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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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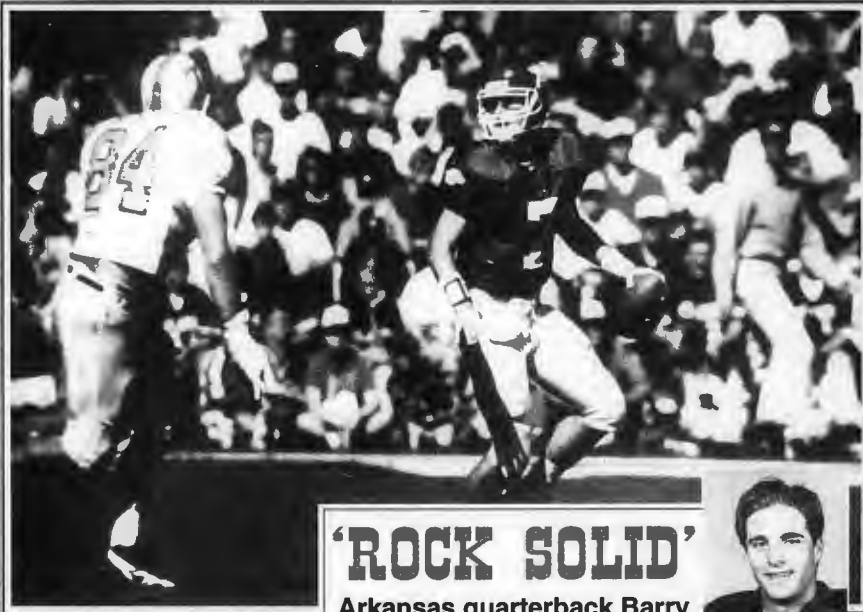
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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 94, Number 26

December 28, 1995



'ROCK SOLID'

Arkansas quarterback Barry Lunney, who has led the '95 Razorbacks to their most successful football season in

recent years, said the real key to his happiness in life is his personal relationship with Jesus Christ - "the Solid Rock."



Two Arkansans among new SBC foreign missionaries

Two Arkansans were among 38 people appointed missionaries by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board Dec. 12 at Broadmore Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn.

Lynn Henderson will live in Ghana, where she will work as business manager and treasurer for west Africa and be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

Born in Helena, Henderson is the daughter of Peggy Henderson of West Helena and Henry L. Henderson of Texas. While growing up she also lived in West Helena and Lexa and considers Lexa Church her home church.

She is a graduate of Philips County Community College in Helena and Williams Baptist College in Walnut Ridge and also attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She served as a missionary journeyman in Gambia and a summer missionary in Arkansas and Illinois.

Connie L. Robbins will live in Russia, where she will work with women as well as be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

Born and raised in Clarksville, Robbins is the daughter of Dena Robbins of that city and the late Meno Robbins. She is a member of First Church in Clarksville.

Robbins is a graduate of Arkansas Tech University in Russellville and Southwestern

Baptist Theological Seminary. She also attended the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She was an accountant with two firms in Little Rock and recently served as an FMB International Service Corps missions volunteer in Russia.

The 38 new missionaries bring the FMB's total missionary count to 4,139. That figure includes 3,515 career and associate missionaries and 624 two-year workers. FMB officials appointed a total of 542 missionaries during 1995, just short of the 1994 record of 545.

During the commissioning service, Avery Willis, the FMB's senior vice president for overseas operations, reminded the new missionaries they were not going on a mission for the FMB or Southern Baptists. Instead, he declared, "You're going on a mission with God. It is God's mission."

FMB president Jerry Rankin emphasized that the new missionaries face "the reality of a lost world, but they have freedom with the obedience to God's call."

Noting that "it is never too late to respond to God's call," Rankin added, "God can use anybody when you respond to His touch, His call."

The new missionaries will go to Rockville, Va., in January for a seven-week orientation before leaving for the field.



Lynn Henderson



Connie Robbins

Cover Story



Barry Lunney 3

Arkansas quarterback Barry Lunney, who has led the '95 Razorbacks to their most successful football season in recent years, said the real key to his happiness in life is his personal relationship to Jesus Christ.

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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'Totally satisfied'

Arkansas quarterback Barry Lunney discovers 'happiness in Christ alone'

By Trennis Henderson
Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Whether the Razorbacks win or lose this Saturday at the Carquest Bowl in Miami, Arkansas quarterback Barry Lunney will conclude his college football career as a winner.

Most Hog fans are well aware that Lunney set numerous passing records en route to the team's first winning season in the decade of the '90s. He led the Razorbacks from a dismal 4-7 record a year ago to a surprising 8-3 regular season record this year.

The Hogs scored thrilling victories against such opponents as Alabama and Auburn on their way to a first-place finish in the SEC West. Their game against North Carolina on Dec. 30—the Razorbacks' first bowl appearance since 1991—follows their first trip to the SEC Championship Game.

But it's not merely his on-field accomplishments this year that make Lunney a winner. The talented young athlete from Fort Smith scored an eternal victory as a fourth grader when he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

"From day one, my mother and dad were instilling Christian principles in me by the things they did, always representing actions of Christ and great character," Lunney recalled. "Because of the way they lived, I saw a need for myself to have a relationship with the Lord."

Lunney, who excelled in football, basketball and baseball during high school, acknowledged that "things came easy to me—I was in Christian cruise control."

Once he began to experience the pressure of being a major college football quarterback, however, Lunney discovered that he was "trying to live my life to please the fans and the coaches."

Enduring a string of disappointing seasons, he admitted, "I was sick and tired of being on an uneven keel—up and down. It wasn't going like I had planned for it to go."

Realizing the need to "get back to the point of what was important and what wouldn't let me down," the Razorback quarterback sensed that "God was drawing me to Him." Lunney responded by recommitting his life to Christ midway through his college career.

"I don't think I really understood what it meant to totally rely on the Lord until I went to college," he reflected. "If God is not in total control of your life, it's easy for others things to take priority. I finally



Razorback quarterback Barry Lunney said his daily dependence on God "has taken my faith to another level" rather than living his life on "Christian cruise control."

came to the point where I told the Lord if I never played another down, I would be totally satisfied just knowing that God loves me and has a plan for me.

"When I started growing closer to God, I became more energetic and excited about living my life," he added. "No longer was my happiness dictated by how I performed on the field. I found my happiness in Christ alone."

Lunney, a member of First Church, Fort Smith, also attends First Church, Springdale, on the weekends he stays on campus. Another significant influence in his Christian growth has been involvement in Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Lunney's dad, who was his high school coach, led an FCA huddle group when Lunney was a youngster. "FCA has been like football in my family—it's something we've always been a part of.

"FCA really holds a special place in my heart," he added. "The past two summers, I've been a huddle leader at the FCA national sports camp in Russellville." One of the highlights of his camp experience has been the opportunity to personally help lead youngsters to faith in Christ.

Even amid the renewed focus on his spiritual growth, Lunney remains an intense competitor both on and off the field—and his immediate goal is to lead the Razorbacks to victory over the Tar Heels.

"To win will be the icing on the cake.

We're excited about the opportunity," he declared. "We don't want to end the season on a three-game losing streak."

Assessing the first 12 games of the season, Lunney added, "It's been rewarding to enjoy the year we've had. The highlight is that I finally accomplished something I wanted to do all four years—have a winning season. I always had a desire in my heart to go out on a winning note."

Lunney, who is a frequent speaker at churches, youth rallies and other events, is confident that this year's record-setting season will provide him an ongoing opportunity to share his Christian witness.

"I think I'll always have a platform here in Arkansas," he remarked. "Hopefully because of my success, I can use my platform to affect young people and let them know about the real deal—and that's Jesus Christ.

"Being a young person today is so hard and it's difficult to reach the potential you have on your own," Lunney pointed out. "If you have the Solid Rock, the Lord, and that's where your faith and trust are, it makes it easier to reach your potential and accomplish what you want to accomplish."

Becoming a Christian as a young person "is such an advantage and makes growing up so much more enjoyable," Lunney affirmed. "When the Lord started working on me, I realized where my faith was.... It's taken my faith to another level."

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABCS Executive Director

What is this business being flashed in our state convention materials, "Live the Word"? Is this just another promotional phrase used to sell some program? Who thought this up?

Having looked at the struggles of our churches, families and communities, the long-range planning group determined that the first step to meeting these awesome needs would be to get our people back to living by the Word. Baptismless churches, plateaued churches, crime-plagued communities, divided churches, racial conflict, unstable family life, moral declension—all of these could be addressed at their roots by a commitment from our church people to "Live the Word."

Our overriding concern is revival and spiritual awakening. We believe that is the ultimate answer. In these, God breaks through and does things for and through His people that are absolutely supernatural. But what is the hope of revival and awakening if God's people do not live the Word? Once again, the beginning point for God's people is His Word.

This is not a scheme to sell some program. It is a call to rally the troops around God and His instructions. He says that life and death, victory and defeat, success and failure are related to what His people do with His Word. This is God's idea.

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does" (James 1:22-25 NIV).

A number of priority projects are being planned to undergird this need as God's spirit initiates "Arkansas Awakening."

God said of His Word, "It will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." What encouragement!

REX HORNE

President's Perspective

Happy New Year!

New Year's Day will soon be here. The minor distractions such as remembering to write "1996" when you date your checks or letters will begin again. Those incidents we might call major **are**, at this point, unknown.

The 1991 year will always be a memorable one for my ministry and my life in a personal way. This was the year Gov. Clinton announced his intention to seek his party's nomination for President. His subsequent election has had repercussions in ways I would not have imagined....nor wish on anyone. The governor's announcement was not the greatest impact for me that year, not even close.

In October of 1991, my dad, whom I love dearly, died suddenly. He was my hero, friend and a great dad. He was my hero, friend and a great dad. I realize, however, how fortunate I was to enjoy such a relationship. Some people never knew their fathers. Other folk, as children, experienced the death of their fathers. Still others had fathers who were not loving, kind or present.

Yet, 1991 was the year I had the privilege of seeing my son profess his faith in Jesus Christ. I then baptized him, thanking God that my son had come to know The Son.

Most years may not have such life-changing events for us, but some have

and will. I would pray this year will be an "eventful" year for Arkansas Baptists. We have an opportunity to encourage this desire.

We have recently called a new executive director to serve and lead us. I would ask every Arkansas Baptist to commit to pray for Dr. Emil Turner, encourage and trust him. This is right. Our new leader is worthy of our best support.

There is not a better way to begin the year than in attending our Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference Monday and Tuesday, January 29-30, which will be held at Geyer Springs First Church. We can agree to pray that 1996 will be the beginning of genuine, authentic revival in our lives, churches and convention.

In just a few days, 1996 will arrive. Heaven will be the destination for some of us this year. Happiness and sorrow will be in the mix for others of us. Facing the new year, we know God will sustain us and lead Arkansas Baptists. May we all become more like Jesus in the coming year.

I extend to you all a heartfelt Happy New Year!

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



Personal perspectives

"When I started growing closer to God, I became more energetic and excited about living my life....I found my happiness in Christ alone."

—Barry Lunney, Arkansas Razorbacks quarterback

"I want Arkansas Baptists to have an identity as a group of people who reach lost people."

—Emil Turner, newly elected Arkansas Baptist executive director

"The bottom line of life is whether or not you're a child of God....When you give God everything is when you find true happiness and true peace."

—Mark Harris, vocalist in 4HIM

Key '95 events impact Baptist life

One of Arkansas Baptists' biggest news stories of 1995 began in late March and continued through mid-December. State convention executive director Don Moore announced March 30 that he planned to retire in early 1996. Emil Turner was elected Dec. 12 by the Arkansas Baptist Executive Board to succeed Moore in the state convention's top administrative post. 1995 also brought new leaders to the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries as well as Williams Baptist College.

In Southern Baptist life, the biggest news was the adoption of the "Covenant for a New Century," a restructuring plan designed to streamline Baptist ministry for the 21st century. The following excerpts from the pages of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* recount these and other major events that took place at home and around the world throughout the year.

■ **JANUARY:** "Start a Party! Share Jesus Now!" was the challenge presented to an estimated 4,400 Arkansas Baptist youth and leaders during the 1994 Joy Exploy youth evangelism conference.... Southern Baptists' 1995 "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" emphasis includes a 60-day simultaneous witnessing effort which began Jan. 9.... Arkansas Baptists contributed a record \$15.82 million to state and national ministry causes in 1994, falling short of the state's Cooperative Program goal by less than 1 percent.... Southern Baptist missionaries are finding opportunities to minister in the aftermath of Japan's deadliest earthquake in 47 years that hit Kobe Jan. 17 and killed more than 4,000 people.... Congo Road Church in Salem, a mission since 1986, constituted on New Year's Day as Arkansas Baptists' first new church of the year.

■ **FEBRUARY:** Andrew Nicholson, 14-year-old son of Arkansas Southern Baptist missionaries to Panama, died from stings of a swarm of African killer bees that drove him over a cliff in Panama's Chame Mountains.... Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has been placed on probation for two years by the Association of Theological Schools due to trustees' treatment of fired president Russell Dilday and other faculty members.... Baptisms related to Southern Baptist foreign mission work worldwide totaled 302,132 in 1994 — the first time annual baptisms have ever topped 300,000.

■ **MARCH:** "The Covenant for a New Century," a proposal to reduce the number of national Southern Baptist Convention entities from 19 to 12, has been endorsed by the SBC Executive Committee.... Arkansas Baptists answered the call of a national Woman's Missionary Union ministry project, donating 46,899 canned food items and raising more than \$12,000 for hunger relief.... David Perry was unanimously elected March 14 as the next executive director of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries.

■ **APRIL:** Don Moore, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention since 1982, has announced his plans to retire by Feb. 29, 1996.... Twelve months after being inaugurated as president of Williams Baptist College, Gary Huckabay has resigned, citing "incompatibility in the governance and direction of the school".... Diane Garland, dean of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's school of social work was fired after telling students that new standards instituted by seminary president Al Mohler will make it impossible to hire qualified faculty.... Evangelist Billy Graham has completed Global Mission, broadcast by satellite to more than 10 million people in 185 countries.

■ **MAY:** A car bomb explosion outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City killed 169 people, reminding Americans that terrorists can strike anywhere, anytime.... The national Baptist Nursing Fellowship has established the Marjorie Grober Special Projects Fund to assist members involved in missions projects at home and overseas.... Kenneth Hemphill was official inaugurated as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary May 1.

■ **JUNE:** Members of the Arkansas Baptist disaster relief child care unity provided care for victims of heavy flooding in the New Orleans area.... Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials have dropped an effort to trademark the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. The trademark application had drawn opposition from Woman's Missionary Union leaders and others.... Former Arkansas Baptist pastor Mark Coppenger has been elected president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.... Evangelist Billy Graham delivered the closing message during Southern Baptists' sesquicentennial convention in Atlanta. Other major events included adopting the "Covenant for a New Century" and a resolution of racial repentance. Jim Henry was re-elected SBC president by acclamation.

■ **JULY:** Arkansas Baptists hosted the 1995 national Campers on Mission Rally at Hope Fair Park, attracting more than 700 participants from 21 states and Canada.... Arkansas Baptists recently dedicated the new Children's Worship Center at Arkansas Baptist Assembly in Siloam Springs.... Jerol Swaim was unanimously elected by trustees July 20 as president of Williams Baptist College.

■ **AUGUST:** A team of 25 Arkansas Baptists provided worship and conference leadership at Interlaken '95, the summer assembly of the European Baptist Convention in Switzerland.... More than 260 high school students from nine states repaired 25 homes as part of a World Changers work project in West Memphis.... Thousands of Baptists from around the world gathered in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to "Celebrate Jesus Christ: The Hope of the World" during the 17th Baptist World Congress.

■ **SEPTEMBER:** Warning more than 300 Arkansas Baptists about the legal risks of sexual misconduct, church liability expert Richard Hammar was the featured speaker during a statewide Risk Management Seminar.... Ouachita Baptist University has been ranked the eighth best liberal arts school in the South by *U.S. News & World Report*.... Ten Arkansas Baptist youth and their leaders shared the gospel with more than 2,000 people during the seventh annual Arkansas High School Baptist Young Men's All-Star Basketball Team trip to Venezuela.

■ **OCTOBER:** More than 3,000 Arkansas Baptist Sunday School workers were challenged to "Carry the Light" during 41 Associational Sunday School Conventions held throughout the state.... SBC Executive Committee members unanimously approved the establishment of a 10-member "implementation task force" to carry out restructuring plans approved by SBC messengers in June.... The Southern Baptist Convention has ended its 1994-95 fiscal year with a record \$145,739,489 in Cooperative Program gifts.

■ **NOVEMBER:** Iowa Baptists have officially organized the Baptist Convention of Iowa, highlighting Arkansas Baptists' current missions partnership with Iowa Baptists.... More than 1,300 messengers attended the 1995 Arkansas Baptist State Convention, electing Rex Horne as state convention president.... World leaders mourned slain Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin while observers pondered what his assassination means to the tenuous peace process under way in the Middle East.... Messengers to the Baptist General Convention of Texas approved a \$42.6 million Cooperative Program budget which cuts funds for SBC causes by 2.5 percent.

■ **DECEMBER:** Louisiana pastor Emil Turner was unanimously elected Dec. 12 as the next executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.... Southern Baptist statesman Herschel H. Hobbs died in Oklahoma City at age 88.... Baptist ethicists, like the American public, are divided over President Clinton's decision to send U.S. troops into Bosnia.... "Celebrate Jesus 2000," a five-year plan to share the gospel in every household in America, is being developed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Executive Board elects new staff for chaplaincy, migrant ministry

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

"This is not a Baptist meeting," joked Chuck McAlister, president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board, noting that all voting during the Executive Board's Dec. 12 meeting was unanimous. Members elected three new personnel and heard committee appointments during the morning meeting held at Baptist Health's Gilbreath Conference Center in Little Rock.

Board members voted unanimously to call Emil Turner, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lake Charles, La., as ABCS executive director effective Jan. 15. He will succeed current executive director Don Moore, who will retire at the end of February. (See related articles in Dec. 14 issue.)

Board members also approved the election of two staff members in the ABCS missions department. Ruby Swanigan will serve as chaplain for the Arkansas Department of Corrections Tucker Unit Two, a women's correctional facility, and Edgardo Mansilla was elected director of the Heritage Ministry Center and Hispanic ministry state consultant.

Don Moore presented the two names on behalf of the board's operating committee. He noted that Swanigan, a member of Immanuel Church in Pine Bluff, "found her call and her niche in ministry when God moved on her heart one Sunday morning in the worship service to see about being a chaplain at one of the institutions near Pine Bluff."

Swanigan is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and earned the master of religious education degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

"During her seminary days, she had done special projects in jail and prison ministry and now after all of these years the door opened," Moore explained. "She has worked for several months as an intern at Tucker and all the way from the man who's responsible for the state department of corrections right on down to those who were her peers, they raved about the effectiveness of Ruby Swanigan."

"I just couldn't feel any stronger about anybody than in recommending Ruby Swanigan to you," Moore added.

Swanigan currently serves as an adjunct instructor for Pines Technical College in Pine Bluff, for Henderson State University at Baptist School of Nursing in Little Rock, and as a science teacher at Southeast Junior High School in Pine Bluff.



Swanigan



Mansilla

In addition to her teaching experience, she has served as a youth director for churches in Louisiana and Texas and as a staff member for the Baptist Convention of New Mexico.

Migrant ministry 'expanded'

Presenting Edgardo Mansilla to the board, Moore said that "he will not just do the migrant center director work. It's an expanded work which will make him a consultant throughout the entire state in the area of Hispanic ministry."

Explaining the importance of Mansilla's ministry position, Moore added, "There are thousands of Hispanics in the state. The fastest growing area of new church starts is with Hispanics. We believe this man will bring to us unbelievable gifts in that area."

Sharing Mansilla's background, Moore noted, "He grew up in Argentina and surrendered to the ministry at 15 years old. He began preaching on the street corners in a society where the Catholics were so very hostile that every Baptist had to pay a price and he paid a price along with the rest of his family."

"The city of Louisville honored him in 1993 as the distinguished citizen of the city," Moore continued. "He has a weekly television show for Hispanics, the first in Louisville. He has a migrant center and is a pastor. We believe that with his gifts and background and experience, our work in that area will be greatly expanded."

Mansilla earned both the bachelor's and master's degrees in theology from International Baptist Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires, and the master in social work degree from the Carver School of Church Social Work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Mansilla has served as director of the community action department for the Argentina Baptist Convention, pastor of Valentin Alsina Baptist Church in Buenos Aires and executive secretary of the Argentina Baptist Youth Convention.

Board members also heard of the appointment of two Executive Board committees, one which will study the ABCS funding formula and another to study scholarship options in the state.

Explaining the need for the Budget Formula Study Committee, appointed every five years, Moore said, "This is the committee that makes recommendation on the percentage distribution that is made of all the Cooperative Program funds."

He said that the only changes ever made to the formula involved a minor change to Arkansas Baptist Foundation funding and "twice we have made changes on the percent increase going to the SBC Cooperative Program."

"For 10 years, we were giving a higher and higher percent increase to SBC causes," he noted. "The churches were never increasing their percentages to the SBC Cooperative Program. So the committee had to come to grips with the question, 'How long can we stay in business in Arkansas if we send out higher and higher percentages and we have no increase in the percentages coming in for Arkansas?'"

"So we moved from increasing it three-fourths of a percent every year down to a quarter of a percent every year," he said. "Right now the formula calls for us to make no increase to the SBC unless the churches make an increase."

"Two years ago, they did. They increased .02 percent. We went from 41.75 percent to the SBC to 41.77 percent," he explained. "Those are the kinds of things that committee has to deal with."

Tom Edwards, pastor of First Church, Camden, will serve as chairman for the seven-member committee.

Moore said the Scholarship Policies Committee will be led by chairman Bruce Raley, minister of education for Walnut Street Church in Jonesboro.

Noting that the committee is responsible for "reviewing scholarship funds and their utilization," he added, "There are drastic changes taking place in the educational field for continuing theological education."

"We have given some assistance to students attending Ouachita and Williams, and we have never provided assistance for those who are continuing studies in other areas" such as seminary extension programs, he said, adding that "this needs to be looked at."

Following the committee appointment report, the board's operating, program and finance committees met for brief orientation sessions. Committee chairmen for the coming year include Ben Rowell, operating committee; Lance Hudnell, program committee; Wayne Williams, finance committee; and Chuck McAlister, executive committee.

'Change is good'

New ABSC executive director affirms need to 'reach people for Jesus'

By Trennis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Echoing a recent fast-food advertising slogan, Emil Turner enthusiastically agrees that "change is good."

Turner, who was unanimously elected earlier this month by the Arkansas Baptist Executive Board as the state convention's next executive director, told board members, "We are in a time of tremendous change and I'm excited about that challenge."

"Everything that grows does so through reorganization," he declared. "Churches and Sunday Schools that do not reorganize die."

Emphasizing that he is committed to "reorganization for the sake of reaching the most people for Christ," Turner added, "God has enabled me to guide churches through change."

Although "I do not know all of the changes in store for our denomination or churches," Turner said, "I personally can be excited about change. I have been forced by God to change and grow. The opportunities for the future are there. God uses these things to refine us, to sharpen us."

As Turner begins his new ministry role among Arkansas Baptists next month, the opportunity for change already is under way. In addition to restructuring efforts being implemented in the Southern Baptist Convention, Arkansas Baptist leaders recently initiated a two-year process to evaluate and strengthen state convention ministry efforts.

During an interview with the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*

following his election,

Turner pointed out, "Any change in restructuring must help Arkansas Baptists reach more people for Christ. That's the bottom line."

Turner said he sensed God's leadership to leave a successful pastorate in Louisiana and accept the Arkansas leadership post only after the Lord revealed

to him that "I can have an impact on having more people in heaven through a lot of churches than through one church."

"That's why my purpose and goal is to help Arkansas Baptists reach lost people for Jesus," he explained. "God has put that on my heart."

Describing himself as "a person of single



Newly elected Arkansas Baptist executive director Emil Turner, accompanied by his wife, Mary, fielded questions during the recent ABSC Executive Board meeting.

focus," Turner added, "I have been able to cast a vision of an alternative direction for the future" among each church he has served as pastor. "The Scripture will not change. The gospel mandate will not change. But we have to come up with new ways, new approaches for reaching people."

Recalling his early ministry as a director for Campus Crusade for Christ, Turner said his ministry goal throughout the years has been to "lead people to Jesus and teach them the Bible."

Acknowledging that "there are

people God has given us to help us."

Rather than focusing on areas of conflict, Turner said, "I simply want to be Christ-like and I want to help Arkansas Baptists reach lost people."

"Arkansas Baptists can expect me to have a focus on building churches that reach lost people and integrating lost people into our churches and going where we haven't gone to reach lost people," he explained. "I want Arkansas Baptists to have an identity as a group of people who reach lost people."

"Arkansas Baptists can expect me to have a focus on building churches that reach lost people and integrating lost people into our churches and going where we haven't gone to reach lost people and doing new things to reach lost people."

— Emil Turner

New ABSC executive director

competing visions of the future in the Southern Baptist Convention and in every state convention," Turner added, "It is not bad to have competing visions for the future. It only becomes bad when they are articulated or presented in a way that hurts people for whom Christ died. When we fight each other, we're fighting the

what Arkansas Baptists deserve," the new executive director shared.

As he and his family enter this time of transition, he encouraged "every Baptist in the state of Arkansas to put me on their prayer list and pray for me to have wisdom and grace to serve. I look forward to serving Arkansas Baptists."

People

Don Moseley was recognized Dec. 3 by Sylvan Hills First Church in North Little Rock for 20 years of ministry as pastor. The program included testimonies by John Shelton, a member who became a Christian during Moseley's ministry, and Moseley's son, Justin, a freshman at Ouachita Baptist University. Tony Weston presented special music which he had written and composed in honor of Moseley and his wife, Margaret. Special gifts included a plaque, a "Dream Vacation for Two" to the destination of their choice, and 20 roses given to Mrs. Moseley from their son, Jeremy. Deacons and yoke-fellows participated in a special prayer time for the Moseleys during the service.

James Swedenburg was honored by Central Association Dec. 3 with a reception in recognition of his nine years of ministry as director of missions. He will retire from the position Dec. 31. The event, held at First Church of Benton, was attended by more than 200 guests from 26 churches.

Preston Beeks was honored Nov. 19 by Farmington Church in recognition of 25 years in the ministry. The worship service included a tribute from Beeks' daughter, Sherrie Langhenning, and a poem read by Beeks' son, Will. Special music was presented by the Beeks children: Sherrie, Carolyn, Will and Camille, accompanied by Thelma Biggers of Odessa, Texas. Beeks, who began his ministry at the Farmington church on Aug. 7, 1994, was presented gifts, cards, letters and a photo scrapbook of his 25 years of ministry.

Don Nall was honored Nov. 12 by First Church of Batesville in recognition of his 20 years of ministry as pastor. The anniversary service, held in Batesville Middle School, included comments from Batesville mayor Joe Biard and the presentation of a plaque and resolution of appreciation from Independence Association. The Batesville congregation has had 500 baptisms and 1,875 additions during Nall's years of ministry. Sunday School attendance has grown from 130 to 358. Nall and his wife, Judy, have two daughters, Felley Lawson of Little Rock and Ashley Nall, a senior at Ouachita Baptist University, and one granddaughter.

Church news

Immanuel Church in Little Rock hosted a "Champion Awards" banquet Dec. 4. Frank Broyles, director of athletics at the University of Arkansas, and former Razorback player Jason Allen were the featured speakers. The event, attended by 700 high



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By MILLIE GILL

school football players and coaches, represented all 16 high schools in Pulaski County. Banquet activities included the presentation of New Testaments to each player and trophies to the most valuable players and the "champion" from each team who has demonstrated the most consistent Christian spirit.

Bingham Road Church in Little Rock hosted a regional youth rally Dec. 2 that featured youth communicator Tierce Greene of Texas. The event, which will be held quarterly, was co-sponsored by Bingham Road Church, Archview Church and Ironton Church, all of Little Rock.

Beech Street First Church in Texarkana launched a new ministry Dec. 12 in which they will minister to children living in the Spanish Trace Apartments. Sara Williams, children's minister, is serving as ministry coordinator.

Victory Church in Jacksonville will observe its 10th anniversary Jan. 7 with a 3 p.m. service. Marvin Peters, director of missions for North Pulaski Association, former pastor Victor Coleman and former member Willie Bryant will be the featured speakers. Elton Ballentine is pastor.

Park Hill Church in North Little Rock will host Al Denson in concert Jan. 12 at 7:30 p.m. Additional information is available by calling the church office at 501-753-3413.

Staff changes

David Reddoch began serving Dec. 3 as pastor of Victory Church of Conway. He previously was pastor of First Church of Gillett, associate interim pastor of Getsemane Church of North Little Rock and youth director of Indian Head Lake Church in North Little Rock. Reddoch has attended the University of Houston and Mid-America Seminary. He and his wife, Gwen, reside in North Little Rock.

Mark Constant of Caraway is serving as pastor of Freer Church near Trumann. He previously served Buffalo Chapel near Caraway.

Charles Locke is serving as pastor of Reyno Church. He and his wife, Barbara, moved there from Wheatley where he previously was pastor of Wheatley Church.

Richard White has joined the staff of First Church in Hoxle as associate pastor. He and his wife, Tina, are students at Williams Baptist College. They have two daughters, Emily and Becky.

John Wells has joined the staff of Immanuel Church in Pine Bluff as minister of music, coming there from First Church in Philadelphia, Miss. He and his wife, Teresa, have three daughters, Ashlie, Brittany and Haley.

Wallace Yamauchi will join the staff of First Church in Hot Springs Jan. 1 as student and young singles minister. He previously has served Cana Church in Burleson, Texas, and Second Church in Jacksonville. Yamauchi is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Jane, have two children, Mikki and Katie.

Roy F. Lewis has been named interim director of missions for Central Association. Lewis, a retired Southern Baptist minister and former associate executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, will serve while a search committee seeks a successor for Jim Swedenburg who will retire Dec. 31 as director of missions.

David Ballard has resigned as bivocational pastor of Runyan First Church of North Little Rock to allow a search committee to seek a full-time pastor.

Obituaries

Hazel Loe McClanahan of Pine Bluff died Dec. 16 at age 88. She had been a resident of Sherwood for 45 years where she was an active member of First Church of Sherwood. She is survived by two sons, John H. McClanahan of Pine Bluff, who recently retired as pastor of First Church in Pine Bluff, and Jim D. McClanahan of Camden; one daughter, Anna L. McClanahan of North Little Rock; six grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be made to the television ministry of First Church of Pine Bluff.

Ordinations

Fitzgerald Church near Wynne ordained Michael Bowen to the gospel ministry Dec. 10. Bowen is associate pastor of the church with Herbert Rowland serving as pastor.

Maple Avenue Church of Smackover ordained Phillip Childers, Jerry Wilkerson and Jim Jameson to the deacon ministry Nov. 19.

'Strong faith in God'

Des Arc family experiences tragedy, hope in wake of deadly tornado

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Savage winds that swept over the flat farmland of Des Arc Nov. 10 brought both tragedy and hope to a family, a church and a town.

Following a deadly tornado that night, searchers discovered the bodies of Keith and Donna Walls, members of First Church, Des Arc, nearly 300 yards from their home.

But the story of the family's crisis did not end with tragedy. The winds that brought death also provided a miracle. Found alive by rescuers just a few yards away from the bodies of his parents was their son, Joshua, now seven months old. Miraculously, Joshua survived the tornado with just a few bruises.

"You had to see the destruction and devastation to understand what a miracle it is that that little boy is still alive," noted Donna Walls' brother, Butch Calhoun. "He could not be alive without God's intervention."

Facing the question, "How does a family of faith deal with tragedy," Melvin York, pastor of First Church, Des Arc, said the family's first response was prayer.

Several family members are members of First Church, including Donna Walls' mother, Louise Calhoun, as well as her brother and sister-in-law, Butch and Meredith Calhoun. Keith Walls' mother, Sue, also is a First Church member.

"The night of the tornado, many friends and family came to the Calhoun house and were supporting them and we were praying together in small groups," York recalled. "Then I went on to the hospital...I met Sue Walls coming down the hall and she said, 'I want you to go to the chapel with me and pray.'"

York said the first thing that Sue's husband, Jim, said to him at the hospital was, "Preacher, let's go to the chapel. We need to pray."

Affirming the impact of faith amid tragedy, Butch Calhoun remarked, "We've lost Keith and Donna. They're gone and gone on to a better place. I don't see, personally, how Christian people have no hope when something happens. We have hope."

"If I didn't have a strong faith in God, and being a Christian myself and knowing I'll see them again, I would feel real bitter, to be honest," he said. "I'm hurt, but I'm not bitter at God."

Calhoun, a farmer and state represen-



Circle of love—Tornado survivor Joshua Walls is surrounded by (clockwise from top right) paternal grandparents Jim and Sue Walls, maternal grandmother Louise Calhoun and aunt and uncle Meredith and Butch Calhoun.

tative, said that the family has learned a valuable lesson in the deaths of their relatives: "No matter how good you are, life can be short."

York concluded that the tragedy has worked to the benefit of the church and community. "It has done two things to the church. There has been a new awareness of how short life is and how we need to take advantage of the people around us and advantage of opportunities.

"It also has had a bonding effect," he said. "In this small community, if there is one thing I would identify Des Arc with, it's that it genuinely is the volunteer community that it says on the sign. When a disaster happens, everybody drops any differences that they may have had over any small thing and pulls completely and totally together to help."

Jim Walls, a farmer who said he attends First United Methodist Church on Sunday mornings and First Baptist Church on Sunday nights, noted that the deaths of Keith and Donna Walls has "weided" the two families together "in an unbreakable bond."

Just as Keith and Donna's deaths brought the families and community together, so has the survival of Joshua.

"They said at the hospital that, because he was a chunky little fellow, his body temperature stayed warmer a little longer," Jim Walls said, adding that his temperature was 90 degrees when rescuers found him.

Another miracle, Walls said, was that the emergency medical technician who rushed Joshua to the hospital "was the number one EMT in the state last year. There was just a phenomenal amount of

happenings to save him. How else but with God would the number one EMT in the state find the baby or be in charge of him in the hospital?"

Jim and Sue Walls have taken responsibility for raising their grandson. While the couple admitted that caring for an infant again is challenging, they emphasized that his life has provided comfort for their grief.

"I don't do any of the things I did before," acknowledged Sue Walls. "The hardest part is being tied down again. But I love him and love doing for him and having him there. He is making this tolerable for us. He has been my saving grace...I don't have time to dwell on what could have been."

"Without him we would have a hard time," her husband agreed.

"I think God has a purpose for him down the road."

Just as the winds brought both death and hope, they also brought a loving response from the community, church members and a larger family of faith, family members declared.

"We've had responses from all over the world, even England," said Jim Walls. "This community is a small community. It's a close-knit community. The people rallied."

Because of that response, he acknowledged, "There's a whole lot more good, Christian people in this world than I thought there were. We were just inundated with...hundreds and hundreds of responses and we're still getting them right now."

One, he said, was from "a little girl named Laura. She wrote Joshua and said, 'Dear Joshua, my momma and daddy told me about your mom and dad and it made me very sad. My Nana and Papa send me three dollars every week for a McDonald's Happy Meal. This week I am sending it to you. Maybe it will make you happy.'"

"I have had poems written to me by people who are friends," added Louise Calhoun. "It's amazing that people's hearts are just broken over this for us."

According to Joshua's uncle Butch, "Our main concern right now is that little boy and seeing him grow and come to know Christ as his personal Savior."

"It is because of the relationship that all of the family has had with the Lord that they've been able to be as strong as they have," York affirmed. "It's been wonderful to see their walk with the Lord giving them the strength to get through this."

4HIM utilizes vocal talents to point people to Christ

4HIM, winners of the Dove Award for Group of the Year each of the past three years, is more than a group of talented vocalists in the growing field of contemporary Christian music.

The four singers, who toured together with Truth for two years before launching 4HIM in 1990, insist that ministry is the group's primary motivation. The four spent half of 1995 on the road, presenting 130 concerts—including a recent performance at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock.

"We feel like we're called," explained Andy Chrisman. "This is something God put together and gave us an opportunity to do. We're definitely in this for ministry. ...You could call us ministers as much as you could call us musicians."

The enthusiastic minister/musicians, who released their fifth album last year called "The Ride," have produced eight No. 1 singles in recent years.

"A lot of the songs we sing are common-man songs," Kirk Sullivan remarked. "They're not deep songs—they're

something everyone can relate to and grab onto."

Mark Harris, who writes many of the lyrics recorded by 4HIM, pointed out, "I try to make each song say something creative enough to be interesting, yet it has a heart to it.

"My goal is to write in such a way that it touches someone's life and draws them closer to the Lord," he added. "Ninety-nine percent of our lyrics are about our relationship to Christ."

Nearing the end of their '95 concert tour with their appearance in Arkansas, Chrisman noted that both he and Harris are anxious to spend time with their new babies at home in Mobile, Ala. The children are the second for each family.

Although the group took time off for

both men to be home for the births, spending six months on the road has its challenges. "Probably one of the greatest challenges for us is leaving our families," Harris said.

While the group seeks to "pretty much balance things as much as we can," he added, "Home is where family is. That's the major struggle I have—I feel like I leave my heart there."

Despite the struggles of life on the road, 4HIM remains committed to "speak the truth and share the Word of God" in each of their concerts, Harris said.

4HIM consistently seeks to "be as good musically as we can be," Chrisman pointed out. "But ministry is No. 1 no matter what happens on stage."

"In our concerts, we try to give everybody an opportunity to meet Jesus," Harris told the North Little Rock concert crowd. "The bottom line of life is whether or not you're a child of God... When you give God everything is when you find true happiness and true peace."

"I have followed this guide personally for the last several years. Hundreds of folks from churches where I have served have used this tool to assist them in developing consistency and discipline in prayer and Bible study. Some had never read the entire Bible before."

—Randel Everett

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ABCHFM focuses on effort to recruit new houseparents

Board members of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries voted unanimously Dec. 12 to increase salary packages of houseparents. The action was taken, said executive director David Perry, to address the needs of current houseparents and to make the position more attractive to prospective houseparents. The agency is seeking to fill five full-time positions and three relief positions.

Perry said the board adopted the increases "in recognition of the value of these servants to our ministries and because it was right. They need to be taken care of at an adequate level. Houseparents give up a lot of their privacy, personal desires and other freedoms to do this."

Due to staff vacancies, "there are 38 children who are possibly in need of care who cannot be accepted," Perry explained.

"It's not an easy job, but it has its

rewards," he said, "such as seeing a child work through a personal crisis or make a spiritual commitment, watching a child with little chance educationally receive a diploma and go on to college, or seeing a child from a totally dysfunctional family get it together and go on to fit in society."

Perry said the agency is searching for couples or singles to fill full-time positions at the Arkansas Baptist Boys Ranch in Harrison, Arkansas Baptist Home for Children in Monticello and the Camden emergency receiving home.

"Houseparents are needed for two cottages at the Boys Ranch," he said, "one for boys who have completed treatment for chemical addictions and another for boys who need a place to live due to family or personal problems."

He said the need for houseparents at the Children's Home in Monticello calls

for couples who will work in the Boys and Girls Duplex building "which provides care for the youngest children in the home, typically ages five through 12."

Houseparents at the Camden receiving home, he added, will work "on an emergency, short-term basis" with children from birth through 17-year-olds who are abused or abandoned.

Perry said the three part-time positions are needed to relieve "both the boys and girls side at the Children's Home duplex, the senior and intermediate boys buildings also at the Home and as relief for two different ranch houses at the Boys Ranch."

Duties vary with the different positions, he said, "but basically, they are responsible for the daily care of up to eight children, serving as substitute parents."

In addition to the base salary for houseparents, Perry said other benefits include room and board, medical insurance, life insurance, annuity after one year employment, paid annual leave and training.

For additional information about the positions, contact Perry at the ABCHFM offices at 1-800-838-ABSC in state or locally at 501-376-4791, ext. 5167. Those interested in specific positions may contact the institutions directly: Royce Aston at the Arkansas Baptist Home for Children, 501-367-5358; Clint Morrison at the Arkansas Baptist Boys Ranch, 501-741-3806; or Mark Weaver for the Camden emergency receiving home at 501-862-0095.

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'96 conference features new executive director

Arkansas Baptists will have the opportunity to hear from the state convention's new executive director during the 1996 Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference.

Emil Turner, who was elected Dec. 12 to succeed Don Moore, will join a slate of speakers who will highlight the annual Evangelism Conference to be held Jan. 29-30 at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock. The conference, sponsored by the ABCS evangelism department, will feature a five-session program focusing on the theme, "To God be the Glory."

Department director Clarence Shell said he "wanted the people of Arkansas to know the evangelistic heartbeat of our new executive director. We are delighted to give Dr. Turner the platform to share his first message with Arkansas Baptists."

Shell said each of the conference's five sessions will focus on a separate theme. The sessions will emphasize praising God for Christ, salvation, biblical inspiration, churches and "...Victory in Life."

Preaching during Monday afternoon's "...for Sending His Son" session will be Jimmy Draper, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board; Shell; evangelist Bailey Smith; and Gary Smith, pastor of Fiedler Road Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, and a former Arkansas Baptist Student Union president.

Turner will speak during the Monday evening "...for Saving Our Souls" session. Also speaking on Monday evening will be Roy Fish, professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; ABCS evangelism department associate Paul McClung; and Darrell Robinson, vice president for evangelism for the Home Mission Board.

Tuesday morning the emphasis will be "...for Inspiring His Word." Speakers will include Draper; retired ABCS evangelism department director Jesse Reed; Robinson;



Emil Turner

Don Moore



Jimmy Draper

Bailey Smith

and SBC Executive Committee president Morris Chapman.

During the Tuesday afternoon session, "...for Instituting His Church," participants will hear messages from Gary Smith; ABCS executive director Don Moore; Ken Carter, HMB associate vice president of program development; and Bailey Smith.

Focusing on "...for Victory in Life," the

Tuesday evening session will feature Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, Chapman and Fish.

Special music will be provided throughout the conference by music evangelist Madeline Jones of Longview, Texas.

There is no cost for the conference. For more information, contact Shell at 1-800-838-ABSC or 501-376-4791, ext. 5132.

Two events held in conjunction with the Evangelism Conference will be the fourth annual Festival of Evangelists Jan. 29 and the fifth annual Bivocational/Smaller-Membership Church Ministers and Wives Fellowship Dinner Jan. 30.

Evangelist Johnny Jackson, president of Arkansas Evangelists, said the festival, which begins at 9:45 a.m., will feature messages from Clarence Shell, Arkadelphia evangelist Bobby Cook and Bailey Smith.

For more information about the festival, contact Jackson at 501-227-4697.

The Bivocational/Smaller-Membership Dinner will begin at 5 p.m. in the Geyer Springs First Church fellowship hall. The dinner, sponsored by the ABCS church leadership support department, will focus on "fellowship," according to department director Bruce Swihart.

The cost for the meal is \$5 per person. Checks, made out to the church leadership support department, should be sent by Jan. 12 to P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. For more information, contact Swihart at 1-800-838-ABSC or 501-376-4791, ext. 5148.

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Accepting resumes — for full-time pastor, Piney Baptist Church. Mail to: Howard Graves, 115 Ledgerock, Hot Springs, AR 71913.

Receiving resumes — for part-time youth minister. Natural Steps Baptist Church, Roland, Arkansas. Mail resumes to: Bill Blankenship, Committee Chairman, 24809 Saddleranch Lane, Roland, AR 72135.

Needed — Part-time youth director. Send resumes to Youth Search Committee, Ironton Baptist Church, 14718 Ironton Cutoff, Little Rock, AR 72206.

Needed — Part-time minister of music/senior adults. Send resume to Gosnell Baptist Church, 603 Highway 181, Blytheville, AR 72315.

Bivocational youth director — Send resumes to Personnel Committee, Immanuel Baptist Church, 2201 South Dallas, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

Staff position — Opening for minister of education/youth, after 1/1/96. Send resume or inquiry to Search Committee, FBC, PO Box 1339, St. Francisville, LA 70775.

Needed — Part-time youth minister. Send resumes to: Tommy Freeman, First Baptist Church, PO Box 368, Star City, AR 71687.

Classified ads must be submitted in writing to the ABN office no less than 10 days prior to the date of publication desired. A check or money order in the proper amount, figured at 90 cents per word, must be included. Multiple insertions of the same ad must be paid for in advance. Classified ads shall be restricted to church-related subject matter.

Music Ministry Handbook available Jan. 2

The Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries department will mail its annual handbook to music ministers in the state on Jan. 2, according to department leaders.

Department associate Peggy Pearson said the Music Ministry Handbook "contains all the information and registration forms for all church music-sponsored events for the coming year. It also serves as a handy resource about department staff and other people who can assist them in their ministry."

She said the handbook's intent "is to encourage church music leaders to participate in church music ministries events and provide them a description of our shared ministry through music."

Pearson said that in addition to the handbook, supplemental mailings throughout the year will support the information in the handbook.

"The handbook will be mailed to the

music director at every Arkansas church that reported a music ministry on their 1995 Annual Church Profile," she said. "Churches not reporting a music ministry were mailed a letter from (department director) Rob Hewell in September, with a return card to request a handbook."

She said that churches which do not receive a handbook may request one by calling the church music ministries department at 1-800-838-ABSC in state or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5121.

MK prayer calendar

Missionary kids attending college in Arkansas with birthdays in January:

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

■ Jan. 22 — Tim Gary, OBU Box 3921, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; senior from Guadalupe.

■ Jan. 23 — Nathan Strickland, OBU Box 4154, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; freshman from Venezuela.

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- ★ Construction team members for mission trip near Bucharest, Romania, May 1996. Cost is \$2,000 per person. Harry Black and Ronnie O'Neal, team leaders.
- ★ Two or more people to serve as hospitality persons, representing the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, at the EBC Summer Assembly in Interlaken, Switzerland, July 6-11, 1996.
- ★ A team of eight to do food preparation, serve and clean up at the EBC Youth Camp at Grindelwald, Switzerland, July 6-11, 1996.
- ★ Partners for church in Dusseldorf, Germany and Athens, Greece.

Please contact the ABCS Brotherhood Dept., Doyle Plummer or Harry Black, at 1-800-838-ABSC or 501-376-4791, ext. 5190, for more info.

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Convention Uniform

Called to serve

By Steven Mullen, assistant professor, Williams Baptist College
 Basic passage: Isaiah 42:1-9
 Focal passage: Isaiah 42:1-2, 4
 Central truth: When God calls us to serve, He equips us with a servant's heart.

Have you ever been called upon to serve? Surely, at one time or another, most of us have or will be called upon to serve our church, country or civic organization in one capacity or another. What does the call to service mean?

First, it indicates there is a task that needs to be performed. Second, it indicates that someone feels you have the ability to carry out the task.

In carrying out the duties of a servant, it is important that we underscore some important principles:

■ *The attitude of servanthood is as important as the act of servanthood.* Have you ever asked someone to serve and later regretted asking them because their disposition was so negative? There is no room in a servant's heart for performing the task grudgingly. We have no business performing God's tasks without His Spirit (v. 42:1).

■ *Real servanthood means we perform out tasks without drawing attention to ourselves* (v. 42:2). The Holy Spirit has been referred to as "the silent member of the Trinity." He does not draw attention to Himself. What a lesson for us! Instead of displaying our acts of servanthood in crowds, we should seek to be servants when the least amount of people are watching. God is always watching, and it is He whom we serve.

■ *When we enlist to serve, we are permanently enlisted.* God wants us to be consistent, diligent and courageous in service. He will supply us with the needed encouragement and the victory (v. 42:4). Sometimes He uses others to be instruments of encouragement. If our place of service is that of encouragement, we should be about such business.

■ *Servanthood does not mean that we must please all the people all the time.* Only Christ - not anyone else - has lived a sinless life, walked the road to Calvary, died for the atonement of sins and overcome death and the grave. Servanthood does not mean that we try to please everyone. Rather, it means that we please only He who has redeemed us. If we please Him, we have no one else to consider.

This lesson treatment is based on the International Bible Lesson for Christian Teaching Uniform Series, Copyright International Council of Education. Used by permission.

Life and Work

The teachings of Jesus

By Ben J. Rowell, pastor, First Church, Rogers
 Basic passage: Matthew 5:1-12
 Focal passage: Matthew 5:1-2, 12
 Central truth: Jesus showed us the real "good life."

The people were coming to Jesus now in tremendous crowds near the sea of Galilee, probably close to Capernaum. He sat and taught them, which was the custom of the day, what we call "The Sermon on the Mount" and what glorious things He revealed to them. We call this section of the scriptures "The Beatitudes," but I like to call this portion of scripture "The Good Life." The Lord showed us that real blessedness comes not from the things of the world and what it has to offer, but in the joyous freedom that comes from responding to the will of God.

The Kingdom of God, He told us, is to be found first within the heart, which springs from an inner disposition toward goodness. Jesus began His sermon with "Blessed are..." Blessed means happy or fortunate. The Beatitudes are divisible into two groups. Verses 3-9 are beatitudes of character. Verses 10-12 are beatitudes of conflict. When you look at words in the beatitudes like "poor," "contrite" and "meek," put them together and you can see a type of character that can be traced back to the Psalms and the prophets.

We can see how gradually the noblest of the Old Testament saints learned the hard lesson that whenever they were oppressed, whether by individuals or natural disaster, the true pathway of deliverance was to draw near to God in prayer. They refused to assert themselves, but regarded the suffering which they had to undergo as a chastening of their own inner spirit. Therefore it was a blessing. By not outwardly resisting the oppressor, but by committing their cause entirely into God's hands and trusting in Him alone, the final victory is ours. That, my dear friend, is very hard for us to do, but what a blessing when we do.

Please note that there is no suggestion of salvation by good works. We are dealing with the laws that operate within the Kingdom of Heaven, not with the way for entrance, but through all problems and difficulties we can see victory ahead. Rejoicing in afflictions now is practicing for the greater joys above (1 Pet. 4:12-13). On that hillside just outside Capernaum He truly showed us "the good life."

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Bible Book

The supremacy of Christ

By Don Moseley, pastor, Sylvan Hills First Church, Sherwood
 Basic passage: Colossians 1:1-2:5
 Focal passage: Colossians 1:9-20
 Central truth: In everything, Jesus must have the supremacy.

The apostle Paul responded to an urgent appeal made to him while in prison in Rome by Epaphrus. Epaphrus was no doubt the minister of those at Colosse whom he had led to Christ, discipled and was now seeking to protect from false teachers.

The false teachers were gnostics. The term comes from the Greek word *gnosis* which means "to know." These teachers felt they had superior knowledge. They believed all matter was evil and that God who is holy would not come in the flesh because it was evil. Therefore, their false conclusions led them to attack the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Paul reassured the Colossians of his constant prayers for them since hearing of this crisis (vv. 1:9-14). He reminded them that they had been rescued from darkness and brought into the kingdom of Christ. They had been redeemed and forgiven.

In response to the hang-up these false teachers had with the evil nature of creation, Paul gives a proper perspective of Jesus and creation. Jesus existed before creation (v. 15). He created all things and they exist for Him (v. 16). He is the one holding all things together (v. 17). This same Jesus is head of the body: the church (v. 18). Therefore, Paul reasoned, "in everything he might have the supremacy" (v. 18b). In the light of these facts, Jesus must always be first in our lives.

Paul reminded these believers that God in His fullness was dwelling in Christ for the purpose of reconciling men unto Himself (vv. 19-20). But this reconciliation could only be completed through the death of Christ (vv. 20b, 22). It is not by the incarnation alone or the perfect life of Christ by which reconciliation is achieved, but by His death. Through His death, we can be presented "holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation." What good news for a sinner in need of forgiveness and reconciliation with the God who created him!

Paul reminded the Colossians that God had chosen to make known to them this mystery, "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (v. 27). Paul encouraged them by suggesting they not allow men to "deceive you by fine-sounding arguments" (v. 2:5).

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Convention Uniform

Sent on mission

By Steven Mullen, assistant professor, Williams Baptist College
 Basic passage: Isaiah 49:1-6
 Focal passage: Isaiah 49:1-3
 Central truth: The true test of servanthood is revealed in whom we glorify.

This is the second lesson of the new year and, interestingly enough, both have focused on servanthood. Wouldn't it be nice if we could be obedient to God the first time? However, the fact remains that many Christians fail to become servants even after God's second mandate.

There are important principles we should extract from this text and incorporate into our everyday lives:

■ *The Lord called him from the womb* (v. 1). While still in the womb, God knows everything about us (Psa. 139:13) and calls those who would be servants.

■ *The Lord entrusted him with the Word of the Lord* (v. 2). The Word of God is powerful enough to pierce the heart of man. It is God's instrument, placed in the hands of servants, to convict man of sin.

■ *The servant was hidden in the shadow of the Lord's hand* (v. 2). When we are God's servants, we depend on His protection and are not concerned about ourselves. We only become defensive and protective when we fail to serve.

■ *The Lord appointed him as servant* (v. 3). The true test of servanthood is whether or not we have been called by God. Every Christian has been called to serve God and some have been called to serve in "full-time" positions of ministry. It is contrary to God's nature to call someone to serve without equipping that person with His Spirit. It is inconsistent with Scripture to claim to be God's servant and not possess His compassionate grace.

■ *The purpose of his ministry was to glorify God* (v. 3). I wish that all who pretend to be God's servants would glorify Him and not self. However, this is inaccurate. How do we glorify God? We glorify God by giving Him the credit, by exalting His name and by adopting His spirit. Anyone who pretends to be God's servant but edifies himself above God speaks an unheard decree and builds a wall too high to be scaled by unbelievers.

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Life and Work

Darkness or light

By Ben J. Rowell, pastor, First Church, Rogers
 Basic passage: Matthew 5:13-20
 Focal passage: Matthew 5:17-20
 Central truth: Righteousness is not outward, it is inward.

When Christ's words about "salt" and "light" are seen in this setting, His purpose is at once made clear. No touch of self-seeking can remain. The good life is to be lived for others.

The characters of the disciples are being built up for a direct purpose: the healing and redemption of others. They are to have the supreme blessing of being united with Christ Himself in bringing the good news of the kingdom of God to all mankind. "Freely they have received, they must freely give" (Matt. 10:8).

All of us must be salt and light for the people with whom we come in contact. We could call this our circle of influence. Christians are not to just sit on the sideline. We are to influence the world in which we live. Jesus' followers should be like salt in that they would create a real thirst for more knowledge. Light is meant to shine and give direction.

In Capernaum, where Jesus was teaching these truths on the hillside, all around the Sea of Galilee were villages. At night, you could make your way by seeing the lights from these little towns. Our lives should lead people to our Lord and Savior, but it should not cause people to praise us, only to glorify God. A Christian is the channel of Christ's light and power. If we hide the light, we have no testimony for our Lord and Savior and we are of no use to Him in reaching our lost world. The candle should be on a candlestick.

Verses 17-20 could easily be called the old and the new. Jesus is saying here that He will not make God's law of less account even in the smallest degree. Rather, He will make it of more account. He will not make it easier to observe. Rather, He will make it, in one sense, harder. To keep the spirit of a great command of God is always harder than to keep the letter. The righteousness that Jesus demanded was not merely external, but was a true inner righteousness based on faith in God's word. The righteousness Jesus is talking about shall be inward from the heart.

May I ask you, "Is your righteousness outward or inward?"

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Bible Book

Holding fast to Christ

By Don Moseley, pastor, Sylvan Hills First Church, Sherwood
 Basic passage: Colossians 2:6-23
 Focal passage: Colossians 2:6-8, 11-14

Central truth: True spirituality does not come by keeping regulations, but by walking by faith in Christ.

The gnostics sought to add many regulations in an attempt to promote spirituality. Paul revealed that such efforts were of no spiritual benefit. He gave them the only solution: Hold fast to the Lord and return to the liberating power of Christ.

The Colossians were to live by the same faith by which they had come to Christ. They had to realize that their source of life was Christ, in whom they were "rooted." They would be "built up" in Christ, find their "strength" in Him and understand that all was of Christ and nothing of themselves. They would, therefore, experience an "overflowing of thankfulness" (v. 7).

Paul alerted the Colossians to the fact that these false teachers were attempting to captivate them by a man-made religious system that would only produce bondage, instead of the liberation they had experienced in Christ.

In a challenge to the false teachers, Paul held Christ up as revealing the fullness of God. He reminded the Colossians that they had been given the fullness of Christ (vv. 9-10). He also reminded these uncircumcised Gentiles that in Christ they had experienced spiritual circumcision and had no need of the physical (v. 11). Paul described this to the Romans as a "circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by written code" (Rom. 2:28-29).

Circumcision is symbolic of God dealing with our sinful nature by removal of sin. The sinful nature received from Adam and passed down needed cleansing. That is why the organ of procreation was used in this symbolism. It was not that procreation was sinful, but the product of it was man's sinful, unclean nature. Christ forgave their sins and gave them a new nature: a circumcision of the heart. They were no longer condemned by the Law. They had been raised by the resurrection power of Christ to new life. The power of the old sin nature over them was broken (vv. 12-15).

Paul told the Colossians they must not allow anyone to put them in bondage to religious rules and regulations (vv. 16-23). True spirituality comes out of one's walk with Christ (v. 23).

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