. Taking time to read the gospel accounts of Christ's ministry while standing on the traditional sites of His sermons, miracles and prayers is an unforgettable worship experience.

"Baptists love the Bible and the land of the Bible because it brings the Bible alive," affirmed KAC member Richard Lee, pastor of Rehoboth Baptist Church in Tucker, Ga. "It is a place that tests but not only the mind but touches the heart."

■ According to Rafi Shalev, director of the Israel Government Tourist Office in Dallas, "Israel is much more than the land itself, it is the people." He's right. Brief visits with Magen Broshi, the longtime curator of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Suhail Fahoum, deputy mayor of Nazareth, offered glimpses into the culture and

history of Israel that could not be gained by merely walking through a museum or visiting a historic site.

Although the natural tendency may be to visit as many sights as possible in a limited amount of time, it's worth the effort to interact with the people of the land and discover personal insights and friendships along the way.

■ While safety is a legitimate concern, it is not an overwhelming one. Our group arrived in Israel only a few weeks after violence erupted over the Temple Mount dispute, leaving more than 70 Palestinians and Israelis dead. That's impossible to ignore. Yet our entire tour was conducted in complete safety. A sizable detail of Israeli police patrolling the affected area was the only physical evidence of lingering concerns.

"We have a problem of perception," Shuv acknowledged. "Israel is perceived as a place of war." He pointed out, however, that "outbreaks of violence happen not just in Israel, but worldwide."

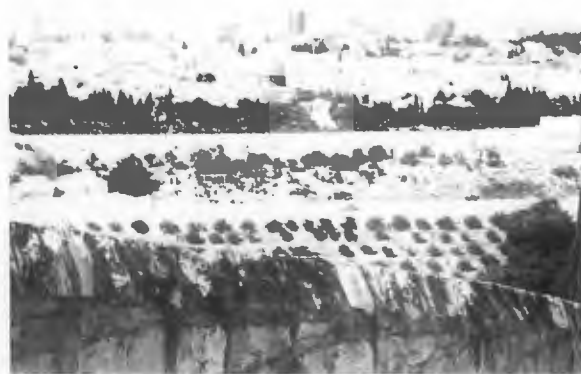
KAC spokesman Don Argue, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, noted that "we are asked again and again about safety. I feel totally safe in Israel — a lot safer than in a lot of American cities."

For individuals accustomed to visiting large American cities or other foreign destinations, safety concerns in Israel are comparable. Advance planning, common sense and working closely with a qualified tour guide should alleviate most safety concerns for the vast majority of travelers.

■ Among the recommendations presented by KAC members during the trip was a suggestion to encourage travel to Israel as part of ministerial training in colleges and seminaries. I concur. With the variety of international education options available at many Baptist schools and seminaries today, it seems only natural that an option to tour or study in the Holy Land would be a tremendous benefit to ministerial students. Perhaps Baptist educational leaders on the state or national level could mobilize resources and programming to turn such an option into reality.

A similar benefit could be gained by ministers who have never had the opportunity to travel to Israel. Churches providing a trip for their pastor would be a significant investment in his ministry and a unique way to express appreciation for his service to the church.

"For evangelicals, there is nothing more important than the land of the Book," Argue emphasized. "Anybody who comes to better understand their faith will be a better witness."



The historic city of Jerusalem, viewed from the Mount of Olives, is visited by up to half a million Americans who travel to the Holy Land each year.

THE HOLY LAND



Pilgrims gather daily to pray at the Western Wall, all that remains of Jerusalem's first century temple.

Israel



Magen Broshi (left), who served 30 years as curator of the Dead Sea Scrolls, talks with visiting journalists.



The Church of the Beatitudes on the Sea of Galilee marks the traditional site where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount.



A group of nuns gathers for prayer in the remains of a fourth century synagogue in Capernaum.

Armed Forces to give Just Kids worldwide audience

By Russell N. Dilday

Arkansas Edition, Arkansas Baptist

An Arkansas-produced Christian program for children recently was picked up by the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service, giving it worldwide distribution. The partnership will expose Just Kids, which has provided children's educational and informational programming primarily for Christian markets, to the world's largest radio and television area.

Linda Bennett, who serves as owner, producer and host of the weekly 30-minute program, said that with the Armed Forces offer, her "initial dream of reaching children in our city and our state has expanded to reach not only a nationwide audience, but a worldwide audience."

Bennett noted that the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) had contacted her three years ago about the possibility of featuring Just Kids on their service. "I sent them a tape of the program and the format of the program, but I didn't hear back from them."

Then, "just a few months ago, they started contacting me again," she said. "Larry Henderson had been in a meeting with one of the guys from this area and they introduced themselves...and so we made contact."

Henderson, who is the top-ranking chaplain with the Arkansas National Guard, has also been a 10-year member of the Just Kids cast, providing a biblical interpretation segment through his talents as a ventriloquist. ☉

Following that contact, Bennett added, "the program had to be approved at the Pentagon and had to meet all of the guidelines for their programming. Once that was done, they wrote a letter welcoming us to the Armed Forces Radio and Television Network. They are at this time picking it up from satellite for distribution in 1997."

In his welcome letter, AFRTS religious programming director Chuck McGathy noted that "AFRTS...carefully selects only the best religious programming for our military and Department of Defense personnel stationed far from home. I know, as a father of two, how much quality children's programming is appreciated by the overseas audience."

McGathy also said that AFRTS geographically provides "the world's largest radio and television service."

"With the AFRTS, we have a potential of reaching a lot of adults," Bennett said. "Our target age range is preschool to sixth grade, but we have a lot of adults who watch. If there is a possibility of reaching a young serviceman on board a Navy ship

when he hears the gospel, that's what it's all about. Someone out there may hear the gospel for the first time."

Just Kids, she explained, is a children's program "that is produced to entertain, educate, and to bring children closer to Christ through teaching them biblical values."

"Each program revolves around a single Bible verse and we teach that Bible verse through my opening and we bring it in with puzzles and books that might relate to that particular Bible verse," she said. "Dr Larry Henderson and his friend, 'Jody,' bring the Scripture verse to life in about a three-minute segment where they get into the Scripture and share it in a fun way that kids can understand."

The program is produced on a shoe-

string budget by an all-volunteer staff on a set at Geyer Springs First Church, she related. "Just Kids belongs to God. I can tell you that if God had not been in this, there is no way that this program could be reaping the blessings that we are."

"In the secular world we weren't supposed to have made it. We have no budget, we have equipment that is not exactly the best and the most updated but...through all that God has taken it and placed it into an unbelievable market. In children's programming, it's unheard of for any children's program to be produced for less than \$150,000 per episode and I have \$8,000 to produce 13 new episodes coming up."

Bennett, who also is executive director of the American Christian Television System affiliate in Little Rock, noted that prior to the Armed Forces offer, the program was broadcast to markets with potential audiences of 100 million people. "We are on ACTS and FamilyNet as well as the Worship Channel...We also, this past year, have gone onto some of the small dish networks such as Sky Angel based in Florida and Primestar."



Just Kids, a Christian children's television program produced in Little Rock, has been selected to be shown by the Armed Forces television system, said producer and host Linda Bennett (center).

She noted that the growth in market areas for Just Kids is the result of the demand, brought on by recent legal initiatives, for quality children's programming on secular markets. "Because our programming has an element of education and information in it, it is appealing to these broadcasters who, all of a sudden, are finding themselves seeking additional children's programming."

She said the program's recent market expansion has left her "a bit overwhelmed. When I began Just Kids, it was developed for a Little Rock market. All of a sudden in 1991 we went on our network all over the United States and then we've gone on others. Then, when we went to worldwide coverage, it was a dream."

"When I get letters from children from California and Pennsylvania and Colorado, then it hits me that we have an audience beyond Little Rock, Ark.," she said. "It's unbelievable, from a human sense, that this is happening. When I step back and see that God can take something that we do and make it as big as He wants, then it is overwhelming."

The key to missions giving

Pastors: no secret to Cooperative Program giving, just commitment

What compels a church to give to missions through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program? According to pastors whose congregations lead the Arkansas Baptist State Convention in CP giving, commitment is a chief motivation. They said other factors range from education to maintaining a missions-support tradition.

Congregations that led the state in Cooperative Program giving were honored recently at the 1996 Arkansas Baptist State Convention for their efforts during the 1994-95 reporting period. Leading in total giving was Immanuel Church in Little Rock which gave \$427,374. First in per capita giving was First Church in Blytheville. Members there contributed an average of almost \$222 per person through undesignated gifts.

In percentage giving, Cassville Church in Deer led among churches with a membership of less than 50, giving 30.45 percent of its undesignated gifts. West Hartford Church in Hartford led churches with 50 to 300 members, giving 29.86 percent. Ridgcrest Church in Blytheville led churches with 300 to 1,000 members by giving 44.37 percent and First Church in Crosssett led churches with more than 1,000 members by giving 25.16 percent.

During the same reporting period, the average Arkansas Baptist church gave about 10.93 percent of its undesignated gifts through the Cooperative Program. While Arkansas Baptists gave more than \$16 million in undesignated receipts for the 1994-95 year, that number represents a decline in church CP giving by percentage over the past five years. Arkansas Cooperative Program giving has annually decreased an average of about 0.12 percent per church from giving in the previous year.

Bill Fuller, pastor of First, Blytheville, said that his congregation's per-capita giving leadership (\$221.96 per person) is a result of "tradition and conviction. It goes back to a time many years ago when good pastors and good laymen, people who loved the Lord, came to some very serious convictions about evangelism and missions giving. As a result, they have given 20 to 25 percent across these years."

"When I was considering this church to become its pastor," he added, "it's (giving record) spoke very loudly to me in my prayer life and my consideration. I felt that what they were doing for missions and evangelism also spoke of where their heart was in terms of where our priorities should be."

Fuller said "commitment to the Lord is key" to strong giving and that "the wise way to do that is in a cooperative effort."

Arkansas CP leaders*

#1 in total Cooperative Program gifts
Immanuel, Little Rock \$427,374

#1 in per capita Cooperative Program gifts
First, Blytheville \$221.96/person

Percentage of undesignated gifts

Churches with a membership of less than 50
Cassville, Deer 30.45%

Churches with a membership of 50-300
West Hartford, Hartford 29.86%

Churches with a membership of 300-1,000
Ridgcrest, Blytheville 44.37%

Churches with a membership of 1,000+
First, Crosssett 25.16%

*from 1994-95 Annual Church Profile

we group our nickels, dimes and quarters, we will be able to do so much more."

Jack Ramsey, new work associate in the ABCS missions department, accepted the state convention honors for Cassville, Deer. Although the church is currently without a pastor, he knows its members well - he grew up there and helped build the facility when he was 15.

He said that Cassville members agreed with Fuller that cooperation increases missions efforts. "They feel that's something they can do and that it is the best way they can be involved in world missions. They can give."

While the smaller-membership church gave more than 30 percent of its undesignated receipts to missions, Ramsey said the sacrifice was a struggle. "The biggest financial burden there is trying to keep pastoral staff. There is no employment out there, so they have to pay a traveling pastor."

But is giving any easier for larger churches? Rex Horne, pastor of Immanuel, Little Rock, doesn't think so. The church's more than \$427,000 in undesignated giving represents about 18 percent of its budget.

"In some ways it would be different, but in most ways, I don't think it would," said Horne, who also is president of the ABCS. "The demand on a larger church, when you think about staffing, programming and a lot of fixed expenses that you have, you have a lot of expenses."

"That we do give says a lot of things,"

he emphasized. "We do some extras, but we feel like the Cooperative Program is the best use of our funds."

Horne urged every Arkansas Baptist church to re-evaluate its giving through the Cooperative Program. "I know the churches can't necessarily in a year's time jump from where they are to where they need to be, but they can incrementally and I would encourage churches each year to set a five-year plan to increase giving."

"I think whether it is conventions or corporations or churches, this thing about re-evaluating is a movement that seems to be touching most every area of every organization and that's fine," he said. "I think part of being a good steward is re-examining our CP giving and, up to this point, I think when it is re-examined that most Baptists can say, 'That's the best way to be the best stewards of our money.'"

Horne also encouraged churches to re-examine the use of CP dollars in state. Currently the ABCS keeps 56.23 percent of undesignated receipts for missions causes in state and forwards 41.77 to SBC causes.

Study what Arkansas Baptists do and how we use the money," Horne urged. "When you examine our agencies and institutions, anybody would be proud with what they see as the result of our giving."

ABCS associate executive director Jimmie Sheffield added another feature of typically strong CP-giving churches: "It is a church that has a heart for missions and that usually is generated by a pastor or WMU leadership or, third, if they get active and do missions and become more involved in missions. Those are general, but all three are valid."

Be careful, though, added Fuller, to keep the Cooperative Program as the church's primary giving outlet. "I can remember that the strong point of our Cooperative Program giving was, 'We don't want all of these individualized offerings being asked for or taken, because that divides the momentum of our single focus in pooling our money into the pie.'"

"All of us together, small or large, can do a far more effective job with CP," he said, "but we're slipping a little bit into that other mold where we have good organizations, worthy groups that need to go forward, taking special offerings."

"Every time we take these special offerings, we are kidding ourselves if we don't think we're taking it out of one pocket and putting it over in the other pocket," he warned. "Most people know how much they are going to give and if they give to one, they are going to subtract it from another."

Taking Jericho

Pope, Yell county churches initiate prayer ministry to 'bring down spiritual walls'

An emphasis that covered three months, thousands of miles and saw hundreds of Christians participate in the Pope County area sought in "bring down the spiritual walls of Jericho" through innovative prayer strategies.

Tom Walker, minister of evangelism and administration for First Church in Russellville, spearheaded the multi-denominational initiative called "Operation Jericho." He said that while area churches had spent years in active evangelism efforts, "It seemed like the Lord said the missing ingredient was that we just haven't spent the time before the Lord hating it in prayer."

Walker noted several areas that planners had identified as "spiritual walls" to be breached including a recent liquor zoning battle, gambling and a rash of divorces and drugs and family break-ups. Enough is enough. It's time to repent and turn and go back to Him. Whatever wall or facade that's up there in the way, whatever's holding people back" must be taken down, he added.

"March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times..." (Joshua 6:3-4)

A central part of the operation, which began Sept. 22 and concluded Nov. 3, involved a caravan of vehicles filled with participants making an 85-mile trek that took the group through the seven participating communities of London, Dover, Hector, Atkins, Pottsville, Dardanelle and Russellville.

During each of the seven Sunday afternoon drives, said Mark Lashley, pastor of Calvary Church in Dardanelle, participants prayed for people in each of the seven communities — and even those in other vehicles — that the group passed. "It was a prayer drive," he explained. "There was no casual talking, only prayer."

Participants followed a prayer guide that requested prayer not only for each community's spiritual walls, but for civic leaders, authorities, educators, the unsaved and other Christians.

Also during the operation, participants

held a Halloween-day initiative that included establishing a 24-hour men's prayer vigil in the entrances to each of the seven communities and women praying at area churches while pausing kept a prayer vigil on Crow Mountain overlooking the Arkansas River Valley.

"When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout..." (Joshua 6:5a)

The prayer emphasis culminated in a prayer and worship rally Nov. 3 at Tucker Coliseum on the Arkansas Tech University campus in Russellville. The rally featured a testimony from Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee and, much like God had commanded of the Israelites, the blowing of a ram's horn and shout by the nearly 2,000 participants.

"Then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in" (Joshua 5:8b)

Walker said the first phase of Operation Jericho was a preparation for an evangelistic drive that will span the participating areas. He noted that 52 percent of the area's population of about 60,000 in 19,000 households are unchurched.

"We're now ready to go down to that part where we take the city," he emphasized. "We realize that when the walls fell down, everyone didn't just stand back and see what was going to happen, but every man went straight in."

Phase II, he said, will include a 15-week, five-prong effort beginning Feb. 2 dividing up the communities and mapping out areas of work. Neighborhood-based volunteer teams will be assigned duties in five areas: Prayer walk teams walking through neighborhoods in specific prayer; telephone teams calling everyone in area telephone books to pray for or with respondents; survey teams assessing neighborhood needs and religious standing; evangelism teams witnessing in homes; and discipling teams for new Christian follow-up.

Pastors like Lashley are eagerly awaiting the next phase of Operation Jericho. "God's going to be doing something — He is already doing something," Lashley affirmed. "As Experiencing God states, 'God is at work and He invites you to come with Him.'"

Group to coordinate prayers during legislative sessions

Members of a Little Rock prayer group have announced a plan to coordinate Arkansians in a concerted prayer initiative during each session of the Arkansas legislature in 1997.

Group member Mary Schroeder, a member of First Church in Little Rock, said she had "really felt a burden for us to cover the session in prayer. The prayer group I have prayed with for four years felt this, too. The eyes of the world are on Arkansas and we wanted to see what God can do and not man."

Schroeder said that the group hit upon the idea of coordinating volunteers to pray at the state capitol and from their homes as a way of affecting change in government. "We felt like we had an opportunity to come together and maybe affect a change for good for the people of Arkansas through prayer."

"We had asked God what His strategy was and His answer seemed to be a coalition of prayer groups," added Schroeder, a former member of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board and Southern Baptist Convention Committee on Committees.

The strategy, which she said is similar to one Christian groups have used in Virginia, involves coordinating volunteers to come in pairs and pray for legislative concerns in a "Legislative Prayer Network" while the law-making body is in session. Schroeder said the group has a goal of "six to come in the morning and some in the afternoon. Some can pray all day."

"In my mind, I'm thinking we could get a network of prayer warriors together and, when something comes up, we can put out the word to pray."

Besides interceding for the legislature, she said the prayer ministry may lead to other blessings, such as "friendship or a relationship with representatives" and witnessing opportunities.

The group will hold an informational meeting Jan. 8 from 9-11 a.m. at the First, Little Rock, Reception Room to formulate plans for the initiative.

For more information or to volunteer to pray at the capitol or at home, contact Schroeder at 225-1158 or 224-4484, Mary Maude Shaffer at 228-5105 or Sondra Thompson at 666-0478.

"When the walls fell down, everyone didn't just stand back and see what was going to happen, but every man went straight in."

—Tom Walker
Minister of evangelism
and administration
First Church, Russellville

FMB officials highlight global priority needs

By Mark Krilly

Foreign Missions Board

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—The world's need for the gospel has never been greater, and Southern Baptists have been given unprecedented opportunities to help bring people to Christ.

"God is moving as never before to bring a lost world to Christ," said Southern Baptist Convention president Jerry Rankin. "He's moving quickly to fulfill His promise that the gospel will be preached to all peoples before the end comes.

"There are only a few nations left in the world still closed to the gospel. I can count them on my hand," he said. "We may, in fact, be sending out the last generation of missionaries."

The Foreign Mission Board recently released a list of 750 new missionary requests for 1997 — 50 of which were labeled strategic priorities. The requests reflect needs among ethnic people groups that have never heard the gospel as well as "harvest fields" where potential response is great.

The door of opportunity has been thrown wide open in places like Russia, where Baptist leaders have requested 150 new missionaries to help start and develop churches. In other places, God has provided strategic moments to start new work in countries like Bosnia, where war has left people very receptive to the gospel.

In some places, like Mozambique or Cambodia or Mexico, response to the gospel is limited only by the number of workers available. Among some peoples, Christian professionals can carry the good news of God's love where no one has ever heard it.

The opportunities to serve are diverse, said Lloyd Atkinson, who directs the FMB's missionary selection department.

"The needs are so great we could have listed 10,000 requests," Atkinson said. "But because of limited resources we ask missionaries on the field to narrow the number down. These top 50 requests are the highest priority of the highest priority."

"As urgent as the needs are, however, at least three-fourths of these requests may not be filled," Atkinson added. "That's a real burden for me."

"But God's the one who lays a people group or country on someone's heart. He's the one who designs them through their gifts and experiences for their assignments. Surely God has someone prepared for each of these requests."

A sampling of priority requests for new overseas workers includes:

- English teacher: Teach literature, writing, grammar and conversational

Fords reappointed to South America

David and Janene Ford were among 51 people appointed Dec. 8 as Southern Baptist foreign missionaries. Mrs. Ford, a native of West Helena, and her husband are former missionaries to Argentina. They were reappointed to serve in Venezuela.

The FMB appointment service held at First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss., concluded a year in which the FMB appointed 507 new missionaries around the world to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. A similar appointment service will be held April 8, 1997, at the State-house Convention Center in Little Rock.

The service, which began with a procession of international flags, attracted an estimated 3,500 participants.

Each of the missionaries shared a brief testimony regarding their call to foreign missions and FMB president Jerry Rankin presented a charge to the

missionaries and the crowd. The FMB currently has nearly 4,200 workers serving in 127 countries among 336 ethnic people groups.

The Fords will start and develop churches and will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

Prior to their re-appointment, Ford has been minister of missions at South County Baptist Church in St. Louis. They had previously served 15 years in Argentina.

Ford, a graduate of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, considers Jefferson City, Mo., his hometown.

Mrs. Ford, who holds a nursing degree from Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, has been serving as a patient care manager at a health center in St. Louis. The Fords have two grown children.



David and Janene Ford

English 12 to 18 hours per week while developing relationships for lifestyle outreach. China

- Church developer: Strengthen churches and train church leaders and pastors using Theological Education by Extension in several responsive areas around the world where trained pastors and church leaders are needed. Mozambique, Russia, Cambodia, Nigeria.

- Church planter: Start and develop churches. Opportunities in areas where local Baptists have appealed for assistance, among ethnic groups with little or no access to the gospel and in countries recovering from civil war. Russia, Ukraine, Central Asia, Ivory Coast, Honduras, Peru, Hungary, Madagascar, Bosnia.

- Community center ministry: Manage the work of a community center, teach English and vocational/technical classes to reach people with the gospel and start house churches. Guinea.

- Student worker: Work with state youth organization and university students; help churches develop ministries to these groups. Brazil.

- Urban evangelist: Witness, disciple and plant churches; develop a model that can be used in other areas. Brazil.

- Rural health worker: Develop a community health ministry and use

contacts as opportunities for evangelism and church planting. Nigeria.

- Strategy coordinator: Study the language, culture and demographics of an ethnic group with little or no access to the gospel; develop and implement a strategy for evangelism. Asia, Southern Asia, Africa, Russia.

- Nurse: Develop mobile medical clinics as a method of sharing the gospel with Muslims whose country has been devastated by civil war. Africa.

- Trade evangelist: Learn the language and find employment using a secular skill to establish a Christian presence and practice lifestyle ministry. Egypt.

- Hospital administrator: Manage the work of a Baptist hospital that admits 4,000 patients a year. Yemen.

- Community development evangelist: Work as an evangelist, agriculturist or public health worker to begin ministry to an ethnic group with little or no access to the gospel. Mali.

There are dozens of other needs for surgeons, well drillers, children's workers, business managers, pilots, musicians and even a chemical engineer.

For information on specific needs — or to talk with someone about God's call to overseas service — call the Foreign Mission Board at 1-800-999-3113, ext. 1635.

Staff changes

Kerry Powell recently announced his resignation as pastor of First Church of McGehee, following more than eight years of ministry. Powell, a native of Warren, plans to enter full-time evangelism, effective March 1. He is a graduate of Carson-Newman College, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Trinity Theological Seminary in Indiana. He has been pastor of nine churches in four states, including First Church of Forrest City. He also was associate pastor of First Church in Little Rock and served as a chaplain in both the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force, retiring in 1991 with the rank of lieutenant colonel after more than 33 years of service. Powell, who delivered the 1996 Arkansas Baptist State Convention annual sermon, has served as vice president of the Arkansas Baptist Pastors Conference and vice chairman of trustees for Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also has been a member of the ARBC Executive Board and the Southern Baptist Convention Committee on Boards. He and his wife, Carolyn, have four sons. Brent, Jamie, Jon, Gary and Kerry Christopher. Powell may be contacted at First Church of McGehee, phone 501 222 4271 or after March 1 at P.O. Box 824, Warren, AR 71671, phone 501 226-9040.

Bert Self began his ministry Dec. 22 as pastor of First Church in Pangburn. He previously was pastor of First Church of Monetite and Grace Church of Augusta, as well as associate pastor of Youth at First



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By NELLE GILL

Church of Bay. He also has been a staff member of churches in Texas and Mississippi. Self is a graduate of Arkansas State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Rebekah, have one son, Jonathan.

Vance Marcum is pastor of Old Walnut Ridge Church. He is a student at Williams Baptist College.

Robert Leslie Willis Jr. will join the staff of Parkway Place Church in Little Rock Jan. 5 as associate pastor/worship leader. He will go there from Life Line Church of Little Rock where he has served nine years as minister of music. He previously served for seven years as minister of music for First Church of Brinkley. He also has served on the staff of First Church of Carlisle and Philadelphia Church of Jonesboro. Willis is a member of the Arkansas Master Singers. He is a graduate of Arkansas State University and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Becky, have four children: Jim, Stephen, John, Andrew. Rebekah Britti and Leslie Kathryn.

Harley F. D. Petty has announced his resignation as minister of youth at First Church of Sherwood, effective Dec. 31. He has accepted the call to join the staff of

Calvary Church in Sherwood, La., as youth minister. He previously has served Woodland Heights Church of Harrison, First Church of Conway and First Church of DeWitt. He has been associated with Focal Point Ministries since 1986, leading more than 400 seminars for churches, conventions, summer camps and retreats throughout 10 states. Petty is a graduate of Arkansas State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Leigh Ann, have two daughters, Victoria Christian and Alexandria Marie.

Tom Edwards recently resigned as pastor of First Church in Camden. He now is serving as pastor of Ramoth First Church in Palmetto, Ga. Edwards, a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, came to Camden from First Church of Dekalb, Texas. He and his wife, Vicki, have two children, Cory and Rusty.

Wayne Porter recently resigned as pastor of Daniel Chapel of Dumas. He previously served Community Chapel Church of Crossen and Locust Bayou Church and was a staff member of Trisman First Church of Hampton. He is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg and the University of Arkansas at Monticello. Porter, who is superintendent of Bradley Public Schools, is available to serve as a pulpit supply or interim pastor. He may be contacted at P.O. Box 586, Bradley, AR 71826, phone 501-894-3313 or 501-894-3606.

E. Randolph "Randy" Richards began serving Dec. 15 as interim pastor of First Church of Marked Tree. He is assistant professor of religion and philosophy and director of campus ministries for Williams Baptist College. He and his wife, Stacia, have two sons, Joshua and Jacob.

David Crouch, retired pastor of First Church in Searcy, is serving as interim pastor of First Church of Marianna.

Earl Humble, a retired professor of Williams Baptist College, is serving as interim pastor of First Church of Black Rock.

Gary Gregory is serving as interim pastor of New Hope Church at Hardy. He is a faculty member at Williams Baptist College.

Church news

Tuckerman First Church recently held a crusade that resulted in 32 professions of faith and 45 rededications. William Blackburn of Fort Smith was the evangelist and Dan Haygood of Tuckerman directed music. Pastor Danny Taylor noted that the 30 days prior to the revival included a focus on prayer, fasting and personal spiritual renewal.



Liberty Association dedicated a new office building Nov. 30. The building, located at 912 Mt. Holly Road in El Dorado, is valued at \$190,000 and was constructed at a cost of \$103,000. The 3,200-square-foot facility houses two associational offices, two offices for Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries and a large meeting room. Emil Turner, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was the guest speaker. Tommy Robertson is director of missions.

Little Rock Second Church recently held a surprise recognition for Sarah Lee in honor of 20 years of service as the church's financial and administrative secretary. She was presented with a love offering, as well as a gift of jewelry. Pastor Ray Higgins was assisted in the presentation by Jim Makoch, Gene Hornbeck and Bob Rollins.

Brush Creek Church of Springdale recently honored pastor Larry Catcher in recognition of 10 years of service. The deacon body, on behalf of the church, presented him with a clock plaque and a framed poem written by Faye Tankley.

Mount Olive Church of Crossett recently honored Jayne Pennington in recognition of 45 years of service in the nursery/pre-school area.

Red River Association held a building tour and dedication service Dec. 1 for its new facilities on Seventh Street in Arkadelphia. Shelby Cowling, pastor of Second Church in Arkadelphia was the featured speaker. Doug and Joyce Quillin of Center Point Church coordinated the fellowship hour. Maurice Hill is director of missions.

Obituaries

Delbert Lee Garrett of Texarkana died Nov. 30 at age 81. He was a member of Beech Street First Church in Texarkana. A retired Southern Baptist minister, Garrett had served as pastor of Arkansas and Oklahoma churches, including First Church of Yellowville, Eastview Church of Texarkana and First Church of Hicks.

Homier Warren Shirley Jr. of Searcy died Nov. 29 at age 70. His funeral services were held Dec. 3 at First Church of Searcy where he was a member and had been interim pastor. Shirley, who had served 45 years as a Southern Baptist minister, had been pastor of First Church of Crossett and First Church of Siloam Springs as well as interim pastor of First Church of Augusta and Floral Church. He also served as director of development for Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services from 1977 to 1983.

D.T. "Buddy" Bordeaux of Monticello died Nov. 21 at age 77. He was a member and deacon of Enon Church in Monticello where he was baptized in 1932. Survivors include his wife, Patty; one son, Danny of Monticello; one brother; three sisters; and two granddaughters.

Ordinations

Lakeshore Heights Church of Hot Springs ordained Jack Williams as a deacon Nov. 24.



Crystal Bentley



Amy Starrett



Serenity Turner



Emily Watts

Four Acteens appointed to state advisory panel

Four Arkansas Baptist Acteens have been selected to serve on the 1996-97 Arkansas Acteens Advisory Panel. The panelists will be available to speak at associational and local church Acteens events.

Panelist applications are sent out statewide during the summer. Interested individuals who meet the requirements are invited to complete an application and submit it to the state Woman's Missionary Union department. The State Youth Committee will then select four panelists and one alternate.

The panelists will preside at the Acteens Encounter, April 4-5, 1997, at Immanuel Church in Little Rock. They recently participated in a retreat where they helped plan events for Encounter, highlighting the theme, "Take Up Your Cross."

"The girls emphasized that the general sessions be worshipful experiences where they are challenged to be like Christ in their everyday teenage lifestyles," noted state Acteens director Angela Lowe.

The Encounter program will feature worship leader Mike Raymond from Jacksonville, as well as missionaries Abana and Ron Greenwith from Brazil, Glenn and Pauline Nicholson from Panama, and Kathy Johnson from Zimbabwe. Becky Nelson, youth products editor from national Woman's Missionary Union, will lead conferences for Acteens advisors.

Crystal Thomson, a recent Foreign Mission Board journeyman to Japan, will speak in the general sessions and lead conferences.

"Crystal grew up in Acteens at First Church, Green Forest," Lowe noted. "I am excited that she will be able to speak to the girls since Crystal attended

Encounters throughout her teenage years."

This year's Acteens panelists include:

Crystal Bentley of Lexa Church. She is a junior at Barton High School where she is involved in Senior Beta Club, Quiz Bowl, Band, Gifted and Talented, and Library Club. She enjoys playing the flute, singing, writing poetry and clowning.

Amy Starrett of Immanuel Church in Little Rock. She is a senior at Arkansas Baptist High School where she is active in Future Business Leaders of America, Mission Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Yearbook. She enjoys singing and acting.

Serenity Turner of Geyer Springs First Church of Little Rock. She is a senior at Parkview High School where she is active in Dance Ensemble, Alpha Omega Christian Club and drama productions. Her hobbies include softball, volleyball and knitting.

Emily Watts of Second Church in Arkadelphia. She is a senior at Arkadelphia High School where she is active in Band, Choir, Student Government and Arkadelphia Students for Christ. She enjoys performing music, working with and meeting new people.

Kimberly Musgrove of First Church in Mansfield has been selected as an alternate. She is a junior at Mansfield High School.

"What impresses me most about the panelists is their commitment to doing missions," Lowe remarked. "They have outstanding leadership skills which come through at school and church activities as well as Acteens. I commend them for their continual involvement in missions activities during their busy high school years. Their spiritual maturity was apparent as they worked together planning for the Encounter."

BWA team visits Karen refugee camp

WASHINGTON (BP)—An estimated 100,000 Karen refugees, most of whom are Baptist, live on the northern border of Thailand and Myanmar. Although they live in poverty and fear and face an uncertain future, the refugees are preaching, teaching and baptizing new believers, according to Baptist World Alliance leaders who recently visited the area. The refugees were forced to leave Myanmar because of an ongoing insurgency against the government there.

The BWA team included Denton Lee, general secretary, Tony Cuptit, director of the BWA division of study and research, Australian pastor Thorwald Lorenzen, chairman of the BWA human rights commission, and Edwin Lopez, BWA regional secretary for Asia.

While life in the refugee camps is filled with suffering, Baptist pastors have organized schools and churches that serve the estimated 100,000 refugees in the camps, the BWA team reported.

"We want peace," "We hate war" and "We want education" were among the signs held by the hundreds of schoolchildren who welcomed the BWA team. According to Robert Hirwe, president of the Karen Refugee Committee who hosted the BWA, the killing of Karens in Myanmar and government troops continues, with no reconciliation in sight.

While they have given up their fight for an independent state, the Karens say they want peace with justice and a chance to be self-governing, something the Myanmar government refuses.

Karen Baptist leaders asked Baptists around the world to pray for them. The BWA team promised to plead their cause at the United Nations and around the world and encourage Baptists to speak to their governments on behalf of the Karens.

Southern Baptist volunteerism high

VILLANOVA, PA (ABP)—Southern Baptists volunteer an average of 3.4 hours per month for their church, according to a recent study. That exceeds the average volunteering time among the four other faith groups surveyed — Assemblies of God church members (3.2 hours per month), Lutherans (2.7 hours), Presbyterians (2.7 hours) and Catholics (1.6 hours).

The study, conducted by three college professors, also suggests that volunteer time is as vital to church health as financial support. The study summarizes findings of the Lilly Endowment's study of American congregational giving.

Researchers also found that Southern Baptists who belong to larger congregations tend to volunteer more. Those polled who attended churches with 50 to 100 members volunteered an average of 3 hours per month. Members of Southern Baptist churches with more than 1,000 members volunteered almost 4 hours per month.

Volunteer time also increased with household income. Southern Baptist families earning less than \$20,000 reported volunteering 2.3 hours per month. Those making \$80,000 or more reported volunteering 5 hours per month.

Evangelism leaders focus on soul-winning

HONOLULU (BP)—State directors of evangelism, seminary evangelism professors and Home Mission Board staff seized the opportunity to practice what they teach during their recent annual winter meeting.

Seventy conference participants joined 100 members of Nuuanu Baptist Church in a Saturday block party and intensive door-to-door witnessing effort resulting in 112 professions of faith in Jesus Christ.

Located north of downtown Honolulu, Nuuanu Baptist Church sponsored the project to reach its neighborhood for Christ. Thirty-five teams were sent into the communities surrounding

the church to conduct a prospect survey and share the gospel. Other volunteers went to a local park to provide a personal witness to the 600-plus people who came for the free food and entertainment.

"The response of the local people to the visitors from the mainland was incredible," said Rick Lazee, pastor of Nuuanu. "Usually the Hawaiians are reluctant to new people."

Lazee added that the block party was unique because of the mixed demographics of the participants. "We were able to reach affluent retirees as well as gang leaders and drug addicts," he noted. "What an incredible God we serve."

During the conference, C. Thomas Wright, the HMB's director of evangelism materials, introduced a new web site that will provide an evangelistic voice to the Internet community.

The web site features information and tracts telling how to become a Christian. It also provides access to all available HMB evangelism resources as well as e-mail access to HMB evangelism staff, state evangelism staff and seminary evangelism professors. From the web site (located at <http://www.thegoodnews.org>), individuals can link to other evangelical organizations including other SBC agencies.

Sky Angel to deliver up to 50 channels

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—It's called "Sky Angel." More specifically, it's a high-power satellite located 22,300 miles out in space.

What makes it unique is that as many as 50 channels of family, ministry and educational programming will be beamed from it, including FamilyNet, the 24-hour broadcast television service of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. All that is necessary to access the programming is a compatible 18-inch dish antenna and receiver.

Programming on "Sky Angel" is from Dominion Video Satellite, Inc., of Naples, Fla., the only Christian organization in the world licensed to own and operate a Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) system. FamilyNet programming became available on the system beginning Dec. 10.

Jack Johnson, RTVC president, said that with a compatible 18-inch dish-shaped antenna and receiver, the message of the gospel can now reach virtually any home, school, church, business, hospital, nursing home or prison in America.

"Dominion's vision for 'Sky Angel' is global," Johnson noted. "Recent developments in telecommunications policy have made it possible to begin plans for worldwide evangelism via Direct Broadcast Satellites. During these last days of the preaching of the gospel is going to depend a great deal on modern technology."

Graham to use Internet for new believers

MINNEAPOLIS (BP)—In addition to calling a phone number shown on the TV screen, new believers will now be able to report their decisions for Christ after a Billy Graham telecast via a special Internet web site. The new service debuted Dec. 19 on the syndicated special, "A Joyful Christmas in a Fragile World."

Traditionally, Billy Graham crusade telecasts include a phone number which viewers can call for spiritual counseling, to report a commitment to Christ or request follow-up materials. From now on, Billy Graham television specials also will incorporate a special Internet address — <http://www.billygraham.org>.

"Using the Internet to expand Mr. Graham's ministry is a logical step in his progressive use of emerging technologies," said Stan Jackson, director of administration for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA). "This will enable individuals to hear from Mr. Graham immediately after making a commitment to Christ and obtain our traditional follow-up materials at their convenience, 24 hours a day."

Cambodian Christians risk danger

Desire to share Jesus' name is dangerous, sometimes deadly struggle

PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA (BP)—In Cambodia, the desire to share Jesus' name is a tedious, dangerous and sometimes deadly struggle — even today.

When a Baptist volunteer shared the gospel with a group of Cambodian women in their primitive home, she learned that villagers had been told they were not to follow Jesus Christ. One woman said some Christians once lived in that village, but one by one, they mysteriously disappeared.

In Cambodia, Christians do disappear. They are abandoned. They must work within boundaries set by district leaders and other government officials. They even still come face-to-face with dreaded Khmer Rouge rebels.

Whatever the threat may be, accepting Christianity often means stepping into danger. So Christians are few — but strong.

On a recent volunteer trip, Jamie Atkinson told how one Cambodian man prayed to receive Jesus Christ as Savior despite his fears.

"We went to a little hut where this one man was staying, and we shared the gospel with him for about an hour and a half to two hours. He was really intently listening to us," Atkinson said. The man committed himself to Jesus, then asked, "Now that I've accepted Christ, what am I going to do, because now they are going to come and kill me."

Shaw, a Christian woman who lives in southwestern Cambodia, is another such follower. When Shaw announced plans to show the "Jehus" film, threats came not from her predominantly Buddhist neighbors but from area police. "If you show that film and start any outreach, I am going to burn your house down and take your children," volunteer Danny Evans quoted the police chief as saying.

The threat came after Evans and two Khmer Christians made a trek to Krong



This house church in Cambodia meets and thrives near the village of Tum Natrach. Despite persecution, Cambodian Christians continue to worship and witness.

Kaoh Kong, the provincial capital, at the chief's insistence. Eight religious officials interrogated the men for four hours.

"These people had never seen a Bible. We had to show them a Bible. They had never heard the name Jesus, so we had to tell them who He was," Evans said. "Eventually, after several hours of going back and forth, they got the paperwork and they all stamped it and put their signatures on it. God blessed it, and we got all the paperwork to spread the gospel."

But the area police chief still was not satisfied. "You know what Shaw did? She showed it anyway," Evans noted. "She said, 'I don't care. I know Jesus.'" Police officers with M-16s on their shoulders arrived, but they did not disturb the presentation. Fifteen of Shaw's neighbors accepted Jesus that night.

The story of Shaw and her Christian friends is just one example of the perse-

cution leveled against Christians in Cambodia today.

One woman Atkinson met was abandoned by her family when she decided to follow Christ two years ago. Now she harvests lotus nuts to support herself. She offers her house as a place of worship on Sundays and every evening. Her husband and two children live within a mile of her home but never come to see her. She is what some would refer to as the village's "man of peace."

Based on Luke 10:6, the man of peace is the open door to a village's receptivity to the gospel. Sometimes the man of peace may be a village leader, a young man or even a great grandmother.

"You look for that 'man of peace' in every village and you go there, and you stay there until you have the work planted," said one Cooperative Services International (CSI) worker formerly in Cambodia. CSI is Southern Baptists' humanitarian aid agency.

Cambodian pastor Leng Sovann oversees more than a dozen churches. Each day he travels by motorbike to villages in the Battambang area where Christ's name often has not been heard.

Although Leng and others serve despite hardship, many Cambodians long to hear the truth. Volunteer groups, invited to Cambodia by the Khmer Baptist Convention, have been reaching some of them.

One searching man's question posed to volunteer Mark Hopkins illustrates the need. Recalled Hopkins: "He asked, 'Did you need God create every country, even Cambodia? Then why did it take so long for someone to come tell us?'"

Missionary notes

Mike and Kerry Gilchrist, missionaries to the Windward Islands, are in the States (address: 18715 Kanis Rd., Little Rock, AR 72211). He considers Shreveport, La., his hometown. She is the former Kerry Duke of El Dorado. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1993.

Ronald and Alana Greenwich, missionaries to Brazil, are in the States (address: 601 S. Hughes, Little Rock, AR 72205). Both consider Monticello their hometown. The former Alana Ichtler, she is the daughter of missionaries to Brazil. They were appointed in 1983.

Scott and Sandra George, missionaries to Portugal, have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service (address: Av. dos Bombeiros Voluntar, No. 46, 3 Esq., 1495 Alges, Portugal). He is a native of Ohio. The former Sandra Fruland, she considers Rogers her hometown. They were appointed in 1996.

Donald and Erma Highfill, missionaries to Brazil, are in the States (address: 1306 S. 36th St., St. Joseph, MO 64507). He lived in Mansfield while growing up. She is the former Erma Hawkins of Missouri. They were appointed in 1973.

Award-winning chaplain views prison inmates as 'just people'

By Colleen Beckler

Assistant Editor, Arkansas Baptist

"They are just people," explained Pat Allen. But as a prison chaplain, his "people" are inmates. Allen's ability to relate to them with honesty and compassion has resulted in Allen being named Chaplain of the Year by the Rock of Ages Prison Ministry during their recent national convention.

Allen, a senior chaplain at the Arkansas Department of Corrections Cummins Unit in Pine Bluff, became a chaplain after his retirement from the military. A 20 year veteran of the U.S. Air Force, Allen had been stationed from Florida to Maine and in Puerto Rico, Panama and Hawaii. His spiritual roots, however, remained close to his home in Alabama. "I don't remember a time when I wasn't going to a Southern Baptist church," he noted. "I grew up in a coal-mining town in the foothills — you had to go there on purpose.

"I fought the ministry for 15 years," he explained. "My dad was a bivocational preacher and I'd do everything in whatever church we were in — but I didn't want to be a preacher." In addition to his chaplaincy duties, Allen serves as associate pastor of Yorktown First Church.

After retiring from the military, Allen went to college and then seminary. While finishing his degree at Southwestern Seminary, he taught GED courses at a halfway house. "The man who ran the halfway house wanted to know if I'd work as a counselor," Allen said. So he went to work at the halfway house and found he had a gift for relating to inmates.

"I wrote all the state departments of corrections asking about chaplaincy," he noted. "Arkansas was kind of unique — my letter was sent back." But two members of the chaplaincy program sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention visited Southwestern's campus to interview people for a chaplain intern position, and Allen got the job. "We got to Arkansas on faith," he added. "We just barely had enough money to get here."

Staying in Arkansas also was a "miracle," he pointed out, noting that even though prison officials wanted him to stay after his year as an intern, there was a state



Pat Allen

having freeze. Prison officials found an "unless necessary" clause in the employment documents and were able to keep Allen at Cummins, where he has served for more than 10 years.

Rock of Ages Prison Ministry is an international organization with headquarters based in Tennessee. Participants minister in prisons all over the United States and in some foreign countries. Organization officials informed Allen that he was the first chaplain ever to be named Chaplain of the Year by a unanimous vote.

Marion Reynolds, ABSC chaplaincy director, noted that Allen has had a long-term relationship with the state convention. "He is held in the highest esteem by fellow chaplains and prison staff," Reynolds affirmed.

"You can never plan a week or a day like a pastor can — it's minute to minute," Allen explained. "One minute you may be talking to a young man who never went to high school and the next having a conversation with a doctor or lawyer."

"The secret to working with inmates is to be yourself," Allen remarked. "I try to treat everyone the same, whether they come to church services or not."

There is no such thing as a 40-hour week in chaplaincy, Allen commented. He pointed out that he and his wife, Mary, "a big supporter of the ministry," live on the prison grounds. Emergencies and death notices call him out at all hours. "Death notices are the hardest," he acknowledged.

Other news is less devastating. "I recently got a phone call from a lady just sobbing," he related. "It took me a while to calm her down. She wanted me to tell her son that his dog got run over, but was going to be all right. He had asked her to look after it while he was away — she felt that it was her fault."

As he performs his duties, Allen emphasized that "you can't be hung up on numbers, because your victory might just be a smile." Life-changing spiritual victories are often won only after lengthy periods of time, he added. "This spring, a bitter, non-Christian man accepted Christ and is very active in Christian work now," he shared. "I'd been working with him since 1984."

"There was another boy who was fooling around with a non-Christian group but still coming to church occasionally because he was raised a Baptist. When his mom was dying of cancer, the Christian men gathered around him and demonstrated love for him. He recently came forward to be a Christian because he could see the difference."

Intentional Interim Ministry available, workshop planned

Four men trained for Intentional Interim Ministry are available to serve Arkansas Baptist churches "between pastors," said the director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's church leadership support department. In addition, a February training session will host ministers who wish to receive IIM training.

"Intentional Interim Ministry is a process to assist churches during the crucial time between pastors," explained Bruce Swihart.

Noting that intentional interim pastors for Southern Baptists is a new concept, he added, "IIM differs from a traditional interim in that a church agrees to go through a process designed to provide a time of reflection on their history, vision making, leadership development, problem solving and preparation for the coming of the new pastor."

"The interim time becomes a time for healing, growth and development of the church," he explained. "An intentional interim minister serves at least half-time until the new pastor is called and arrives on the field. This type of ministry offers stability, continuity and purpose during the transition between pastors."

He noted that intentional interim ministers are trained to assist churches in using the interim time "to deal with issues that will make the coming of a new pastor more effective and aid him in more quickly establishing his ministry with the church."

Those who have completed IIM training include: Jeff Cheatham, director of missions for Arkansas River Valley Association; L.B. Jordan, retired director of the ABSC church leadership support department; Billy Kite, retired DOM for Ashley Association; and Swihart.

The CLS department also is sponsoring "Interim Ministry for Today's Church," Feb. 10-12, 1997.

The cost for the event is \$175 per person and includes all materials. Registration received by Jan. 10 will be \$150. This conference qualifies as 15 hours of the 60 hours required for certification as an intentional interim minister.

More information about IIM is available from Swihart at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally at 376-4791, ext. 5148.

Lewis concludes HMB service

Cites numerical growth, 'doctrinal integrity' as accomplishments

ALPHARETTA, GA (ABP)—Retiring Southern Baptist Home Mission Board president Larry Lewis listed numerical growth and maintaining "doctrinal integrity" as accomplishments of his 10-year tenure in his final report to the agency's board of directors Dec. 11.

He also called on Southern Baptist leaders to maintain the HMB's strong emphasis on church planting, ministry and missions after the agency's merger next year with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television and Brotherhood commissions.

Lewis, 61, retires Dec. 31 to become national facilitator for Mission America's Celebrate Jesus 2000, a multi-denominational effort emphasizing prayer and evangelism. Southern Baptists are among more than 100 denominational and parachurch groups involved in the effort, Lewis said.

HMB directors adopted two resolutions of appreciation for Lewis in a meeting Dec. 11. A day earlier, trustees and colleagues honored Lewis at a banquet, at which he was presented a new car, a 1997 Mercury. The car was part of a severance package approved earlier by the board's administrative committee.

Also at the meeting, trustees elected Ernest Kelley as interim president, effective Jan. 1. Kelley is executive vice president

for planning and finance at the HMB.

Under Lewis' leadership, the HMB reported increases in baptisms, new church starts and the number of missionaries. The board also appointed a record number of chaplains and the number of missions volunteers increased.

Lewis said "doctrinal integrity," while not a stated goal of the convention, has been a "major concern" of Southern Baptists for two decades.

"The best strategy for reaching America for Christ... is establishing Bible-preaching, soul-winning churches."

—Larry Lewis
Retiring HMB president



"From the outset of my tenure as president, ensuring doctrinal integrity has been a major objective," Lewis said. "No one has been employed or elected to a staff position, no one has been approved as a missionary, who did not affirm the inerrancy of the Scripture, the reality of the miracles, the validity of the biblical narratives or the divinity of Jesus."

"Personally, I don't think anybody ought to be employed at the Home Mission Board or teach at our seminaries who does not believe the Bible is the inerrant, inspired, infallible Word of God," he said.

Lewis challenged the North American Mission Board to continue HMB emphases of church-starting, ministry and missions.

"I believe the best strategy for reaching America for Christ or for ministry is establishing Bible-preaching, soul-winning churches throughout the land," Lewis said.

He urged the agency to continue to reach out in starting new black and ethnic churches, where he said most of the SBC's numerical growth has taken place during the last decade. "If Southern Baptists de-prioritize church planting, we will not continue to grow," Lewis said.

He also joined Brotherhood Commission president Jim Williams in urging that the North American Mission Board receive funding at least equal to current levels at the three agencies being combined.

"The rationale for the consolidation of three agencies... is so we would have more money for the field," he said. "I do not believe Southern Baptists want the money saved through the consolidation to be diverted to causes other than home missions."

Hawaii judge rejects ban on homosexual marriage

WASHINGTON (BP/ABP)—A circuit court judge has opened the door for Hawaii to become the first state to permit homosexual marriage. According to a ruling by Judge Kevin Chang, the state failed to demonstrate it had a compelling interest in prohibiting homosexuals from marrying and struck down Hawaii's ban on such unions.

The favorable decision for homosexual marriage had been anticipated for many months and had prompted some states and the federal government to act in preparation.

By September, Congress had overwhelmingly approved and President Clinton had signed the Defense of Marriage Act, which was designed to strengthen states' authority to refuse recognition of same-sex marriages. Sixteen states have enacted legislation banning homosexual marriages.

The concern of Congress and the states is that a legal same-sex marriage performed in Hawaii likely would have to be recognized by other states unless they are able to show they have a compelling interest in opposing such unions.

The ruling highlights the significance of the Defense of Marriage Act, noted U.S. Rep. Charles Canady (R-Fla). Passage of the act "means that neither the federal government nor the states will be required to give effect to same-sex 'marriages' that might now take place in Hawaii," Canady said.

The court ruling stemmed from a lawsuit by three homosexual couples in 1991 who claimed being denied the right to marry violated an equal rights amendment in the state's constitution.

After a trial court ruled against them, they won an appeal to Hawaii's Supreme Court, which overturned the lower court's ruling and ordered the state to demonstrate a "compelling interest" to prohibit same-sex marriages. The Hawaii government is appealing the decision to the state Supreme Court, which is expected to uphold the lower court's opinion.

While homosexual rights advocates praised the decision, opponents of same-sex marriage denounced it.

"The Bible is very clear that homosexuality is a sin," said Will Dodson, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's director of government relations. "From a biblical perspective, it goes without saying that this sin is harmful to the individuals who commit it and has a harmful effect upon society as a whole."

"What is morally wrong should not be a legal right. There is no reason to believe from the plain meaning of the Hawaii constitution that indeed homosexuality is protected. Nevertheless, a Hawaii court has determined that homosexuality is not wrong and that it is constitutionally protected. The court is wrong on both counts."

"Whether or not one agrees with homosexual marriage," Dodson said, "everyone should be concerned about a judiciary which is willing to usurp power by ignoring its responsibility to interpret the law and not make the law."

Judge Chang issued a stay in his ruling pending the appeal, saying it would be confusing for homosexuals to marry under the law should it later be invalidated.

Concerns prompt Southwestern to cancel spring journal

FORT WORTH, TX (CBP/EP)—The spring issue of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's scholarly journal has been canceled "in the best interests of Southwestern and the Southern Baptist Convention," according to seminary president Ken Hemphill.

The journal was to contain "The Baptist Faith and Message" statement and was scheduled to include articles by William Hendricks, Molly Marshall and Bill Leonard, all Baptist scholars who are former professors at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Hemphill said the presence of those writers had a bearing on his decision, noting that he did not believe Southwestern's journal should serve as a forum for former faculty members of Southern Seminary to share their views without a "balanced response." In the perception of the SBC, he said, these do not stand for a strongly conservative view of The Baptist Faith and Message' statement.

He added, however, that the need for "an improved format and design to enable us to feature our faculty and other authors" was the overriding factor in canceling the spring issue of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology*.

According to Jeff Pool, Southwestern professor and editor of the spring issue, the articles were both balanced and sensitive. "The content of the articles was very balanced," he said. "They were fair assessments in light of the broader history of the SBC. The authors knew the sensitive nature of the (journal) and were careful not to be offensive."

Both Marshall and Leonard said their

articles were balanced. "I was never asked to write about history in terms of one side or the other," said Leonard, a professor of church history.

Critics called Hemphill's decision a blow to academic freedom. A Fort Worth pastor and several seminary faculty members and students complained that the cancellation constituted censorship.

Hendricks noted, however, that "I understand the president's position... This would have presented a problem for any of the Southern Baptist agencies to produce at this time. There is still work in this country."

Most of the writers have asked for their manuscripts back so that another publisher can be sought. The journal's board of editors agreed Dec. 10 to release the articles to the authors.

Hemphill, who is the general editor of the journal, emphasized his overriding

reason for canceling the spring issue was to consider an improved format and design. "I have been looking at re-staffing it for a year and a half," he said.

Such a redesign will halt production of the summer issue and perhaps send the journal into a yearlong hiatus, said editor William Tillman, Circulation, in addition to current students who are required to purchase the journal, a \$60.

"Southwestern has set an intentional course to be faithful to our Southern Baptist constituency, to honor God's Word and to turn our students who love the Lord, His church and the lost world," Hemphill emphasized. "Southwestern remains committed to producing a journal of excellence that will present scholarly articles as well as practical applications of the theology and helps toward spiritual formation."

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Georgia Baptist committees to investigate Godsey book

ATLANTA (ABF)—Georgia Baptist leaders have decided to continue their investigation into writings by Mercer University president Kirby Godsey, authoring two committees to study issues raised by Godsey's book, *When We Talk About God, Let's Be Honest*.

One committee will identify passages in the book that trouble conservatives, discuss those passages with Godsey and ask him to explain them in writing. Godsey's explanation, written in consultation with the committee, will be published in the *Christian Index*, the Georgia Baptist newspaper.

The other committee will study the relationship between the Georgia Baptist Convention and Mercer University, where Godsey 61 has been president since 1979.

Both actions, conducted in executive session, came five days after the university's trustees affirmed Godsey in response to an earlier resolution by Georgia Baptists raising concerns about the book.

That resolution, adopted by the executive committee in September and endorsed by the Georgia Baptist Convention in November, said Godsey's book "departed significantly" from Baptist teaching and injured the state convention, which sponsors Mercer, the nation's second-largest Baptist university.

Among controversial issues are Godsey's view that the Bible should not be

taken literally and questions he raises about traditional church teachings, including original sin and the virgin birth.

Mercer trustees, however, said in their opinion Godsey's book has had "no adverse effect" on the university's mission.

"We think the publication of this book is well within the bounds of appropriate scholarly work," said David Hudson, chairman of the executive committee of Mercer's board.

The Mercer resolution, approved unanimously by the 39 trustees present, supported Godsey's leadership and character, affirmed "without reservation" Mercer's commitment to remaining a Baptist university and asked Georgia Baptists to honor the trustee system which makes the board of trustees ultimately responsible for guiding the university and "adherence to its Baptist heritage."

The trustees "carefully considered" the Georgia Baptist resolution and "understand the good spirit and concern from which it flows," their resolution stated. "Respectfully, we respond that the views of president Godsey do not exceed the boundaries of academic independence in a Baptist university."

Godsey told reporters that he has "no reservation" about either committee. "I look forward, in any way, in any context, with any person, to discuss my writings and my book," he said.

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Study finds most unchurched are 'too busy' to attend

ATLANTA (AP)—Most people who don't attend church stay away not because of hostility toward organized religion but because they believe they are too busy to attend, according to a recent report by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Almost four in 10 participants surveyed said unchurched Americans are "too busy" to attend church. "It's the agency's research division reported. The survey, called Project Discovery, was conducted by four Baptist groups around Washington, D.C.

Four out of 10 people say they are not actively involved in a congregation, synagogue or other house of worship, the survey found. The study also showed that unchurched Americans tend to be younger and disproportionately male.

People polled in the survey were asked

to explain why they believe people don't go to church. "Too busy" was the No. 1 answer. The next most common response was "don't know."

The third reason, cited by about one in six of the people polled (15.8 percent), indicated a specific problem with the church. Responses included such reasons as "they are just after the money" and "they are full of hypocrites."

While about half of those surveyed expressed neutral feelings toward religious groups, the researchers noted that Southern Baptists have a public relations problem when compared to other denominations.

Presbyterians topped the list of groups that generated favorable attitudes among unchurched people, generating those feelings in 45.2 percent of respondents. Next

came United Methodists (38.5 percent), Roman Catholics (34.5) and all types of Baptists (33.2). Southern Baptists came in eighth out of 19 groups, with a 37 percent favorable rating among the unchurched.

"Compared to other Christian groups, Southern Baptists had the highest percentage of negative opinions expressed and were among those with the lowest favorable ratings," the researchers noted. "While not critical, Southern Baptists do have a public relations problem that is not shared by Baptists in general."

This perception may be accounted by secular media coverage, they speculated, noting that "Southern Baptists should intentionally communicate the positive values of love, concern, caring, forgiveness and grace that make up their Christian faith."

MK prayer calendar

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■ Jan. 3 Cindy Miller, OBU Box 3937, Arkadelphia, AR *1998-0001 freshman from Uruguay

■ Jan 13 Shannon Byrd, WBC Box 3553, College City, AR 72476; senior from Russia

■ Jan 18 Rachel Spiegl, OBU Box 3147, freshman from Brazil

■ Jan. 19 Karrie Cowin, OBU Box 3256, freshman from the West Indies

■ Jan 22 Tim Gary, OBU Box 3921; senior from Guadeloupe

■ Jan 28 Nick Jones, OBU Box 3947; freshman from Tanzania

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MUSIC MINISTRY

Blankenship urges musicians to lead in spiritual warfare

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Church music leaders need to take their songs outside the church to meet the needs of today's people, just as musicians in the Bible accomplished similar tasks, a national church music director has challenged other musicians.

Speaking to state church music leaders during annual planning sessions at the Baptist Sunday School Board, Dec. 5-6, Mark Blankenship, director of the BSSB's music ministries department, said music ministry today may be too focused inside the walls of churches.

While early Christian musicians led in battle, ministered in prison and soothed sufferers, Blankenship said he wonders if today's singers "are on the battlefield as we engage the enemy in spiritual warfare."

"When is the last time the imprisoned have heard your voice or mine singing of God's love and grace?" he asked.

"I fear that most of the time we are content to sit in our refurbished edifices of spiritual friendship and rarely venture out with our music to confront the bastions of apathy, poverty, war, racial tension, moral laws or the misinterpretations of sound moral laws," he said.

He warned against musicians only feeding "the insatiable Christian music appetite of average church members while rarely sharing the music of our faith outside the walls of our structures."

The message of God's peace, he said, can be taken to political arenas, nursing homes, war zones, mass communication outlets, to the homeless and the poor, among others.

He urged Southern Baptist music leaders to be "the visionary expanders of how our wonderful music ministries can touch people where they are, not just in our churches."

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Family Bible

Preparing the way

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

Book passage: Mark 1:1-15;
Luke 7:18-30

Focal passages: Mark 1:1-8
Central truths: The authenticity of
our Christian life helps prepare the
way for others to know Jesus.

John the Baptist stepped into history as a prophet preparing the way of the Lord. He came "preaching a baptism of repentance" (v 4). The Jews were familiar with ritual washing, but John's baptism was accompanied with confession and forgiveness of sins (vv 4-5). He asked Jews to submit to a full immersion, the baptism of a cleansed life rather than the Jewish ritual of sprinkling with water.

It is clear that John the Baptist's ministry was enormously effective because the people flocked to hear him and to submit to his baptism (v 5). Why do you suppose he made that kind of impact?

■ **Because he lived his message.** His life was a protest against the wickedness of his day. He lived in the wilderness (v 4) to give himself a chance to hear God's voice. He wore unfashionable clothing (v. 6). To observe him was to be reminded that he had identified with the prophets and rejected luxuries that can kill the soul. Legion are the people whose lives do not match their message. John the Baptist was as authentic as his message.

■ **Because his message was true.** John's message demanded a decision. An effective message is one which speaks to a person's heart by someone who has the right to speak that message. For about 400 years, no prophetic voice had been heard. People were hungry for a fresh word from God. John the Baptist was a speaker who knew God and convinced those who heard him.

■ **Because he was completely humble.** His own judgment of himself was that he was not fit for the duty of an ordinary slave (v. 7). To remove someone's sandals was the work of a slave. John asked nothing for himself but everything for the Christ who was to come shortly.

■ **Because his message pointed to someone greater than himself.** He told the people that baptism could cleanse the body, but the Holy Spirit could cleanse a person's life, heart and self.

God saves us so that we may prepare the way for others to receive Jesus. Who are we is to mirror all that Jesus is.

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Life and Work

Lord of the stormy seas

By Tim Beidlin, director of missions,
Central Association

Book passage: Matthew 8:23-27;
14:22-23

Focal passages: Matthew 8:25-26;
14:24-31

Central truths: Jesus can be trusted in all of life's circumstances.

Jesus is not just a fair-weather friend. You can trust Him when life's storms are raging as well as when the sun is shining. This is the important lesson we learn in our texts for today.

In both accounts, Jesus' followers found themselves in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. Both times, the Lord demonstrated His power over the wind and waves as He came to their rescue. On both occasions, He taught them the overcoming value of faith. A faith that sustains us during the storms of life works only because of some important truths about the person and power of our Lord.

■ **Jesus cares!** In Mark's parallel account of our first story (v 4:38) the disciples asked, "Do you not care if we perish?" Jesus always cares! His love will not always keep us out of the storm, but it will always deliver us through it.

■ **Jesus sees!** He is always aware of our need, even before we know we are in danger. Mark's account of the second story (Mark 6:48) states, "He saw them toiling." He who sees the sparrow fall never fails to see us when we are in danger.

■ **Jesus comes!** In the first story, He was in the boat with them the whole time. In the second, He came in the height of their distress. Both times, the disciples discovered the reality of God's promise never to leave or forsake those He loves. How comforting to know that when the storm rages about us, Jesus is "in the safe boat" with us — or walking alongside, ready to save us when we call to Him for aid.

■ **Jesus can!** His power is greater than the oppressive strength of the storm. No wonder that in both episodes all who saw it marveled at the wonder-working power of our Lord!

Do the storms of life ever threaten to overcome you? Is your faith stretched to the limit by the fearful circumstances you face? Remember these truths about Jesus. He cares about you. He knows what you are going through. He always comes to your rescue. He is infinitely able to deliver you. You can trust your life to a Lord like that — even in stormy weather!

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Explore the Bible

The children of faith

By Bill Bowen, pastor,
First Church, Meigs

Book passage: Matthew 18
Focal passage: Matthew 18:3-9
Central truths: Believers must receive each other in love and guard their mutual relationship to God.

Jesus introduces us to the kingdom of God through the eyes of a child. With innocence in his eyes, a little boy came to Jesus when He called. As the child stood next to Him, Jesus told the crowd that the humility of the child was an example of the attitude of the child of God.

In chapter 18, Jesus gave several examples of attitudes the child of God should possess. As He laid down the pattern of living for Christians, He demonstrated how the child of God is to treat other believers. The simplicity of the child's life and faith serves as the model for humility in our lives.

■ **We should receive other believers.** In verse 5, Jesus used the child as an example of anyone who comes to Him. As believers, we are to be open to all who come into the kingdom of God. Believers are part of the body of Christ. Thus, Jesus reminds us that when we receive a new believer we are receiving Him.

■ **We should guard other believers.** In verse 6, Jesus warned us that we have a responsibility to guard our relationships with other believers. Our actions can cause others to sin. This warning is so severe that Jesus used the example of a form of execution used by the Romans to illustrate it: The Romans tied a millstone around the neck of the condemned, took him into deep water and threw him overboard to drown. In stark contrast, Jesus said it would be better to die that torturous death than cause a brother to stumble.

■ **We should control our witness to other believers.** In verses 7-9, Jesus encouraged us to look at our own lives. If our self-inventory shows sinful ways that cause others to stumble, they should be dealt with severely. As Jesus said, figuratively, in verse 9, "If your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away." Jesus considered our relationship to other believers to be so important that we should do whatever is necessary to keep from sinning. In verse 9, Jesus was not saying that Christians face the danger of hell. He was using that reminder that sin is dangerous and we must deal with sin decisively in our lives to keep others from stumbling.

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Family Bible

A servant heart

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

Basic passage: Luke 10:38-42;

John 12:1-8

Focal passage: Luke 10:38-42;

John 12:1-8

Central truth: Service meets a need.

Fortunately, God does not make us all alike. And it is not His intent that everyone serves Him in the same way. It is God's intent that each believer develop a servant heart. There were many who were blessed by Jesus' miracles and His presence, but there were only a few who took time to be His friends. Mary, Martha and Lazarus were true friends of Jesus.

God allows each of us to be a friend of Jesus in a manner that befits our personality. Martha was a dynamo of activity. Mary was contemplative. It is difficult for an active person to understand one who studies things out. The person who meditates may actually look down on the one who is always doing something. However, both kinds can serve our Lord effectively.

Luke gives some insight into the clash of temperaments. When Jesus came to Bethany (v. 38), Mary "sat at the Lord's feet listening to what He said" (v. 39). Martha was frustrated by Mary's unwillingness to help her. Martha strained to make "preparations" for their guest. She asked Jesus to make Mary assist her (v. 40). Martha did not yet understand Jesus' needs. Mary had "chosen what is better" (v. 42). He said, He asked Martha not to worry about how Mary was serving Him.

Martha showed the wrong type of kindness. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to face the cross. He had come to Bethany to relax. Martha was eager to celebrate His presence. He wanted an oasis of calm.

Mary understood what Martha did not. This is one of the great difficulties of life. We desire to be kind, but in our own way. As servants, the first requirement is to understand the hearts of those we serve. True servant ministry causes us to set aside our own plans and ideas to be helpful.

Later, the apostle John related that "Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with Him" (v. 2). Mary anointed Jesus with expensive perfume, for the day of His burial (v. 7). That day the ministries of Mary and Martha were a blessing to Jesus because they served to meet His needs. Develop a servant heart for Jesus and others.

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Life and Work

Power over demons

By Tim Bebbin, director of missions,
Central Association

Basic passage: Matthew 8:28-34;

12:22-32

Focal passage: Matthew 8:28-32;

12:22-30

Central truth: Jesus demonstrates His right to rule in any life by His power over the forces of evil.

"Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4b).

John was aged when he penned these comforting words. But as he wrote, his memory may well have replayed the incidents in today's Scripture passages, for these were among his first times to witness such amazing power firsthand.

Both stories relate examples of the incredible hold demonic forces can exert over the lives of people. Satan is real and so are his demons. His power can be manifested in a variety of ways, all of which counteract the divine purpose for which we were created.

Think of all the seemingly senseless and self-destructive behaviors of people today. Drug and alcohol abuse, sexual perversion and addictive and violent lifestyles are all around us. Could it be that our own eyes are witnessing the continuing drama of satanic oppression?

The focus of Scripture is not on the power of the devil, but rather on the power and authority of God to overcome evil. The greatest contest between light and darkness occurred not in the account of the Gadarene demoniac nor in the story of the possessed man who was sightless and speechless, but on the hill of Calvary.

On the cross, Jesus faced the onslaught of hell and won. By faith, we can enter into His victory. "For I am persuaded, that neither...principalities, nor powers, ... nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

You do not have to face Satan alone. The power of God is greater than all the forces of darkness. He who cast Lucifer from heaven's glory and who someday will bind Satan and cast him into the lake of fire and brimstone will also exercise His miraculous power on your behalf as you trust in Him.

Christ is Lord, even in the realm of sin and temptation. So "submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

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Explore the Bible

The lost young ruler

By Bill Bower, pastor,
First Church, Mesa

Basic passage: Matthew 19

Focal passage: Matthew 19:16-22

Central truth: Salvation involves complete surrender to Jesus Christ.

Perhaps all church leaders have known people who made a decision for Christ, may have come to church for a while and been baptized, but then disappeared. What happened to their relationship to Christ? 1 John 2:19 makes a disturbing statement: "They went out from us, but they were not really of us, for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us."

In Matthew 19, Jesus gives an example of a person who came to Him wanting to obtain eternal life. If a poll had been taken of the rich young ruler's friends, many of them would have said he was a good candidate to have eternal life. He was blessed by God, he was a good man and had done good things. Whatever good qualities this young man had, he knew there was something missing. That searching for God caused him to seek out Jesus.

Jesus knew this man was struggling with his own religiosity. Jesus quickly pointed out in verse 17 that there was only One who is good. If the young man viewed Jesus as only a great teacher, then he would argue that he was just as good as Jesus. However, if he recognized Jesus as the Messiah, he would have to submit to His goodness as Lord and Savior. The proof came in the qualification Jesus gave for him to be saved. In verse 21, Jesus instructed him to go and sell his possessions and give to the poor.

Wealth stood between this man and God. He was almost ready to be saved, but not quite. He could not submit to the Lordship of Christ because he was unwilling to surrender that one area of his life to God. This sin of trusting in his possessions instead of Christ kept him out of heaven. Another wealthy man in Scripture turned from his possessions to receive Christ. Luke 19:6 says that Zaccheus received Christ gladly. Jesus pronounced in verse 9, "Today salvation has come to this house..."

Many things keep people from coming to Christ. A person may say they want to be saved, but there was never a time when they submitted something in their lives that stands between Christ and them. That becomes their god instead of Jesus.

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