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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 94, Number 2

January 26, 1995

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee



These two boys, visiting a Muslim mosque in India, represent the future of Islam. Will they hear the Christian gospel or will they join Muslim efforts to keep Christianity out of whole regions of the world?

1995 YEAR OF PRAYER FOR MUSLIMS



Southern Baptist missionary Chris Austin prays in the name of Jesus Christ as he joins Gambian village elders on their Muslim prayer mats.

ARKANSAS BAPTISTS

Arkansas Baptists contribute record \$15.8 million to '94 CP

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 of \$15.96 million by less than 1 percent.

Reaching 99.18 percent of the state convention's 1994 CP goal marked the seventh straight year that receipts have reached at least 99 percent of the budget goal. Contributions have exceeded the goal three times during the past five years.

The total of \$15,829,049 includes \$15,634,986 in undesignated receipts and \$194,063 in designated gifts. The 1994 receipts exceeded the previous year's gifts of \$15,317,839 by more than \$500,000.

In the area of special offerings, Arkansas Baptist gifts topped statewide goals for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions and Dixie Jackson Offering for state missions. The only offering which experienced a decline was world hunger.

Don Moore, Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director, said the convention's mission partnerships; training "CP champions"; the level of trust between churches and convention leaders, agencies and institutions; as well as an improved state economy have contributed to the stability of Arkansas Baptist gifts. He noted that even the Southern Baptist Convention controversy may have aided giving due to "better support on the part of some churches because of their confidence in the conservative direction the SBC has taken."

Moore said the current level of financial support means "we are able to go on sustaining ministries that have had to be

curtailed in some state conventions."

"We cannot be satisfied, however, with the splendid support being given because mission needs still are expanding around the world much faster than our ability to meet the needs," he said. "The increased giving to the Cooperative Program has not kept pace with the increase of undesignated giving to local churches."

On the positive side, Lottie Moon gifts topped \$5.1 million, exceeding the \$3 million goal and outpacing the previous year's gifts by more than \$167,000.

Annie Armstrong gifts totaled \$1.07 million. That exceeded the goal of \$1,025,000 by more than \$46,000 for a growth over the previous year of nearly \$62,000.

Gifts to the Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering reached \$706,498, exceeding the \$650,000 goal by more than \$56,000. Gifts for the year increased more than \$76,000.

World hunger gifts totaled \$158,416, a decrease of almost 9 percent from the previous year.

Supporting special mission offerings gives Arkansas Baptists "a sense of being on mission in a broader sense than they would otherwise," noted ABCS missions department director Jimmy Barrentine. "State missions wouldn't be possible without the prayers, financial gifts and volunteer participation of Arkansas Baptists."

"It's always exciting to see goals surpassed and know that we are growing in our stewardship," affirmed state Woman's Missionary Union executive director Julia Ketter. "The growth in the offerings reflects a vision for what can be done as we give."

Cover Story



Prayer for Muslims 14

Many of the estimated 1 billion Muslims in the world have never heard the Christian gospel. A joint task force of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and Home Mission Board urges Southern Baptists to set aside 1995 as the "Year of Prayer for Muslim Peoples."

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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Missionaries minister after Japan quake

By Mark Kelly

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board

KOBE, JAPAN (BP)—Southern Baptist missionaries are finding opportunities to minister in the aftermath of Japan's deadliest earthquake in 47 years.

The Jan. 17 earthquake rocked Awaji Island, 20 miles from the major port city of Kobe in western Japan. The quake, which registered 7.2 on the Richter scale, shattered Kobe and caused significant damage in nearby Osaka.

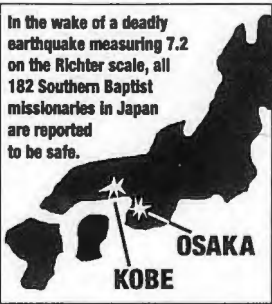
In the hours immediately following the earthquake, missionaries Mike Brooks and Danny Hinson joined rescue crews digging survivors out of the rubble and taking them to hospitals, reported Tokyo-based missionary Linda Whitworth in a telephone interview.

Meanwhile, missionaries Ronald and Cynthia Reynolds translated for international relief teams at Kobe's Canadian Academy, a large school for children of missionaries and other foreigners, where up to 10,000 people have been evacuated from the devastated city center.

Missionaries also are exploring ways to assist as a massive relief effort gears up in the devastated city of 1.5 million located 280 miles west of Tokyo. Initial discussions have centered around water purification, medical assistance and possible establishment of a distribution center at Osaka for food, water and other supplies from military and relief organizations.

All missionaries serving through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board

In the wake of a deadly earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale, all 182 Southern Baptist missionaries in Japan are reported to be safe.



are safe and accounted for, Whitworth said. The Foreign Mission Board has 182 missionaries assigned to Japan and 14 families assigned to the Kobe-Osaka-Kyoto area affected by the quake.

While mission properties sustained some damage, all were "still standing," Whitworth said.

All Japanese Baptist churches also are intact, although two reportedly sustained some damage, she said. Missionary Charles Barham, pastor of an English-language church in Kobe, reportedly was searching for missing church members whose homes had collapsed during the quake.

The fires that raged through Kobe for nearly 24 hours are now under control, but the death toll has climbed past 4,000

and a million homes are without electricity.

The Reynolds, who were told it was unsafe to return to their home, reported they and the other people in the immediate area still lacked clean water Jan. 18.

Government officials estimate the cost of repairs between \$10 billion and \$20 billion. More than 700 buildings were destroyed, primarily in the city center. More than 600 aftershocks have rattled the city, and seismologists expect more shocks, some perhaps as strong as the original quake itself.

As of Jan. 20, the quake's aftermath had left more than 200,000 residents homeless and taking refuge in hastily prepared shelters.

One of the major problems facing survivors, according to Associated Press reports, was finding food. Shoppers jammed the few operating supermarkets and convenience stores, often waiting hours to get inside. Shelters were able to offer only a single ball of rice to those who waited for hours in lines.

Another problem was a lack of medical supplies and treatment facilities. Officials estimate that in addition to the staggering death toll, more than 15,000 people were injured in the quake.

The injured overwhelmed local hospitals, depleting supplies, according to media reports. The Japanese Health Ministry promised to send antibiotics, bandages, blood and other medical supplies by helicopter, but for some, the aid will come too late.

Arkansas Baptists report relatives safe following quake

News of the deadly earthquake that rocked Japan Jan. 17 was more than a headline for several Arkansans who have relatives in areas directly affected by the quake. It was a matter of personal concern as they awaited word of their loved ones' safety.

Maureen Walker, a member of Central Church in Jonesboro, said she talked to her son, Southern Baptist foreign missionary Barry Walker, Jan. 19.

"Barry and (his wife) Tammy were there in Kobe when the quake hit," she said. She explained that the Walkers were assigned to the nearby city of Osaka, but had been waiting in Kobe for a few personal items before moving into their home in Osaka.

"Other missionaries had seen their house in Osaka and said it looked okay," Walker reported.

"When Barry called, he told me he could see a lot of fires in the distance and houses within three minutes that were down and a Buddhist temple that was down.

"I asked if they had been able to help," she noted. "He was to begin language school the day after the quake hit, so all he could help do is get water" for the victims. She said the missionary couple hoped to be able to complete their move to Osaka "and once they are there they can get their house set up so that missionaries in Kobe can get some rest here.

"I was thankful the Lord had protected them," she added. "It

hurts to know they are under these conditions, but the Lord will protect them."

Virginia Irby, a member of First Church in Benton, said her granddaughter, Ann Gaske, escaped from her apartment located on Awaji Island, the quake's epicenter, without any injuries.

Irby said Gaske, who teaches English to Japanese students for a Canadian company, "lost all of her dishes and anything valuable was crushed because things fell on them."

"I prayed she was safe when I saw the TV pictures," Irby recalled. "I could hardly believe anyone was alive." She said Gaske was being relocated to another area in Japan to continue her teaching assignment.

Relocation was more immediate for Mike and Janet Brooks, Southern Baptist foreign missionaries stationed in Kobe. Mrs. Brooks is the sister of Lucia Perry, whose husband, David, is director of program and staff development for the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries.

David Perry said that the missionary couple's apartment was damaged severely.

"Their home has cracked walls and they have smelled gas," Perry said. "They do not know if it is going to be inhabitable. Right now there are five missionaries - two couples with children and a single lady who have moved into one home."

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABS-C Executive Director

It is appropriate that the State Evangelism Conference is early in the year. The burning passion of many individuals and churches for reaching the lost has somehow dwindled to little more than a flicker of a flame. The lost go on in their waywardness, the church goes on with its routine and the believer goes on toward spiritual declension. Everyone loses. The many excuses will be so trite and petty at the judgment seat of Christ that none of us will want to bring them up then. We need to join our hearts in urgent prayer for God to break in upon our Baptist family with His motivation to "seek and to save that which is lost." I urge you to join in a move back to fervent evangelism. Attend our State Evangelism Conference Jan. 30-31 at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock.

Bivocational ministers and their wives will be hosted at a fellowship dinner following the afternoon session of the Evangelism Conference, Jan. 31. I hope this will meet a need for affirmation for these special people who carry such a significant responsibility in our churches.

Baptist Doctrine Study Preview will be held from 4:30 to 6:30 Jan. 30 following the afternoon session of the Evangelism Conference.

Churches should do whatever they can to see that their pastors get to attend these inspiring and equipping events.

Now hear this! I cannot overstate the importance of our churches improving in their ability to work in harmony. More loss of spiritual power and influence comes from God's people not knowing how to work together than from any other one source, I believe. Your convention is trying to address this painful reality by offering area seminars on Building and Maintaining Healthy Relationships in three areas of our state, Feb. 20, 21 and 23. Pastors, staff persons, deacons, church council and directors of missions are urged to attend.

I really believe earnest prayer and involvement in the things mentioned above will put us back into bearing a witness that will have God's blessing and help us reach our communities.

RONNIE ROGERS

President's Corner

Let's finish the job



At the September Executive Board meeting in Nashville, Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board, shared that we started a record 1,500 churches in America last year. He predicts we will exceed the goal of 50,000 churches by the year 2000.

Jerry Rankin, president of the Foreign Mission Board, said we have 35,000 overseas churches, that is twice as many as just six years ago and we are in 129 countries ministering to 189 people groups. We have a record 4,000 missionaries. Also in 1993, we baptized 265,000 persons compared to 85,000 in 1980.

Seminary presidents shared about a 30 percent enrollment increase at Southeastern, 400 new students at Southern, New Orleans is at capacity, and God has brought revival to Southwestern; also Cooperative Program receipts are up three percent. Hallelujah! The battle for doctrinal purity is worth starting and finishing because it eventuates in more people being saved; however, it will take more money to meet the challenges God has before us.

A lack of Cooperative Program receipts is often attributed to the moderates who no longer support the convention; however, I believe they must be respected for making their financial support consistent with their

convictions. Their decision to redirect their money is not the real cause of lagging Cooperative Program receipts; further, any thought of rebathing our convention in modernity in order to have their financial support is counter-productive.

The solution for increased Cooperative Program gifts is for we who have supported the conservative resurgence to finish the job. We cannot struggle for the SBC to be more conservative and mission-minded and then fail to support her financially. If we fail to financially provide for the schools to teach and missionaries to communicate the pure doctrine we fought for, then we have crippled our mission with friendly fire.

I am not endorsing a percentage litmus test to determine a church's love for Christ or suggesting that loyalty to the Cooperative Program is tantamount to a person's loyalty to evangelism. That mistake has been made too often in the past. I am simply asking my brothers, who supported the resurgence and may have decreased or not increased Cooperative Program gifts in the past because of the liberal influence, to reconsider now. I have heeded my own advice, and this year our church increased our Cooperative Program one-half percent.

Let's finish the job.

Personal perspectives

"The Southern Baptist Convention without Woman's Missionary Union would be like ham without eggs...Lottie without Moon and Annie without Armstrong. We go together."

—Jim Henry, SBC president

"Every time God speaks is the right time to obey Him....Obedience is always the beginning to experiencing God."

—Henry Blackaby, author of "Experiencing God"

'Go ye therefore...'

Evangelism is an essential element in effective Southern Baptist ministry efforts. Article XI of The Baptist Faith and Message emphasizes that "it is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ."

During 1995, Arkansas Baptists' statewide ministry goal is to "Reach People." At the same time, most of our churches will join thousands of other Southern Baptist congregations in highlighting the nationwide "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" evangelism campaign.

Both ministers and laypeople will have ample opportunities throughout the year to become personally involved in "Reach People" and "Here's Hope" efforts.

Priority projects specifically related to the Here's Hope campaign include revival efforts in Europe and Iowa, where Arkansas Baptists have ongoing mission partnerships. A 60-day personal witnessing campaign already is under way and simultaneous revivals throughout the state are scheduled to begin in March.

Other evangelism-related projects planned for the year include a Here's Hope college emphasis, media campaign and church-starting effort.

Another way to gear up for evangelistic involvement is by attending the 1995 Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR

By TRENNIS HENDERSON



next week at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock. The Jan. 30-31 conference, which will be preceded by the Monday morning Festival of Evangelists, will feature speakers encouraging Arkansas Baptists to "Share Jesus Now" in every area of life.

Arkansas Baptist youth ushered in the new year with an enthusiastic evangelism emphasis during their Dec. 29-30 Joy Expo. The annual event, featuring high-energy music, preaching, drama and testimonies, challenged youth to "Start a Party! Share Jesus Now!" More than 40 young people responded by accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Other evangelism-oriented opportunities during the coming year include the Golden Age Evangelism Conference April 6-7 in Eureka Springs; the Hispanic Evangelism Conference April 29 at Geyer

Springs First Church in Little Rock; and a national Continuing Witness Training seminar Sept. 25-27 at Second Church, Jacksonville. That is in addition to summer camp programs, retreats, associational events and local church activities which highlight evangelism.

The overall goal of each of these events and emphases is to equip and encourage individual Christians to share their faith with those around them. Even for those Christians who are hesitant to share a verbal witness, the Jan. 12 issue of the Newsmagazine featured an article compiled by several Southern Baptist evangelism leaders about "60 ways to witness in 60 days." Suggested approaches range from subscribing to a favorite devotional guide or Christian periodical for a friend to wearing a T-shirt with a Christian message that can spark a witnessing opportunity.

Knocking on a stranger's door with a Bible in hand is one way to witness, but it isn't the only way. One key is to maintain a willing attitude to be used of God as opportunities arise. And Arkansas Baptist leaders are providing numerous ways this year to help that happen.

What is the source of our power and motivation? As Jesus Christ assured His followers in Matthew 28: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach..."

Beware of subtle attacks

Arkansas Baptist president Ronnie Rogers has exhibited the love Baptists are in need of. In his address to the state convention in November, printed in the Nov. 17 issue of the Newsmagazine, he spoke the truth in love. Bro. Rogers boldly described what's happening with the self esteem exaltation we hear so much about. He defined the origin and identified popular practitioners who employ these seductive, godless devices.

Solomon learned the benefits of enhanced self esteem. It has not changed. Dr. E.Y. Mullins warned about this same danger in connection with the presentation of the Baptist Faith and Message in 1925. False science and theories masked as true science have been here ever since the time of Adam and Eve — just take a bite and see how god-like you become.

The attack is still subtle: "Hath God said?" The Word of God seems so obsolete today. We need this "ology" or that "ism" to explain human nature.

Our rebellious, lustful nature is explained as natural. We inherited this or that-sickness, so we should not feel bad



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

when we are convicted by the Holy Spirit.

Thank you, Bro. Rogers, for saying what few will say these days!

Jim Glover
Heber Springs, AR

Action prompts concern

This letter regards the recent resignation of Dan McCauley, BSU director at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock, as reported in the Dec. 29 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. I write it for several reasons.

First, because I couldn't live with my conscience if I didn't write it.

Secondly, because of my confidence in the Christian life and commitment of Dan, who has been a good friend for more than 20 years. During these years I have never observed anything which would cause me

to doubt that his ultimate commitment in life is to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. As Paul expressed it in Galatians, "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." I don't presume to know all the details of Dan's theology but I have seen his Christian faith expressing itself in love with great consistency for years.

Finally, I have concern about the procedures involved. I feel that, at the very least, Dan should have been given the opportunity to face the persons who brought the charges against him and respond in the forum of the ABCS Executive Board, the Operating Committee or whoever the "employer" is.

But, even if it could be determined with certainty that he was in error at any point, I think Galatians 6:1 should have been observed, "Even if a man should be detected in some sin, my brothers, the spiritual ones among you should quietly set him back on the right path, not with any feeling of superiority but by being yourselves on guard against temptations. Carry each other's burdens and so live out the law of Christ."

James Jones
Fayetteville, AR

BSU personnel changes impact campus ministry

Recent changes in student ministry personnel in Arkansas have resulted in filling a full-time position, a part-time position and four interim positions in Baptist Student Unions across the state. David James, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention student ministry department, said the recent changes signal "a stability in Baptist Student Union work" in the state.

"Our number one priority with personnel is having the right people in the right places," James said. "It involves lots of effort, prayer and change, but I feel like BSU in Arkansas today is more effective than at any point since I have been in the state (as BSU director).... We never like to have this many changes at one time, but are excited about where we are with BSU."

The changes include Darrell Cook, BSU director at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, who accepted the position of BSU associate director at Arkansas State University, Jonesboro. He replaces Linda Osborne, who was recently named BSU director for Florida State University.

James said Cook's ministry skills made him the top candidate for the transfer. "Darrell has good discipling skills in students' lives and student leadership development. The associate position at ASU gives strong attention to freshmen and to discipleship as a whole."

James emphasized that Cook's move from a director's position to the associate's position at ASU is not a demotion.

"We believe our associate positions are on the same level as any of our full-time directors," he explained. "It is also an attempt to say, 'Take a look at this. Here is a guy who takes the associate position seriously.'"

Cook, a Virginia native, earned the bachelor of science degree in family and child development from Virginia Tech in Blacksburg and the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He previously served as

a campus minister intern for the BSU at Georgia College in Milledgeville and as interim BSU director for the University of Nevada in Las Vegas.

Teresa Stephens, a special worker at Southern Arkansas University Technical in Camden, has accepted the part-time position of BSU assistant director at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway.

James said that Stephens' move was crucial to the state student ministry plan. Noting that the BSU state advisory committee has targeted another full-time BSU position at UCA as a top priority, James explained, "Teresa was moved to pioneer that position as we move to a full-time associate there."

Stephens' "gifts and skills in the area of evangelism, interpersonal relationships and a deep personal walk with the Lord have proved to be successful ingredients in her ministry at SAU Tech," he added.

Stephens, who considers Dierks her hometown, earned the bachelor of science degree in education from UCA and the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary.

Prior to her service at SAU Tech, Stephens served as youth minister for Amboy Church in North Little Rock, student-to-student minister at Henderson State University in Arkadelphia and as activities director for First Church, Dierks.

James also announced four individuals filling interim student ministry positions at state Baptist Student Unions. They include:

■ Carolyn Teague, a free-lance speaker, consultant and author, accepted the interim position at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She replaces Dan

McCauley, who resigned Dec. 31 following 17 years of service.

"Carolyn brings an excitement, vision and motivation every time she walks into a room," James noted.

He said Teague is no stranger to Arkansas student work. "In 1993, Carolyn spent 10 weeks on 16 Arkansas campuses helping us focus our attention on evangelism. Not only will she bring great skills to the UALR position, but she has a strong respect from her peers statewide and nationwide."

■ Ronda Cowan, a special worker at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, will become interim associate there following David McKinney's resignation to join the staff of Central Church in North Little Rock.

"This will be a great opportunity for Ronda," James said. "Her faithfulness and hard work will provide stability as we process potential candidates for that position."

■ Mark Williams, youth minister at First Church, Camden, will serve as the interim BSU director at SAU Tech following Teresa Stephens' resignation.

"The key to Mark being brought on is that his involvement in the BSU program made him an obvious choice for the interim," James explained. "His love and commitment to students will bridge the gap between directors."

■ Al Brodbent, a Christian counselor and member of Pleasant Hill Church in Wynne, will serve as interim director at East Arkansas Community College in Forrest City.

"Al believes in associational work and sees BSU as a valid association ministry where he lives," James said. "Al will not just hold things together, but provide a program and invest in students' lives in the interim."

James said a major priority for statewide BSU ministries in 1995 will be Here's Hope, the Southern Baptist Convention's evangelism emphasis for the year. Last year Arkansas Baptist student ministries established three new works on technical college campuses, sent out 107 summer missionaries, and recorded 600 professions of faith.



Cook

Ministers' wives retreat offers refreshment, enrichment

The Arkansas Baptist Ministers' Wives will hold a retreat March 3-4, focusing on the theme, "Fresh Elastic for Stretched-Out Women." Beverly Terrell of Houston, lyric soprano and popular retreat speaker, will lead the conference at the Holiday Inn Airport in Little Rock.

"We want to address the unique situations that ministers' wives find

themselves faced with," explained retreat chairman Kerri Evans, whose husband, John, is pastor of Keo First Church. "It's a time to refresh ourselves and enrich our fellowship with each other."

The retreat begins at 5 p.m. Friday evening with a fellowship time, with the evening program starting at 7:30 p.m. The retreat concludes at 2 p.m. on Saturday

following a luncheon.

The cost ranges from \$29 to \$68, depending on number of people per room, and includes the conference, room and meals. A non-refundable deposit of \$20 is due by Feb. 15.

To register or for more information, contact Kerri Evans; phone 501-842-1004 or 501-842-3553.

Ramirez ministers to Arkansas Hispanics

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

When Margarito Ramirez was ordained Nov. 13 by First Church, Glenwood, he became what state missions leaders believe is the first Hispanic Baptist pastor ordained in Arkansas.

"As far as we know, he is the first Hispanic pastor that was converted after coming from Mexico and came up in (Arkansas Baptist) work," noted Jim Hausler, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department.

"The ordination was very important," Ramirez said, "because the people and the church recognized me in this ministry."

Ramirez, 31, leads Hispanic missions in Glenwood, Arkadelphia and Hot Springs. He said each of the ministries is diverse.

"Here in Glenwood on Wednesday nights, we have an English as a Second Language (ESL) program for 45 minutes, a dinner break and then services," he explained. "In Arkadelphia we have Sunday School on Sunday mornings at First Baptist Church — and a Tuesday night ESL.

"In Hot Springs we have Sunday night services at Central Baptist Church and a Tuesday night ESL also. The people in Hot Springs are from Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica."

Ramirez's own story mirrors that of most people in the mission congregations. Raised in the Hidalgo district of Mexico, Ramirez said he "was brought up in a Christian home."

"About 20 years ago my father became a Baptist Christian," he recalled. "Before that we were nothing. We had no Bible, no God, nothing. A young lady from North Carolina, a missionary, came to my country to share the gospel and that is where my father became a Christian."

He said he made his first work trip to the United States in 1981 at the age of 18. "By 1986, I had my green card and was about to return to the U.S.," he recounted. "The first thing my daddy said to me was, 'Don't forget to study your Bible and go to church somewhere.'"

Ramirez took his father's advice. He found a church home and made a profession of faith at the Iglesia San Juan Bautista (a Baptist mission) in DeQueen. "That's where God called me to the ministry."

He said when he received the call, "I didn't know what happened. Something inside told me you have more to do."

He shared his feelings with mission pastor Oscar Salazar. "So I talked with Brother Oscar and he said, 'Would you know if God wanted you to share the gospel?' I said, 'Me? No. I come from you



Margarito Ramirez (right) leads three Arkansas Hispanic congregations. Co-workers say his rapport and involvement with families are a trademark of his ministry.

know where.' But my mind said, 'You are a son of God and you have everything you need to do this.'"

Salazar gave Ramirez church-related responsibilities, including teaching youth. After a few months, he began to assist Salazar at a mission in Wickes. In June 1991, he began to lead services at Wickes. While maintaining a full-time job as a worker in area chicken houses and preaching at Wickes, he soon began the mission at Glenwood, then in Arkadelphia.

In July, he became a full-time minister sponsored by the Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering and Red River and Central Baptist associations. He resigned from the Wickes mission and added the Hot Springs work.

'A grassroots preacher'

Hausler said Ramirez "is like a sponge. He is a learner." Hausler noted that Ramirez currently is taking Seminary Extension classes in Hot Springs and Arkadelphia.

"He's also like the old-time Baptist preacher. He came up as a bivocational, grassroots preacher that speaks the language of the people," Hausler said. "We need 12 more like him. He relates to the people. He came over, got his green card, knows the system and the people. He's walked the walk and talked the talk."

"He has rapport," said Carolyn Moore, a member of First Church, Glenwood, and one of five ESL teachers at the mission. "He knows the people that move in here and

he is involved with their families.

"He serves as interpreter and gives them guidance in dealing with the things around here they are not familiar with," she said.

Glenwood mission member Noe Morales, speaking through an interpreter, said he has been attending services for almost two years. "I come to the ESL classes to know more about the Word of God and to learn English," he said. "Margarito helps us to know more about God. He likes us and we like him. One of the important things is because he shares the Word of God to these people."

Ramirez said ESL is integral to the vision. "This is how we reach these people. They come from Mexico and speak no English. They want to know. They come to learn English, but they stay and listen to the service and make professions of faith."

Ramirez said the ESL classes at Glenwood "average about 40 members. Sometimes in the summer we have 50 to 60 every week."

He said the hardest part of being an Hispanic mission pastor is that "the Spanish people come from a Catholic background and the face these people see is Mary, not Jesus. That's hard to take off the picture of Mary in their minds and put Jesus there."

"These people," he said of his three congregations, "like me before, come to find work and dollars. But like me they find Jesus. They need somebody to show them love and it is up to us to reach these people and show them Jesus."

Light in the darkness

OBU professor's book offers practical insights for combating the occult

By Russell N. Dillard

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

An Arkansas Baptist author who wrote a book on the occult from a Christian perspective said the book has generated notoriety both in secular and religious circles. Bill Viser, author of *The Darkness Among Us, A Look at the Sinister Growth of the Occult and How Dangerously Close It Is to You*, said it has recently entered its second edition with a printing run of between 10,000 and 18,000 copies.

Viser, associate professor of religion at Ouachita Baptist University, said he had mixed feelings about writing the book.

"This has been, undoubtedly, one of the most interesting experiences of my life," he said. "The subject matter has made it an interesting experience and what has happened as a result of the writing has excited me, but I don't know of anyone in their right mind who would want to write a book of this nature unless the Lord led them to it."

"The word 'occult' comes from the Latin word *occultus*, meaning 'to conceal,'" Viser wrote in the opening chapter of his book. "The origin of the word is fitting, since those involved in the occult world do not want anyone to see what they are doing."

"It's so dark and oppressive," he said. "When you...research evil and you see all

of the manifestations of it, it works on your spirit. I really felt depression."

The book contains references to Satanism, spiritism, witchcraft, astrology and demon possession.

"I had one woman call me after she read the book and said she had to sleep with the lights on after she read it," Viser recalled.

He emphasized, however, that his aim in writing the book "was not to write a sensational, Hard Copy/Geraldo type-thing."

Included in the book are suggestions for countering occultic influences. "When I pick up a book for information, I want to know what I'm going to get out of this book," he said.

"It would have been easier to write from a scholarly approach, but I

wanted parents and kids to pick this up and say, 'Now what do I do with this?' So at the end of each chapter are innumerable things you can use. I wanted it to be practical and helpful.

"What I felt like the Lord wanted me to do was to send a wake-up call and tell people that this is not just fun and games," he added. Viser wrote that many people refuse to acknowledge the occult because they are "too sophisticated, too spiritually blind, too scared, too naive or too doubtful." He added that others view the occult as "too incredible, too distasteful or too faddish."

"The things Satan is using today, he is using masterfully to draw people away from Christ," Viser warned. "I wanted parents to know they can't let their kids go and think that the things their kids are involved in, such as horror movies, Ouija boards or Dungeons and Dragons (a fantasy role-playing game) are just harmless. This is serious stuff. A lot of kids have been seduced with their involvement."

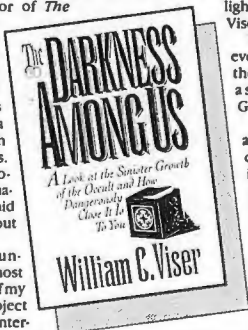
Interest in *The Darkness Among Us*, which recently reached number 4 on the Broadman & Holman Publishers best-seller list, has led to the signing of a contract in Brazil to print it in Portuguese, Viser said. "And we are looking at printing it at the Spanish publishing house in El Paso and in Korean, German and Polish."

Public interest has generated what Viser said have been "hundreds" of radio interviews on secular and religious stations. "They started in August and I have done sometimes as many as three a day."

The media exposure also included interviews and excerpts from the book in newspapers and magazines across the country. He even declined an invitation to dialogue with a representative from the Church of Satan on the Sally Jesse Raphael Show, a popular daytime television talk show.

"It would have been a good plug for the book and a witness as well," but he said he declined because of concerns for the safety of his family "and I just did not have a peace from God about it."

Viser's fear for his family from occultists is well-grounded. He said he has received threats for his statements in the book. "I have gotten one letter from a person involved in the occult who was angry with what I had said and I have had verbal



Throughout his book, *The Darkness Among Us*, author Bill Viser tells the story of Lauren, a fictional composite of many Arkansas teens who deal with occultic influences daily. Following is an excerpt from her story:

Lauren is sixteen, a tenth grader, and an honor roll student. She is your average adolescent with long blond hair and blue eyes. She was always well-dressed and active in her school organizations, until recently.

Lauren's parents do not screen what Lauren watches on television. Lately, Lauren has been watching more and more shows with occult themes. Even Lauren's younger brother and sister watch the same programs. Everyone in the family agrees that they are strangely fascinating.

Her parents recently found a book on witchcraft in Lauren's room, but Lauren just mumbled something about a friend

loaning it to her. Her parents did not pursue it any further.

Her brother and sister told their parents that Lauren's cassette tapes had pictures of the devil, demons and scenes from graveyards and hell but they dismissed it as "typical teenage music."

Lauren's parents are out of touch with their daughter. They know very little about Lauren's world, her friends, or the boys she dates. ...They don't know that Lauren's grades have begun to slip ever so gradually.

Lauren's girlfriends have invited her to a slumber party. Lauren says she wishes she knew what her future would be like so she would know what to do now. The girls laugh and say that's easy. Haven't you ever heard of a Ouija board? Candles are lit, the lights are turned off, and Lauren takes another step into a frightening and deceitful world...

LAUREN

An excerpt from Bill Viser's
The Darkness Among Us

CONFRONTING THE OCCULT

opposition on radio talk shows. There's been anger and skepticism from critics."

A licensed professional counselor who teaches a class at Ouachita on the occult, Viser has seen firsthand the danger from occult followers. "I've talked with parents, kids and former cult members. These people can be hard core and capable of doing anything."

He added that he has received many positive comments about the book including a letter from Anthony LaVey, son of Anton LaVey, founder of the Church of Satan and author of *The Satanic Bible*. The younger LaVey, "who is a born-again Christian, told me how much he had enjoyed the book," he said.

Viser said danger in writing books exposing occult activities don't always come from outside sources and warned other researchers of the risks of studying the occult.

"You run a real risk when you work in this area," Viser explained. "One of the risks is the fascination. When you are conducting your research, one thing leads to another. Most people have no idea how deep the roots of the occult go or how many spin-offs this area can get into."

"I know more about it than I would like to know," he said. "If I wasn't careful, I would get deeper. And this is not your light-hearted, happy type of material. That's the risk."

"If the Lord is in it, that's one thing," he said. "But if you are in it for your own interests, you better watch out. My interest in the occult is limited. It's just enough for what God wanted me to do in writing this book."

Viser said the idea for a book project on the occult began in 1970 while he was a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"When I was a seminary student, I had three years of experience working with youth during the late '60s and early '70s," he recalled. "Interest in the occult was widespread then. I found a fascination of the occult among young people while working with youth at two Fort Worth churches...and parents bewildered by that interest."

He began gathering materials on the occult, planning to write the book, but delayed the project. He said that 20-year

delay gave the book "more strength."

Following seminary, God's call took Viser to Rio de Janeiro, where he served as a foreign missionary. "It was an atmosphere heavily dominated by voodoo and spiritism," he explained.

"With the encounters I have had since seminary, the book, written last year, is stronger and much more effective now than if it had been written in the '70s," he said.

Viser said his research has shown that occult influences are growing both nationally and in Arkansas.

"The stories that are coming in from reputable sources are growing every day. Does that mean that Satanism is growing?" he asked. "Yes. In fact, many law enforcement

officers are calling Satanism the crime of the '90s.

"Arkansas, for example, has a manual for training law enforcement officers to detect signs that a crime is ritually based," Viser said. "You would be hard-pressed to find a sheriff in any county in Arkansas who couldn't give you some kind of docu-



"No matter how diabolical Satan is, God is always 10 steps ahead of him."

**— Bill Viser, author
The Darkness Among Us**

mentation about occult activities in their county."

Occult activities in Arkansas?

"Very definitely and in many different forms," he emphasized. "And a private investigator in Arkansas told me they (occult followers) are moving out of the cities and into the rural areas" to avoid detection.

Viser advised those wishing to combat occult influences to gain "knowledge of the enemy, cultivate our daily walk with Jesus, participate in regular activity with the church and make a daily priority of spiritual concerns."

Assessing the growth in occult activity, he said there is "far too much of this to be coincidental. Why is this growing? Why the prevalence? I have a strong feeling that we are living in the end times. This time in which we are living will be one of great revival, but Satan's also making his pitch."

He said that although he is "alarmed" at cult activities, he is not "scared" by them. "I can't see the work that Satan is doing without an awe of how awesome God's power and authority is over him. No matter how diabolical Satan is, God is always 10 steps ahead of him."

Parental input can help curb occult activity, Viser says

Author Bill Viser urged parents of adolescents to become involved in the lives of their children to help protect against involvement in occult activity.

"Many children are drifting over (to occult activity) with their parents blissfully unaware of it," Viser said. "Until one day they wake up and see that their kids have stepped over the line."

He said the occult is popular among adolescents because "it is a shortcut to power. As they become involved in the occult, they think they are going to get everything they want. It's one of Satan's lies."

"Also, some kids are disillusioned with religion or rebellious against their parents," he said. "What stronger message of rebellion can a kid send to his parents than to say, 'I'm a Satanist. I'm a witch. I reject your religion.'"

Viser described various "warning signs" that an adolescent may be interested or involved in the occult. One or more of these signs does not necessarily mean that an individual is involved in the occult, but these signs should be taken into consideration with other factors such as behavioral changes. A partial list of "warning signs" includes:

- "Nightmarish posters on their walls and items such as crystals and bones and skulls."

- A change in behavior or attitude.

- Changes of dress, "especially wearing of occult jewelry, bizarre haircuts or hair color and a preference for the color black."

- Obsession with rock music using satanic symbols or references. "What kind of music are they listening to?" Viser asked. "Do you understand anything about the groups? There are plenty of sources today that can help parents with background material."

- Possession or use of games with tarot cards, fantasy role-playing games or a Ouija board.

- Rejection of friends or parental values.

- Unusual interest in books of Satanism, black magic, witchcraft and other occult subjects. "If they have a steady diet of this stuff, it's not healthy."

He also advocated parental monitoring of media. "Look for an obsessive interest in movies and TV shows such as *Tales from the Crypt*," *Friday the 13th* and *slasher* horror movies.

"Watching these shows doesn't make one a Satanist," he said, "but when they have an obsessive interest, be careful."

Training conference targets smaller-membership churches

Leaders in smaller-membership churches will have a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity for leadership training during "Celebrating the Smaller Membership Church: Reach People" conference Feb. 24-25 at Ouachita Baptist University. The conference, the first of its kind in the state, is sponsored jointly by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and OBU.

L.B. Jordan, director of the ABSC church leadership support department, said the conference is designed to assist not only pastors, but directors of Sunday School, Discipleship Training, music, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood. There also are classes for church accompanists, deacon chairmen, church treasurers and missions committee chairmen.

'Comprehensive conference'

"This is the most comprehensive conference of its kind," Jordan explained, noting that personnel from almost all of the departments of the ABSC and many OBU professors will be leading conferences. "It deals with virtually every aspect of pastoral ministries as well as helps for all church program features. It offers the widest variety of help for smaller-membership churches.

"This is the kind of event that highlights Arkansas Baptists at their best," Jordan said. "We are a people of cooperation...in terms of various convention boards and agencies when they meet local church

needs. We exist to strengthen churches in order that they may fulfill their biblical mission."

Jordan said the conference has the potential to affect a majority of Arkansas Baptist churches.

"A little over 70 percent of Arkansas Baptist churches are single-staff churches," he said. "About 55 percent of Arkansas Baptist churches have less than 150 members or average 50 or less in Sunday School. These are the churches we are targeting with this conference."

Jordan said the statewide conference replaces smaller, regional events "to offer more diverse conferences. By having a statewide event with multiple offerings, it will give participants greater latitude in choosing conferences to fit their churches' needs."

In addition to diverse educational conferences offered at the event, Jordan said several special conferences will serve specific groups, such as:

■ A pastor's track, including conferences on missions, evangelism, discipleship, Brotherhood and WMU. "It also includes a seminar on 'Computer Assisted Ministry,'" Jordan said. "It's very unique because it is of such time-saving help to pastors in their preparation."

■ Conferences for directors of missions and their wives. "The DOM wives' conference will be especially meaningful because of the conference leaders," Jordan

emphasized. "They've walked the walk. What they say, they will say out of experience, not theory." The wives' conference schedule will include workshops on missions, adjusting to new roles, humor, fulfillment as a helpmeet and developing a pastors' wives support group.

■ Associational secretaries workshops. "This is the first time in the state we have had a conference for secretaries on the use of computers in the associational office," Jordan noted. "The conference will be led by Wally Sale, director of training for Automated Church Systems in Florence, S.C."

■ A music track, including conferences for music directors, accompanists and children's choir leaders.

Worship leaders for the weekend will include Bill Steger, chairman of the OBU religion department, and Neil Darnell, smaller-membership church consultant for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The cost for the event is \$5 per person, which includes conference materials, a Friday evening banquet and Saturday breakfast. "This event is a bargain with a capital B," Jordan emphasized, "because of the quality of offerings."

Lodging is available at Arkadelphia-area hotels, but participants also may lodge with area Baptists at no cost. To secure no-cost housing, contact Maurice Hitt, director of missions for Red River Association; phone 501-246-9524.

For additional information or registration material, contact Jordan at the ABSC church leadership support department, phone 501-376-4791, ext. 5148.

WHATEVER IT TAKES 4' highlights church recreation

Church recreation leaders are challenging Arkansas Baptists to do "whatever it takes" for innovative ministry by attending the "WHATEVER IT TAKES 4'" recreation/ministry workshop March 3-4 at Calvary Church in Little Rock. WHATEVER IT TAKES 4' is sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention discipleship and family ministry department and missions department in cooperation with the Baptist Sunday School Board and Home Mission Board.

The event, the only one of its kind in the state each year, will feature more than 50 conferences that highlight skills and leadership development in church recreation and sports, innovative missions and ministries and camping.

Event leaders said the workshop will be helpful for pastors and church staff; recreation and mission leaders; drama, puppet and clowning teams; camp planners and day care teachers.

Pete Petty, an associate in the missions department, said WHATEVER IT TAKES 4' "is a skill and leadership workshop designed to combine recreation and ministry to reach people and meet needs. The training equips people for local ministry as well as missions beyond the church."

He said the workshop is necessary "because we must reach outside the walls of the church — and to get the ears of people we must reach them through innovative approaches."

Bob Holley, director of the discipleship and family ministry

department, pointed to the increasing attendance at the event as evidence of the growing popularity for innovative ministries.

"Last year there were 265 in attendance," Holley noted. "People who attend are finding applications for summer youth ministries, summer missions, resort ministries, day camping, Vacation Bible School and Mission VBS."

"These approaches are used to get attention and communicate truths," Holley added. "They are a vehicle for communicating with people at their level."

Sandra Kemmer, Woman's Missionary Union director for First Church, Brinkley, specifically encouraged Acteens to attend the conference.

"Acteen Activators require 50 hours of training before going to a mission project," she said. "The wide variety of conferences provided during this workshop such as puppets, puppet construction, balloons, clowning, juggling, etc., is a great opportunity in training."

The conference will begin Friday at 6 p.m. with a recreation and ministry fair and concludes Saturday following a 2:30 p.m. worship service.

The cost for the workshop is \$17.50 per person. The cost includes two meals, conference materials and a notebook containing all conference handouts. To register, contact Petty at the ABSC missions department; phone 501-376-4791, ext. 5249.

Home missions season spotlights ministry

By David Winfrey

Southern Baptist Home Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—With the theme "Win All," this year's Season of Home Missions highlights a variety of Southern Baptist evangelism efforts.

The season, from mid-February to mid-March, includes the Week of Prayer for Home Missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, the home missions study and Sunday School emphasis day.

From block parties to truck stop chaplaincy, Southern Baptists are using creativity and common sense to take the gospel to people who might never enter a church, said Joe Westbury, author of the home mission study, titled *All Things to All People*.

"Our missionaries have learned that you don't do evangelism the same way in Boston that you do in Mississippi," he said. "As they have adapted to the locations where they are assigned, they have also adapted the gospel presentation to the people there."

In addition to profiling the work of home missionaries, this year's study offers tips from the missionaries that individual Southern Baptists or their churches can use to be a better witness.

Woman's Missionary Union has adopted an unprecedented \$50 million goal for the 1995 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions. WMU executive director Dellanna O'Brien said the goal is ambitious but reachable. "It's far beyond anything we've ever done before, but it's definitely not beyond the realm of possibility," she said.

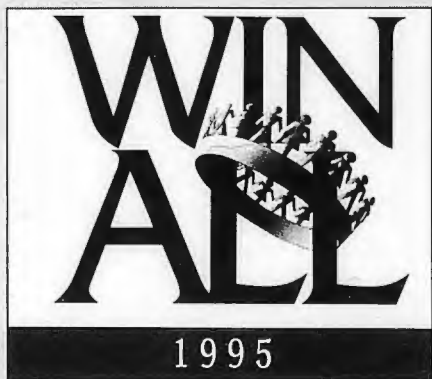
The previous highest offering received was \$37.6 million in 1992. WMU adopted the \$50 million Annie Armstrong goal and December's foreign missions offering goal of \$100 million in recognition of the denomination's 150th anniversary, O'Brien said.

Reaching the goal will require that offering supporters both give and be advocates for the offering in their churches, she said.

"It's going to take all of us making a decided effort," she emphasized. "It's not going to happen without additional and sacrificial efforts."

O'Brien also stressed the importance of prayer for missions work. "While we put emphasis on the dollars that go into an offering, what we feel is more significant is the prayer that accompanies the giving," she said. "Dollars without prayer support can never be as effective as those that are spent in the power of Christ."

This year's Week of Prayer for Home Missions will be March 5-12. Home



Season of Home Missions

- Home Mission Study
February 19-22, 1995
- Week of Prayer for Home Missions
March 5-12, 1995
- Home Missions Day in Sunday School
March 12, 1995
- Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions
National Goal: \$50 million
State Goal: \$1,025,000

missionaries whose work is highlighted this year are:

■ Charles and Laura Lea Chamblee, of Franklin, Mass. He is a church planter and she is a missions growth team associate.

■ Richard Harris, a director of missions in Wheeling, W. Va.

■ Lee and Bonnie McClanahan, Mission Service Corps volunteers who coordinate construction crews to help build churches in Arizona.

■ Dub Bryant, a regional evangelism missionary for Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota.

■ Ramon Alemon, a catalytic missionary who helps start Hispanic churches in northwest Oklahoma.

■ Ken Weathersby, a new work strategist who helps start African-American churches in Memphis, Tenn.

■ Charles and Daisy Joyner, who start new congregations through apartment ministries in metro Seattle.

■ Bill Sims, an area evangelism director who helped pioneer evangelistic block parties in the San Francisco Bay area.

March 12 will be Home Missions Day in Southern Baptist Sunday Schools. Members will be challenged to consider their responsibility to witness and minister — including prayer, mission trips, class goal setting and giving to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, said Dan Eullis, chairman of the offering's promotion team.

Church news

Hope First Church observed Frances Miller Appreciation Day Jan. 15 in recognition of her retirement following more than 26 years of service as church secretary. Miller also served for more than 18 years as financial recording secretary, serving under three pastors: Gerald Trussell, Richard Stillner and Stan Parris. In addition, she assisted two ministers of music and education, five ministers of music, three ministers of education and five ministers of youth.

Benton First Church hosted a reception Jan. 15 to honor Lorene Reynolds who has retired as pastor's secretary, following more than 20 years of service. Reynolds, who came to the church as the first director of the Mother's Day Our program, also has assisted with financial records. Prior to her retirement, she was secretary to current pastor Greg Kirksey. She also had served former pastors Bernes K. Selph, Dickson Ryal, Tommy Tutor and Randel Everett. The reception included tributes from Reynolds' family members. She was presented with a silver tray and memento book by the congregation.

Cullendale First Church in Camden held a noteburning ceremony Jan. 1 to celebrate the early retirement of a \$362,000 note made in 1985 when the sanctuary was remodeled. Pastor Larry Wilson led in the celebration at the close of the morning



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By MILLIE GILL

worship hour. Trustees Doc Long, David Cicero and Sommers Buckley, who signed the original note, assisted with the noteburning. Louise Scarborough, widow of trustee Paul Scarborough, also participated.

Blytheville First Church Baptist Men's mission team recently participated in a building project in Belize. Team members included Tommie Westbrook, Steve Westbrook, Don Childers, Mike Childers, Edwin Holstead, Buddy Harris, Allen Edwards and Johnny Buchanan.

Red River Association recently held its first annual deacons rally for deacons, pastors and their spouses. The event, held at Beech Street Church in Gurdon, was attended by 100 participants from 12 churches. The rally was coordinated by Cecil Sutley, associational pastoral ministries director, and director of missions Maurice Hitt. L.B. Jordan, director of church leadership support for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and his wife, Nancy, were speakers for the program which also include testimonies given by Mel Wasson, a deacon from First Church in Arkadelphia, and Jerry Hilton, a deacon from the host church.

Staff changes

Charles Michael "Mike" Manning is pastor of Calvary Church in Batesville, coming there from Rockford, Ill., where he planted the Christ Community Church in 1990 through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Illinois Baptist State Convention. In addition, he has served other Arkansas churches, as well as churches in Louisiana and Texas. Manning, a native of Conway, is a graduate of Dallas Bible College and Criswell College Graduate School. He and his wife, Leslie, have three children, Matt, David and Stephanie.

David McKinney has joined the staff of Central Church in North Little Rock as minister of education and outreach. He and his wife, Jill, moved to North Little Rock from Fayetteville where he was associate director of the Baptist Student Union on the University of Arkansas campus. McKinney is a graduate of Northwestern Oklahoma State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dan Webb recently retired as pastor of Meridian Church of Crossett, following 23 years of service. Under his leadership, the church constructed a new sanctuary, educational wing and fellowship hall. Webb has served three tenures as moderator of Ashley Association and was selected as the association's bivocational pastor of the year in 1992. He also was named the 1992 Arkansas Baptist State Convention Small Membership Pastor of the Year. Webb has served two terms on the ABSC Executive Board and as chaplain for the Crossett Police Department. Webb and his wife, Lillie, will continue to reside in Crossett at 803 West 9th; phone 501-364-3821. They have two daughters, Mary Ann and Cindy.

Prince E. Claybrook of Hope began serving Jan. 1 as interim pastor of First Church in Stamps.

Nathan Twigg of Titusville, Fla., has joined the staff of First Church in Pencil Bluff as minister of youth. He is a senior at Ouachita Baptist University.

Sean Couch has joined the staff of First Church in Pencil Bluff as education director and youth associate. He is a graduate of Central Baptist College in Conway. Couch is married to the former Valerie Parker of Mena.

Chris Gildewell is serving as minister to students for Second Church in El Dorado. A native of Jonesboro, he will graduate in May from Ouachita Baptist University with



Emmanuel Church in Batesville celebrated being debt-free Dec. 4 for the first time in the church's 28-year history. "The debt was retired three years early because of double payments for 10 months and a \$4,600 special offering," said pastor Bill Scroggs. The celebration included a potluck luncheon and noteburning service. Evangelist Billy Walker was the featured speaker. Burning the note were (left to right) Orlando Teague, Larry Greenfeld, Scroggs and A.G. Western.

a degree in biblical studies. Glidewell previously served as minister of youth at Parkers Chapel First Church in El Dorado.

John H. McClanahan will retire Jan. 31 as pastor of First Church in Pine Bluff, following more than 29 years of ministry. McClanahan has served as pastor of other Arkansas churches in Blytheville and Hope, as well as in Kentucky.

He has been president of the national alumni association of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and held numerous denominational and associational leadership positions, including serving as a member of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board and Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee and on the boards of trustees for both Ouachita Baptist University and Southern Baptist Junior College (now Williams Baptist College). He also has published books and sermons and has written for numerous Southern Baptist publications. He has been recognized as an Alumnus of the Year by both Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Ouachita Baptist University.

McClanahan is married to the former Rosalind May Owens whose parents were Southern Baptist missionaries to Palestine. They are the parents of four adult children, John David McClanahan of Fort Smith; Rosalind M. Mouse of Pine Bluff; Stephen E. McClanahan of Atlanta, Ga.; and Laura M. Wilborn, of Sherwood.

The McClanahans will reside at 2500 West 38th Street, Pine Bluff, AR 71603; phone 534-1737. McClanahan, who currently is teaching at Pines Technical College in Pine Bluff, will be available for pulpit supply, revivals, lectures or to serve as an interim pastor. The church will host a retirement banquet for McClanahan Jan. 27 at the Pine Bluff Country Club.

Bradley Scott Hutchins has joined the staff of First Church in Osceola as minister to youth. He and his wife, Laurie, came to Osceola from Muscle Shoals, Ala., where he was singles director for First Baptist Church. In addition, he has served as a staff member for Metropolitan Church in Madison, Tenn. Hutchins, who will enroll in Mid-America Seminary this spring, is a graduate of Pensacola Christian College in Pensacola, Fla.

Thomas R. Edwards has joined the staff of South Highland Church in Little Rock as minister of music, coming there from First Baptist Church of Wake Village, Texas. He

previously served on the staff of other churches in Texas, Arizona and Oklahoma. Edwards is a graduate of Oklahoma City Community College, Prescott College in Prescott, Ariz., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is married to the former Sherri D. Blevins. They have two children, Laura Marie and Emily Michele.

Bob Norvell is serving as interim pastor of First Church in Booneville. Norvell, who retired in 1993 as pastor of College Park Church in Las Vegas, Nev., is a Fort Smith native. He is married to the former Edna Marie Brown. They have three children and five grandchildren.

Jimmy Jeffress is minister of music at Eudora Church. He and his wife, Candace, and their four teenage daughters reside in Crossett.

Chuck Miller, a member of Emmanuel Church in Batesville, has surrendered to the call to become a full-time evangelist and is available to do pulpit supplies, revivals or testimony services. Miller and his family reside at 451 South Central, Batesville, AR 72501; phone 501-698-0629.

Obituaries

Mary Katherine Hutson of Knoxville, Tenn., died Jan. 4 at age 74. She was a former youth worker for Arkansas Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, serving from 1959-66 when she resigned to join the staff of First Church in Knoxville, Tenn. Survivors are two brothers, William F. Hutson of Northbrook, Ill., and Charles C. Hutson of Knoxville; and a sister, Sarah Hutson Reynolds of Knoxville.

Elizabeth "Mema" Henderson of North Little Rock, age 94, died Jan. 14 in St. Vincent's Hospital in Little Rock as the result of a stroke. Her funeral service was held Jan. 17 at Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock where she was a member. In addition, Henderson was a charter member of Cedar Heights Church in North Little Rock. She also was a member of Pike Avenue Church in North Little Rock for 32 years and a longtime Sunday School teacher. Survivors include a son, R.J. Henderson of Little Rock; a daughter, Shirlee Davis of North Little Rock; six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren. Memorials may be made to Baring Cross Church Building Fund or to any charity.

Ronald Griffin of Cabot died Jan. 14 at age 62. Griffin, who retired in 1993 because of health problems, had served as a Southern Baptist pastor and denominational worker for 39 years. He retired from Cherokee Church in Memphis, Tenn. He

had been pastor of Arkansas churches, including Marshall Road Church in Jacksonville, North Main Church in Jonesboro and Mount Carmel Church at Cabot where his funeral services were held Jan. 17. In addition, he had served churches in Texas and Ohio. Griffin, a native of Texas, was a graduate of the University of Corpus Christi and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Survivors are his wife, Martha Lynn Sexton Griffin of Cabot; a son, Philip D. Griffin of Laurel, Miss.; a daughter, Marsha L. Moses of Cabot; his mother, Ella Nelson of Fort Worth, Texas; a sister; a brother; and two grandchildren, Katie and Bailey Moses of Cabot.

Ordinations

Conway First Church ordained Joe Austin and Rik Sowell as deacons Jan. 8.

Hot Springs First Church ordained Keith Baker, Gary Beckwith, Stacy Farnell, James O'Neal and Greg Thomas as deacons Jan. 8.

Fordyce First Church ordained Hal Graves and David Archer to the deacon ministry Jan. 8.

Central Church in Jonesboro ordained Bill Panneck as a deacon Jan. 15.

Arkadelphia Second Church recently ordained Gary Newman and Troy Tucker to the deacon ministry.

Prescott First Church recently ordained Randy Lowdermilk and Bill Terrell as deacons.

Rosie Church pastor killed in accident

Barry A. Jackson, pastor of Rosie Church, died Jan. 15 in a head-on collision on U.S. 167 near Denmark, according to Arkansas state police.

Jackson, age 30, was killed when the car he was driving collided with a tractor-trailer truck. The driver of the truck, Robert Wayne Carter of Patterson, was not injured, police said.

Funeral services for Jackson were held Jan. 17 at Rosie Church.

Survivors are his wife, Karen Morgan Jackson; three children, Elizabeth, Daniel and Sarah Jackson, all of Rosie; one stepson, Brian Coats of Rosie; his parents, Hoyt and Charlee Newcomer Jackson of Ozark Acres; his grandfather, John Gilson Newcomer of Mechanicsville, Va.; and two brothers.

Missionaries' mud hut is witnessing tool

By Craig Bird

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board

FARAFENNI, GAMBIA (BP)—West African villages evoke lots of emotions, including, for Americans, "It's a great place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there."

Life in the villages often is a hot, insect-infested, laborious existence.

But Southern Baptist missionaries Chris and Karen Austin decided a village in Gambia was a great place to live — not for the creature comforts, or lack thereof — but as the best way to develop a living knowledge of village life among the Mandinka people.

During their first two terms as Southern Baptist foreign missionaries, the Austins worked full-time doing community development and public health work in Gambia. Any evangelical witness there must be tied to jobs that benefit the tiny coastal country's economy or health care.

"We felt it was time for us to drink the water from their wells and use the latrines we'd told them would make them more healthy," explained Austin, a Virginia native with advanced degrees in science and public health.

"We also became convinced that to really develop a world view like theirs — so

we can share the Christian faith with them more clearly — we needed to live with them."

Both Austins scored high on Mandinka language exams. But they knew they weren't really fluent.

"They speak in riddles and proverbs and half-sentences," pointed out Mrs. Austin. "We missed all the deeper meaning underneath what they were saying, or else they just wouldn't talk about meaningful topics if we were around."

So, for more than a year, the Austins have lived in Tankanto for 10-day stretches, interspersed with four-day stays at a mission compound six miles away in Farafenni, where they keep development ministries going.

Mud walls and a tin roof

Mom, Dad, 14-year-old daughter Eryn and 17-year-old son Gabriel (when he's home from boarding school) sleep in a three-room, 10- by 20-foot hut with mud walls and a tin roof.

They cook over a wood fire in a separate kitchen hut. They haul water from communal wells and gather firewood from the bush. And yes, they drink water treated with the "Clean Water Medicine" Austin developed and use the latrine he designed

— now the standard design adopted by the Gambian government.

Over the first six months they noticed three distinct phases in their relationships with the people.

First came a honeymoon period when the villagers were "almost too nice" because "no one felt we would stay very long." A rude stage followed, when people — especially women — seemed to go out of their way to irritate these strange white people settling among them. Eventually, acceptance came.

"Being willing to get dirty helped," Mrs. Austin said. "When we went into the community fields on work days and did everything they did for as long as they did, they were impressed. We didn't run home when it got tough. Now we are included in discussions and even serve on (village) committees."

To fight the temptation of iced tea and cool showers waiting just miles away at the mission compound, the Austins don't keep their truck at the village.

"This is obviously much harder on Karen physically than it is on me," Austin insisted. "She has to do 90 percent of the manual labor, which takes a toll on her back and gives her tremendous headaches at times."

Despite cultural norms, he does help

1995: a year of prayer for the Muslim world

By Erich Bridges

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—Muslims: They're at least 1 billion strong — one in every five people on earth.

Despite deep and sometimes violent disputes among themselves, Muslims are growing in strength and numbers in many areas — including the United States.

They believe in one God — the God of Abraham and Moses. The Koran, Islam's holy book, recognizes and honors Jesus as a prophet, sinless and born of a virgin.

But Muslims do not believe Jesus is the Son of God. And many live in places or cultures where they seldom, if ever, get the chance to hear and respond to the Christian gospel. Those who do often risk their lives.

Only one thing will ever change these realities, Christian mission strategists believe — prayer.

That's why a joint Foreign Mission Board-Home Mission Board task force urges Southern Baptists to set aside 1995 as the "Year of Prayer for Muslim Peoples." Why 1995, and why all year?

"The whole movement of Islam around the world is gaining momentum," explained Lewis Myers, chairman of the Muslim evangelism task force and FMB vice president for strategies to reach "World A" — the most unevangelized peoples of the globe.

Islam has spread in Europe, North America and North Africa and strengthened in old Muslim strongholds in Central Asia as they have moved out from under communist dominion, Myers said.

The "most intense time" of prayer for Muslims, Myers added,

will unfold during Ramadan, the annual 30-day Muslim period of prayer and fasting beginning Feb. 1 this year. For the third year, Southern Baptists and other Christians will pray for Muslims as Muslims themselves are praying.

"This is a period of time when Muslims are particularly sensitive to spiritual matters, and they're praying for themselves and their relationship to God," Myers said. "It's an ideal time to call on Christians to enter into that prayer arena on behalf of Muslims."

Last year, Myers reported, on "the very day" Christians around the world were praying for a particularly resistant Muslim people group, Christians baptized the first converts ever among that group.

"They attribute it almost solely to focused prayer," he said. "Because in the Muslim environment, people might express some interest in Christ or even say, 'I believe in Him.' But the decisive issue for them is baptism. That's the break point" with one's traditional religion, culture, even family.

Resources for people who want to pray effectively for Muslims in 1995 include a 30-day prayer guide — ideal for the Ramadan period but useful any other time too — focusing on 30 different Muslim people groups. Also available: quarterly prayer guides (the first focuses on Muslims in the Americas), a special video available March 1, and other ideas and resources for observing the year of prayer in local churches.

To order any of these resources, call the Foreign Mission Board's customer services office toll-free at 1-800-866-FMB1 or write FMB Customer Services at P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

haul water — much to the amusement of the village males. "But he's allowed to do that since he has only one wife and only one daughter," Eryn explained.

"Actually," Mrs. Austin corrected her daughter gently, "he does it because he chooses to be nice to his wife!"

It's a hard life, both physically and emotionally. After 10 days in Tankanto the Austins are ready to "go home," but the same isn't true after four days in the relative comfort of Farafenni.

"Every time it's a battle," Mrs. Austin admitted of the trek back to the village. "We battle ourselves, each other and Satan. Once we get back out it's okay and we can enjoy it, but until then it's tough. Moving here was an act of obedience, not choice. We chose to be obedient to what we felt God wanted us to do — but scratching mosquitoes is not my idea of fun."

Other cultural insights come as the Austins participate in the nightly, three-hour village tea ceremonies or note the reactions when they deviate from normal practices.

Extra windows aid witness

For example, when they moved into their village home they knocked more holes in the walls for extra windows and doors.

"Aren't you afraid to do that?" they were asked. The traditional Mandinka home has one door and often no windows. They shut all openings tight at night to keep out spirits. Cool night breezes, they believe, aren't worth the risk of letting dark forces in.

When the missionaries attribute their lack of fear to faith in a loving, protective God, even the extra windows and doors become a testimony.

And other paybacks come from time to time. One afternoon Austin walked to a neighboring village to visit the chief, a longtime friend. Upon arrival, the old man was faithfully reading his Koran, the Muslim holy book.

"Will you read the Koran for me?" Austin asked the chief, who proudly did so. "What does it mean?" the missionary asked. "Oh, I don't understand Arabic," came the reply. "The blessing is only in the reading."

Then Austin asked the chief to read the Gospel of John, written in Arabic script but using Mandinka phonetics. The man began reading in the same singsong cadence he used with the Koran. But after a few words he realized he understood what he was reading. His face lit up with a mixture of pleasure and surprise.

That's what the Austins live for — the joyous dawning of understanding of the good news of Jesus Christ among the Mandinka.

National WMU leaders vote to establish foundation

By Teresa Dickens

Woman's Missionary Union

TALLADEGA, AL(BP)—The Woman's Missionary Union's executive board accepted a report during its Jan. 7-11 meeting from its long-range planning committee, calling for, among other things, the formation of a foundation.

In a Jan. 10 vote, board members voted to establish the Woman's Missionary Union Foundation, which it received as a recommendation from the long-range planning and finance committees.

The WMU board also approved a loan to the Foundation for start-up costs. The funds will be released to the foundation over five years with repayment due to WMU by the end of its 15th year of operation. The foundation will operate independent of WMU, with its own staff and board of trustees.

"The WMU Foundation will allow gifted laypeople who appreciate the work of WMU and desire to assure its ongoing ministry to assist us," said Dellanna O'Brien, WMU executive director. "It will also broaden the awareness of the many missions projects initiated by WMU, benefiting many at home and around the world physically and through the sharing of the good news of Christ."

The board also approved the recommendation of the committee to employ a chief operations officer for WMU, with the title senior associate executive director, to streamline planning and decision-making processes. June Whitlow, who has served on the national WMU staff 28 years, was named to the new position.

Board members and guests also gathered for the dedication of the Alma Hunt Museum of Woman's Missionary Union.

The museum, which highlights WMU's 107-year history, is named in honor of Alma Hunt, WMU executive

director from 1948-1974. Hunt, along with Southern Baptist Convention president Jim Henry, spoke during dedication ceremonies held Jan. 7.

"The link between Woman's Missionary Union and the Southern Baptist Convention is critical," Henry insisted. "It must be encouraged, protected and strengthened."

"The Southern Baptist Convention without Woman's Missionary Union would be like ham without eggs... Lottie without Moon and Annie without Armstrong. We go together. We must pray for and build on in the future this habit created by Miss Hunt."

In other business, the WMU executive board:

- Approved the establishment of the Jessica Powell Loftis Scholarship fund for Acteens. Loftis was an Acteen in a Birmingham, Ala.-area church who was killed in an automobile accident in October 1993 along with her father. Loftis' mother, Deborah, and grandmother, Mary Carlton Stear, gave the initial gifts to fund the endowed scholarship.

- Approved the budget for the WMU Vision Fund, which was created in June 1993 to fund ministry projects. The budget for 1995, totaling \$194,000, includes funding for WMU's social issues projects, the Alma Hunt Museum, Girls in Action camps in new work areas and assistance for language work.

- Approved the report of the task force assigned to develop "Project HELP: AIDS," the 1995-96 social issue. The project will include a nationwide effort to collect items needed by local AIDS ministries and an international project to provide funding through the Vision Fund for an AIDS hospice in Brazil. The hospice request came from Southern Baptist missionaries Tony and Karen Gray and will be under the auspices of the Foreign Mission Board.



SBC president Jim Henry visits with Alma Hunt following the dedication of a WMU museum in her name.



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14,000 receive food in Haiti relief effort

MEMPHIS, TN (BP)—Since food distribution efforts started in Haiti in December, more than 14,000 people have received commodities through the effort.

Mark Rutledge, agricultural missionary to Haiti, and Harry Campbell of Killeen, Texas, on-site coordinator for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, reported that 13,914 "family packs" of basic food commodities that includes flour, cooking oil, beans and rice, as well as a gospel tract, have been distributed to 24 Haitian churches and missions. The packs were distributed to 3,053 families for a total of 14,357 people.

"Rutledge and Campbell are reporting progress in solving the transportation problem of getting food to remote areas," said Mickey Caison, project manager at the Brotherhood Commission. "There are reports of deaths in these areas because of a lack of food."

The Haiti relief project is a joint effort of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and Brotherhood Commission. The two agencies are working in conjunction with the Baptist Convention of Haiti.

Recruiting efforts for the Haiti project continue to go well, said Caison. So far, a total of 81 volunteers have served in food distribution efforts in Haiti. Volunteers recruited for the food distribution and initial construction teams total 164. It is expected that more than 200 additional volunteers will be needed for construction, well repair and medical phases of the project.

Additional information about the Haiti relief effort may be obtained by calling the Brotherhood Commission at 1-800-280-1891.

Annie offering is second highest in history

TALLADEGA, AL (BP)—Gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions last year were the second highest in the history of the special offering, Home Mission Board president Larry Lewis announced Jan. 9.

Speaking to the national Woman's Missionary Union executive board, Lewis praised WMU members for conducting the annual missions offering which makes up nearly half of HMB funding. This year marks 100 years that WMU has promoted a special home missions offering.

"No organization does more for home missions and home missionaries than Woman's Missionary Union," Lewis affirmed. "Thank you for your faithful, fervent support."

According to the year-end unaudited report, 1994 gifts totaled \$37.18 million, 2.4 percent more than 1993 receipts. The largest offering was \$37.6 million in 1992.

Lewis said he is confident "this time next year I will be able to announce to you that the 1995 Annie Armstrong Offering was the largest in history." The 1995 offering goal is \$50 million. "I agree that is an ambitious but reachable goal," Lewis said.

Volunteers sought for European crusades

WIESBADEN, GERMANY (BP)—Hundreds and possibly thousands of Southern Baptist volunteers will be sought for a series of major evangelistic campaigns in western Europe between 1995 and 1997.

A campaign planned for France in 1997 could involve between 400 and 500 volunteers and be the largest of its kind ever held in western Europe, said W.H. "Dub" Jackson Jr., the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's crusade coordinator for Europe. He is planning campaigns in Denmark, Spain, Norway, Sweden, France and Germany.

Although Americans usually see these western European countries as cultured and prosperous vacation destinations, missiologists have considered the area one of the most resistant

and spiritually needy regions of the world.

"As God is 'stirring the waters' in Eastern Europe, we're praying He will do the same in western Europe," said John Floyd, the FMB's area director for Europe. "Dub and Doris Jackson have committed the next two years to bring renewal to this important part of the world. Europeans are saying 'Yes!' to partnering in evangelism and renewal. I pray Southern Baptists' response will be the same — by praying and volunteering for the teams to minister in Europe."

Interested pastors, laymen and musicians of all ages are being sought. Additional information is available by calling the Foreign Mission Board's volunteer hot line number at 1-800-888-8657.

Clean water project aids missionaries

MEMPHIS, TN (BP)—After hosting missionaries Dale and Gaye Coleman, the Baptist Men of Oak Grove Baptist Church near Covington, Tenn., knew exactly what the Southern Baptist missionaries to Togo needed.

"We wanted to give them a Pure Water-Pure Love water purification unit," said Jeff Koonce, an Oak Grove member and Big Hatchie Baptist Associational Brotherhood director. Pure Water-Pure Love is a new program of the Brotherhood Commission's men's ministries department. It will place water purification units in career missionary homes throughout the world. The program will allow a missionary family to have pure water and will help the family minister more effectively in countries where water can be a major health problem.

"We're excited about the fact that churches can help provide our missionaries the basic physical need of life, water, and that the missionaries can then tell the people about Christ, the living water," explained James D. Williams, Brotherhood Commission president.

"We are trying to purchase 2,500 units at a cost of \$250 for each unit. For churches, it can be a great way to have a personal touch of missions," Williams added.

The Pure Water-Pure Love program officially begins on Baptist Men's Day Jan. 22. Baptist Men's units across the country will be challenged to make this a project for their men's group. More information about the project is available from the Brotherhood Commission at 901-272-2461.

Christian leader jailed, freed in Morocco

CASABLANCA, MOROCCO (BP)—A prominent Baptist from El Salvador was abruptly released Jan. 9 after he was sentenced to a year in a Moroccan jail for sharing his Christian faith.

Six days earlier, in a twice-delayed trial, Gilberto Orellana was convicted of "proselytization" and sentenced.

Orellana, former conductor of the San Salvador Symphony Orchestra and a member of Miramonte Baptist Church in San Salvador, moved to Morocco in 1992 to teach music at a conservatory. He was arrested during December while meeting with five Moroccans, most or all of whom are Christian believers.

Three of the Moroccans were released. The other two were sentenced to eight months in prison; they also reportedly have been freed.

"This case of a resident of Morocco being imprisoned for living out his faith, and nationals of a religious minority being harassed and incarcerated, demands a response," said one Christian worker who requested anonymity because of security concerns.

Morocco, a heavily Muslim country in North Africa, is known for its anti-Christian repression. Some Christian workers fear anti-Christian actions may increase in North Africa as militant Muslims push their efforts to set up Islam-dominated, Iran-style church states.

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Blackaby challenges couples to obey God

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press

MEMPHIS, TN (BP)—Even the latest and best book on marriage can leave husbands and wives "still one step away from a relationship with the Lord...the one who makes all the difference," according to Henry Blackaby.

Speaking during an "Experiencing God Weekend for Couples," Blackaby noted, "You need a person" — Jesus — "who will always be present in...your marriage."

More than 400 couples attended the inaugural Experiencing God marriage conference led by Blackaby and his wife, Marilyn, at a downtown Memphis, Tenn., hotel Jan. 6-8. The conference, linked to "Experiencing God" study materials published by the Baptist Sunday School Board, drew on the Blackabys' 30 years of ministry in Canada and California.

Blackaby did much of the Bible teaching during the weekend's five sessions, with his wife recounting family experiences of God's guidance and care in raising four sons and a daughter in home missions/pioneer settings.

Among the keys to Jesus' presence in

marriage, Blackaby said, are "a deep sense of awe" and "a tremendous sense of excitement" for what God says to Christians in Scripture — followed by prompt obedience.

"Do you tremble at God's Word or are you always looking for a nice devotional thought that will make you feel good?" Blackaby asked. "Every time God speaks is the right time to obey Him," he stated. "Somehow, obedience anchors a life on God... Obedience is always the beginning to experiencing God.

Postponing such surrender "could cost everything," Blackaby warned. If instruction or reproof from God is not heeded, the sin at issue can become a habit — and a habit can lead to a fixed heart, ultimately ruining a person's life, he said.

Citing the creation account of Genesis 1, Blackaby said, "The God who could speak and bring harmony out of the whole universe won't have any trouble with your marriage. I never saw a situation that was beyond the grace of God."

Obedience to God, however, requires major adjustments in order to have a shaping, spiritual role in the lives of children and grandchildren, Blackaby said.

Urging parents to take full responsibility

for their children, for example, Blackaby discounted such laments by parents as "I did everything I knew to do" for their now-ward children. Rather, he said, the question should be: Did you do everything God told you to do?

Children are the product of how their parents relate to God and each other, he said, noting the rearing of godly offspring to share Christ in the day-to-day world is one of God's key purposes in marriage.

Parents of troubled children should "seek the wisdom and face of God," asking the Holy Spirit to convict them of neglect or other sins and to reveal the radical adjustments they as parents must make, likely shedding tears and spending sleepless nights in the process, Blackaby said.

"It's no fun, but it can redeem your children," he said, noting he experienced this truth when he agonized with God over one of his sons who once strayed. "I became a different father," he said.

Addressing fathers, Blackaby said, "There's nobody who can influence your children like the father." To a man who says his wife handles the religion of the household, Blackaby said, "Then hang your head in shame...."

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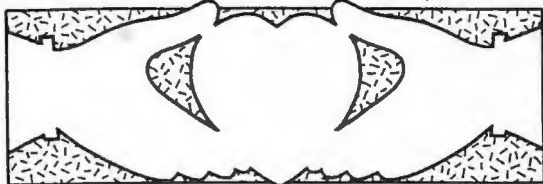
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Williams College names Jones vice president

Arkansas native Thomas Jones has returned to Arkansas as the new vice president for institutional advancement at Williams Baptist College in Walnut Ridge.

Jones, who held the same title at California Baptist College, is responsible for fund-raising at Williams and also oversees such areas as public relations and alumni affairs.

"We're working hard and getting organized in our donor base and administration," Jones noted. "I am getting acquainted

with the work of the college and getting to know denominational leaders."

Jones said he is looking forward to securing financial resources for Williams, adding that the vision of Williams president Gary Huckabee will help make a significant difference. Fundraising "only works effectively with good institutional planning," Jones said. "Dr. Huckabee's planning opens doors to donors looking for an



Thomas Jones

institution which anticipates the future."

Jones spent most of his early years in Arkansas while his father, Don Jones, was pastor of several churches in the state. Noting that his family moved to California while he was a teenager, Jones said he is pleased to return to his home state.

Jones holds a bachelor's degree from California State University in Sacramento, a master's from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a doctorate from Pepperdine University. He and his wife, Gail, have two children, Sara, 12, and Matthew, 7.

OBU names Judy Jones director of admissions

Judy Jones has been named registrar and director of admissions at Ouachita Baptist University, according to president Ben Eirod. Jones succeeds Mike Kolb who has been named to the newly created position of director of career planning and placement at OBU.

For the past five and a half years, Jones has worked as associate director and later director of educational talent search at OBU. The program is part of the TRIO education guidance program on campus. The program is co-sponsored by Ouachita and the U.S. Department of Education and designed to assist in providing academic support to seventh through 12th graders in regional schools who demonstrate potential to pursue and succeed in a program of post-secondary education.

"I am really looking forward with excitement to working directly with the students at Ouachita," Jones noted.

Jones received a bachelor of science in education degree from Henderson State in 1970. She earned her master of science in education degree from Ouachita in 1989.

Jones and her husband, Bobby, are the parents of two children, Kevin and Scott.

MK prayer calendar

Missionary kids attending college in Arkansas with birthdays in February:

■ Feb. 7 - Ruth Provost, WBC Box 3074, College City, AR 72476; freshman from Lebanon.

■ Feb. 17 - Michelle Nicholson, OBU Box 4077, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; sophomore from Nigeria.

■ Feb. 21 - Mandy Scalc, OBU Box 3487, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; sophomore from Brazil.

■ Feb. 23 - Shad Smith, OBU Box 3846, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; sophomore from Portugal.

■ Feb. 25 - Ben Darley, OBU Box 4287, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; freshman from Japan.

■ Feb. 26 - Matt Bolls, OBU Box 4455, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; freshman from the Niger Republic.

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Baptist legislators fill top leadership posts in new Congress

WASHINGTON (ABP/BP)—For the first time in history, the top four officials of the U.S. government are Baptists, but the nation's largest Protestant denomination ranks far behind Roman Catholics in terms of total clout in the 104th Congress.

When the 104th Congress was sworn in Jan. 4, Newt Gingrich and Strom Thurmond became, in order, the next two people in line to succeed the president. Gingrich and Thurmond, as well as President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, are Southern Baptists.

Gingrich, the speaker of the House of Representatives, is a member of New Hope Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga. Thurmond, the president pro tem of the Senate and fourth in line of presidential succession, is a member of First Baptist Church of Aiken S.C.

Clinton is a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, and Gore is a member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va.

Overall in Congress, however, Baptists number 65, behind Catholics, with 148 adherents.

Thirty-three members of Congress describe their religious affiliation as Southern Baptist, while several others who also belong to Southern Baptist churches are among the 24 Congress members described simply as Baptists.

Five members are American Baptists,

two are Missionary Baptists and one is an Independent Baptist.

Behind Baptist groups rank United Methodists with 63 members and Presbyterians with 62.

Per capita, the mainline Protestant churches are well represented. The 2.4 million-member Episcopal Church has 49 adherents in the 104th Congress, while the Assemblies of God, one of the fastest-growing denominations with 2.2 million members, has three.

There are more than 30 million Baptists in America, 8.7 million United Methodists and 4 million Presbyterians. The Roman Catholic Church claims 58 million members.

Thirty-four members of Congress are Jewish. Lutherans number 22, while 20 Congressmen describe their religious affiliation as Protestant. The Mormons and United Church of Christ tie for the 10th largest bloc, with 13 members each.

Commentary writer, BSSB editors agree to withdraw manuscript

NASHVILLE, TN (ABP/BP)—The author of a commentary on the Book of Joshua has withdrawn his upcoming volume in the New American Commentary series because of disputes with editors at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

The author, Stephen Wyrick, said he made the decision after recent discussions with editors in which "it became clear they weren't going to be happy" with the book. "The methodologies I desired to employ during the research and writing and the methodologies they desire to be employed are irreconcilable," said Wyrick,

a religion professor at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, Texas.

Among concerns raised by editors are his dating of the events described in Joshua and his treatment of disputed texts.

Charles Wilson, vice president for trade publishing at the Baptist Sunday School Board, said Wyrick's manuscript "did not meet standards established for all volumes of the NAC and, after considerable discussion, we agreed to discontinue efforts toward publishing that material."

Wyrick's manuscript was not consistent with the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy, which holds that inerrancy implies an internal consistency within Scripture, Wilson added.

"Passages in Joshua are capable of more than one interpretation," Wilson noted, "some of which can result in the appearance of inconsistency within that book. Dr. Wyrick's manuscript acknowledged some of those kinds of interpretations without ever resolving the inconsistencies."

Wyrick said he ran into problems with commentary editors over the dating of Israel's conquest of Palestine and issues raised by recent textual studies and archeological finds.

"For me a commentary on Joshua needs to include clear and open discussion of the tension that exists between the archeological data and the various biblical interpretations of that data," Wyrick said.

Wyrick said he also examined discrepancies between the Hebrew Bible and other ancient texts, a practice "that's common in all academic commentaries," while editors wanted him to rely solely on the Hebrew text.

Wyrick, who said his commitment to inerrancy was never questioned in his disagreements with editors, added, "Folks have been very gracious at Broadman. They have been very kind. There is just a difference in opinion over how one should approach presenting the data."

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Convention Uniform

Pride, confusion, failure

By Ed Saucler, pastor,
Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith
Basic passage: Matthew 26:17-35
Focal passage: Matthew 26:31-35
Central truth: More often than not,
by the time we uncover pride, it's
too late.

Jesus has been talking about some shocking and – to Peter and the others – unacceptable issues. He mentioned that before too long He'd no longer be around. Some rat fink was going to sell Him out! And, to make matters worse, whoever that rat fink was, and Peter didn't know, he was one of the guys at the supper table.

Just then Jesus picked up a loaf of bread, began tearing off some pieces and passed them around to all the disciples. "Eat this bread. It's my body." After that He took a chalice filled with wine and passed it around. "Drink this with me. It's my blood."

All of that aside, none of which Peter understood, Jesus added one more thing, a real zinger: "You're all going to abandon me. The bad guys are coming, and when they get here, every last one of you is going to hit the road running." This one Peter understood. At least he thought he did. And he didn't like it. He didn't believe it either.

"No way! Huh-uh! It'll never happen! I can believe these others guys might skedaddle when things heat up. To be honest, I don't have a great deal of confidence in 'em either. But don't put me in their camp! I won't run! I won't. Take it to the bank. There's only one thing that would make me run, fear. And I'm not afraid of anything."

You'll recall that Jesus tried to talk Peter out of his pride. He told him outright: "Peter, not only are you going to fall to pieces tonight, you're going to do it three times."

He wouldn't be convinced: "Not on your life. I'll die first and be glad to do it. No one makes Peter run. No one."

Well, you know the rest. Peter blew it. Big time. Just like Jesus knew he would. And now Peter knew it too.

Pride can really be confusing. By the time we finally figure out what it is, it's usually too late. Just remember, Peter failed, miserably (know the feeling?), but the story didn't end there. As a matter of fact, that's sort of where it all really started.

Life and Work

True compassion

By Kenneth W. Overton, pastor,
First Church, Marked Tree
Basic passage: Mark 6:30-44
Focal passage: Mark 6:31-34
Central truth: Compassion is not an
emotion of convenience.

Every person needs his rest. Jesus was not an exception to this rule. He needed to get away from the throng of people. They were preventing Jesus and His disciples from even a basic part of life – eating.

The disciples were hungry and tired. They had been involved with the crowds (vv. 6:7-13). People came and went, each wanting his needs met. This suggests that the disciples made an impact on the people.

It was time for rest and peace for the Twelve and Jesus. They needed an isolated spot where the demands of ministry would not overwhelm them for awhile.

Jesus and the Twelve went in a boat to find a solitary place. At least they thought it would be. The lake was not so large that the people could not notice where they were going. It is possible that the people were able to keep up with the boat. People today are still this hungry for the truth.

When Jesus disembarked, instead of becoming angry for not getting His much-needed rest, His compassion overwhelmed His personal needs. This word compassion is used in the New Testament only by Jesus or in description of Jesus. He is the only one who demonstrated well how to be more than emotionally moved.

The people were in need greater than healing, a full belly or relief from distress. They were without spiritual guidance. They had no guides who took pains to help. The people needed leadership that would not exploit them but guide them.

Someone less than Jesus might not have felt the same compassion. Scripture even tells us that later the disciples wanted to send the people away (vv. 6:35-36). But Jesus fed them with His teaching and then He fed them with a miracle of food.

The miracle of feeding 5,000 from five loaves and two fish set Jesus apart as a man of great compassion for human needs. When one came who commanded the natural world, they listened. They had been spiritually empty too long. "Maybe this Jesus can change our situation."

It seems by their reaction that no one cared for the common people. Jesus was different. He preached to the poor and they came in multitudes. No one before had cared so much as this man.

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Bible Book

Sure, certain judgment

By Stan Parris, pastor,
First Church, Hope
Basic passage: Jeremiah 11:1-15:9
Focal passage: Jeremiah 13:1-17
Central truth: Pride will attempt to
substitute the externals of religion
for genuine repentance.

Despite His repeated warnings to Judah to "listen to My voice" (v. 11:7), God declared that there was a conspiracy among them to turn away from Him and return to the sins of their fathers. Therefore, He would bring an inescapable judgment upon the nation and refuse to hear their prayers (v. 11:11). He even commanded Jeremiah not to pray for the people (v. 11:14). The Lord knew their crying out was due to pain and not contrition.

An important truth is revealed in verses 11:15-17: Sacrifice and ceremony cannot turn aside divine judgment. This principle is reinforced in verses 14:7-12, where Jeremiah voiced a prayer that he consistently urged his people to pray. Once again the Lord told Jeremiah not to pray for the welfare of the people. The reason for God's judgment is stated in verse 14:12: Ceremonial religion does not take the place of genuine repentance.

Even Jeremiah's attempt to lay the blame for the nation's sinfulness on weak spiritual leadership was met by God's rebuttal: It was because of their continued wickedness that judgment will come (vv. 14:13-16).

In verses 14:17-22, the people ask, "Has God rejected Judah?" The Lord's reply in verses 15:1-4 applies to continuous rebellion in any generation. He stated that He would reject even the intercession of Moses and Samuel for this people. God will permit pain in order that His people might turn from their ways (vv. 15:5-9).

The reason for this judgment can be seen in the symbolism of the linen waistband (vv. 13:1-11). The ruined and worthless waistband is a picture of the destruction of Judah's pride (v. 13:9). The Hebrew word is *gaan* and denotes wealth and splendor. A second warning against pride is found in verse 13:15 where another word, *gabah*, is used. This word applies to arrogance. In verse 13:17, the word *gawah* is used to describe Judah's pride. It means "to rise up," like a back or a hump.

It seems certain that pride had so distanced Judah from communion with God that sure and certain judgment was her only remedy. The externals of religion had not turned her heart to the Lord.

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Convention Uniform

Righteous resignation

By Ed Saucier, pastor,
Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith
Basic passage: Matthew 26:36-68
Focal passage: Matthew 26:36-42
Central truth: Obedience to God has
to be learned, and it's tough going.

These verses contain subject matter that I freely admit is nearly incomprehensible to me. I don't pretend even to begin being able to appreciate fully the things we're going to discuss. But it's here for us, so let's look at it.

Jesus was discouraged. Why deny it? Use other words if you aren't comfortable with my choice, but the facts don't change. He was deeply distressed, so much so that He wasn't sure He could physically survive.

Picture what happened. Jesus, the very embodiment of everything God is, was so overwhelmed with grief that He gathered a few close friends around Him and asked them to pray for Him. He needed help. And He searched for that help in Peter, James and John.

He knew what was ahead. He'd known for a good while. But what lay ahead is now almost there. And He didn't want to go through with it. He even asked His Father if there might be some other way—three times.

Doing things God's way is never easy. Not even for the Lord of glory Himself. He had to learn how to do it. And He learned it through the things He suffered. Check it out (Heb. 5:8). I'll say it again, incomprehensible.

Jesus had to learn spiritual obedience. And He did learn it. He learned it to utter perfection. He wasn't trying to elude God's will. Never think that. His greatest desire was always to do what the Father wanted. That was the source of His unbroken fellowship with the Father. But for this, He needed confirmation. He got it. When He was sure, in spite of the fact that He didn't want to go through with it (who would?), He came to a spiritual plane I can only call righteous resignation.

It's where God wants us, you know. Righteous resignation isn't the same as giving up and calling it quits. It doesn't mean you've failed. It means just the opposite. It means you've won, because you've learned that only God's will matters. Your will has been lost in His. We struggle with it. It isn't easy for us. It couldn't possibly be. But it's God's way. Learn it.

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Life and Work

True spirituality

By Kenneth W. Overton, pastor,
First Church, Marked Tree
Basic passage: Mark 7:1-23
Focal passage: Mark 7:14-23
Central truth: The inner man is the true man.

Should we be amazed at how slow the disciples learned Jesus' teachings? They did not understand the parable of the sower in Mark 4:13 and now are unable to grasp this spiritual principle.

Be amazed, but do not condemn. We also find ourselves not understanding fully all that Jesus taught. It is possible that the disciples had trouble understanding because they were influenced by popular notions. The Pharisees had spread their teaching and different teachings were not easily comprehended. The Pharisees taught that what you ate made a difference but Jesus said it was not true. The point Jesus makes in this illustration is that uncleanness is a moral issue, not a ritual.

Two emphases come from verse 15: A man can eat without guilt and he demonstrates in life what he is inside. Nothing outside a man can defile him nor alienate him from God. What one eats cannot render his soul impure nor emphasize sinfulness. Food does not reach the mind, the will, the passions and drives. It affects the body, but cannot pollute the soul.

The list (vv. 21-22) is a range of man's vile character. It includes sexual sins, sins of attack on people, sins of attitude and sins of action. Looking at a few of these, we find coveting is greed. Deceit is stealth, cunning or treachery. Licentiousness is something shocking to public decency. Slander can denote an evil attitude toward God or man. Notice in the midst of these sins we find pride and arrogance. Why do we find it difficult to equate the sin of pride with other sins of this list?

We have no problem identifying sexual immorality, murder or slander as polluting. But surely pride is not one of these. This is not a list of the different levels of sin. It is a list of that which comes out of a man indicating his make-up. Pride is one of those sins. It is self-centeredness, arrogance and an "I'm better than you" attitude.

God is to be number one. Pride reverses that perspective. No evil in the world creeps a wall between a person and God except that which is already in the man. Pride makes its home in man and keeps him from being pure and undefiled before God.

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Bible Book

A parable for a prophet

By Stan Parris, pastor,
First Church, Hope
Basic passage: Jeremiah 15:10-20:18
Focal passage: Jeremiah 18:1-12
Central truth: God knows and controls the circumstances of life.

The prayers of a discouraged prophet:

■ In verses 15:10-21, Jeremiah reminded the Lord that he faithfully represented Him and met failure. He pointed out that because of God's call, he sacrificed his human relationships (v. 15:17). This was further illustrated in verses 16:1-3 where God called him to celibacy. He also was forbidden to enter a house of mourning (v. 16:5) or a house of feasting (v. 16:8) as a statement that the activities of the disobedient nation would come to a halt.

Jeremiah felt that God abandoned him "like a deceptive stream, like waters that fail" (v. 15:18). The Lord's response called the prophet to repentance and reminded him that faithfulness does not ensure easy acceptance, only victory (vv. 15:19-21).

■ Verses 17:14-18 are a cry for help and an affirmation of faith. God delayed the judgment He had asked Jeremiah to proclaim and the people mocked the man and his message. It is insightful that in his complaint he refers to God as his Physician, Savior, Praise and Refuge and reminds himself that "God knows."

■ Verses 20:7-18 are the last and the most forceful of Jeremiah's confessions. Here he complains that God has betrayed him. Verse 7 contains strong language and implies that God forced Himself upon the prophet. In return for his obedience, he has become a "laughingstock all day long."

Parable for a discouraged prophet:

Verses 18:1-12 mark the despair and questioning as God directed Jeremiah to the potter's house where He would "announce My words to you." It was the picture of the potter shaping and reshaping flawed clay that marked a new motivation in his ministry. He saw that the potter had a gentle touch and a concern and understood that beyond the judgment that was to come upon Judah there was hope.

Parable for a disobedient people.

In verses 19:1-15, God commanded Jeremiah to break an expensive jar as a prediction of Judah's destruction and a denunciation of their rebellion. The Lord's prophet now understood that her captivity did not mean doom, but discipline.

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NEWS DIGEST

Billy Graham plans world's largest evangelistic crusade

MINNEAPOLIS (BP)—Evangelist Billy Graham will preach the gospel by satellite in March to as many as 10 million people in 165 countries.

Graham's "Global Mission" crusade, scheduled for March 16-18, is being called the largest evangelistic outreach in the history of the church and one of the most complex technical efforts ever attempted.

The crusade is seen as the capstone — not the end — of the remarkable career of Southern Baptists' "favorite son" evangelist.

It will originate in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where the 76-year-old Graham will preach March 14-18 at Hiram Bithorn Stadium. Satellite broadcasts will begin March 16, beamed by 12 production trucks to 165 countries in more than 40 languages. Broadcasts will be translated locally into another 40 languages.

Court order forces pastor to release church records

SANFORD, FL (ABP) — After resisting a court order for more than a year, a Florida pastor and Southern Baptist Convention leader says he now is willing to turn over documents that include individual giving records to a former church clerk who accuses him of wrongdoing.

Bob Parker, pastor of First Baptist Church of Markham Woods in Lake Mary, Fla., issued a statement Jan. 12 announcing he plans to comply with a court order to make giving records available to Ann Hayes, a charter member who won access to the records in a 1993 lawsuit.

Parker, a member of the SBC Executive Committee, said a \$10,000 fine assessed by a judge who has already found him and the church in contempt of court, coupled with a threat of further sanctions, prompted him to turn over the records.

While Parker said he now will follow the court order, he continued to protest the ruling, contending it "will have a chilling effect on future contributions to churches" because donors can no longer be sure their donations are confidential.

McCartney retires as CEO of Radio-TV Commission

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—Arkansas native Richard T. "Dick" McCartney retired as executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission effective Jan. 1. Jack Johnson, RTVC president, said McCartney will continue serving the Baptist agency as an adviser and consultant.

"Dick McCartney has always been on the leading edge of communications technology," Johnson said. "His contributions to Christian broadcasting have helped pave the way for all those who use mass media to proclaim the gospel."

McCartney is a graduate of John Brown University in Siloam Springs and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served as director of public relations of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and Baptist General Convention of Texas, editor of the *Oklahoma Baptist Messenger* and pastor of churches in Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas.

Southern names Carl Henry senior research professor

LOUISVILLE, KY (BP)—Carl F.H. Henry, often acknowledged as the dean of American evangelical theologians, has been named senior research professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

A leading figure in American evangelicalism for the past half-century, Henry was among the founding faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary. He also was the founding editor of *Christianity Today* magazine.

"Southern Seminary is proud to welcome Dr. Carl Henry to this faculty," said president Al Mohler. "He brings passionate conviction and seasoned wisdom to the task of theological education."

Henry holds degrees from Wheaton College, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary and Boston University.

Hebrew scholar John Olen Strange dies at age 77

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—John Olen Strange, 77, a Southern Baptist Old Testament and Hebrew scholar for nearly 50 years, died Jan. 11 at his home in Slidell, La.

A specialist in Hebrew grammar, Strange taught at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary from 1953-90. Upon retirement he was named professor emeritus.

"John Olen Strange was a first-class scholar and a Christian gentleman in every sense of the word," said Landrum P. Leavell II. "His death leaves a vacuum, and we will miss his presence." Strange was chairman of the seminary's division of biblical studies during much of Leavell's tenure as president of New Orleans Seminary.

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