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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 93, Number 20

October 6, 1994

SEE YOU AT
THE POLE

Students at Cabot High School pray before classes during a "See You at the Pole" rally, one of nearly 350 rallies held statewide on Sept. 21. Initial estimates indicate more than 20,000 Arkansas youth participated in this year's "See You at the Pole" activities.

SOUTH EASTERN
LARRY F. COOPER
Historical Commission,
Nashville, Tennessee



Southern Baptists anxious to begin Haitian relief work

By Mary E. Speldel
SBC Foreign Mission Board

DAVIE, FL (BP)—President Clinton has announced he will lift U.S. travel and trade sanctions against Haiti, but that hasn't yet cut the red tape tangling the start of a major Southern Baptist relief project to the troubled island nation.

That's the word from Mark Rutledge, Southern Baptist missionary to Haiti, who's been attempting for several weeks to gain U.S. government permission for Southern Baptist relief planners to travel to Haiti.

The planners will assess human needs in Haiti, paving the way for a relief project which will be sponsored by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and Brotherhood Commission.

Relief funds available

So far, the Foreign Mission Board has pledged \$386,000 in hunger and relief funds to meet immediate needs. The board also may contribute more than \$400,000 for a two-year water well project there, officials said.

Rutledge, who has been staying temporarily in south Florida since leaving Haiti in June, spends his days calling officials to try to find the fastest way to get the Southern Baptist team into Haiti.

Until commercial flights to Haiti resume, the U.S. Treasury Department must grant permission for a private plane, passengers and supplies to travel there. Then permission must be granted by the United Nations. Then the request goes back to

the Treasury Department, which issues the necessary licenses. The process could take at least four weeks, Rutledge said.

Another option is for team members to travel to Haiti on already scheduled humanitarian aid flights allowed into the country by the U.S. military. Rutledge and other project leaders are trying to find such a flight. Nothing has developed so far.

The team will include Rutledge and his wife, Peggy; International Service Corps workers Ed and Mary Brentham; and journeyman Todd Lowe. Other members include Foreign Mission Board and Brotherhood officials and some leaders from state Baptist conventions who are experienced in relief projects.

"The (survey) team have their bags packed and ready to go," said Russell Griffin, assistant vice president at the Brotherhood Commission. "But we're on hold until the (U.S.) government says we can go."

Once they finally get into Haiti, planners will determine how Southern Baptists volunteers who follow them can best meet needs. The first project likely will be food distribution, lasting about seven weeks. Additional volunteer teams may work in medical care, water well repair, water purification and construction.

The relief projects will involve at least 150 Southern Baptist volunteers enlisted by the Brotherhood Commission. Qualified Southern Baptists who want to volunteer for these projects should call the SBC Brotherhood Commission at 1-800-280-1891 or 901-722-3787.

Cover Story



See You at the Pole 6

1994 "See You at the Pole" prayer rallies attracted an estimated 20,000 high school and junior high students to prayer services on campuses throughout the state.

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Sunday School workers challenged to lead

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Nearly 1,300 Arkansas Baptists attended two days of training and inspiration at the State Sunday School Convention Sept. 23-24 at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock. The convention involved Sunday School teachers, directors, ministers of education and pastors, who participated in a wide range of conferences in their areas of interest.

Milton Redeker, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department, said he was "pleased" with the turnout of 1,281 participants. "This year was second only to the 1,500 participants during the first year it was offered," he noted, adding that the Saturday conference attendance "was the largest ever."

He attributed the good attendance to "good communication from directors of missions, pastors, ministers of education and Sunday School directors, and (the popularity of keynote speaker) Bill Taylor."

Taylor, executive pastor and minister of education for North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., presented the audience a straightforward challenge as he interpreted the conference theme, "BREAKTHROUGH: Witness to Win."

"We talk about reinventing the church, we study (contemporary church models), we buy books, we attend conferences. We are surrounded by the best information," he said. "But we are dealing with a disillusioned people."

Taylor quoted Tom Sine in his book, *Wild Hope*, saying, "The western church is going out of business." He showed Southern Baptist statistics from 1985-90, in which "13,000 churches baptized less than five people and 6,000 didn't baptize any."

"What happens when a business doesn't bring in any revenue? It dies," he noted. "If these churches were a business, they would be out of business. We need to wake up and take a different direction."

"It's time to lead again," he urged. "Arkansas educators, we have to come back to what Christ wants us to do."

"What method did Jesus use?" Taylor asked. "He came teaching. Teaching was His business. We must see ourselves as educators. Model the behavior you desire. Everything you do or say is a signal."

"Teachers, you are the most trusted persons in the churches of Arkansas," he said. "You will spend years in the classrooms and your people will do what you say. The world needs hope and our Bible studies have the answer."



Keynote speaker Bill Taylor calls on Arkansas Baptist Sunday School workers to be "on the cutting edge" of ministry.

Participants attended any four of the 68 small-group conferences offered. Topics ranged from outreach programs and adult curriculum to teaching the homebound and beginning a cradle roll ministry.

Representative of the curriculum classes was one led by Randy Millwood of the Bible reaching-teaching division for the Baptist Sunday School Board, reviewing changes in the adult Life and Work curriculum beginning in October.

"The advanced study book and Dr. Hobbs' commentary are not different," he said. "Everything else is different. Why? Because of a new way of looking at adult development. It is sociologically based on generations and how they learn."

Millwood noted that curriculum editors identified four generations and their needs, developing curriculum based on those needs. The groups include:

■ "GIs" (born 1901-24). "The government is important to this group," he explained, "because of child labor laws and GI bills for education. This is a very patriotic group."

■ The "silent mid-lifers" (born 1925-42). "This group bought into the company," he said. "They are detail people. None of them have been elected president, but many have served as chiefs of staff. They want to see things get done."

■ "Boomers" (born 1943-60). Millwood described this group as "idealists, people that say, 'We can change the world.' They are the children of rock 'n' roll and only 2 percent of them were raised in any institutional care, such as day care."

■ "13ers" (born 1961-81). "These are

emerging adults," he said, describing the generation as "cynical. Most were raised at one time or another in a single parent home. About 60 percent are products of institutional care."

He proposed to teachers that new Life and Work curriculum should be selected according to the age group classifications. "Pathways" is written for GIs, "Ventures" is for mid-lifers, "Pursults" is for Boomers and "Directions" is for 13ers.

Raye Zacharias of the BSSB's church growth group told pastors, ministers of education and Sunday School directors to "look for leaders" when recruiting for Sunday School.

"Leaders are equippers, growers, enablers, cultivators and facilitators," he listed. "And we want leaders who are honest, competent, inspiring and who have a sense of direction."

Pointing out steps for "spiritual recruiting" of workers, Zacharias said:

■ "Pray for God's guidance for the person. Always visit them in their home and know something about the person you are visiting."

■ "Present them a real challenge of the position," he added. Show how the task can help them in their spiritual life and never make them "feel guilty."

■ "Decide something definite, such as making an appointment to call, before you leave the interview. And 'enlist for a given period of time,' he concluded.

Although many conferences were led by Sunday School Board personnel, most were led by Arkansasans such as Bruce Raley, minister of education for Walnut Street Church in Jonesboro. He led a conference about churchwide outreach, noting there are three purposes for outreach: evangelistic, prospect contact and ministry.

An outreach program will be effective if "the organization of the church is in place, you develop a record system and you find prospects," Raley said. "Can a church have too many prospects? Yes, if you can't keep up with them."

The key to successful outreach, he said, "is to focus. A focus is usually for a short period of time, but find out who you want to go after."

Reflecting on the impact of the training, Linda Holloway, an adult department director for Park Hill Church in North Little Rock, noted, "I've been out of Sunday School work for a while. I'm catching up on the terminology and getting ideas on how to get members involved."

Acknowledging that, "many Sunday School workers probably aren't trained... and are at loose ends," she emphasized, "It is important to train for service."

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABCS Executive Director

The first of October gives our churches an opportunity to "begin again." New starts, whether it be classes, departments or new mission starts, are exciting. New students, new teachers – these all bring a freshness and excitement to the work of the church at this time of the year. My hope is that reaching the lost will be uppermost in your minds as you strive to reach out into your communities.

Churches usually work on their budgets this time of year. I must appeal to the pastors and budget committee members. Should you, could you increase the percent you are giving through the Cooperative Program? Our churches are receiving increasing amounts of undesignated gifts each year. At the same time they are keeping a larger percent of it for local causes. Our mission programs in the state, nation and world are hurting. The Home Mission Board is having to cut back 6 percent on their mission work in 1995.

Church members need to assume responsibility for providing appropriate mission support in the budget. There are people who protect funds for choirs, youth ministry, senior adult work, buses, vans and nearly everything else. There seems to be few in the church who "go to bat" for the Cooperative Program.

In the budgeting process, you also need to make plans to help your association with its media campaign to promote the Here's Hope Revivals in 1995. Your pastor and staff should be given at least a cost of living raise. The Bible is very clear about instructing the church to take care of its leaders. God blesses good stewardship in the church just as He does in individuals.

The other exciting thing about this time of year is the annual meeting of our associations. We have some excellent planning, training and mission work being done. Our directors of missions are not only faithful to their post of duty locally; they are a big support for those of us who work with the entire state. I hope our church people will turn out in great numbers and that the Lord will visit you in a special way during your meetings.

VICKI WICKLIFFE

Woman's viewpoint



Making the right choices

I believe Christians are having to make more choices for our families than we did a few years ago. Society accepts more sexual immorality on our televisions and in our media as being all right. So many of our prime time shows that a family used to be able to watch together, seem to be portraying sexual immorality as an accepted thing. The language that is often used would have been deleted a few years ago. Going to rent a movie without bad language or sexual immorality can be very difficult. Listening to the words of popular music can be surprising.

Even some Christian parents seem to just accept that their children are or will be sexually active before marriage. Our teenagers are having such a hard time with this issue. They are not alone. Unmarried sexual relationships are too common for all ages.

More homosexual relationships are

showing up on our screens every day. We may be shocked the first time we see it, then we become more tolerant. During the past year a number of shows added either homosexual relationships or teenage stars engaging in sexual activity as a usual part of growing up.

We need to wake up and quit allowing ourselves and our children to be led astray from what God teaches about sexual immorality. God's laws do not become outdated or change because of our society's acceptance.

As Christian parents we need to stay close to God and know His laws so we can make the right choices for our families. If we don't make the choices, society will and our families will suffer.

Vicki Wickliffe is the wife of Verne Wickliffe, pastor of Malvern First Church. They have two children, Kara, 10, and Troy, 7. She is the director of the Children's Center at the church.

Personal perspectives

"See You at the Pole has opened a lot of eyes and it will change our campus – if not a lot, then maybe a little."

—High school senior Courtney Cobb, a member of First Church, Cabot

"Sometimes we are afraid to admit to weaknesses for fear of rejection, but any weakness can become one's strength if he faces it, and allows God to use it in his life."

—International student Bapin Bhattacharyya, who is blind and deaf

"We have brothers and sisters in Christ who have been unfairly judged and labeled because at some point they did not dot every 'i' and cross every 't'. This intolerance has burned bridges rather than building them... This is not the spirit of Jesus Christ. We must recapture civility again."

—Southern Baptist Convention president Jim Henry, speaking to SBC Executive Committee members

No substitute for cooperation

As Southern Baptists observe their annual Cooperative Program Month emphasis throughout October, Baptist leaders across the denomination are grappling with how to assure the future success of the convention's voluntary giving plan.

The challenge is not in identifying the solution but in successfully implementing it. The obvious key to Cooperative Program support is prominently displayed in the plan's name — cooperation.

The problem is that effective cooperation has been hampered in many areas of Baptist life in recent years. That isn't surprising news to anyone. Listen, for example, to the recent views of two prominent Southern Baptist leaders.

Southern Baptist Convention president Jim Henry, speaking two weeks ago to the SBC Executive Committee, emphasized the urgency of recapturing a sense of cooperation. "Our best posture on this committee and in our institutions is the servant mode," he declared. "Control must become anathema to us.

"We have brothers and sisters in Christ who have been unfairly judged and labeled because at some point they did not dot every 'i' and cross every 't,'" Henry added. "This intolerance has burned bridges rather than building them.... This is not in the spirit of Jesus Christ. We must recapture civility again."

Baptist Sunday School Board president

Perpetuating controversy

I recently received an invitation from Tom Logue to meet and hear Dr. Keith Parks. Upon reflection I began to suspect that it was actually an organizational meeting to raise grassroots support for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. This was confirmed during the meeting, which I attended.

Basic information about the CBF was shared and donations were solicited in the form of subscriptions to *Baptists Today*, a publication associated with the CBF.

The Southern Baptist Convention was derided, the leaders of the conservative resurgence were accused of "smear tactics," "not caring about missions" and "having a political agenda." Dr. Parks even predicted that the Cooperative Program would become fragmented in the future to the point of uselessness.

In attempting to justify his actions Dr. Parks stated that while serving as president of the Foreign Mission Board he had documented 14 attempts by its trustees to influence the personnel policies of the board and that over the past 12 years the



STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR

By TRENNIS HENDERSON

Jimmy Draper, in his new book, *Bridges to the Future: A Challenge to Southern Baptists*, writes: "The bridges of cooperation between Southern Baptists have been tested across the years. Today these bridges are showing new signs of strain. Our task is to come together, strengthen these bridges, and build stronger ones over which we can lead millions to Christ."

Draper goes on to affirm that "the denomination's service to Christ is based on voluntary cooperation, not coercion; on consensus, not commands.... Our cooperation is completely voluntary because of our firm belief in the democratic principle of freedom of choice for churches and individuals."

The principle of voluntary cooperation is essential to the ongoing success of the Cooperative Program. Without widespread

cooperation, the entire plan would quickly collapse.

How can such cooperation be maintained amid the constant challenges faced by Southern Baptists? One vital ingredient is trust.

Listen again to the words of SBC president Jim Henry: "The Christian faith and our mode of denominational operation call for a decision to trust. And you trust only what you cannot control." Noting that "trust builds loyalty," Henry told fellow SBC leaders, "We must see that that trust is earned again and kept."

What does the future hold? On the positive side, the SBC Cooperative Program's fiscal year concluded last week with record gifts of \$142.86 million. That total, which exceeded the budget goal by more than \$4 million, halted a three-year decline in national CP gifts.

Yet the good news is tempered by Henry's assessment that hundreds of Southern Baptist churches "stand on the brink," waiting to see if they have authentic opportunities for input and involvement in Southern Baptist life. At the same time, Baptist leaders in such states as Florida, North Carolina and Texas are evaluating possible changes in how they define and distribute Cooperative Program gifts.

How can we assure the future success of the Cooperative Program? The clear key is a renewed commitment to Christianlike cooperation. There is no substitute.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SBC had insisted on controlling the entities it supported. I am at a loss to explain why Dr. Parks doesn't understand that the SBC and the trustees of SBC entities have a right and responsibility to control their institutions by doing such things as influencing personnel policies.

I don't know why I, a local pastor and the missions development director for Harmony Baptist Association, was sent an invitation to this dismal gathering nor why our director of missions was also solicited to attend. While CBF supporters are always harping about divisiveness, this type of activity truly perpetuates the controversy, benefiting the CBF.

Warren Watkins
Pine Bluff, AR

Editor's Note: An article about Dr. Parks' comments is published on page 19 of this week's Newsmagazine.

Reconsider invitation

I was both shocked and disappointed to read that Jerry Falwell has been invited to speak to the pastors of Arkansas at their annual meeting. It grieves me that they would choose someone who, in the name of Christianity, conducts himself on national television in such an unscriptural manner. I do not believe our Heavenly Father sanctions such actions.

I agree with the Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention that it is wise to keep our Christian mission out of the political arena. I do not feel that the Arkansas Baptist Pastors' Conference is the proper forum for the furtherance of Mr. Falwell's political agenda. Even if his intent, or that of the pastors, is not political, it will be interpreted as such by citizens of Arkansas and national observers.

My prayer is that the pastors will reconsider inviting Mr. Falwell to speak at this conference.

Genile Bowers
Harrison, AR

'It will change our campus'

See You at the Pole rallies involve more than 20,000 Arkansas youth

Sept. 21 came early for more than 200 students at Cabot High School as they gathered around their school flagpole to pray for non-Christian friends and each other.

Many shivered in shorts and T-shirts in the dawn light, wrapping their arms around themselves to stay warm. Backpacks loaded with books were stacked in piles of 10 or 20 surrounding the students. Adults stood at the back, preparing a table full of donuts, juice and milk. It was a time to pray.

Fellow students took turns at a microphone set up near the flagpole, each with a song or personal message about the need for Christ on their campus. Some spoke in a shy, halting manner, reflecting the insecurities of their age; others, reflecting a need to speak boldly, were more direct in their messages.

One speaker was senior Rachel Alford, a member of Mt. Carmel Church in Cabot who read from a Bible she pulled from the back pocket of her jeans. She described the Cabot "See You at the Pole" rally as a "great thing to come and do. It's encouraging to see other people pray with you. A lot of people have a big problem of apathy."

Classmate Gary Ford, a member of Briarwood Church, agreed. "It is an encouragement to teenagers," he said. "I can't go to a Jesus United Students Together (a Christian club on campus) meeting because of my schedule. With something like this early in the morning, I can come out with other teenagers to pray."

Courtney Cobb, also a senior and a member of First Church, dabbed at a tear at the corner of her eye following the prayer service and spoke of the event's purpose. "There are a lot of people who haven't been saved on this campus," she said. "We need to go after them."

"There's a lot of hypocritical behavior on campus and it's up to us (Christian students) to help them," she emphasized. "See You at the Pole has opened a lot of eyes and it will change our campus—if not a lot, then maybe a little."

Alford, who helped plan the event, said she received training in See You at the Pole (SYATP) activities during Super Summer, an Arkansas Baptist State Convention-sponsored evangelism school held at Ouachita Baptist University in June.

Randy Brantley, an associate in the ABSC evangelism department, said part of Super Summer's emphasis is on SYATP activities.



Benton dentist Mike Bourns officiates as Benton students enjoy "adventure games" during See You at the Pole activities at Benton High School. The event, including games and a rally, was part of a post-pole celebration held after school Sept. 21.

"See You at the Pole was introduced into Arkansas Baptist life in 1991 through Super Summer," he said. "In past years we've given an emphasis to training students for SYATP. This year, we actually took the 1,250 students at Super Summer and did a mock SYATP event."

"This is not just a passing fad. It is really a movement of God."

— Randy Brantley
Associate, ABSC
Evangelism department

See You at the Pole is a national, non-denominational, student-led prayer gathering for junior high school and high school students which began in 1990. It is traditionally held around the school's flagpole as participants pray for national and community leaders, non-Christian friends and the influence of Christ on their school.

Brantley said increasing numbers of Arkansas youth are participating in SYATP. "Arkansas first participated in 1991 with more than 11,000 youth," he said. "In 1992, we had 17,000 participate and last year more than 18,000 youth participated."

Brantley said tentative 1994 figures

show SYATP attendance to have nearly doubled in many areas and estimated attendance to have surpassed 20,000 in Arkansas.

"In northwest Arkansas, we polled a number of schools," he explained. "Last year 1,152 attended. This year they had 2,310 students. That is a 100 percent increase."

"The same thing is happening down in the El Dorado area," he added. "El Dorado High School more than doubled their attendance. In 1991 60 participated. In 1992, 100 participated and this year they had 200 students participate."

He added that SYATP was observed on 337 of the 450 secondary schools in the state in 1993. "Students in three quarters of Arkansas schools participated in SYATP last year and we are seeing lots of new schools this year. As of Sept. 23, we have received reports of 16 new schools."

He cited Judsonia's Central High School with 101 of 239 total students participating in the school's first SYATP event as being indicative of first-time reports.

"This is not just a passing fad," Brantley said of the increasing numbers. "It is really a movement of God. I think students realize there are true problems in their schools. They are willing to experience the inconvenience of getting up early to call on the Lord to ask Him to use them on campus this year."

Many planners noted the high number of Baptist youth at the events. "That shows

Jonesboro churches reach out to ASU fraternities, sororities

Five Baptist churches in Jonesboro banded together Sept. 25 to reach Greek sororities and fraternities in what David James described as "the only event of its kind that I know of in the nation." Greek Day, sponsored by First, Central, Walnut Street, Highland Drive and Nettleton churches, attracted 256 members of 14 fraternities and sororities from Arkansas State University.

James, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention student ministry department, said the event is unique because of the cooperation among churches.

"To the best of my knowledge, there is not any other college community where all of the Southern Baptist churches come together as an outreach to the Greek community," James said. "There are a lot of individual churches that are doing a great job reaching Greeks, but I'm not aware of a group of churches working together like the group at Jonesboro."

Moving beyond stereotypes

Bruce Raley, minister of education at Walnut Street Church, said the event, in its second year, was planned because "we came to realize that the Greek community was not being touched by Southern Baptist churches in Jonesboro and there are only a few Greeks that attend BSU activities."

"We also realized we had stereotyped the fraternities and sororities and they had stereotyped us," he explained. "We wanted to begin to build a relationship where they realized we are people who are available to them for service and in return, we believe we can reach a lot of these students."

Raley said Greek Day activities began at First Church with breakfast and a program. "Some of the students prayed, one brought a testimony on how to balance church and school activities and David James spoke. We dismissed them and assigned different sororities and fraternities to the five churches for morning worship."

Arliis Dickerson, director of the ASU Baptist Student Union, said Greek Day is a positive way for participants to attend church. "You have gobs of students active in churches at home that come to college and never attend."

"You have pledges that were required

to come to Greek Day that have no church background who heard the gospel," Dickerson explained. "Nine out of 10 pledges that pledge their freshman year are not active in church throughout college. It was a chance for them to say, 'Hey, I can be active.'"

"Many Greeks are believers and church members," James added, "but sometimes it is difficult to express their faith in the Greek world. This gave them an avenue to highlight the importance of the Lord Jesus in their lives."

Dickerson said that only by working together could the five churches sponsor an event the size of Greek Day. "It's an event that one church couldn't do. There might be one or two that could pull off an event like this, but together you reach more students. It works best for everyone."

Noting that the BSU "couldn't do this event because we don't have the space," Dickerson said, "Our ministries make each other better."

Raley said the cooperation among the churches began when church leaders assessed their college ministries. "We realized a few years ago we were competing, particularly for Baptist students. Because of that, there was competition and not a lot going on to reach unchurched students."

As a result, Raley said, the churches began working together on Greek Day and other events, such as retreats. "We can see a lot if we work together. The students also realize that churches care. When one joins a church, we all rejoice and there is no jealousy because of it."

"The BSU has been a central point where the churches have rallied together to reach ASU students," James added. "The fact that this kind of Southern Baptist joint effort is unusual symbolizes the importance of what is happening among our church leaders in Jonesboro."

"Where there could be jealousy and turfism, there is unity," he affirmed. "Colleagues are looking for a gospel that brings wholeness, not division."

Dickerson said Greek Day benefited the participating churches as well as the students. "There were a lot of (church members) excited about it," he said. "When they saw that many students stand up and be recognized in their churches, it got the people excited about reaching college students."

the influence Baptist youth pastors have in the state," Brantley said. "They are spreading the word."

Churches in many communities also sponsored "Saw You at the Pole" parties later that day, celebrating attendance at SYATP and presenting the gospel more aggressively.

One such community was Benton, where several churches offered "adventure games" on school grounds after class and a worship service later that night at Benton High School auditorium.

Event organizer Ronnie Brock, minister of youth at First Church, said the party was a change of focus for participants. "We wanted the students to gather at the pole in the morning and use the obvious focus on them," he said. "We wanted them to then invite their friends to the party after school and the worship service that followed to focus on the gospel."

"If you took a stand on your campus, we wanted you to be able to celebrate that," he explained.

The party included adventure games in which students donned padded sumo wrestling costumes and wrestled with friends, strapped on elastic cords for a "bungee run," stuck themselves to a velcro wall and ran obstacles in the "velcro challenge course."

Brock reported that more than 900 students attended the afternoon activities and that the worship service also was well attended. "More than 600 students participated in the praise and worship and heard a message from Brandon Barnard, a student at Ouachita Baptist University."

"Twenty-three came down for salvation and about 160 more came down for rededication and recommitment," he noted. "They went for worship, to celebrate the fact they took a stand on their campus and to clarify in their minds the gospel message."

Brock said several factors, including cooperation between school administrators and event planners, contributed to the success of Benton's SYATP. "For one thing, it was entirely student-led and organized. Corey Goode (a First Church member), president of the student body, was a big factor in that. We also had Baptists from Magnet Cove and Bryant, Catholics, Missionary Baptists and Assemblies of God."

Mike Duke, a member of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Benton, said he was "excited" about See You at the Pole because it is "exciting to see the kids come and acknowledge Christ as their savior, to show others your faith."

"What it did for Benton, only the students will know," Brock said. "Seeing other Christians take a stand helps them in their walks."

Student uses handicaps as ministry outlet

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Being deaf and blind does have some advantages, said Bapin Bhattacharyya, a student at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock. "I get to save on my electricity bill, because I don't need a light at night."

Most Arkansas Baptists do not know Bapin (pronounced BAH-pen), but have a profound influence on his life. He is not only active in the Reach Our Campus Thursday night worship of UALR's Baptist Student Union, but also receives Arkansas Baptist State Convention funds for an interpreter during BSU functions.

"I appreciate that," he said of the funds from the state missions department. "It makes me feel that BSU is doing its part in reaching out and makes me feel more involved."

Bapin said he enjoys BSU activities because, "as a Christian, I want to be involved, share my faith with others and to feel inspired when other Christians speak. I don't get to participate in a lot of social activities with other Christians."

Jimmy Barrentine said Bapin's interpreter is being funded as a pilot project ministry. "It's a legitimate missions investment. It is a challenge to the BSU to make a commitment to reaching the high deaf student population at UALR." He said providing interpretation for one deaf student will allow for translation to others. "In a sense, we are hoping he's a missionary to the deaf."

Barrentine said the interpretation funds come from a "limited response" fund in the state missions department provided from a mixture of Cooperative Program and Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering receipts. "The fund allows us a quick response to needs we don't know about when conducting annual planning," he explained.

Bapin, a native of India, was raised in a village 20 miles south of Calcutta. "The village has no paved roads, vehicles or fancy markets," he related. "Eighty-five percent of its population live in poverty and get free land on which they build huts from mud, hay and bamboo."

Deaf from birth, Bapin was blinded at age 9 following a fight with another boy. "I slowly lost sight in my left eye during a three-month period. I was so frightened and felt lost as I did not know how to live or move around freely without any sight."

He said he feels "gifted" because of support from his family in India. "God provided me a wonderful family. Most people in this kind of culture would be too embarrassed to show their handicapped



Bapin Bhattacharyya (left) visits with UALR BSU director Dan McCauley.

children to the public," Bapin remarked. "They always understood that my needs were very special," he said of his parents. "At the age of 2, my mother taught me how to speak Bengali, my native language. She used many ways to describe how to make the sound of a letter by moving her lips."

Because of his handicaps, he was forced to quit school and make other adjustments in his lifestyle. "It was not easy. I lost a lot of friends because they were fearful about how to communicate with me."

"While struggling to acquire a new life without any sight, I often fell into a desire to commit suicide," he said. "At that time I was not a Christian, yet God kept His eyes closely on me. God was gracious in granting me enough strength to live through those difficult days."

Despite his thoughts of suicide and growing discipline problems, Bapin was able to discover positive outlets. "I had hobbies such as woodworking and ceramics. I made many statues of Indian gods and goddesses from clay I got from my uncle's brick factory. My mother is a talented artist and would paint them for me."

In the meantime, he said, God was planning a "miracle" for him to come to the United States.

He said his father wrote letters "all over the world" searching for a school that

could accommodate his son's needs. After several disappointments, he was accepted to the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Mass. "It was a miracle how God planned for me to come to Perkins."

Part of that miracle came in the form of Frank and Steve, Christian staff members at Perkins. "I became good friends with them and we did things together while they were off duty," he said. "From time to time they would take me to church."

"On February 8, 1987, after I heard an inspiring sermon I wanted very much, in my heart, to accept Jesus as my Savior," Bapin recalled. "But I was afraid, since I thought my parents would oppose my converting to Christianity."

"I told Steve and one of his friends, Mike, overheard me and told Steve to have us go to his house for lunch," he said. "After we finished eating lunch, Mike and I had a long conversation. I told him how afraid I was to change my faith."

Mike told Bapin "not to worry since God came first before anything else. At this point, I felt inside me something strange. It was as if Jesus was talking to me. I told Mike that I was ready" to accept Christ, he said. "Mike prayed with me and I accepted the Lord into my heart."

God's leading eventually brought him to UALR and to the BSU. Director Dan McCauley said Bapin adds to and receives from the program there. The BSU provides Bapin a forum to express himself in a Christian community of peers. In fact, his testimony was the focus of a recent Reach Our Campus service.

BSU offers compassion

"The BSU provides him with students who care about him in a compassionate way, although he doesn't seek compassion," McCauley explained. "He wants to be accepted for who he is."

Although physically handicapped, he asks others not to think of his handicaps as a weakness. "Sometimes we are afraid to admit to weaknesses for fear of rejection, but any weakness can become one's strength if he faces it, and allows God to use it in his life," Bapin affirmed. "Even people who are hearing and sighted can be handicapped. Not necessarily physically, but handicapped in the way they deal with different situations."

Bapin maintains that God provided his handicap as a ministry outlet. "I feel blessed for my disabilities because I can truly see others with disabilities," he noted. "God made me with disabilities to help others who feel their lives are not important. I want to be a missionary to those with disabilities."



A sea of faces surrounds Florida Baptist relief coordinator Jim Brown, who helps with weekly food distribution in a Rwandan refugee camp in Tanzania.

Baptists aid Goma's neediest refugees: kids

GOMA, ZAIRE (BP)—Anyone wanting to practice the Christian doctrine of helping "the least of these" can stay busy here.

That's why Southern Baptists opened their own camp in early September to house 500 children identified as "unaccompanied minors"—the weakest and most vulnerable of the 800,000 Rwandan refugees who overflowed the lake town two months ago.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees calls them unaccompanied minors because there's no way of distinguishing orphans from children separated from their families in the mad scramble across the Rwanda-Zaire border. Their plight gives new meaning to the term "helpless."

"We just knew that, as Christians, we had to try to do something to help," said Tad Tadioc, a missionary with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board who was on the initial Baptist survey team that came to Goma.

On Sept. 6, the first Rwandan children came to the Nyabushongo Baptist Children's Camp. The first was a 10-year-old boy, separated from his parents for two months. He was found wandering naked and malnourished outside another children's camp. By the end of the day 10 kids had arrived. By the end of the week, 75. By the end of the month the camp was expected to be at capacity — 500.

"I suspect this camp will be needed for a least a year, since UNICEF has said children like these should be the very last group to return to Rwanda," said missionary Stan Lee, project coordinator, who had to flee Rwanda himself last April.

"I dream we can open another camp like this in Rwanda someday to help return these children to their families. But even when all the refugees are gone this facility can still serve needy Zairian children."

A common sight, orphaned children stream into Rwandan camps naked and malnourished. Baptist volunteers help care for the children at camps in Goma. Many were orphaned by disease or fighting.



Hungry and alone, a boy clings to Donna Schroyer of Fort Worth, Texas, part of a joint relief team of the Brotherhood Commission and Foreign Mission Board.



Last ride through crocodile-infested waters in a leaking, overloaded boat means freedom for Rwandan Hutus fleeing to Tanzania to escape Tutsi soldiers.

Possible changes in CP prompt concern

Annuity Board urged to ban investments related to 'abortion industry'

NASHVILLE, TN (BP/ABP)—The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, concerned about possible changes in the historic Cooperative Program relationship with several state Baptist conventions, urged extreme caution in any departure from "this God-given and time-honored approach to funding a world mission strategy." The resolution was approved by the committee during its Sept. 19-20 meeting.

Several state conventions will consider allowing changes in the traditional state-SBC Cooperative Program in annual meetings this fall. Texas and North Carolina will consider plans which offer churches opportunity to give to state and other mission causes called "Cooperative Program" but not include the SBC.

The resolution seeks to remind state conventions that CP funds have never been used to fund organizations "having no accountability to state conventions or the SBC," and it asks the states to inform constituents "of the variances of theology and doctrine being embraced and espoused by some groups identifying themselves as Southern Baptists."

Although the resolution did not single out specific state conventions, Jerold McBride, president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, called the action "coercive" and a violation of Baptist polity.

"There are other denominations whose polity calls for power to flow down from the national level, to the state level, to the district or association and to the local churches, but such polity has no place in Baptist life," McBride said. "There are no levels in Baptist organized life and no group has any business 'reminding' or 'urging' any group."

SBC Executive Committee president Morris Chapman emphasized that "the Cooperative Program has stood for that unique relationship fully supported by our churches."

Describing the "true partnership between the Southern Baptist Convention and state conventions," he added, "We are partners in service to Christ as well as brothers in Christ. Our roots are embedded in convictions and cooperation."

In other business, the Executive Committee "respectfully request(ed)" the SBC Annuity Board to revise its guidelines to prohibit investment in companies with connections to the "abortion industry."

Current investment guidelines prohibit the Annuity Board from investing in "any company that is publicly recognized ... as being in the liquor, tobacco, gambling

and pornography industries" or "whose products, services or activities are publicly recognized as being incompatible with the moral and ethical posture" of the Annuity Board.

The Executive Committee action requests the Annuity Board to add abortion to the list of banned industries in the first clause and that "contributions" be substituted for "activities" in the latter.

Annuity Board chairman Richard Scott of Waco, Texas, told the Executive Committee "we feel the same way about abortion as you do," but emphasized the "operational difficulty" of implementing the policy.

Faul Powell, Annuity Board president, added his agency's trustees will carry out the Executive Committee's request to consider changing the policy but reminded members "this will not be the investment policy of the Annuity Board unless the trustees say that."

The Executive Committee also voted to request the Annuity Board to provide the committee with a written report of "all involvement with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, including copies of all contracts with the CBF, by the February 1995 Executive Committee meeting."

The Annuity Board services the CBF with a retirement and protection plan similar to plans with SBC boards and agencies. Current Annuity Board policies allow it to service organizations which are connected in some way with Southern Baptists, such as the CBF and Mid-America Seminary in Memphis, Tenn., but not controlled by a Southern Baptist national or state entity.

Budget requests shared

The September Executive Committee meeting traditionally hears the first request from SBC agencies for Cooperative Program funding for the next year's budget. The committee will recommend a 1995-96 SBC Program Allocation Budget to the June 1995 SBC annual meeting in Atlanta.

The 19 requests totaled \$146,364,915, which is more than 7 percent above the 1994-95 budget of \$136,539,730. Heading the list were the Christian Life Committee, asking for a 28.5 percent increase, and the Radio and Television Commission, seeking 27.6 percent more.

SBC Executive Committee members approved a resolution affirming R. Albert Mohler for his leadership as president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, although not specifically mentioning controversy surrounding Mohler's request

for the resignation of associate professor of theology Molly Marshall, which she submitted Aug. 22.

James Merritt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Snellville, Ga., who submitted the resolution, affirmed Mohler's "unwavering courage and uncontaminated integrity."

In other business, the Executive Committee:

- Discontinued a feasibility study of a proposed SBC TV news program "because the projected costs exceed projected financial resources." The committee said the project could be revived "when funding resources are deemed to be imminently available."

- Declined action on a motion referred from the SBC annual meeting for provisions in the SBC constitution for removing a trustee or trustees by a simple majority vote of messengers at the annual meeting. It is "a complex issue and is a matter of ongoing study," the Executive Committee stance noted.

- Declined action on a referred motion barring SBC missions agencies from asking missionary applicants "about inerrancy or about any other matter of faith and practice."

- Declined action on other referrals calling for review and updating of the Baptist Faith and Message; for procedures for Baptists not in attendance at the SBC annual meeting to vote on SBC business; for prohibitions against the Committee on Nominations, Committee on Committees and Committee on Order of Business nominating or recommending to the respective committees family members, fellow church members or co-workers of current committee members; a prohibition against Committee on Nominations members being spouses of full-time church or denominational workers; and the naming of Committee on Committees members by the president of each state Baptist convention.

- Approved resolutions of appreciation for Robert B. Wilson, who retires Dec. 31 after 23 years as executive secretary of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan and editor of the state newspaper; Cecil C. Sims, who retires Dec. 31 after 14 years as executive director-treasurer of the Northwest Baptist Convention; Theo E. Sommerkamp, who retired April 30 after 18 years as editor of the *Ohio Baptist Messenger*; and James W. Nelson, who retires Dec. 31 after nine years as executive director of the Montana Southern Baptist Fellowship.

State executives review draft of HMB report

Executive directors from more than 30 state Baptist conventions met in Atlanta recently to review the confidential draft report concerning the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's relationship with state conventions.

The state executives met with members of the study committee which was created by a vote of the HMB executive committee last June.

HMB board chairman Bob Curtis, pastor of Ballwin (Mo.) Baptist Church, said the meeting was beneficial, noting it cleared up misperceptions. "I think the meeting alleviated a lot of preconceived concern about (the committee's) intent," Curtis said. "Our purpose has never been to investigate the state conventions but to strengthen and enhance our relationships."

Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director Don Moore said, "I was glad to learn from the committee that they were not, in fact, going to investigate the state conventions as it relates to their involvement with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Their recognition that the state conventions are autonomous and not subject to investigation or regulation by the Home Mission Board was significant."

Moore added that "the executive directors could not be more in agreement that there must come a new day of commitment to missions through the Cooperative Program by our local churches."

Study committee member Greg Martin, an HMB director from Mississippi who made the motion creating the committee, agreed the meeting was positive.

"This was a very open and honest dialogue," Martin said. "There should be more meetings like this between groups in the Southern Baptist Convention."

The committee report distributed at the meeting was labeled "working draft." Curtis said the committee will finalize its recommendations and present them to the HMB's administrative committee, with full board action anticipated in December.

Curtis explained the report is confidential at this point because it is still a draft but said it will include recommendations that will "focus on the mutual trust and understanding necessary for us to work together."

SBC president urges Baptist leaders to help restore trust

NASHVILLE, TN (ABP/BF) — Southern Baptist leaders must resist the temptation to control, said Jim Henry, and instead restore trust to a denomination wracked by 15 years of turmoil.

Speaking Sept. 19 in his first address to the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee since his election as SBC president in June, Henry outlined his agenda for reconciliation and revitalization of the 15-million-member denomination.

Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla., said he has received letters from almost 1,000 Southern Baptists since his election, many asking if the SBC has "a hope and a future."

Southern Baptists do have a hope and a future, Henry said, if they do three things: remember their heritage and polity, recommit to cooperation and civility, and refocus on their primary mission.

"We've been through the crucible many times," he said. "Individuals and groups have splintered off and left us and become tributaries or disappeared from the landscape. But the mainstream of Southern Baptists has continued steadfastly forward. History is a great teacher. Our mistakes should not be repeated. Our successes we should learn from."

Southern Baptists should learn from their history that the denomination exists to serve local churches, Henry said. "Centralization is not to our benefit."

"Our best posture on this committee and in our institutions is the servant mode," he said. "Control must be anathema to us."

While theological "parameters" are healthy and serve to ensure "diversity without divergence," he said, Southern Baptist leaders must resist the temptation to control Southern Baptist life.

"We are perceived by some as recreating a system that we sought to loose ourselves from some years ago, and it's not selling well on Main Street," he said. "The answer is not complicated. It's one word: trust."

The "deep well" of mutual trust among Southern Baptists is still intact, Henry affirmed. There is still much love and loyalty in the denomination, he said, noting "only a few hundred churches of 39,000 have opted out" in recent years.

"But hundreds stand on the brink," he warned. While sound theologically, they desire "more openness, more of an opportunity to participate and know that they're heard," he said.

To demonstrate that trust, Henry said he would use only Southern Baptists as parliamentarians at next year's Southern Baptist Convention meeting. Barry

McCarty, a professional parliamentarian and Church of Christ minister, has served as convention parliamentarian each year since 1986.

Henry said he has thanked McCarty "for the excellent work that he did at a critical time in our denomination. God used him. But now we need to move on. This is one way that we're saying...we're moving on in trust."

In addition to cooperation, Henry called on Southern Baptists to recommit to the responsibility of leadership among America's evangelicals, the Cooperative Program and civility.

Henry criticized the "hypocrisy" of SBC leaders whose support for the Cooperative Program is minimal.

"For too long, some of us in leadership or who aspire to leadership have given lip service," said Henry. "Our people in the trenches then question if what we're about is that important."

"We've poured time, energy and resources in defending biblical integrity, and we should, but the question is: Why don't we support the vehicle that is our prime delivery system for that same good truth to be disseminated in this nation and around the world? It smacks of hypocrisy and leaves the faithful in the pews uncertain."

Henry also urged caution for "any restructuring, renaming or re-engineering" of the Cooperative Program. Several state conventions have already altered the traditional channels of funding, and others are studying changes. Meanwhile, the Executive Committee is studying a realignment of the SBC's agencies.

Change is appropriate only "if it will better facilitate accomplishing God's purpose," he said, not if it decreases the SBC's effectiveness or confuses the people.

Henry called for a recommitment to dialogue and civility, "talking with and not shouting at each other."

"We have brothers and sisters in Christ who have been unfairly judged and labeled because at some point they did not dot every 'i' nor cross every 't.' This intolerance has burned bridges rather than building them. It has caused anger, hostility and anxiety. This is not in the spirit of Jesus Christ. We must recapture civility again."

When Southern Baptists "not only talk but listen to the Holy Spirit through others, when we seek His glory, His will...when our methods and our manners are shaped by the heart of God, God has pronounced, 'You'll find me. You'll find me,'" Henry declared.

Church news

South Caraway Chapel, sponsored by First Church of Jonesboro, held its first services Oct. 2 in the Fox Meadow Elementary School. Troy Prince, former pastor of Magnolia Road Church of Jonesboro, is serving as pastor of the new congregation. Emil Williams is sponsoring church pastor.

Trinity Church in Searcy celebrated Martha Faught Day Sept. 18 in recognition of her 25 years of service as church organist. She was presented a plaque and corsage during the morning worship service.

Levy Church in North Little Rock observed its 88th homecoming anniversary Sept. 18 by dedicating new stained glass windows which had been donated by members. Ben Elrod, president of Ouachita Baptist University, was the guest speaker and the Mullins Singers were featured musicians.

Broadmoor Church of Brinkley celebrated its 16th anniversary Sept. 18 with a morning worship service, dinner on the grounds and a musical program featuring *Mission on the Move* from Second Church in West Memphis. Former pastor Roger "Sing" Oldham was the speaker. Thomas Morris is pastor.

Charleston First Church observed Ed Crawford Day Sept. 25, recognizing his 37 years of service as Sunday School director. Pastor Mike Love presented him with a plaque in the morning worship service. An evening reception honored both Crawford and his wife, Marie.

Tuckerman First Church will celebrate 100 years of ministry Oct. 23 by dedicating a recently renovated sanctuary. John Parrott will speak during the morning dedication service that will be followed by dinner on the grounds. Other anniversary activities will feature former pastors and a gospel concert, featuring The Songsmen Quartet. Danny Taylor is pastor.

Ozone Church recently honored pastor Raymond Palmer and his wife, Jean, with an anniversary dinner, recognizing five years of ministry. He was presented with a plaque and other gifts.

Barcelona Road Church of Hot Springs Village placed first out of 20 competing churches during the second annual Senior Baptist Men's golf tournament Sept. 22 at DeGray. Highway Church of North Little Rock placed second in tournament play and Balboa Church of Hot Springs Village placed third. Harry M. O'Connor of



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By MILLIE GILL

Immanuel Church in Little Rock was closest to the pin and J.N. Williams of Balboa Church had the longest drive.

Beech Street Church of Gurdon was the first-place winner in the fifth annual Baptist Men's golf tournament played Sept. 8 at Rebsamen Golf Course. Mount Carmel Church of Cabot placed second with third place going to First Church of Fordyce. Frank Young of Fordyce won closest to the hole. The longest drive was won by Max Brown of Gurdon.

Calvary Church of Little Rock will host a singles concert Oct. 22 featuring gospel recording artist Luke Garrett. The concert will be held at 7 p.m. in the church's Family Life Center, with a singles mixer beginning at 6:15 p.m. More information is available by calling 663-8303.

Revivals

Barton Church held revival services Aug. 13-17 that resulted in eight professions of faith, one rededication and one commitment to full-time Christian service, according to pastor O.S. Cooper. Doug Grubbs was the evangelist and Michael Davis of Waldron directed music.

Decatur First Church held a revival Aug. 28-31 that resulted in 45 professions of faith, nine rededications and one addition by statement, according to pastor Terry Eaton. William Blackburn of Fort Smith was the evangelist.

Victory Church in Conway held a revival Sept. 9-11 that was led by Doug Compton, Brad Green and Tiffany Thompson, an evangelism team from Ouachita Baptist University. The youth-led event resulted in 11 professions of faith, three transfers of membership and seven other commitments, according to pastor Paul Parker.

Stephens First Church held a revival Sept. 25-29 with Rob Randall of McKinney, Texas, as evangelist. Charles "Chuck" Downey is pastor.

McGehee First Church recently held a crusade with William Blackburn of Fort Smith as evangelist and Brandon Willey as music director. Pastor Kerry Powell reported the revival effort resulted in 63 professions of faith.

Freeman Heights Church in Berryville will hold revival services Oct. 23-26 with Frank Harber, a doctoral student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, as evangelist. Cathy Moss, the church's part-time director of music, will coordinate the music program. Scott Cox is pastor.

Ordinations

Fort Smith First Church ordained T. Ray Grandstaff to the gospel ministry Aug. 28. Grandstaff, a member of the church, serves as state director for Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Bradley Church ordained Danny Cannon, David Miller and Ricky Ward to the deacon ministry Sept. 18.

Staff changes

C. Glenn Golden is pastor of First Church in Western Grove, coming there from Yardelle Chapel in Western Grove. He previously has served churches in Texas, Louisiana, Missouri and Oklahoma. Golden is a graduate of Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Okla.; Central State University of Edmond, Okla.; Missouri Southern State College in Joplin, Mo.; Southwestern Missouri State University of Springfield, Mo.; and Liberty University of Lynchburg, Va.

Dickie Echols began serving Sept. 4 as pastor of River Road Church at Redfield, coming there from Trinity Church of Mablevale where he was ordained to the ministry June 9 and served as associate pastor. Echols is married to the former Cindy Maltien of Little Rock. They have two children, James Edward and Melissa Marie.

Doug Grubbs, pastor of First Church in Clarendon for more than six years, resigned Sept. 30 to become pastor of Oates Avenue Church in Columbus, Ga. A native of Arkansas, Grubbs has served since 1978 as either a pastor or staff member of Arkansas churches. Grubbs, currently working on his doctor of ministry degree through Luther Rice Seminary, is a graduate of the University of Central Arkansas and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Grubbs and his wife, Karen, have four daughters, Megan, Morgan, Miranda and Mackenzie.

Michael J. Bedford, pastor of music and worship at University Church in Fayetteville for the past eight years, has resigned to enter a church growth

consulting ministry, specializing in assisting churches in reaching people through music, worship and special outreach events.

Brian Cody has joined the staff of Elmdale Church in Springdale as minister of students, coming there from First Church of Claremore, Okla. He previously served First Church in Bartlesville, Okla., and as assistant director of admissions for Southwest Baptist University where he received his degree in theological studies. Cody also attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Jill, have one son, Tyler.

Russell Walje is associate pastor of youth and education at Cullendale First Church in Camden. He is a graduate of Southwest Baptist University and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Kirsten, joined Cullendale First Church Sept. 11.

Kenneth Holland is bivocational youth director for Palestine Church at Quitman. He is a junior at the University of Central Arkansas.

Diane Collie is serving as bivocational music director for Brookwood First Church in Little Rock, going there from Reynolds Memorial Church in Little Rock. She is a faculty member of Roper School in Little Rock. Collie and her husband, Robbie, have two children, Samantha and Hunter.

O.H. Brooks has retired as pastor of St. Francis Church, following 21 years of service. He has moved to Malden, Mo.

Carl Petty has resigned as pastor of North Main Church in Jonesboro to serve a church in Florida.

Obituaries

Glen E. Chambers of North Little Rock died Sept. 13 at age 67 following a lengthy illness. His funeral services were held Sept. 15 at Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock where he had been a member for more than 57 years, serving as a deacon, a member of the music committee and as a supply music director. He also was a member of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America. Chambers attended Ouachita Baptist College (now university) where he was a member of the Ouachita Quartet. Survivors are his wife, Sue Chitwood Chambers; three daughters, Julia Harvey of North Little Rock, Gig Parker of Little Rock and Carol Usery of Sherwood; a brother; and eight grandchildren.

Sherman resigns Sunday School post after decade of service

Larry Sherman, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department since 1985, has resigned effective Oct. 27, citing a desire to re-enter local church ministry.

Sherman has served as associate for youth ministry and associate director of Arkansas Baptist Assembly in Siloam Springs. His responsibilities have included direction of state youth Sunday School work and statewide ASSIST team coordination. He also began serving as director for the assembly in January of this year following the resignation of former department director Freddie Pike.

Noting that he sensed "leadership of the Lord for a change in direction," Sherman voiced appreciation for the opportunity to minister among Arkansas Baptists. "I have been able to meet people in all walks of life and in all sizes of churches, sharing ministry ideas," he affirmed. "I have felt a sense of accomplishment in working with local churches."

Sherman added that his 10-year tenure has been rewarding and given him a new missions vision. "I have had the opportunity to travel in Brazil and Guatemala (with Arkansas Baptist missions partnerships). It has been a blessing I can't put into words; to learn from people all over the world. Through all of this, I have captured a new missions vision."

Sherman said the timing of his decision will provide his successor the opportunity to make a positive ministry impact related to the state assembly. "To make Siloam the best it can be, someone else needs to take

charge, especially of the construction of the new children's center," he explained.

Director Milton Redeker said the department will miss Sherman. "We're missing 10 years of experience at Siloam, an availability to youth ministers and workers across this state, Larry's outgoing, jovial personality and we're going to miss a dear and precious family in the larger family of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention."

Sherman earned the bachelor of arts degree from Ouachita Baptist University and the master of religious education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He previously served as education and outreach minister and associate pastor for Dallas Avenue Church in Mena; Park Place Church in Hot Springs; Southside Church in Pine Bluff; and Greenwood First Church. He has led Sunday School enlargement campaigns and state Sunday School conferences in numerous states throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

Sherman and his wife, Gwen, have two children: Robby, a student at Southwestern Seminary, and Teri, a student at Ouachita.

Applications for Sherman's position are now being accepted. Send all resumes to Milton Redeker at the ABS Sunday School department, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. Redeker said applicants "must have a desire to serve the Lord above anything else, a desire to network with youth ministers across the state and a sincere devotion to Arkansas Baptist Assembly." He said applicants also should have a university and seminary degree.



Larry Sherman

Wesson celebrates 100 years of ministry

Wesson Church at Junction City observed 100 years of ministry Sept. 18 with special services. Susie Boyce, age 87, was recognized as the oldest member of the church and Helen Pickering, age 97, was recognized as the oldest person present.

Union County Judge Charles Skinner presented the church with a resolution from the state of Arkansas signed by Sen. Bill Moore and Rep. Bobby Newsman, and a proclamation from Union County which designated Sept. 18 as Wesson Church Day.

Other special features included a historical display of photographs and an anniversary cake which was served to the 110 people present for the dinner on the grounds.

"The March of the Church" was the message delivered by pastor Dale Shirey who has served the congregation for 16 years. Shirey shared tributes to the town of Wesson, the church and its pastors. Discussing the seasons through which the church had already marched, he challenged the congregation to march on toward another century of service.

Bowlen named East Arkansas BSU director

Mike Bowlen, youth pastor for Good Hope Church in Forrest City, has been appointed to serve as part-time Baptist Student Union director for East Arkansas Community College.

"These students have big dreams of what they can become through education - I want to impact them with a vision of what they can do through Christ," Bowlen said. "We've been going for about three weeks and have 15 to 20 students involved. I think there is potential for at least twice that many."



Bowlen

Bowlen and his wife, Janie, moved from West Memphis, where he was active in Second Church.

Bowlen attends Mid-America Seminary and is employed by General Electric. He served for eight years in the U.S. Air Force.

George Sims, an associate in the state student ministries department, noted that the BSU at East Arkansas Community College "is a strong outreach to an all-commuter campus."

Bible Drill, Speakers' Tournament materials available free to churches

Local congregations should request Bible Drill and Youth Speakers' Tournament materials as soon as possible, said Bob Holley, "so they can begin preparing their children and youth for participation in church, association and district tournaments."

Holley, director of the Discipleship and Family Ministry department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, said the drills and tournaments are important to young people because they offer "skill development."

"The Speakers' Tournament is designed to stimulate growth toward Christian maturity," he explained. "It challenges youth to think seriously about their Christian commitment. Participation in the tournament also equips youth to express that commitment verbally."

"Bible Drills offer skill development, familiarity with certain key passages of the Bible and memorization of select passages each year," he added.

Holley said that in the past month,

"approximately 125 churches have requested Bible Drill/Speakers' Tournament materials" from his department, emphasizing that the events "are longstanding traditions among many Arkansas churches."

Holley said more than 650 children and youth were awarded Bible Drill/Speakers' Tournament certificates for their participation in Bible Drill and Speakers' Tournament events in 1994.

District tournaments will be conducted in each of the eight districts of the state during the week of March 27, 1995. The State Youth Bible Drill and Speakers' Tournament will be conducted at the State Youth Convention at the Little Rock Convention Center April 14, 1995.

Materials may be ordered without cost from the ABCS Discipleship and Family Ministry department. For additional information or materials, contact the department at P. O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 376-4791, ext. 5160.



PRAYER RETREAT

Avery Willis

**First Baptist Church, Little Rock
62 Pleasant Valley Drive**

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Sponsored by the Brotherhood Department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Arkansas layman helps equip Polish ministry

By Marty Roll

SBC Foreign Missions Board

RADOSC, POLAND (BP)—Southern Baptists from Arkansas and North Carolina were among those recognized during Sept. 17-18 ceremonies dedicating a new Baptist seminary and conference center in formerly communist Poland.

Polish Baptists have been working since 1989 to complete the \$1 million facility, a complex of five major buildings in the fast-growing area of Radosc near Warsaw. The seminary building's interior is only partially complete, but classes began meeting there for the first time Sept. 19.

North Carolina Baptists have contributed heavily to the construction project as a result of their 1990-92 partnership with Polish Baptists. Southern Baptists from the state composed the majority of the 36 foreign visitors at the dedication, attended by about 400 people, including Baptist leaders from Germany, Belarus, Sweden and other countries.

J.M. "Jimmy" Shults, a member of Immanuel Church, Pine Bluff, also has given \$35,000 for Polish Baptist work during the past six years. Shults, once a hog producer and now a real estate investor, had wanted to do something for Poland since World War II. During the war, two Polish nurses cared for Shults after he suffered severe frostbite while being marched by German soldiers to a prison camp.

Shults' latest gift, \$15,000 given in memory of his late wife, Victoria, will buy



Arkansas Baptist layman J.M. "Jimmy" Shults (center) is honored by Polish Baptist leaders Ryszard Gutkouski (left) and Konstanty Wiazowski.

a printing press for the Polish Baptist Union. The press will print newspapers, publicity materials, Bible studies and church-related items. His first gift to Baptists in Poland came while Eastern Europe was still closed to the West. A plaque in the union's new printing facility at the seminary complex acknowledges Shults' generosity.

Moldovan Baptists provided tradesmen for the seminary and conference center. With the money they earned they built a new church in Moldova.

"God prepared people for us who...

were appointed to do the Lord's task," said Konstanty Wiazowski, president of the Baptist Union of Poland, as he thanked all who helped build the seminary.

Seventeen students are training for pastoral ministry and full-time Christian service at the seminary. For now, 12 single students are sharing a three-bedroom apartment in a building that one day will be occupied by teachers and staff. Student housing eventually will open in the seminary building.

The students are "eager for the new term and eager for being equipped," said John Floyd, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board director for work in Europe. Floyd joined those who gave greetings and prayed for the seminary.

"We are building for the future," said Arsenius Krasnopolski, construction manager. "The architects and I tried to imagine every future eventuality that Polish Baptists may need and we have tried to make provision for this."



RA Leadership Workshop

Saturday, Oct. 29 • 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Second Baptist Church, Little Rock

Conference fee: \$5

Conference leaders include: Tim Seanor, Tim Bearden and James Warren from the SBC Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, Tenn. The new EZRA co-ed program for grades 1-6 will be introduced. Challenger and World Changer conferences offered - Youth ministers welcome.

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NOTICE

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— Don Moore,
ABSC executive director

Please mail contributions to the Christian Civic Foundation, P.O. Box 193256, Little Rock, AR 72219-3256

BSSB trustees set \$250 million budget

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Baptist Sunday School Board trustees approved a 1994-95 budget exceeding \$250 million during their semiannual trustee meeting Sept. 26-27. Terming the budget aggressive but achievable, president James T. Draper Jr. cited his optimism for the agency's future despite financial challenges.

A record 1994-95 budget of \$250,480,000 in total revenue was approved, including \$3,374,000 in funds above operating expenses to reinvest in the board's operations.

Ted Warren, business services group vice president, said while financial data for fiscal 1993-94, which ended Sept. 30, will not be available for several weeks, projections are for a \$3.7 million loss. He said total revenue of \$223,882,000 is anticipated, compared to total expenses of \$227,606,000. The loss has been expected, he said, because of expenditures designed to improve sales over the long term. He said a financial plan is in place for the next three years, with a goal to pay back loans and to operate out of cash flow by the end of 1997.

"Profit is not our objective," Warren said. "Ministry is number one. But we must have funds to pay for ministry."

Draper said despite financial challenges and "constant change" that have characterized his first three years as the agency's president, he is optimistic about the future.

Among specific reasons he cited are a solid customer base, dedicated employees, progress toward generating adequate cash flow from operations, cost containment and budgeting at a more realistic level

and positive feedback from customers.

Draper said the board is nearing completion of major organizational and structural changes that have resulted in reductions and changes in personnel. As of Sept. 15, the agency had 1,646 employees, a reduction of 121 or 6.8 percent from Aug. 15, 1991. That number will further decrease as recently announced reductions become effective.

"We have been in a 13-year trend of flat to declining sales of church literature," he said. "That is a major concern. We have invested heavily in the last year in conducting research and making changes to meet the desires of users and non-users of our curriculum."

Trustees approved a recommendation to close Baptist Book Stores in Vancouver, Wash.; Phoenix, Ariz.; Columbus, Ohio; and Forest Park, Ga., due to poor financial histories. Prior to the board meeting, it was announced that 116 positions in the 65-store chain are being eliminated. The cuts include 80 vacant positions and 36 current employees in 18 stores.

Trustees also were told that Bill Taylor, executive pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., is the choice of the BSSB administration to become director of the Bible teaching-reaching division.

Taylor, 55, who has held his present position since January, was minister of education and administration at churches in Texas, Florida, Georgia and Louisiana.

Taylor will succeed Harry Piland who retired in June to become associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas.

Pastor search — First Baptist Church of Manila, Ark., has elected a pastor search committee and is now accepting resumes. Please send resumes to: Mr. Paul Wayne Hicks, 2429 N. Country Road 243, Manila, AR 72442.

Associate minister — Full-time, music/youth/children. Job description: Search Committee, Third Baptist Church, 817 Young, Malvern, AR 72104.

Youth/Education director — Full-time. Please your resumes to Marshall Road Baptist Church, P.O. Box 726, Jacksonville, AR 72078.

Associate pastor — First Baptist Church in Nashville, Ark., is seeking resumes for a full-time associate pastor in charge of ministry to children, youth and college-age people. Please send resumes to: First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 339, Nashville, AR 71852.

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8:10 - 10:05 p.m.	Formation for Ministry	Burton Perry

Saturday:

7:45 - 9:40 a.m.	Interpreting Galatians/Philippians	Jack Ramsey
10:10 - 12:00 noon	New Testament Survey	Robert Staggs
12:50 - 2:45 p.m.	Christian Interpersonal Relations	David Strawn

For more information, call Carter Tucker or Judy Spencer, Missions Department, ABSC, at 376-4791 ext. 5249.

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NATION

Mississippi College board votes to alter trustee selection

CLINTON, MS (BP)—Mississippi College's board of trustees amended the college charter Sept. 22 to alter the selection of trustees for the 168-year-old Baptist-related institution, contending the college must distance itself from denominational politics.

Trustee spokesmen likened the action to moves by other Baptist universities like Baylor in Texas and Furman in South Carolina and most recently Samford in Alabama making trustee selection a board responsibility. Prior to the charter change, the 15 members of the Mississippi College's board of trustees were selected by the Mississippi Baptist Convention at its annual meeting each fall.

Under the charter change, effective immediately, the board will have 24 members, all of whom must be Baptists, with six of them being named by the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Four pastors on the board of trustees issued a statement opposing the action. "We consider both the process and the action totally unacceptable and in no way do we concur with or condone this action," they noted.

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board executive committee held a special called meeting Sept. 23 after the trustees' announcement. The committee released a statement that, "Everyone was shocked and saddened," noting that no Mississippi Baptist Convention officials had any prior knowledge of such possible action. "The executive committee said it will continue 'closely monitoring events and prayerfully considering our position.'"

Board chairman Harry Vickery of Greenville, Miss., acknowledged that denominational politics weighed as the primary factor in the trustee takeover of the trustee selection process. "The trustees felt that it was our responsibility to provide the necessary insulation for Mississippi College from the potential actions of various factions that could compromise our ability to serve all Baptists," he explained.

College president Howell Todd was not appraised of any trustee selection discussions prior to his hiring March 15, Vickery noted in his statement.

"He was informed of the board's interest only in recent days, when we asked him not to take a position," Vickery stated. "We did not want anyone on any side to be critical of him, since this decision was not his and he had no part in it. He indicated he would abide by and support whatever action the board approved."



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CBF is here to stay, Parks tells Arkansans

Insisting that the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is "here to stay," Keith Parks took that message to several Arkansas Baptist churches during the past week.

The CBF, organized by Baptists dissatisfied with the current direction and philosophy of Southern Baptist Convention leadership, has established its own global missions program and supports other moderate Baptist causes. SBC messengers responded in June by instructing convention agencies to cease accepting any funds channeled through CBF.

Parks, who served 13 years as president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, retired in 1992, citing philosophical differences with FMB trustees. He later accepted the position of CBF global missions coordinator where he has helped build a missions program which currently includes 52 missionaries.

Parks, a former Arkansan, spoke recently at Lakeshore Drive Church in Little Rock; First Church, Batesville; First Church, El Dorado; and Second Church, Russellville.

Speaking to a luncheon crowd at Lakeshore Drive that included more than a dozen former or retired missionaries, Parks noted that the CBF missions program is "focusing on peoples rather than nations." He said their strategy involves "going where there are not missionaries, taking the gospel to that fourth of the world that has not had a chance to hear in our lifetime."

Emphasizing that his decision to leave the FMB presidency "was a 10-year struggle," he said he determined that "I would not stay as a figurehead but would step aside and let people know why I'd stepped aside."

1992 was "the climax of that struggle," he added. "Decisions were being made by people who were promoting a political/theological agenda, making decisions to support a cause rather than for the good of missions."

Insisting "there's not a liberal thought in my head," Parks said he refused to "vote the party line" in order to remain as FMB president. His decision to retire "was

neither simple nor easy nor pleasant," he recalled. "We went through grief and anger and sorrow."

Describing the CBF as "a movement within Southern Baptist life" rather than a separate denomination, Parks said SBC leaders "are determined to identify us as a denomination. They want to do that because they feel that would hinder our growth. We don't accept that tag."

"The sharp distinction between denominations and what we're about is we do not control one thing about any of those agencies we support. We don't control a thing except our missions program."

Voicing hope that the SBC and CBF "can co-exist," Parks said he believes SBC leaders "are going to try to destroy us but I don't think they can. Hopefully in the future there will be sort of at least a truce, if not a peace, and we can co-exist as Baptists and churches will choose, individuals will choose how they express their Baptist convictions beyond their own church."

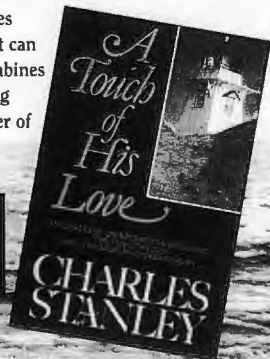


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Ouachita Baptist University

Exchange agreement signed—Officials at Ouachita Baptist University and the University of Derby in Derby, England, have signed an agreement to provide for an exchange program between the two universities.

Neil Campbell, director of the American Studies Program at Derby, recently visited the Ouachita campus to sign the agreement with Ben M. Elrod, president of OBU. The program is expected to begin in the spring of 1995.

McCrary named to post—Bill McCrary has been named as the director of institution research and assessment at Ouachita Baptist University. McCrary has recently served the university as an adjunct faculty member in the Hickingbotham School of Business. He is a graduate of Sam Houston University in Texas.

Student selected for IBM honor—Shanna Burris, a junior chemistry major at Ouachita, has been named as the recipient of an IBM Scholar Award for 1994. She is one of 50 students nationwide selected for the honor that is administered by the Foundation for Independent Higher Education in Chicago.

Faculty appointments—Four faculty members at Ouachita Baptist University have received special recognition during the opening days of the 1994 fall semester.

George M. Keck has been appointed by the university's board of trustees as the Addie Mae Maddox Professor of Music. Joe Jeffers has been appointed as the W.D. and Alice Burch Professor of Chemistry

and Pre-Medical Studies.

Raouf Halaby, professor of English, has been appointed as the interim chair of the department of art. Randall D. Wight, associate professor of psychology, has been appointed as interim chair of the department of psychology.

Williams Baptist College

Jackson wins national honor—Dorothy Jackson, former vice president for student affairs at Williams Baptist College, was recently honored as Educator of the Year by the Baptist Association of Student Affairs. The national award was presented at a recent chapel service to Jackson who retired in June after 25 years at Williams.

Sloan Chair of Business—Larry T. Sloan of Walnut Ridge has been named Christian Businessman of the Year by Williams. Sloan recently endowed the college's Lawrence C. and Hatz Padgett Sloan Chair of Business in honor of his parents.

Moving to NCAA—Williams Baptist College has been accepted into Division II status of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The NCAA has notified athletic director Carol Halford that the Eagles begin a three-year provisional membership this fall.

Williams is currently a member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). The college will maintain its NAIA affiliation during the three-year transition into the NCAA.

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David and Suzanne Adams, Baptist representatives to Germany, are on the field (address: Krummer Weg 22, 41749 Viersen, Germany). He considers Rogers his hometown. She is the former Suzanne Heifner of Missouri. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1991.

William and Frankie Falkner, Baptist representatives to Canada, have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service (address: 5 Glendale Way, Cochrane, Alberta, TOL 0W3, Canada). They are natives of Texas; she is the former Frankie Cunningham. He was an associate in the discipleship and family ministry department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention for 15 years. They were appointed in 1994.

Mark and Candi Holmes, missionaries to Surinam, are in the States (address: 1524 N. 55 Terrace, Fort Smith, AR 72904). They are natives of Arkansas. He was born in Little Rock and both consider Fort Smith their hometown. She is the former Candi Bateman. They were appointed in 1990.

William and June Wardlaw, Baptist representatives to Eastern Europe, are in the States (address: 500 W. 53rd St. #96, Texarkana, TX 75503). He was born in Texarkana. She is the former June Mills. They were appointed in 1984.

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Convention Uniform

The sin of conformity

By Roy Buckelew, professor,
Ouachita Baptist University
Basic passage: 1 Samuel 8:4-9, 19;
12:19-25

Focal passage: 1 Samuel 8:4-19;
12:19-25

Central truth: We are torn between conforming to the world around us and the will of God.

Nearly everyone is under pressure to conform to something. There is "political correctness" in our society. There is "peer pressure" which young people feel so fiercely. The infamous political "lobbyists" try to make legislators conform to their issues. Businesses must conform to regulations. Schools must conform to standards. Not even churches or religious denominations escape. There are always some, always have been some, who want everyone to conform to their beliefs.

Christians feel the pressure to conform to the world, even the sins of the world... just accept pornography, just accept gambling, just accept the excesses of drinking. Just go along. Go along to get along. Don't make a fuss. Don't be different. I love the Phillips translation of Romans 12:2, "Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold."

This is not a new problem. The people of Israel faced pressure. One possibility for the people of God was to conform to their world. The people of Israel were tempted to be like other nations. They wanted a king like everyone else (vv. 8:4-5). They approached Samuel, the man of God, and he prayed to God for them. God answered that they were not rejecting Samuel but Him, just as they had rejected Him from the time He saved them from slavery in Egypt (vv. 8:6-9). God told Samuel to warn them about what a king would do to them, but they still wanted one (vv. 8:10-19). So often we know where conformity will lead, but we still do it.

The other possibility for the people of God was to conform to the will of God. In verse 12:19, the people of Israel finally repented of wanting a king. They realized they had sinned against God, but repented out of fear. They should have repented of the sin of conformity and returned to God, because the way of the world leads to death but the way of God leads to life. They should have seen the stupidity of the sin of conforming to the world and the wisdom of conforming to the will of God. Read 12:20-25 carefully.

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

Life and Work

Hope for the hopeless

By Rick Hyde, pastor,
Malvern Third Church
Basic passage: Genesis 3-4
Focal passage: Genesis 3:21-24,
4:8-12

Central truth: God can embrace hopelessness with hope.

When we harbor unconfessed sin, God will carry out His sentence. "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever'; therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life" (vv. 3:22-24, NKJV). "A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth" (v. 4:12).

Just as God expelled Adam and Eve from Eden for their sin, He expelled their son Cain from the second homeland for his sin. Adam and Eve tried to deny their guilt. Cain tried to deny his guilt. However, God knows and shows our guilt. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7). Hopelessness results when one harbors unconfessed sin.

When we confess our sin, God will cover our sin. "Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin and clothed them" (v. 3:21). "And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him" (Gen. 4:15).

Adam's and Eve's sin had far-reaching consequences. Even though they lost their Edenic home, they did not have to lose hope. God still loved them and cared for them. His act of clothing them not only took care of their physical needs, but the slaughter of the innocent animal for the guilty couple covered their spiritual needs as well.

Cain's sin had far-reaching consequences. Even though he lost his homeland, he did not have to lose hope. God embraced their hopeless situations with hope.

Whatever hopeless situation you may face in life, God can help you cope. He may not spare you from having to deal with the consequences, but He can enable you to turn even hopelessness into hope.

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Bible Book

God's grace; the mystery

By W. David Moore, president,
Arkansas Baptist Foundation
Basic passage: Ephesians 3:1-21
Focal passage: Ephesians 3:1-10,
14-19

Central truth: The mystery now revealed is that God has brought Jews and Gentiles together in salvation through Jesus Christ.

As youngsters, the neighborhood boys started a baseball club. We actually used a plastic ball and bat, but we organized ourselves like the majors.

One rule was firm — no girls! Only boys were allowed to play in our league. Imagine how startled I would have been to know that girls would one day play in Little League! Little did I realize that I would have only girls for my children and that one of them would be a great sports star.

My mindset was one of simple exclusion — baseball is only for boys! The same kind of mindset existed for the Jewish people of Paul's day. For centuries, they had been led to believe that God's salvation was only for God's people, the Jews. Gentiles had no place in the salvation of God.

The apostle Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. His message was clear — salvation is not exclusively for Jews. God offers salvation to Gentiles as well. This "mystery" is a truth that was formerly hidden, but is now revealed. God had made plain the simple truth of this revelation.

Paul thus became a servant of this mystery. His job was to communicate this truth. His purpose was to make known the manifold wisdom of God in redeeming all mankind — Jew and Gentile alike.

Thus, his hope and prayer for the readers is that they will understand just how far the love of God can reach. This love has height and depth and length and breadth that can reach every Gentile as well as every Jew.

Only when one realizes the extent of God's love does he become aware of the grace of God. This truth can set the believer free. If we restrict God's grace to those who are Americans, or Caucasians, or the middle class, or those with other restrictions, then we have limited God's love.

God's love in salvation knows no limits. Are you restricting God in not sharing His love with someone who is different from you? If so, you are making the same mistake the Jews were making long ago! Come alive to the mystery of God's love!

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Convention Uniform

Old drama, timeless truth

By Roy Buckelew, professor,
Ouachita Baptist University
Basic passage: I Samuel 9:15-
10:1, 20-24
Focal passage: I Samuel 9:15-
10:1, 20-24

Central truth: From ancient events, we can learn timeless truths about how God works, about God's will.

One way to think about things is to visualize it as a play or drama in a theater. A drama has several components: the playwright, director, actors and audience. Think about Saul being anointed king of Israel as a drama. In it, God is the author and director, Samuel and Saul the actors and the people of Israel the audience.

God, as director, told Samuel to anoint Saul as the king of Israel, but this was not God's ideal will for Israel (vv. 9:14-17). God Himself wanted to be King and be recognized as King, but they rebelled, so God gave in to their wants. Sometimes, when we are determined to do less than the ideal will of God, God is willing to settle for less. For example, Jesus said about divorce that God's ideal was, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." But He added, "because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives" (Matt. 19:4-9). From these examples, we learn that God is not an all-or-nothing God; He is willing to start with us where we are and love and lead us to where He wants us.

Second, think of Samuel and Saul as the actors. Samuel anointed Saul king (vv. 9:25-10:1). God often reveals His will to one person through another person. Saul was physically head and shoulders above the rest, but intellectually and spiritually he was marginal. When we think of our heroes in America today, we have fallen into the same mindset as Israel. But God can use the unexpected, the least likely, to do His will. When Saul was introduced to the people of Israel as their king, he hid and was reluctant to be recognized. Good! A little reluctance born of humility or fear is an appealing trait in any person who would be a leader.

Third, think of the people of Israel as the audience. In this scene, the audience influenced what happened on stage. Against the director's will, they got a king! Sometimes God is willing to work around and in spite of our rebellion. Also, like Israel, we often can't see what we need because of what we want.

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Life and Work

A flood of failure, faith

By Rick Hyde, pastor,
Malvern Third Church
Basic passage: Genesis 6:1-8:14
Focal passage: Genesis 6:5, 7:1, 8:1
Central truth: God's justice is tempered by His mercy.

God never fails to note corruption. "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (v. 6:5). The corruption of a culture as a whole invites the judgment of God. As our society continues to slide down the path of not only allowing but encouraging such sins as abortion and homosexuality, God is neither asleep nor ignoring our cultural corruption. He will call us to accountability. We need more Noahs and John the Baptists calling the people to repent!

God never forgets to show compassion. "Then the Lord said to Noah, 'Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation'" (v. 7:1). Thank God for the righteous remnant. Sometimes that remnant is very small indeed. Yes, Noah alone found grace. Yes, John the Baptist was a lone voice crying in the wilderness. Christians today may be in the minority when it comes to speaking out for righteousness. Yet, in our convictions, let us never fail to show compassion. God did. Let us preach the standard of sacredness and leave the punishment of sin to God. Noah did.

God never forsakes His covenant. "Then God remembered Noah and every living thing and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided" (v. 8:1). God vindicates His people and His plan. His covenant is based upon our acceptance of His assurances ("if you will...I will...").

If you have failed to measure up to God's standard, don't wait until you are overwhelmed with floods of despair and defeat. Remain true to the righteousness of God and you will find grace in His eyes even in the midst of a corrupt people.

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Bible Book

The unity of God's people

By W. David Moore, president,
Arkansas Baptist Foundation
Basic passage: Ephesians 4:1-16
Focal passage: Ephesians 4:1-16
Central truth: The church is a unity as Christians are bound together in the oneness of Christ.

Someone said that there is a believing side of the gospel and a behaving side of the gospel. This passage moves us from the believing side to the behaving side.

In the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul reminded the readers of the doctrines of the Church. He reviewed salvation and its effect on both Jew and Gentile. He prayed for the readers' understanding of the love and grace of God.

Now, in light of that doctrine, Paul has things to say about how they are to act. In verse 4:1, he moved from doctrine to behavior, from positional truth to practical application. In light of these truths (in chapters 1-3), a Christian should walk worthy of the high calling that was described in the first three chapters.

"Walk" is a special word that Paul uses to describe one's lifestyle. Watchman Nee has a classic book on Ephesians, *Sit, Walk, Stand*. The reminder is to sit first and learn doctrine. Then it is time to walk it out in daily living and one day we will have to stand against the forces of Satan.

Now if the Church is to walk correctly, it must first walk together in unity! Every effort should be made to maintain the unity of the church. Paul gives several appeals to this oneness.

Earlier this year, I moved from a church pulpit to a pew. While I may preach many Sundays in churches, I attend my own church as a member, not a pastor. In fact, most church members know me simply as the "pianist's husband," rather than a pastor or president of the Foundation.

It has been an interesting change. Our family searched for a church that was not negative or critical. We wanted to attend a church that was pulling together. As I have told my pastor, we love our staff; but were sold on the church by the marvelous people. They acted, worshipped, loved and talked together!

On the golf course, we like to say that 84.5 percent of the time if you don't get the ball to the hole, it won't go in. Let me adapt that saying to the Church. If the Church is not together in unity, chances are that nothing else will work. Unity has to be settled first!

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EEOC withdraws guidelines on workplace harassment

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Following months of controversy, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission voted Sept. 19 to withdraw guidelines designed to help interpret what constitutes workplace harassment based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin. An EEOC spokesman said the agency has no plans to redraft a new set of guidelines.

Virtually every religious and civil liberties group, including the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and the Baptist Joint Committee, criticized the guidelines as open to misinterpretation. Congress voted earlier to remove religion from the guidelines.

The EEOC withdrew the guidelines entirely because it became apparent that the objective for drafting them had not been accomplished, the EEOC spokesman said.

Baptists from the Philippines jailed in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA (BP)—Two Baptists and at least one other Christian from the Philippines reportedly remain in prison in Saudi Arabia after being arrested for holding a Christian home meeting.

The three, along with five others, were arrested Aug. 26 for conducting a home Bible study. The Muslim kingdom forbids Christian meetings — public or private.

All eight Christians are Philippine contract workers. Four or five reportedly were released and are being watched by Saudi Muslim "religious police." But Joel Cunanan, identified as the group's leader, and at least two others remain in detention. Cunanan reportedly is being held for interrogation in solitary confinement.

Sentencing is expected to take place this month. Christians in the Philippines are praying the Saudi Arabian government will reconsider the charges against the Christians.

Killing abortion doctors immoral, Baptist leaders assert

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The murder of doctors who perform abortions in order to protect unborn children is "not a morally justifiable or permissible Christian response," according to a statement produced by a panel of Southern Baptist ethicists.

The document affirms the sanctity of human life from conception and the moral obligation of Christians to oppose abortion actively, but it emphasizes that lethal force to stop abortion is not consistent with the Bible.

The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission organized a consultation to produce the document after three attacks outside abortion clinics in 18 months resulted in the deaths of two doctors and a bodyguard, as well as injuries to another physician.

Former Baptist college president indicted on 19 counts

JACKSON, MS (ABP) — Former Mississippi College president Lewis Nobles faces felony charges in a 19-count federal indictment issued Sept. 21 in Jackson, Miss. He pleaded innocent at a Sept. 22 arraignment.

The indictment accuses Nobles, 69, president for 25 years of the Baptist school affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention, of diverting \$1.7 million in donations intended for the college and squandering the money on a lavish lifestyle, prostitutes and personal investments.

Nobles is charged with four counts of transporting females across state lines for "immoral purposes," five counts of money laundering, six counts of mail fraud and four counts of income tax evasion. If convicted, he could be sentenced to 165 years in prison and fined \$5.15 million. Nobles was fired by the college's board of trustees in 1993 after they confronted him with evidence of embezzlement.

Church wins legal right to feed the hungry in D.C.

WASHINGTON (ABP) — A federal court ruled Sept. 9 that a Washington, D.C., church has the right to feed the homeless. Western Presbyterian Church filed suit to retain the right to run a feeding program after the District of Columbia zoning board voted in April to ban the ministry when the congregation moves to a new location.

The 139-year-old church is scheduled to move a few blocks from its current location three blocks from the White House. Residents at the new location have complained that the feeding program will attract undesirable people to their upscale neighborhood. The congregation has run its feeding program for 11 years, serving breakfast to about 150 to 200 homeless people every weekday.

The district judge said that "the city must refrain, absent extraordinary circumstances, from in any way regulating what religious functions the church may conduct.... Unquestionably, the church's feeding program in every respect is religious activity and a form of worship."