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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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In the first of a four-part series on church conflict and termination, ABSC Executive Director Don Moore explores the various causes behind the epidemic. "Those who love the Lord, love the Lord's church," Moore says, "They can hardly bear the pain and shame that accompanies church fight. They demonstrate patience and forgiveness in the hope that if the present battle will subside, perhaps there will be no more. Many in frustration and grief abandon the fight. Others keep on keeping on."

9 Acteens: Clowning for Christ

Arkansas' "Clowns for Christ" Acteens Activators were in Keokuk, Iowa, June 15-25 as the first team to participate in the Arkansas/Iowa Partnership. The team distributed more than 400 gospel tracts, conducted backyard Bible clubs, and presented clowning programs in locations varying from a retirement homes to a shopping mall.

14 New VP for HMB ministry

Larry Martin, director of missions for Greater Boston Baptist Association, unanimously was elected Home Mission Board vice president for ministry by HMB trustees. Eight other people also were elected to fill vacant staff positions during the summer meeting.

15 Freemasonry study

The director of the Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department, Gary Leazer, will take a three-month leave to produce a study comparing Masonic lodge teachings with Christian doctrine. The Southern Baptist Convention voted for the study during its July meeting in Indianapolis.

23 Bond recall authorized

The church loans division of the Home Mission Board plans to recall \$24 million in high interest bonds officials claim are costing the agency more than \$1 million a year. HMB board members voted during their July 15 meeting to authorize the recall of the bonds, which have an average annual yield of 10.58 percent.

Cover story

(BP) photo by Joe Clark



Heirs of the Faith

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At the dedication of baby Hong Phuong, Tho Ngoc Dang is much more than pastor of Vietnamese Baptist Church in East Biloxi, Miss. He is a trusted friend and a part of the family. Ceremonies are important for new immigrants worshipping in America, not only to celebrate past traditions but to offer new beginnings.

Language Missions Day is Aug. 9. In an interview with the ABN, ABSC Language Missions Director Elias Pantaja talks about his own pilgrimage and the direction of language missions in Arkansas.

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FIRST OF A FOUR-PART SERIES

The Church Fight Virus

(This series of four articles are an outgrowth of the ABCS Task Force on Church Conflict and termination.)

by Don Moore
ABCs Executive Director

Church conflict and termination of pastors is so prevalent that drastic action is needed. In medical terminology we would say "heroic measures" are called for. It is tempting to compare this epidemic to the scourge of AIDS. Many carriers of the Church Fight Virus exist. While this virus may not kill the church, something dies when this virus is active. Vitality, spirit, fellowship, zeal, influence, hope, direction, and momentum — these all die when the CFV is active. Other deficiencies also show up as the disease progresses.

You may ask, "How bad is this problem?" Latest reports indicate that 1,600 pastors are terminated each year in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Those who love the Lord love the Lord's church. They can hardly bear the pain and shame that accompanies church fight. They demonstrate patience and forgiveness in the hope that if the present battle will subside, perhaps there will be no more. Many in frustration and grief abandon the fight. Others keep on keeping on.

An illness calls for early diagnosis. The sooner the cause is found, the better the prospect that it can be treated successfully.

The causes of the Church Faith Virus are many. Therefore, it is difficult to isolate one cause and treat it. Two separate surveys of Arkansas Baptist churches indicate that most of their fights revolve around "personality conflicts" and "power struggles" over "Who's going to run the church?" In the last 10 years, more than half of Arkansas Baptist churches have experienced major conflicts. Both laymen and pastors reported these two causes to be by far the most frequent sources of conflict.

The location, size, and age of the church seem not to be major factors in the spread of this virus. The causes and consequences are common to all. However, there does seem to be a set pattern. Both churches and pastors develop a pattern of behavior that results in conflict whoever the pastor may be or whichever church is pastored. The result is amazingly predictable for both pastor and people. Repeat offenders are as real in the church scene as with the Department of Corrections. Neither church nor pastor can plead that they are "without sin."

Several sources have been used to try accurately to determine the chief causes of these problems. A survey was taken a few years ago to see what was happening in our churches. Deacons and Sunday School workers comprised two thirds of those polled, with pastors being the other third.

A research project was completed with churches that had conflict.

A conference of people who serve as directors of missions, counselors, and interim pastors was convened to get their input.

A task force of Arkansas Baptists worked several months addressing the question of church conflict and termination. Their areas of concern were causes, prevention, and restoration.

As a staff person for five years and a pastor for 26 years, observation has brought some insight. Then, as Executive Director for nearly 10 years, a further opportunity has been given for insight.

What are the conclusions about the causes? Heretical teachings and immorality or dishonesty are not major causes, according to all sources of information. Tragically, these sometimes enter the picture, but contrary to secular media hype, these are not common occurrences. Most pastors are sound doctrinally, morally pure, and responsible in their obligations.

According to all the sources, power struggles are at the heart of most church fights. A pastor assumes that he is the leader of the church. The church may even call him to be the leader of the church. Until he begins to exercise leadership, these

are safe assumptions. When he begins to give leadership, it comes to light that he has not been empowered to lead. In fact, another individual or group of individuals really controls the church. They have, by influence, position, reputation, risen to a position of power. As soon as the popularity of the pastor, the growth of the church, or the influx of new leaders begins to threaten the power of this individual or these individuals, you can expect trouble to start. The threat of losing control is one of the major reasons cause is found to discredit the pastor, reduce his effectiveness, or counteract the momentum his leadership has generated.

Let me hasten to say that some pastors come with such domineering, dictatorial, omniscience-oriented attitudes that they force a confrontation. The churches who fail to discover such traits in a prospective pastor before they call him have failed in their duty. You might say, they "bring it on themselves."

The struggle for control will manifest itself early on in decisions related to finances and deacon elections. It definitely will show up in committee selections, building projects, and nominating committees.

However right or wrong a church may be, the pastor who determines to take control by human means such as manipulation, politics, or coercion is destined to have his ambitions thwarted and his church divided. God's plan of demonstrated, sacrificial, servant leadership over a period of time will let the church see that it is safe to trust and follow the pastor. He will be given power by God and the people. Actually, most pastors never stay at a church long enough for such a situation to develop.

(continued on p. 4)

Arkansas Baptist

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Letters to the editor are invited. Letters should be typed double-space and may not contain more than 350 words. Letters must be signed and marked "for publication." A complete policy statement is available on request. Photos submitted for publication will be returned only when accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Only black and white photos can be used. Deaths of members of Arkansas churches will be reported in brief form when information is received not later than 14 days after the date of death. Opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the editorial position of the *Arkansas Baptist*. Advertising accepted in writing only. Rates on request.

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The Church Fight Virus

(continued from p. 3)

Group rivalries that have been carried over from earlier church and community conflicts pose a serious threat to a pastor and church. Unknowingly and unintentionally, the pastor may actually, or be perceived to be, taking sides with one group or the other. Before he knows it, through no fault of his own, he finds himself embroiled in painful conflict. Unresolved conflict always surfaces in battles that are re fought with the innocent and unsuspecting being the pawns and the victims. Even this is a matter of a power struggle for control.

Personality conflicts are the next most frequently given cause for conflict. Surveys indicate that 59 percent of laymen and 66 percent of pastors believe this is a major cause of conflict. God calls a wide range of personality types into ministry. His plan is that the variety will make for color, strength, and effectiveness. In other words, the wider the variety, the more types of people to whom the church should be able to attract and minister.

Satan and the flesh always attack the beauty and effectiveness of God's plan. We reject people who are different. They make us uncomfortable, if not mad. We criticize and judge them because they are not like the people in our former church, or like our former pastors. We often draw conclusions about people before we know them. Their expressions, their dress, their voice, their mannerisms, their opinions, any one of these may set us off on a course that will never allow for good, productive relationships. It happens with the church toward the pastor, and the pastor toward the church. Again we ask, "Why could that have not been discerned before the pastor was called by the church?"

Any kind of change may cause church conflict. Financial procedures, buildings, staff, order of service, policies, constitution and bylaws — these are typical occasions for trouble. People like sameness and predictability. Change may create inconvenience, displacement, and fear. People fear the unknown. The effect of change is not known, and so the change is questioned and feared. Most changes are not of such consequences as to cause a fight, but they

will if approached without following church procedures, without giving adequate time and information, and without getting adequate input from the congregation in the process.

Leadership styles are often cited as a cause of conflict. While the overbearing are the pastoral types that most often experience conflict, any leadership style that does not respect congregational government; that does not respect the unique worth and giftedness of every church member; and that will not involve the people in the leadership process, is destined for trouble.

Involved in leadership is planning, communication, trust, decision making, and commitment. The people likely will follow the leader who brings the people along with him in all of the process.

Frustration causes a lot of church fighting. When expectations are so high and those expectations are disappointed, someone is to blame. Both pastor and congregation tend to have unrealistic expectations. Neither wants to accept the responsibility for failure, so they end up fixing the blame on "the preacher" or "the church." Humiliated by failure and irritated by inability to get the church moving, the pastor tends to lash out at the church, and the church reacts with its own emotions of defensiveness, anger, and rejection. The course is set. A confrontational showdown is on its way. The pastor, church, or both will lose. No one wins in church fights.

Cultural diversity sometimes results in a pastor and people being "cross threaded."

Family background, educational or economic background, and social background affect how a pastor and people fit together. One pastor said, "I'll never fit in where I am. I don't drive a pickup. I don't deer hunt. I don't wear cowboy boots or dip skool." As humorous as that is, the principle is there. It is not a match for happy and effective church life. Cultural background affects one's approach to worship, ministry, administration, and relationships. This needs to be given serious consideration by pastor search committees looking for a pastor.

Differing worship styles, procedural differences, philosophical differences, plus an over-supply of preachers create a situation in which pastors can be quickly and carelessly rotated in and out of leadership. The tragic impact of this grievous phenomenon will be discussed in succeeding articles.

At this point, we are challenged to put an end to church fights, whatever the cause. We need to do what the apostle Paul said: "Endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Ep. 4:3). Jesus has prayed for this; "... that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee... that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jo. 17:21). It is safe to say that the CFV, Church Fight Virus, has done more to hurt the witness of Christians to the world and to cut off the flow of the Holy Spirit's power than any other single factor. What Satan, the world, communism, and secularism cannot do, we do to ourselves.

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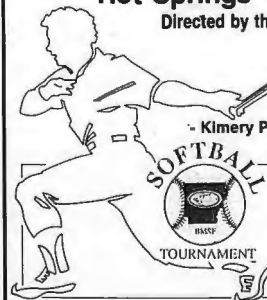
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DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know



Dr. J. Everett Sneed labored tirelessly and feverishly to provide Arkansas Baptists with a news organ that would keep them informed. With the same passion he sought to be fair and objective. He loved Arkansas Baptists. He loved Southern Baptists. He loved Baptist doctrines and principles.

Without a doubt, he not only served the longest time of any editor in Arkansas Baptist history, he served during the most difficult time to serve as editor. Few things bring greater pressure than knowing that we are not living up to the expectations of others. To spend a large part of a 20-year tenure in the crossfire of opposing movements means that numbers of people from one side or the other would be unhappy much of the time.

Beyond the controversy, sociological changes in which the general public has withdrawn from reading impacted the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* with declining subscriptions. Escalating postal rates reached astronomical amounts at the same time subscriptions were down. This brought severe financial problems. This was added pressure.

The financial problems necessitated reduction in staff, which together meant reducing the number of issues to every other week. This brought Dr. Sneed great personal disappointment, and therefore, added pressure.

Perhaps the most profound influence of Dr. Sneed will be the lasting investment he made in the lives of students who attended Boyce Bible School where he regularly taught, and in the lives of the members of hundreds of our churches where he taught January Bible studies. 1 Timothy 5:17 calls for "double honor" to be given to those who labor in the Word.

We are indebted to the man who gave so much of himself to help the family of Arkansas Baptists. We must pray and work together to sustain the *Newsmagazine* as a major tool for the motivation and mobilization of our churches.

Don Moore is executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

From the Editor Emeritus

An open letter to Arkansas Baptists

As the editor emeritus of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, I am grateful to the paper's board of directors for this opportunity of sharing with my fellow Baptists of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention some sentiments and thoughts about my dear friend, the late Editor J. Everett Sneed, and this paper, which he and I have in respective tenure helped to produce for the last 35 years.

Throughout my tenure as editor of our state paper (1957-1972) I was privileged to have as a dear friend and fellow servant of the Lord, Dr. J. Everett Sneed. So it was only natural upon my retirement from the editorship and Everett's appointment as my successor that the two of us would be drawn even closer together.

One of the gifts I received at retirement was a plaque—still on my wall—stroking me as the editor who had been in office the longest of all who ever had held the position.

But now, and for the last five years, that is no longer the case. Editor Sneed's record of editing the paper for more than 20 years places my former record in total eclipse.

But through the years neither of us was ever jealous or envious of the other, and each of us knew that any time one of us could be of any help to the other, he was available, "hook, line, and sinker." So Everett's homegoing, on Friday, June 26, after two attempts to put in a full day at his office, came as a great shock to me personally.

On Sunday, the third day after Everett's death, my Sunday School class, at Park Hill Baptist Church, North Little Rock, of which Everett was a beloved member, readily agreed to participate in the giving of a cash fund to the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* in the late editor's honor. The response has been great. As this was being written, class contributions were approaching \$2,000. The fund will be applied toward retiring the paper's debt, which resulted from excessively high postage rates now assessed on second-class mailings.

Everett and I had a lot in common. I like to think that we were editors cut from

the same cloth, as I trust the next editor will be. Each of us saw the position of editor as being of the Lord and our calls as opportunities to be used of the Lord in helping local churches and individual church members grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and in fulfillment of his purpose for us.

From the time we entered upon our respective assignments, Everett and I saw the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* as having a strategic and unique place, a constant and continuing ministry of service to local churches and to the convention. The state Baptist paper is to help all of us to be the best possible stewards in carrying out the Great Commission, winning people to Christ, and "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . ."

The editor and paper can be successful in achieving this great purpose only to the extent that they have the support of the convention, the churches, and individual Baptists. This includes, ideally, having the paper in every local church budget, going to every Baptist home in the state. For us as individuals it calls for a place in our prayers and finding time to read the paper and use it, along with our Bibles, in finding direction for daily living.

Finally, let me throw out a challenge to all of us Arkansas Baptists still alive and potentially active in Kingdom work here on earth. Let's give full support to whoever is called as the next editor of our paper. When the lord tells us to love one another as he is loving us, surely that is a call for us to trust one another and work together as brothers and sisters in Christ "to bring his kingdom in."

In addition to our own class's gifts, members of other classes in our Sunday School department have added their contributions. If any of you would like to join in with us in helping to pay off our paper's indebtedness, mail your checks directly to: *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203, designating them "For Dr. Sneed Memorial." Thank you, and God bless you.—Erwin L. McDonald, ABN Editor Emeritus

Adopt an Annuitant

by James Walker
ABC Annuity/Retirement

Do retired ministers always enjoy the fruits of their labors? Most of the time they do. They reflect on many years of ministry, the people brought to Christ, the lives touched with grace, and relive the good times.

But sometimes the good memories are touched with the harsh realities of daily needs. Many served smaller membership churches and contributions to a retirement program were limited. Others put church needs before personal needs. A few have seen all accumulated resources wiped out by high health care costs. Some retired ministers, like others in the community, are classified below the poverty level.

Arkansas is home to 660 annuitants who receive a monthly benefit from the Annuity Board. The average retirement benefit is \$318 with 45 percent receiving less than \$200 a month.

How does the Annuity Board respond when real needs press retired ministers?

The Cooperative Program makes possible a limited amount for assistance and grants. Thirteen people in Arkansas currently receive assistance.

The Adopt An Annuitant program provides \$50 a month for twenty-eight people in Arkansas. More than 900 retired Southern Baptist servants are receiving assistance through this program.

Many more could use an extra \$50 a month. How is it possible to help those in need?

The Adopt An Annuitant ministry is an opportunity for individuals, families, Sunday School classes, and churches to respond with help. A contribution of \$50 a month enables one to adopt an annuitant. An annual gift of \$600 will provide a full year's support for one annuitant. A one time gift of \$7,500 will sponsor a worthy retired minister or widow permanently.

For printed materials or more information contact your state annuity representative at 376-4791, ext. 5114 or call the Annuity Board at 1-800-262-0511.

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BUDDY SUTTON

The President's Corner

Well acquainted with stress



Few subjects receive more attention today than the subject of stress. Proof is irrefutable that large numbers of our people are either hyperactivated into a state of exhaustion on the one hand or paralyzed with frustrating indecision on the other by stress. Realizing that certain conditions of stress should be reserved for expert analysis by the professionally trained, it is obvious that many of us suffer needlessly from failure to apply what we are taught in God's word.

Real stress is closely related to fear—fear of the unknown, fear of inadequacy, fear of failure, of embarrassment, of ruin, of loneliness, of not being able to cope.

Being well acquainted with forces that cause fear and panic, Paul wrote from prison to young Timothy, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and discipline" (2 Ti. 1:7).

The mature Christian who seeks that peace that passes all understanding knows that it cannot be found in running away. The great Christian layman, Robert E. Lee said, "Duty is the sublimist word in the English language." I have to confess that for many years I didn't understand the depth of that statement but, after a while, even the slowest of us learns that there is no peace outside the sanctuary of duty.

Sometimes duty requires that we rise

up with great energy and aggressively pursue an objective. Sometimes it requires that we simply endure (silently). But the promise is there in any case that if we are in a state of obedience, God will remove the fear and replace it with power, love, and discipline. He also will teach us not to worry about results but to leave that to him.

The writer of Hebrews expressed it thus, "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness" (He. 12:11).

In the paradox of 1992 we are witnessing the piece by piece dismantling of Christian structure in our own beloved nation at the very time that former Iron Curtain countries are begging us to bring the Word of God.

Somewhere in that titanic struggle there is a place of duty for every Christian soldier. Find your duty in that war, and God will replace your stress and fear with peace. You have his promise, "I will never desert you nor will I ever forsake you" (He.13:5,6).

William H. "Buddy" Sutton, a Little Rock attorney and member of Immanuel Church, Little Rock, is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.



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LANGUAGE MISSION DAY AUG. 9

Heirs of the Faith

by Colleen Backus
Arkansas Baptists

A gentle manner and a warm sense of humor belie a firm sense of mission and strength of purpose in Elias Pantoja. As language missions director for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, Pantoja's commitment to evangelism and ability to put those around him at ease has resulted in 23 new language works in the brief two years he has been in Arkansas.

No less remarkable is his own personal journey. When asked about himself, the first thing Pantoja says is, "I was born and raised in a Christian home." The home where Pantoja was born in 1950 was in McAllen, Texas, where his parents had been converted two years before in the First Mexican Baptist Church. It was in that church that Pantoja was baptized at the age of nine. Pantoja jokes that he was in church every time it was open because his father was the church custodian. Like many children raised in traditional Anglo churches, he always was involved in church activities from Sunbeams (now Mission Friends), RAs, to youth work.

Pantoja's family was part of the migrant stream; from the early 1950s to 1967 the family followed the crops from south Texas to Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana. The youngest of 10 children, he was the only one to graduate from high school. He then attended Pan American University for one year and graduated from Dallas Baptist College (now University) in 1973 and Southwestern Seminary in December 1976.

"Probably the influencing factors in my surrender to the ministry were, first, godly parents, who encouraged me and took me to church," Pantoja remarked. "As a freshman at Pan American, I was involved with BSU. . . . It became the oasis for us as Christians on a campus that was 95-99 percent non-evangelical." At a missions conference in 1970, Pantoja surrendered to a call to the ministry. That summer he spent 10 weeks serving on the Rio Grande, involved for the first time in summer missions. The following two years he participated in summer missions in Dallas and Columbia, S.C. To prepare for the ministry, he transferred to Dallas Baptist College.

A week after graduating, Pantoja married his wife Martha. They have two children; a 16-year-old son, E.J., and a 13-year-old daughter, Maria. While in seminary, the Pantojas started a new work in Carrollton, Texas. "We had eight people to start that work and in three years we had more than 200. It was a suburban church in Spanish.

But we felt that outside of Texas there were a lot of Hispanics who needed the gospel. We were growing to a point where I was doing more pastoral ministries than evangelism and outreach," Pantoja said. In 1977, Pantoja began work with Shelby County Baptist Association in Memphis, Tenn., as a catalytic missionary. For six years he started language work among Hispanics, American Indians, Vietnamese, and Laotians. In May 1983, he became language missions director for the Missouri Baptist Convention, a position he held for more than four years.

Needing a change in his ministry, Pantoja went to the Baptist Sunday School Board's Student Ministry Department in January 1987 as a consultant in ethnic/international work. However, he missed the missions part of his ministry. In July 1990 Pantoja accepted the call to come to Arkansas to start and direct language missions.

"Right now, we have about 50 targeted places in the state where if we had the leadership, sponsorship and funding, we would probably be able to do some type of ministry to Vietnamese, Laotians, Hispanics, American Indians," Pantoja said. "Presently we, as Arkansas Baptists, are in nine different languages including the deaf. We have about 75 ministries directed toward non-English speaking people. We are finding that we have pockets of Hispanics and other ethnic groups in our state that have been overlooked. And probably will not come to whatever Baptist church is in the community. They're different culturally, linguistically, — the approach that we try, coming from an Anglo perspective, will not reach them." With the support of the Cooperative Program, Annie Armstrong Offering, and the Dixie Jackson Offering, we are trying to help churches and associations become sensitive and culturally aware.

Language Mission Day, Aug. 9, is one such opportunity to raise the awareness of language persons in the community. Churches can find many ways to get involved.

Churches that already have language ministries may want to have a joint service. Two years ago on Language Missions Day, Fort Smith First Church held a joint service with all three of its language congregations: Korean, Laotian, and Spanish, centered around a baptismal service and Lord's Supper.

Another option would be to invite a language pastor to give a testimony or preach. Just being sensitive that there may be people in your community in need of

Jesus Christ can be a good first step, Pantoja said. Sponsoring or co-sponsoring a new work may seem overwhelming, but every county in the state has language people. There may not be a concentration in your area, so your church could co-sponsor a work with a church that is located in a language area. "We do have works where two or three area churches have combined," Pantoja observed. "Three sponsoring churches in Benton County have combined to support a Spanish work and each of them have services in Spanish with one pastor serving all three congregations. We've seen growth and Baptisms out of that kind of venture." Financially, language work cannot support a pastor for every work. Pastors usually serve two or even three preaching points. Sometimes, English as Second Language classes are used as an outreach tool.

Heirs of the Faith



CELEBRATE
LANGUAGE MISSIONS DAY
AUGUST 9, 1992

"The largest language group is Hispanic," Pantoja said, "but the 1990 census does not show a good picture of the ethnicity of Arkansas. Estimates run as high as 50,000 Hispanics, while the census shows 20,000." Other groups include Vietnamese, Chinese, Laotians, Filipinos, and Japanese.

"We continue to have 30 ministries among the deaf, with a couple of new works. The ministry goes from an interpretive Sunday School class to an interpretive worship service. First Springdale has a bi-vocational pastor to the deaf, which is the best way of starting and growing a church. We doubled our attendance this year at our Arkansas Baptist Conference of the Deaf," Pantoja said.

Pantoja is modest about language missions accomplishments in Arkansas, concentrating on the work that still needs to be done. But as a true heir of the faith, his determination to provide the gospel message has made him an agent of hope.

Finding Native Americans

by Dave Parker
Okla. Baptist Messenger

Although the U.S. census shows between 16,000 and 19,000 Native Americans living in Arkansas, and Fort Smith has the 22nd-largest Indian population in the nation, there are no indigenous Indian churches in the state.

To change that, an Arkansas Baptist official is soliciting help from Oklahoma Indian churches to help just east of the border.

Elias D. Pantoja, language missions director for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, said most of the state's Native Americans live in its westernmost counties, just across from Oklahoma's Ottawa, Delaware, and Adair counties.

Benton County, which includes Rogers, had 1,435 Native Americans in the census; Washington County (Fayetteville) had 1,486; Crawford County (Van Buren) had 685, and Sebastian County (Fort Smith), had 1,396. In the middle of the state, Pulaski County, where Little Rock is located, had 1,163.

Other counties with 200 or more in population were Sevier (DeQueen), 222; Pope (Russellville), 319; Garland (Hot Spring) 484; Saline (Benton), 285; Faulkner (Conway), 256; Jefferson (Pine Bluff), 227; and Craighead (Jonesboro), 200.

Pantoja said the interest in Native American churches "will vary according to how much they have been assimilated into the churches. I present this to Anglos and they said, 'We don't have any in our church.' They may be involved in the Anglo church."

"The concern I have is the large number who have not been assimilated, and never will be, into the First Baptist Church."

Indian workers needed. Pantoja, a Hispanic who worked as a migrant farm worker for many years, said he has a great deal of rapport with Hispanic migrants who would not openly talk with an Anglo. In the same way, he said Indians will open up better to other Indians.

"It's going to take your people reaching your own people, and our people reaching our own people, until we can get to the

Oklahoma Baptist Messenger photo / Dave Parker



Elias Pantoja (left); Bob Haskins, Oklahoma's director of cooperative missions; and Moses Rodriguez, from HMB language extension department.

point where we're reaching everybody for Christ," Pantoja said.

The first step in the process, he said, will be to survey the areas of the state with the highest concentration of Native Americans, to determine if there is interest in starting Indian congregations. He said he needs help from Indian churches in Oklahoma to do the survey work; next summer he said he also will try to get help from Baptist Student Union summer missionaries, who are BSU students that help out on short-term mission projects.

"We have mission trips to Arizona and other parts of the country; why not to Arkansas?" he asked.

Although Pantoja would like Anglo pastors in Arkansas to become more aware of the need for Indian churches, he said his efforts for now primarily are focused on Indians themselves.

"Many times we see ourselves as the recipients of mission, but we need to be doing mission," he said. "I want to get some help from existing Indian churches to come and help us survey," he said.



CELEBRATE LANGUAGE
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Pantoja, who has been with the ABSB for two years, said he became aware of the needs for Indian churches after a chapel led by Russell Begaye, director of the language church extension division at the Home Mission Board.

"I realized the number there," Pantoja said. "According to the census, we have that many Hispanics, and we have 12 Hispanic missions. Russell came to our chapel last spring, and he's coming to our state evangelism conference in January. That will help us create an awareness of the need."

Churches wishing to help in the effort should contact Pantoja at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; telephone 501-376-4791, ext. 5150.



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Acteens: Clowning for Christ

by Millie Gill
Arkansas Baptist

Arkansas' "Clowns for Christ" Acteens Activators were in Keokuk, Iowa, June 15-25 as the first team to participate in the Arkansas/Iowa Partnership.

Angela Galucki of Second Church, Cabot; Wendy Hoag of West Church, Batesville; Rebecca Holt of First Church, Sparkman; Leah Orman of Reynolds Memorial Church, Little Rock; and Monica Thompson of Temple Church, Searcy, comprised the team that was assigned by the Home Mission Board to work with Bob and Amy Little, church planters in the Keokuk community of 14,000. The Activators were active, high school Acteens who were at least 15 years old and had completed more than 50 hours of training. Their adult leaders were Stephanie Darby of Amorel Church; Jan Roberts of Temple Church, Searcy; and Angela Lowe, Acteens director of ABCS Woman's Missionary Union and a member of Calvary Church, Little Rock.

The "Clowns for Christ" launched their ministry in Keokuk by canvassing neighborhoods where they were planning to lead backyard Bible clubs. This effort resulted in the location of four families and an average BBC attendance of 45. Fourteen new prospects for Bethany Chapel, where Little pastors, were located.

The Activators also distributed more than 400 gospel tracts along the seven block downtown business district. One of the Activators gave a tract and a personal invitation to a little boy in a blue truck stopped at a red light. The little boy, Michael, and his mother, who recently moved to Iowa from Missouri and a Southern Baptist background, came to the BBC that afternoon.

Also used to "sow the seeds of the gospel" were puppetry, face painting, animal balloon sculpturing, Good News bracelet distribution, and the presentation



Acteens Activators clown for Christ.

of programs in a gazebo, a shopping mall, two nursing homes, one retirement multi-story complex, and one senior citizens center. In addition to the public presentations, the Activators led the morning worship service at Bethany Chapel and presented a drama emphasis on "People Need the Lord" in Madison Church, Fort Madison, Iowa, sponsoring church of Bethany Chapel.

The clowning troupe further shared their missions enthusiasm through personal testimonies via a live broadcast on a Keokuk Christian TV station, and as they met with youth and adults in Keosauqua, Iowa, where they gave a demonstration of their ministry skills, distributed "Use Me Books" and Good News bracelets.

Orman stated that her most meaningful experience in Iowa was witnessing to an Amish family in the Keosauqua park, and that her most challenging experience was sharing her personal testimony on TV.

Lowe said, "Our missions experience in Iowa would not have been possible without the support of Arkansas WMU and Arkansas Baptists. We could not have shared the gospel without the faithful prayer support of the people back home."

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Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

People

Gary Glover began serving July 13 as minister of youth and music at First Church of Marianna, coming there from Granbury, Texas, where he was serving as director of living units at Happy Hill Farm Academy/Home. A native of North Little Rock, he is a graduate of the University of Central Arkansas and has attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Glover also has served on the staff of Levy and Sylvan Hills First Churches in North Little Rock. He and his wife, Becky, have three sons, Drew, Daniel, and David.

Robbie Reeves has been named assistant minister of childhood education at Jacksonville Second Church with responsibilities in programming for birth through sixth grade. She and her husband, David, have three children, Jessica, Jennifer, and Justin.

Robert and Nell Singley Tucker of Wynne will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary Aug. 22 with a reception at Wynne Church. Tucker retired in 1988 as director of missions for Tri-County Association following 16 years of service. Currently serving as interim pastor of Immanuel Church of Marion, he also has pastored churches in Mississippi and Arkansas. Mrs. Tucker has served as a civilian employee with the U.S. Corps of Engineers, as well as serving as a sales representative for various companies. The Tuckers were married Sept. 12, 1941, at Toulminville, Ala.

Jim Stockdale recently observed five years of service as education director for Conway Second Church.

Steve Stephens is serving as associate pastor of Naylor Church, Conway.

Danny Smith has joined the staff of South Side Church, Damascus, as music director. Tracy Bush of Joshua, Texas, has joined the staff as youth minister.

Carol Halford, athletic director and women's basketball coach for Williams Baptist College, recently was chosen as the 1991-92 National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Woman Administrator of the Year.

Dick Emery is serving as interim minister of music for First Church of Siloam Springs.



Glover



Reeves

Ron Quillin began serving July 19 as minister of youth and music for Keo Church, going there from Marlbrook.

Shaela Williams of Paragould died July 5 at age 13 from injuries she received in an automobile accident near Hardy. Also fatally injured was her grandmother, Francis Huffman. A member of Eastside Church of Paragould, she had returned July 4 from a youth mission trip to Granite City, Ill. She also was active in the church's Acteens Missions Awareness organization, worked on the first level of Studact. She would have been an eighth grade student at Ridgecrest Junior High in the fall. Survivors include her parents, Dr. Dwight and Judy Williams; a sister, Traci Williams; a brother, Jarrod Williams; her maternal grandfather, Jess

Huffman; her paternal grandparents, Bob and Doris Williams, all of Paragould.

Ron Ingram has resigned as general manager of ACTS of Pine Bluff, Channel 65, to become director of television ministries for First Church of Dallas, Texas.

J.D. Woodard is serving as summer youth worker for Hardin Church, Pine Bluff.

Carter Tucker of Little Rock, ABSC Chaplaincy Director, and Paul Gean and Jerry W. Neel, both members of First Church of Fort Smith have joined other men from Missouri, and Alabama to participate in Project Brother, a short-term food distribution linkup between the SBC Brotherhood Commission and Evangelical Christian Union (Baptist) in Russia.

Hayden Hendix of Little Rock, a student at Ouachita Baptist University, is serving as summer youth worker for Crystal Hill Church in Little Rock.

Terry Walters has resigned as pastor of Diaz Church to serve in South Bend, Ind.

Jim Bynum is serving as pastor of New Hope Church #1, Walnut Ridge.

Butler Smith resigned July 5 as pastor of Ravenden Springs Church.

Tiffin Hubbard has resigned as minister of music and youth at First Church of Danville.

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Carol Ann Draper
(Mrs. Jimmy)

Sterling Haskle Andrews began serving July 5 as pastor of Rye Hill Church, Fort Smith, coming there from First Church of Omaha, Texas. A native of Kilgore, Texas, he is a graduate of East Texas Baptist University, Marshall, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Andrews has pastored other Texas churches. He and his wife, Sherry Marie, have three children, Jim, Tracee, and Stacey.

David Laird began serving July 19 as pastor of Trinity Church of Malvern, going there from Maple Avenue Church in Smackover.

John E. Shelton observed five years of service July 12 as pastor of First Church of Lewisville.

Dan Tibbett of DeWitt is serving as pastor of Tichnor Church.

David Bond, a junior at Ouachita Baptist University, is serving as summer youth director for Dover Church.

O.S. Cooper began serving July 5 as pastor of Barton Church, his first full-time pastorate. Recently ordained by Parkway Place Church in Little Rock, he earned a diploma in Christian ministry in March from Boyce Bible School in Little Rock. He served 21 years for the Little Rock Fire Department. Cooper and his wife, Jacquelin Sue, have an adult son, Jack.

Keith Thomas has resigned as pastor of South Bend Church, Jacksonville.

Rev. and Mrs. Don Hook of Little Rock will be honored Aug. 29 in recognition of their 60th wedding anniversary. Their daughter, Ethelene Moore, her husband, Kenneth, and their two children, Keith, and Kyle, will host a reception at South High Church, Little Rock, from 2 to 4 p.m. The Hook's were married Sept. 2, 1932 in Pleasant Plains. Mrs. Hook, the former Ruby Opal Wallace, is retired from Maritz Research Corporation. Hook, pastor of Woodson Church, has pastored churches throughout Arkansas, including those at Rosie, Roosevelt, Bradford, Pleasant Plains, Lake City, Conway, Charleston, Amity, Ozark, Paris, Malvern, and Little Rock. He also has served as interim pastor of several Arkansas churches, as well as serving as a member of the ABSC Executive Board for 16 years, as president of ABSC Pastors' Conference, as president of ABSC for two terms, as a Home Mission Board trustee for six years, a trustee of Central Baptist College for six years, as a two-term member of the ABSC Constitution and By-Laws Committee, as a member of the ABSC Historical Commission, and as Arkansas' representative on the SBC Education Task Commission for two years.

David Mitchell began serving July 12 as interim pastor of Lakeshore Heights Church in Hot Springs. Mitchell is director of Second Baptist Schools in Hot Springs.

Bill Tyler has resigned as pastor of Pine Grove Church, Pocahontas.

Bruce Raley observed 10 years of service July 19 as a staff member for Walnut Street Church in Jonesboro. Currently serving as associate pastor of administration, education, and college ministry, he also has serv-

ed the church as minister of youth and education and minister of education and administration.

Sandra Swalm observed 10 years of service July 1 as secretary and office manager for Mount Olive Church, Crossett.

Charles Pullin is serving as interim pastor of Gardner Church, Hamburg.

Ottis E. Denney of Norton, Ohio, died June 30 at age 80. A former Arkansas

1992 Annual Association Meetings

Ark. River Valley	Oct. 12-13	First, Havana; Fair Park, Russellville
Arkansas Valley	Oct. 19	Elaine
Bartholomew	Oct. 19-20	Migrant Mission Center, Hermitage; Calvary, Monticello
Ashley	Oct. 19-20	Eden, Hamburg; South Main, Crossett
Benton	Oct. 19-20	Harvard Avenue, Siloam Springs
Big Creek	Oct. 18-19	Spring River, Hardy; Saddle, Mammoth Springs
Black River	Oct. 19-20	Immanuel, Newport; First, Walnut Ridge
Buckner	Oct. 13-15	First, Waldron; Fellowship, Witcherville
Buckville	Sept. 28-29	Rock Springs
Caddo River	Oct. 19-20	Caddo Gap; Pencil Bluff
Calvary	Oct. 20	Rosebud
Carey	Oct. 15	First, Tinsman
Caroline	Oct. 13	Cockleburr, Ward
Centennial	Oct. 12-13	Gillett; Almyra
Central	Oct. 8	Highland Heights, Benton
Clear Creek	Oct. 13	Oak Grove, Van Buren
Concord	Oct. 19-20	Phoenix Village, Fort Smith
Conway-Perry	Oct. 20, 22	First, Wye Mountain; First, Center Ridge
Current-Gaines	Oct. 19-20	St. Francis; Biggers
Delta	Oct. 19-20	Kelso, Rohwer; South McGehee
Faulkner	Oct. 19	First, Conway
Garland	Oct. 5-6	Pearcy; Park Place
Greene County	Oct. 26-27	Calvary, Paragould
Harmony	Oct. 12	Dollarway; Hardin
Independence	Oct. 12-13	Calvary, Timbo; Ruddell Hill, Batesville
Liberty	Oct. 19	Parkview, El Dorado
Little Red River	Oct. 19-20	Pines, Quitman; Pleasant Valley, Heber Springs
Little River	Oct. 12-13	Kern Heights, DeQueen; Crossroads
Mississippi	Oct. 19	Ridgecrest, Blytheville
Mt. Zion	Oct. 19-20	Nettleton, Jonesboro; Lake City
North Arkansas	Oct. 13	First, Valley Springs
North Central	Oct. 12-13	Clinton, First; Skyland Mission
North Pulaski	Oct. 19	First, Jacksonville
Ouachita	Oct. 12-13	First, Hatfield; First, DeQueen
Pulaski	Oct. 19-20	Pleasant Grove; Greater Grace
Red River	Oct. 19-20	Sycamore, Gurdon; First Southern, Blsmark
Rocky Bayou	Oct. 15-16	First, Calico Rock; First, Hardy
Southwest	Oct. 22	Memorial, Waldo
Tri-County	Oct. 19	Vannale
Trinity	Oct. 12-13	First, Harrisburg; First, Lepanto
Washington-Madison	Oct. 19-20	First, Prairie Grove
White River	Oct. 19-20	Eastside, Mt. Home; First, Cotter

Ridgewood Church in Wadsworth, Ohio. Survivors are his wife, Margaret O. Norton; a daughter, Martha Bowden of Colorado; two sons, David Norton of Akron, Ohio, and Phillip R. Norton of Texas; a brother; and seven grandchildren. Memorials may be made to Ridgewood Church, 7891 Ridge Road, Wadsworth, Ohio 44281.

Paul Root of Arkadelphia, chairman of the department of education at Ouachita Baptist University, has been named by Arkansas Governor and Democratic Party presidential contender Bill Clinton as his best teacher. As a result, Root will be featured in the new Public Broadcasting Service show "Learning Matters" to be aired nationwide in October.

Larry Michael Taylor has accepted the call to serve as pastor of First Church of Booneville, coming there from Fairview Church of Durant, Okla. A native of Fort Smith, he is a graduate of John Brown University and Southwestern Bible Theological Seminary. He also has pastored churches in Texas, Illinois, and Arkansas. Taylor and his wife, Dianne, have three children, Jennifer, Philip, and Jana.

Briefly

Harlan Park Church youth in Conway, as a June mission outreach, conducted a vacation Bible school in Delta, Colo.

Jacksonville Second Church hosted its second annual "Handi-Capable" banquet July 11 in the church gym for all Jacksonville area mentally delayed adults and their families. Musical entertainment was provided by Sidney Piggee, John Lewis, and Angie

Mitchell, director of special ministries at Second Church.

Fort Smith East Side Church hosted an anniversary celebration July 12, honoring Doris Sloat for 20 years of service as pastor's secretary, and Wally Portmann for 10 years service as minister of youth and activities.

Reyno Church observed homecoming June 28 with morning services, a noon meal, and an afternoon program. Speakers were Former Pastor Jim Acklin and Max Gregory, director of missions for Current-Gains Association.

Little Rock First Church 46-member mission team recently worked in Wisconsin, leading 13 Kid's Clubs, doing street witnessing, survey work, and construction work.

Little Rock Second Church 22-member youth mission team returned July 18 from a mission tour to Jupiter, Fla., where they led in backyard Bible clubs and presented the musical, "My Place in This World."

Paragould East Side Church Woman's Missionary Union recently sponsored a youth mission trip to Granite City, Ill., with the youth teaching Bible stories, assisting with crafts, and leading in recreational activities. The effort resulted in 11 professions of faith and one assurance of salvation.

Texarkana Cornerstone Church 23-member mission team recently worked in Montana's Flathead Indian Reservation.

Springdale Berry Street Church Baptist Young Women recently received a WMU Distinguished Achievement Award in recognition of completion of 17 basic and seven elective educational and service activities.

Earle Church observed its 90th anniversary June 28 with an "Old Fashioned Sunday." Activities included the recognition of 25 members for 50 or more years of service. Former pastors attending were Clayburn Bratton of Fort Smith and Wade Carter of Millington, Tenn. Don Settles is pastor.

Clarksville Second Church ordained Clarence Cowell, James Howell, and Paul Tollison to the deacon ministry June 28. Ordination council members were George W. Domeser, director of missions for Clear Creek Association; Bill Milam, pastor of Lamar Church; Willis Jones, pastor of Spadra Church; and Marvin James, Second Church pastor.

Royal First Church recently held a youth revival that resulted in five professions of faith and four baptisms. Elias D. Pantoja, ABCS Director of Language Missions, was evangelist. Dick Cayce is pastor.

Rogers First Church ordained Avery Auten and Paul Beckelheimer to the deacon ministry July 19.

Bethel Church was organized July 5 with 150 in attendance at 112 Jeff Davis Street in Jacksonville with Wayne Kocourek and Gary Moore as co-pastors. The new work

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that includes seven active deacons and one inactive deacon will seek membership in North Pulaski Association, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. On July 12, there were 220 in attendance. New hymnals, chairs, and a central air conditioner have been donated. Meeting in a metal building, the group has established a building fund for expansion and is working toward launching a Together We Build program. Activities include Sunday School at 9:30 a.m., morning worship, 10:30 a.m., evening worship, 6 p.m., and Wednesday evening prayer meeting at 7 p.m. A nursery has been organized.

Spring Lake Church at Williford recently honored Pastor Ed Stoddard and family in recognition of his nine years of service.

Conway First Church broke ground June 21 for a \$2.5 million worship complex that will replace the sanctuary destroyed by fire Jan. 4, 1992. R. Dale Wicker Jr. is senior pastor.

Evening Shade Church held a revival July 12-18 that resulted in five professions of faith. Shelby Bittle, pastor of Brownsville Church, was evangelist. Ed Farris of Evening Shade directed music. Chester Miller is pastor.

Boyce fall term

The fall term of Boyce Bible School will begin Aug. 21 at the Baptist Medical System Support Center, located at Colonel Glenn and John Barrow Road. Courses and instructors are: The Pastor's Role in Christian Education, David Strawn; Church Administration, Bob Holley; Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, Maurice Hurley; New Testament Survey, Robert Stagg; and History of Southern Baptists, Robert Stagg.

For further information call Lehman Webb at 376-4791, ext. 5149.

Bold Mission Prayer Thrust

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—Thank the Father for Harry Trulove and the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.

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HOME MISSION BOARD

New VP for ministry

by Sarah Zimmerman
SBC Home Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—Larry Martin, director of missions for the Greater Boston Baptist Association, unanimously was elected Home Mission Board vice president for ministry by HMB trustees.

Martin assumes his responsibilities Sept. 1, succeeding Paul Adkins who is retiring after 23 years with the Home Mission Board. Adkins received a plaque and a standing ovation from trustees during their July 15 meeting.

During Martin's nine years in Boston, the association tripled its number of churches and developed an extensive use of volunteers in ministry. In his new role, Martin will oversee chaplaincy, church and community ministries, special ministries, and volunteers.

Martin, a Kentucky native, previously was director of missions for the Greater Detroit Baptist Association and as a pastor in Kentucky.

Eight other people also were elected to fill vacant staff positions during the summer meeting.

Martin King, director of public relations and marketing for Community Hospital in Anderson, Ind., was elected director of public relations and development. King is also a journalism instructor at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind. King succeeds Jim Newton, who left the HMB in May for a post with World Vision International.

In related action, board members dissolved the office of planned giving which was created but never staffed. The board voted to add development to the public relations director's responsibilities.

The board also approved a change in the Mega Focus Cities program, moving the unit from associational missions to the executive office. Mega Focus Cities is a strategy to help associations in the nation's largest metropolitan areas reach the cities for Christ.

Hugh Townsend, who has been assistant director of the metropolitan missions department since 1990, was elected national manager of Mega Focus Cities.

Michael J. Cox, presently associate director of black church extension, was elected assistant director for the east regional office of Mega Focus Cities.

Robert L. Moore, state director of missions for the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey, was elected national manager of town and country thrust and metro thrust.

John W. Hutchins Jr., director of evangelism for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, was elected director of the evangelism church growth department. The former pastor also has worked for state conventions in Texas and Virginia.

Keith Walker, associate director of the evangelism church growth department, was elected associate director of the personal evangelism department.

George C. Pickle, chaplain at Brotman Medical Center in Culver City, Calif., was elected director of health care chaplaincy and pastoral counseling. The Texas native is a former pastor and campus minister.

Carlos A. Ferrer, accounting and finance administrator at the Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary in San Antonio, was elected controller. The native of Cuba is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin.

In other action, the board requested permission to use money from the Cooperative Program capital needs allocat-

tions for new Home Mission Board offices to be completed in 1995.

The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee must approve reallocation of the money.

The board sold its offices near downtown Atlanta for \$14.5 million in 1990, planning to use receipts from the sale to buy land and construct a new facility. But the cost of the new building is now estimated at \$16 million.

The board also agreed to increase the maximum loan available from the church loans division from \$1 million to \$1.5 million.

The change is necessary because of increasing land and construction costs, said Bob Inlow, director of the church loans division. He noted most of the division's loans are to new churches for their first buildings, but costs up to \$1.2 million are not unusual in metropolitan areas.

President Larry L. Lewis reminded board members of the priority of evangelism. He noted this year marks his 40th year in the ministry and he said the most important thing he ever learned is the importance of soul winning.

In recognition of 1992 being the 500th anniversary of Columbus discovering America, Lewis noted the Southern Baptist Convention includes 2,600 Hispanic congregations with more than 300,000 members. He said the September issue of "MissionsUSA" magazine will be a special tribute to Hispanic ministries.

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Freemasonry study

To be performed by Interfaith Witness director

by David Winfrey
SBC Home Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—The director of the Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department will take a three-month leave to produce a study comparing Masonic lodge teachings with Christian doctrine.

Gary Leazer, director of the department since 1987, personally will be responsible for researching and writing the study, said Darrell Robinson, HMB vice president for evangelism. "He can involve others as he sees fit," Robinson said.

Leazer, who has been with the Interfaith witness department since 1979, has a doctorate in philosophy of religion from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Southern Baptist Convention voted for the study during its meeting in July after messenger James "Larry" Holly made a motion to form a committee to determine whether Freemasonry is compatible with Christian doctrine.

The report will compare arguments by

Holly and other Mason critics with responses by Mason advocates, Leazer said. After each debated point, Leazer will offer an analysis of both sides, he said.

Leazer said he hopes to find whether modern Masons agree with the interpretations offered by Holly and other critics of Masonic writers from the 19th century.

"Most of these (anti-Masonic) writers have used Albert Pike, Albert Mackey, and others who basically are writers of 100 or so years ago," Leazer said.

"Modern (Masonic) writers have not been given the opportunity to respond, and I'm going to give that opportunity," he said. "It's going to be a balanced, objective, scholarly study."

Leazer added he's been inundated with about 100 offers of information or assistance from Masonic opponents and supporters since the study was requested in early June.

"I appreciate it, but I get snowed under having to answer all these letters and phone calls, and I have a hard time getting my

study done," he said. "That's why I want a three month study leave."

During the HMB's July board of directors meeting, a trustee noted Holly had sent several mailings concerning Freemasonry to all board members and suggested Holly address the board.

Chairman Ron Phillips, however, opposed the idea, adding, "We have had more publicity over this than starting churches and winning souls."

Phillips promised board members they would get an opportunity to review Leazer's report before it was presented to next year's Southern Baptist Convention.

"I hope when the SBC's over next year we will have finished — at least 'til five years from now when it comes up again — whatever we are going to do," he said.

Holly, a Beaumont, Texas, physician, has contended Freemasonry is a religion antagonistic to Christianity and of pagan and, ultimately, satanic origin.

Since the subject arose, Freemasonry and the board's study have been among the most debated topics on the letters to the editor pages of several state Baptist newspapers.

According to a poll by the Baptist Sunday School Board, 14 percent of Southern Baptist pastors questioned were or had been members of a Masonic lodge.

At least three denominations have adopted stances against membership in Masonic Lodges: the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Assemblies of God, and the Presbyterian Church in America.



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LESSONS FOR LIVING

Convention Uniform

The battle within

by Earl Humble, retired, Walnut Ridge

Basic passage: 1 Timothy 6:1-14,17-21

Focal passage: 1 Timothy 6:1-14,17-21

Central truth: Godliness and prosperity, spiritually speaking, are not foes.

Is godliness a free ticket to prosperity? Some say it is. The "Name It and Claim It" people say so. These people give glowing testimonies of how God blesses obedience with material wealth. Paul does not agree at this point. Yet, Paul would not deny that it is within God's power to do what he will for his people. Paul says that godliness is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. The gain may be material, but it certainly is spiritual. Godliness means to be like God in our daily walk.

Godliness may store up some treasure on earth; it certainly will store up treasure in heaven. People who are truly godly already have contentment. Those who use godliness as a gimmick are never content.

The battle within is joined when we set our mind to get wealth at any cost, especially when we use religion to gain wealth. This is covetousness, and that is idolatry. Verse 10 is the famous verse about wealth: "for the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil." If a Christian has the attitude that wealth is everything, he already is defeated in his battle within.

Verses 12-14 are a clear call to Timothy to do battle with the forces of evil. Not only is he to flee from the mammon of unrighteousness, but he is to go boldly into battle against self indulgence and concentrate on living a clean and obedient life. Above all, let him look for the return of the Lord. He is to minister to others, and he cannot do that well unless he resolves the battle within. If it is this kind of gain that we are to be concerned with, we answer, "Yes, there is much gain to this kind of godliness."

Paul's message to those who are rich in this world's goods is that they fix their hopes on God who "richly supplies us with all things to enjoy." Is it possible, then, for God's child to have the best of both worlds? Paul implies that it is, but he would caution that it is not ours to determine how much money we should have. If we have material wealth, we should be sure God has led us into it. We should then use it for his glory. We should strive for a balance between the spiritual and material; both belong to God.

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Life and Work

Seeking God's forgiveness

by Mitch Tapson, Mount Carmel Church, Cabot

Basic passage: 2 Samuel 11-12

Focal passage: 2 Samuel 12:1-2,4-9,13

Central truth: Honesty before God is the best policy.

I never read this account of David and Bathsheba that I do not feel gripped with a great sense of pathos. It is as if you are there and you feel and know exactly what is being portrayed on the pages of God's Word. "Temptation is the pull of man's own evil thoughts and wishes. These evil thoughts lead to evil actions and afterwards to the death penalty from God" (Ja. 1:14-15 LB).

Nathan, the prophet, is called upon by God to deliver God's message to King David. It is in the form of a parable. David takes it for reality. He pronounces judgment on such an insensitive, cruel, and greedy man. David is the king and ultimate judge. He quickly sees the error of his rich man's actions and pronounces his decree on him.

Just four words then are uttered from Nathan's lips. Only four. But they carry with them enough power to shame and humble a king. "You are the man!" (2 S. 12:7). The ultimate confrontation has occurred: a man's bared soul and the truth of God. There is no place to hide.

Some have questioned the Bible's declaration of David as a man "who had the heart of God." They question it by recalling his great sins of adultery and murder. How could an adulterer and a murderer have the heart of God?

Without in any way excusing what David did, I can forthrightly say that in these chapters, 11 and 12, and Psalm 51, the very answer to the dilemma is found. "I have sinned against the Lord," said David (12:13). No excuses, no extenuating circumstances, no cries of injustice, no pointing a finger at others, just a simple admission of guilt. God had spoken clearly and truthfully, and David humbly admits the truth and asks for forgiveness (Ps. 51).

Having a heart after God does not mean one is perfect. The only one perfect is Jesus Christ. It does mean that in our spiritual battle over the flesh and temptation, sometimes we win and sometimes we lose. When we lose and God speaks, it is time to "come clean" and seek the forgiveness of a loving God.

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Bible Book

The value of prayer

by Bruce A. Swihart, East Side Church, Paragould

Basic passage: 2 Kings 13:3-6a,22-25; 14:11-14

Focal passage: 2 Kings 13-2-5,22-23

Central truth: God is eager to answer the prayer of those who move beyond vain ritual and open their hearts to him.

Never underestimate the value of prayer. Israel had rebelled against God when they set up their places of worship (1 K. 12:26-33). Yet, God listened with compassion to the sincere prayer of King Jehozahaz. Why should you pray?

(1) The Lord hears a sincere prayer. Satan wants to bring defeat in your life by causing you to believe you are too sinful for God to hear your prayer. Jehozahaz's life was characterized by these words, "He did evil in the eyes of the Lord by following the sins of Jeroboam..." (13:2). Jehozahaz and the children of Israel were being punished by the Lord. As their sin continued to become more obstinate, God's punishment became more severe. When things became unbearable Jehozahaz had to pray and, "the Lord listened to him..." (13:4). God usually does not hear the prayers of those who choose to be blatant about sin (Is. 59:1-2). However, God is sovereign and does not limit himself to what prayers he will hear.

(2) The Lord desires to provide. God provides his grace even when we are undeserving. The grace of God is an expression of his love. He expresses his love because of his covenant promises. God does show his wrath, but he prefers to move in grace and love. He wants to draw us to him in a loving relationship.

(3) The Lord chooses to give grace. Fortunately we do not get what we deserve. God allows sinful people to continue in existence. We get what God's grace provides. God eventually did destroy Israel because of idolatry and wickedness. His grace with sinners is not endless.

During the time of Noah the wickedness of the people offended God. Before the flood came the Scripture states, "Then the Lord said, 'My Spirit will not contend with man forever'" (Ge. 6:3). The Lord showed grace to Israel because of his covenant (13:23) and because of Jehozahaz's prayer. He shows grace to you because of Jesus. What could God do for you if you got serious about prayer?

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LESSONS FOR LIVING

Convention Uniform

Unashamed workmen

by Earl Humble, retired, Walnut Ridge

Basic passage: 2 Timothy 2:1-15

Focal passage: 2 Timothy 2:1-15

Central truth: If our work for Christ is not based on God's Word, it is worthless.

Whatever Timothy would become or achieve would be accomplished because of the grace which had come to him in Christ. We have no claim on God at all unless it is at the point of his grace in Christ. His grace begins in our life as an act of undeserved favor. Every blessing we have received since conversion is an outgrowth of divine grace.

Grace is a blessing of such magnitude that we must share it with others. The best way for a leader like Timothy to do this is to choose others to be trained, then lead the ones thus trained to become trainers of others. It then becomes an endless chain of witnesses, ever broadening as time passes.

Paul uses military language as he instructs Timothy to a self-disciplined life. He is not to seek an easy life but to be willing to endure hardness. He also is to remember that his commander is not in Rome but in heaven. He is not to become entangled in mundane affairs any more than a soldier should become entangled in non-military things. The soldier obeys through a sense of duty, and perhaps fear. We also have a sense of duty, but our supreme commitment is through love.

Paul also appeals to Timothy to observe a farmer as he tills and plants and reaps. The farmer shares in the fruits of his labor. He also uses the athlete as an example of discipline, endurance, and rewards. The illustration most applicable to the Christian worker is that of the unashamed workman. Verse 15 is one of the great biblical passages on Christian workers.

The old idea that we who serve as ministers of God's Word do not need to study, but that God will speak through us, is not really scriptural. Jesus gave such a passage to his disciples to use when they were on trial for their lives, as witnesses for Christ, but it was never to be used as an excuse for failing to study. For any worker for the Lord to avoid study, may also mean he might avoid prayer. The command to study is as plain as the command to witness. This is no place for lazy minds and sluggish hearts.

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Life and Work

Showing kindness to others

by Mitch Tapson, Mount Carmel Church, Cabot

Basic passage: 2 Samuel 16:1-4; 19:15-43

Focal passage: 2 Samuel 19:25-29, 31-33, 38

Central truth: You are never too big to be kind.

A number of years ago there was a fictitious movie that told the story of the Pope and his escape from the Vatican and its protection to Italy's countryside. For a brief period of the time the Pope became an ordinary citizen and shared life with ordinary people. It was a delightful story. Its appeal was found in our fascination with the powerful people of the world, and how they would be if they had to live like us.

David has just been through one of the most trying times of his life. He had lost his kingdom briefly to his son, Absalom, who then was killed by David's soldiers.

In the midst of this turmoil, we are given an account of the meeting between David and Ziba, a servant of Mephibosheth, a grandson of Saul. Ziba brings supplies for David and his men. He reports to David that this grandson of Saul has stayed behind in Jerusalem in hopes of being named king in David's absence (2 S. 16:1-4).

Upon David's return to Jerusalem after the death of Absalom, he now must regain control of his kingdom. One of the first ones to meet him, oddly enough, is Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth is dressed in clothes of mourning. His countenance suggests grief and perplexity. Indeed, he tells King David that contrary to Ziba's account of his treachery, it was Ziba who had left him behind and told these falsehoods.

Here we are allowed to see David, a truly great warrior and monarch, taking care of a minor issue. David had more important matters, but condescends to absolve Mephibosheth and grant him kindness. King David's kindness toward this grandson of Saul reveals the depth of David's character.

The rule of human relations always has been, treat others as you would want yourself treated (Mt. 7:12). Treat all men equally. You are never too big to be kind. The world, our homes, our business dealings, our churches, indeed all human endeavors can stand the milk of human kindness.

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Bible Book

God's judgment

by Bruce A. Swihart, East Side Church, Paragould

Basic passage: 2 Kings 14:23-24; 17:6-9a, 18-23

Focal passage: 2 Kings 17:6-9a

Central truth: God will intervene in human history to punish his unfaithful people because he takes sin seriously.

American already is beginning to feel the judgment of God. The government, political institutions, businesses, families, and individuals are indulged in flagrant, willful violations of God's law. Our society is beginning to come apart at the seams. God expects nations and his people to be holy as he is holy. When an individual or a nation breaks their relationship with God, they become as worthless and useless as the idols they worship. What causes God to bring judgment on a nation, and what is the result of his judgment?

(1) Its cause. The nation of Israel failed God at the points of improper worship and immoral behavior. Israel's exile and failure can be traced to lack of total commitment to God. He demands first place in the life of his people. Anything less is idolatry. For the most part, our nation is preoccupied with sex, money, material possessions, power, and every vain thing that exalts itself against God. We have allowed ourselves to become corrupted by the very things with which God has blessed us. Your life style is shaped by whom and what you worship. Israel demonstrated poor judgment by openly violating their covenant with God and by refusing to listen to his chosen ministers set to warn them. America is no less guilty than Israel.

(2) Its result. The result of God's judgment is the loss of his presence and power. God is free to determine when and how to punish a wicked nation. He used the ungodly Assyrians to destroy Israel (17:6-9) because they refused to be loyal to him. God separated his people from himself by their exile, and his power on the behalf of righteousness was thwarted because of the callousness of their hearts.

God calls his followers to single-minded devotion and full commitment to him. When we refuse to obey, he withdraws his protection. No person or nation ever rises above the possibility of judgment from God. Only repentance from sin and turning to the Lord will stop God's coming judgment on America.

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Bond recall authorized

ATLANTA (BP)—The church loans division of the Home Mission Board plans to recall \$24 million in high interest bonds of officials claim are costing the agency more than \$1 million a year.

HMB board members voted during their July 15 meeting to authorize the recall of the bonds, which have an average annual yield of 10.58 percent.

The bonds, which were made available between 1985 and 1990, were issued to raise money for church loans, said Bob Inlow, director of the HMB church loans division.

Lower interest rates in the 1990s, however, mean the high return bonds are no longer a fiscally responsible way to raise money for loans, he said.

"The bonds were designed to be called at a time like this," said Inlow. "I doubt that many Southern Baptists would want us to pay 10.58 percent interest for church loan

capital at a time when the money could only be loaned at 8 3/4 percent.

Mike Arnott, director of financial services for the church loans division, agreed.

"It is just time to change in an environment of significantly lower inflation and lower interest rates," he said. "The conditions of the '80s that contributed to high interest rates are no longer with us."

While Arnott said the move makes economic sense, he said it may disappoint many of the 700 predominately Southern Baptist bond holders who might find it difficult to achieve similar rates of return in the 1990s.

"We regret any disappointment on the part of the bond holders," Arnott said. "It's just a different interest rate environment."

The prospectus for the bond issue, or the advisory of the terms for the bonds, clearly stated they were subject to early recall, Inlow said. The highest interest bonds were

scheduled to begin retiring in 1998, Arnott said.

Inlow added the structure of the bonds required deposits to a growing fund from which to pay principal and interest on the bonds. That fund, which would be used to pay off retired bonds, now totals about \$10 million. This means that \$10 million must be held in a bank account instead of being used for church loans, Inlow said.

"Failure to call them is a clear cut case of poor stewardship," Inlow said, adding that officials have had to weigh their duty to bond holders against their duty to all Southern Baptists.

Wailing Wall plans stir complaints from Jews

ATLANTA (BP)—Plans for Southern Baptist churches to dedicate Wailing Walls this fall have stirred complaints from the American Jewish Committee, which calls it a "manipulative use of Jewry's holiest site."

The Wailing Wall is part of the "See You at the Pole," a Home Mission Board-sponsored youth prayer emphasis planned for Sept. 16. "See You at the Pole" is an attempt to gather youth at their school's flag pole before class to pray for their peers.

This year, churches also are asked to establish a Wailing Wall. The wall would be a place where youth could put pictures of their friends in crises. The wall would serve as a reminder for youth to pray for their peers.

The American Jewish Committee's statement said, "The Western Wall has profound meaning for Jews within the specific context of Jewish history and Jewish experience. To lift it out of that context and use it to promote witness to another faith is abusive and offensive."

Home Mission Board officials said there was no attempt to reflect negatively upon the Jewish faith.

"We see the wall as place of prayer, a sacred place," said Bob Banks, HMB executive vice president. "Our purpose is to lead young people to pray for the crises in the lives of their fellow students. We also will want youth to share how their faith has helped them deal with crises in their lives."

Banks noted the youth Wailing Wall is an in-church event and is not meant to select people from another religious group for direct evangelism.

"The roots of our Christian faith come out of the Old Testament and are reflected in the New Testament," Banks said. "We have deep respect for Jewish history and faith. It is the foundation of our faith."



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Across the country, around the world

Blind conference canceled by low registration

NASHVILLE—A national meeting of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Blind Aug. 14-16 in Nashville has been canceled, according to the organization's president, Charles Couey of Nashville. Low registration, Couey speculated, may have been caused by the nation's sluggish economy.

Baptists join in protest of lesbians' ad in paper

AUSTIN, Texas—Six Baptists, including the executive director of the Austin area Baptist association, were among a group of Christians who held a news conference July 14 to protest an advertisement in the *Austin American-Statesman* announcing a "marriage" between two lesbians. The news conference was called by Christian radio talk show host Jack Chambers, a member of Congress Avenue Baptist Church in Austin. Among the participants was Dale Gore, executive director of the Austin Baptist Association.

Young, CIC agree to form multiethnic advisory group

HOUSTON—Southern Baptist Convention President H. Edwin Young of Houston has agreed to work with the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission to establish a denomination-wide multiethnic advisory committee to address ethnic diversity in the denomination. One of the goals of the task force would be to develop a plan to increase multiethnic representation on the boards and professional staffs of Southern Baptist agencies and institutions.

Keith Parker will head European missions for Fellowship

THALWIL, Switzerland—Keith Parker has joined the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as coordinator of its mission program in Europe. Parker, former Europe area director for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, assumed his new position July 1, according to an announcement from Jimmy Allen, who co-chairs the fellowship's global missions ministry group.

BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD

Trustees to consider retirement 'window'

by Charles Willis

Baptist Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)—Trustees of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board will be asked in their Aug. 17-19 meeting to approve an early retirement "window" for employees who qualify with a specified combination of age and tenure.

President Jimmy Draper said the proposal, which has been affirmed by the trustee board's general administration committee, would provide a one-time voluntary retirement incentive for any of the 188 employees who qualify. Employees must be at least 52 years old and their age and years of service must total at least 77. Qualifying employees would have from Sept. 1 to Oct. 15 to consider the option and could retire as late as Nov. 1.

The announcement came as a part of ongoing work to restructure the board for more efficient operation and followed the June announcement of eight long-tenured employees retiring from middle- and

upper-management positions.

The restructuring process, guided by task forces of employees from throughout the organization, reduces both the number and levels of management and the number of positions at middle and upper levels. More than 1,000 of the board's 1,915 employees have provided input through task forces, surveys, and focus groups thus far, Draper said.

He said structural changes are designed to make it easier to make decisions and accomplish work. This will give employees greater personal accountability and encourage greater initiative.

The early retirement window recommended to trustees "is a voluntary retirement opportunity," Draper said. "No one will be forced to take it. Every attempt will be made prior to Oct. 15 to inform those employees who qualify for the plan should the restructuring adversely affect their positions. My hope is that we will be able to place in other positions any employees whose jobs are eliminated."