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February 14, 1985

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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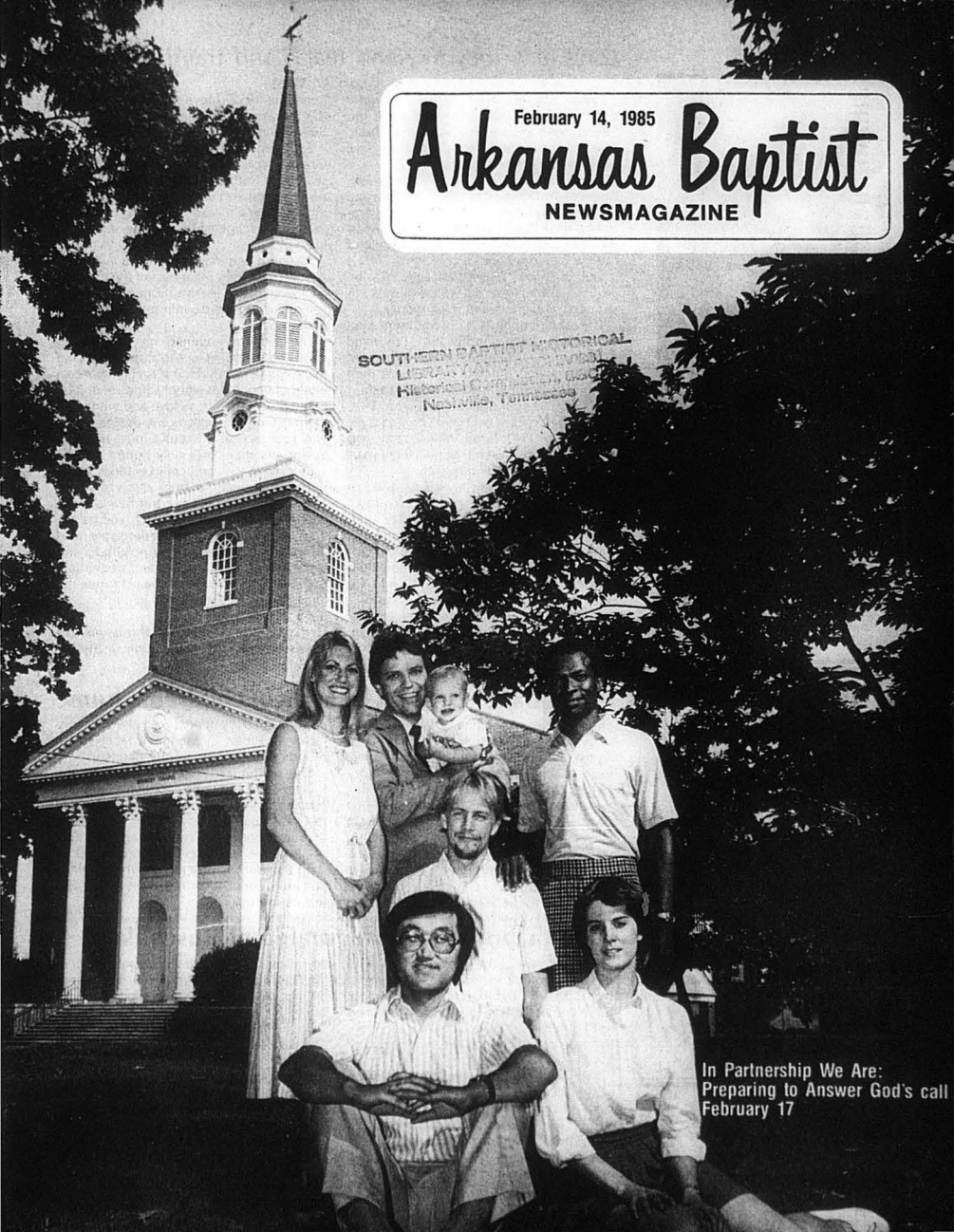
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February 14, 1985

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Nashville, Tennessee



In Partnership We Are:
Preparing to Answer God's call
February 17

On the cover



Photo by Ray Wickham

Whether men or women, married or single, international or national, students in Southern Baptist seminaries, colleges and schools—such as these students at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.—have a common goal: preparing to answer God's call. Many churches across the Southern Baptist Convention will be observing Feb. 17 as Baptist Seminary, College and School Day.

Long may they live and teach and train!

by Henry G. West

I rejoice in the denominational calendar emphases for February: the WMU and our SBC colleges and seminaries. Both of these, from my childhood to my senior years, have affected my life profoundly.

Through the missionary preaching emphasis of my father in the 1920's and 30's and the WMU and their auxiliary, the Royal Ambassadors (R.A.s), I learned the mechanics, the "nuts and bolts" of our SBC home and foreign mission work.

Out of those "depression days mission groups," came some of Southern Baptist's strongest preachers and missionaries.

The other emphasis is our Southern Baptist schools. In the summer 1941, I received a catalog from Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill. I wanted very much to go there and then on to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

Since Mississippi College at Clinton, Miss. was our best Baptist college, I enrolled there in the fall of 1941. Soon WW II came into focus. I volunteered, and the next three years were spent in the military.

At the close of the war, I was called to three half-time churches near Tupelo, Miss., one of which I preached on Sunday afternoons. Since these churches were only 75 miles from Jackson, Tenn., my wife and I enrolled at Union University at Jackson. Both of these Baptist schools were vivid instruments in the shaping of my ministry.

Upon my graduation from Union University in 1948, we enrolled at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Ky., where I received my Master of Divinity

degree in 1952. I love Southern Seminary. It is the "Mother Seminary" of all of the six SBC seminaries.

Southern taught me the word of God in Greek, Hebrew and English. It taught me to search for truth (for truth is always truth, it never varies) and to not be afraid wherever that truth might lead. It taught me a high regard for scholarship and the dignity of learning.

Southern Seminary taught me a love for all human beings, regardless of their race or background, and leached from my imperfect spiritual life, hatred, animosity, selfishness and greed.

The seminary opened my questioning mind and searching eyes to a needy, lost and dying world—a world full of such humans—a world of people for whom Christ died. It increased my concern to love and witness to them of God's saving grace in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, my only Savior and mankind's only hope.

Our seminaries and colleges today come under many attacks from many different sources. But from my heart of hearts, I say, "Long may they live and teach and train!"

All over America, there is a desperate need for trust in our families, our neighbors and especially in our churches and denomination. Let us try with all our hearts to see the "best" in all of these areas in 1985.

Henry G. West is director of missions for Mississippi County Association in Blytheville.

In this issue

7 in the gap

Vast Southern Baptist mission needs will never be met without a massive infusion of volunteers, such as these Arkansas doctors and dentists who are meeting critical overseas needs at their own expense.

8 SBC citizenship

Every time convention messengers elect their leaders for another year, the future of the SBC is on the line, says Cecil Ray, director of the denomination's Planned Growth in Giving emphasis. Responsible participation in denominational processes is an absolute must, if the convention is to ever achieve its goal of sharing the gospel with every person.

Earthquake damages churches, children's home

MENDOZA, Argentina (BP)—An earthquake early Jan. 26 cracked the walls of two Baptist churches and damaged a children's home in this western Argentina province.

Many Mendoza residents were returning home from theaters and coffee houses when the quake hit at 12:07 a.m. Others ran from homes into the streets, and several died of heart attacks. Early reports listed six dead and 110 injured (including 50 hurt when walls of Carmen Hospital collapsed). Thurmon Bryant, director for Southern Baptist work in

eastern South America, said the two missionary couples in Mendoza received no reports of casualties among Baptists.

The earthquake, registering 5.8 on the Richter scale and lasting about five minutes, cracked walls at Mendoza's First Church and the suburban Godoy Cruz Church. A children's home also was damaged, though none of the buildings' walls collapsed. A third Southern Baptist missionary couple in San Juan, about 100 miles to the north, also felt the tremor.

Seventh president inaugurated at Ruschlikon

RUSCHLIKON, Switzerland (BP)—The seventh president in the 35-year history of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Ruschlikon called in his inaugural address Jan. 11 for the seminary's mission and identity to be catholic, apostolic, reformed and evangelical.

James Altus Newell based his address on 1 Corinthians 13 and told the solemn convocation that being catholic should "embrace God's care for all kinds of persons;" the apostolic tradition should contain "the historic witness of the church grounded upon biblical authority," and being reform-

ed means "we are not simply recipients of the Reformation but participants in the continuing reformation which God wants to bring."

But he insisted the institution should be "unashamedly evangelical!" "We exist as a community to be an instrument of God's redemption in the world, to train for ministry, to bear witness and to be witnesses, to lead others to become Christ's disciples and to grow in faith," he said.

Newell was elected president in July 1984. He formerly was pastor of First Church of Opelika, Ala.



Often, well-meaning Christians allow their pastor to be abused in church simply by their silence. It is always wrong to allow injustice to take place when we have it in our power to stop it. This principle should, certainly, apply in church relationships.

Sometime ago, a state worker received a phone call from a pastor friend. The pastor said, "I guess I will need to leave this church soon." The day before, the deacons had received the report of the budget committee, which had recommended a small raise for the pastor.

Two of the deacons had objected strongly to the pastor receiving the raise. "You shouldn't receive this salary increase," they said. "After all, your wife has a good paying job." The pastor felt that the situation was serious, because not another one of the 18 deacons present said a word.

The state worker did what he could to reassure the pastor. He told the pastor that he would pass his name on to churches as he had opportunity. Before the day was over, the pastor called the state worker again, "Don't give my name to anyone. Everything is all right. All my deacons except the two who complained have been by to tell me that everything is fine. One even bought me an expensive gift."

Later, the state worker supplied the pulpit of the pastor while he was away on vacation. He was in the home of one of the deacons who loved his pastor. At length, the deacon brought up the meeting in which his pastor had been attacked by the two disgruntled deacons. The state worker asked, "Why didn't you defend your pastor?" The deacon replied, "Well, you see, I don't want to offend anyone, and I am not going to let anything bad happen to my pastor."

This story raises two important issues. First, it should go without saying that what a pastor's wife earns should have nothing to do with the pastor's salary. Whenever possible, the church should pay the pastor enough that his wife shouldn't be forced to work. It should be her option. If she wants to work away from home, she should have that right. But it is tragic when the economic situation forces her to work.

The second issue is the silence of good men. The theory that we "won't let anything bad happen to our pastor" is inadequate when it is accompanied by silence. There are several things wrong with this concept. First, the silence itself produces anxiety. One of the greatest psychological hurts that an individual can know is the fear of uncertainty in the still of the

night. A vocational Christian worker's position represents a dimension that no other job has. For him, his job represents not only employment and security but, also, his service to God.

Second, the silence of a church's best and most dedicated leaders may encourage a few troublemakers to believe that they have more strength than they have. This means that the troublemakers will continue their jabbing and sniping activities against the pastor. Such activities over a long period of time may convince peripheral church members that the pastor is inadequate.

The most important question is, "How can church members support a good pastor?" First, when unjust criticism is brought against the church or the pastor, the members should speak positively about them. Untruths should never be allowed to go unanswered.

Church members can, also, lighten a pastor's load by seeing that his salary and benefits are adequate. Although the pastor is not in the ministry to obtain great earthly riches, he has family obligations. Not being able to meet these obligations tends to place him under tremendous stress. A pastor should be able to provide a decent standard of living for his family and to plan for retirement. This means that a church should place, at least, an amount equal to 10 percent of the pastor's salary and benefits in the Annuity Program for the pastor. He like others, wants to educate his children, and in today's world this is extremely expensive.

Church members can help their pastor greatly by exemplifying an attitude of cooperation. When a godly and prayerful pastor makes a proposal on the basis of hours of study and prayer, it should be considered carefully. Certainly no one in the congregation wants the work of their church to succeed more than the pastor does.

Members can help the pastor by assisting with many routine activities, such as visiting the sick and the lost in the community. Nothing would thrill a pastor more than for a lay person to call him and say, "Pastor, I have led an individual to the Lord and will be accompanying him to church Sunday. He will be coming forward on the invitation."

Church members can and should pray for the pastor every day. When an individual is praying regularly for another, criticisms will disappear, and both pastor and lay people will be blessed.

Arkansas Baptist

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God's truth deeper than human comprehension, Stagg says

by Mark Kelly

Laying hold of Scripture's truths is a delicate matter, one that can never be completed with finality, said Frank Stagg during Arkansas' State Evangelism Conference in Little Rock Jan. 28-29.

Stagg, emeritus professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, likened plumbing the depths of Scripture to expressing one's love to one's spouse. "As many years as my wife and I have been married, I'll never be able to finally tell her how much I love her," said Stagg. "If I tell her every day for the rest of my life, I'll still never do it with finality."

Similarly, the task of Christian theology, expressing the scriptural truths about God, is never completed, Stagg explained.

Stagg was in Little Rock to preview his 1985 Doctrine Study, "The Doctrine of Christ," and speak to the Evangelism Conference on the topic "Cleansed from Sin by the Savior."

The text of Scripture assigned to him for the evangelism Conference provided a good example of theology's challenge, Stagg noted.

Speaking on 1 John 1:9, Stagg explained that sin calls for forgiveness. A sinful act cannot be undone; it can only be forgiven. Yet sin is a condition as well as an act, he pointed out, and that condition may be undone by an act of cleansing.

Although that much is clear, the passage raises two important questions, Stagg continued. The first, "Who is the savior?" is not answered as one might expect. God, rather

than Jesus, is the one who saves from sin according to the text, Stagg pointed out.

A second question that might be raised is "What saves us from sin?" Stagg said. To that question, the passage has two answers: God, on the one hand, and the blood of Jesus, on the other. The first is a traditional Old Testament emphasis on God's power, the second a profound New Testament focus on the necessity of Jesus sacrifice, Stagg explained.

"How do we get these together?" he asked. "If God is always able to forgive and save, why was the death of Jesus necessary?"

The best answer lies in the twin theological themes of the oneness of God and the deity of Christ, Stagg explained. God is one, though we know him in many ways; Jesus was Immanuel—"God with us"—and not just a second person of the Trinity.

As a result, we can understand that God is a God who suffers, Stagg asserted. He was the crucified God, even before the crucifixion of Jesus. In the death of Jesus, we see the full expression of God's suffering for our salvation. The God who can forgive and save is the one who died for our sins.

Such profound truth can never be fully comprehended, Stagg asserted. For that reason, creedalism is opposed to faith seeking truth.

"Creedalism undercuts all this," Stagg said. "It presumes to capture in a verbal net what can never be captured."

"It is in the nature of faith to inquire, to seek truth," he continued. "Truth cannot be

fully captured in our words. To say it can be is idolatry."

Because of man's incomplete understanding, "wherever you have integrity, you have pluralism," Stagg said. "Only under tyranny do you have any appearance of a monolithic community, and then you have it only because freedoms are suppressed." He cited as examples the official uniformity of Polish and Soviet societies and Pope John Paul II's efforts to enforce theological conformity in the Roman Catholic community.

"To be human is to be free and to carry the responsibility of our freedom," Stagg continued. To claim a theological formula has captured the truth undercuts both freedom and responsibility and sets up an idolatrous creed in place of God's Word, he said.

"I am not an examiner. I will not be examined by anyone. God is my examiner," Stagg declared. "I am a liberator. I will not submit the Bible to any creed."

Stagg has just completed a month as theologian in residence for Webberly Heights Church, Huntsville, Ala. During his term, he led the congregation in doctrinal studies, trained them in Bible study and hosted "fireside chats" on topics of the congregation's choice. He lives in retirement in Bay St. Louis, Miss.

Mark Kelly is a staff writer with the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

Lesson writer begins

Glenn E. Hickey, director of missions for the Pulaski County Association, begins this week writing Sunday school lesson commentaries for "Lessons for living."

Hickey, an Arkansas native, is a former Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil, where he served from 1964 to 1978 as a pastor and seminary teacher. A graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Hickey also has served churches in Batesville and Ashdown.

A member of Ouachita's board of trustees, Hickey is married to the former Dorothy Thomason of Malvern.



Hickey

Letter to the editor

Secret meetings

Something prompted the passage of a law prohibiting secret or "closed door" meetings. This was recently called to our attention in Arkansas in the Eureka Springs incident. It has been aired by media and printed so it needs no repeating here.

Churches have deacons to deal with problems. I believe the office arose to correct a problem situation (Acts 6). Deacons have

a good grade in solving problems when problems are left in their hands. Secret, unauthorized meetings are not advisable.

Recently, a meeting took place in a Little Rock church, and some were not invited, and some were not welcome.

I question the advisability or productivity of such meetings whether they be in City Hall, a local church or an association. — Name withheld by request

Missionary stops going; sends tapes to West Beirut

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)—Southern Baptist missionary David King no longer risks going to preach at University Church in West Beirut. Now he sends his sermons to church by cassette tape.

His change in routine came after American Catholic relief worker Lawrence Martin Jenco was kidnapped within a block of the church in early January. Until then, King had been riding in the backseat of a non-American doctor's car as a safety precaution. Now his wife, Maxine, takes cassette tapes of his sermons across the green line into Muslim-dominated West Beirut each Sunday.

King says no American men are attending the services now. A Baptist layman leads the

worship.

Jenco is the latest of five American men being held hostage. Presbyterian missionary Ben Weir, a friend of many of the Southern Baptist missionaries, has been missing since May. An American news correspondent has been missing since March. American women and children have not been victims of kidnappings.

King says he had prayed the fighting factions in West Beirut would overlook University Church. "We still pray that prayer... but we feel we also should use the common sense the Lord has given us and not presume upon his grace," he explains.



'Herein is love' . . .
(1 John 4:10)

**Pray for Arkansas'
Brazil partnership**

Don Moore

You'll be glad to know...

... **Planned Growth in Giving** is a local church program. It was developed by church members who were asked to study the stewardship performance of our churches. They were shocked to learn that our church members average giving 2 percent of their income back to the Lord. This was true in 1935 and has not changed since. The factor that has changed is the amount churches keep for themselves. This has been a pattern for many years.

Both individual stewardship and church stewardship are doctrines that have been neglected. In a recent seminar I attended, I was shocked when two pastors confessed that they had been in the ministry many years without being tithers. You wouldn't expect many sermons on stewardship from a pastor who didn't tithe himself. Whatever our reaction, interpretation or application, "the tithes is the Lord's" (Lev. 27:30). Just as his name, his word, his day and his spirit remain holy, so does the tithe. No cancellation of this declaration can be found.

In this wonderful, biblical, practical and personal program, we have an opportunity to grow. This we must do. This we must help our people do.

Some 25 Arkansas leaders are being trained to lead seminars over our state. They are lay people, pastors, staff persons and denominational workers. There will be 12 seminars located so none will have to drive more than 75 miles to attend. The pastor and a lay leader who can lead the church need to attend.

The potential of this program in helping our people grow spiritually is tremendous. Most of the churches' needs would be met through an all-out effort in Planned Growth in Giving. A big step in meeting mission needs could be taken. Do you realize that our foreign mission fields asked for 315 preachers to come as career missionaries in 1984? Only 68 were appointed. If the preachers had been available, funds would not have been. From the youngest believer to the oldest and largest church, we need to grow in our giving until we are like Jesus who came to give!

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



Moore



Food and fellowship

Virginia Kirk and Jane Purtle

Saying good-bye

We are often faced with good-byes, and they are never easy to say. Friends or family move to another part of the country, our pastor is called to another church, one of our senior members goes to live with a relative, a friend dies. We need to say good-bye and to accept our grief, not to push it down inside us.

Recently, a dear friend in another city died. For several days I felt a submerged depression, vague anxiety and hurt. Finally, I realized that I was grieving for my friend whose cheerful face and busy hands I would never see again. I would never sit in front of her blazing fire and hear her pray for me and for others she carried around with her in her heart.

I began to cry, realizing that because I had not said good-bye to Alice, I continued to suffer grief and loneliness. I knew I had to let her go from me. She continues to live in my memory, but I accept her going and feel her presence occasionally in a deeper way than when she lived.

When a person moves from our fellowship—whatever the circumstances—the church should celebrate their going. I say "celebrate" even though it is a sad time. Some ceremony that acknowledges our grief and gives us a chance to wish them godspeed is appropriate. One small church has a potluck dinner in honor of members that are moving. Another presents, at a worship service, an autographed hymnal with good-bye messages from the church family. In a large church, a Sunday School class or other group can initiate its own ceremony for departing members.

Food will likely be a part of some of these celebrations. Eating together is one of the special parts of friendship. In memory of my friend, we are including two of her favorite recipes.

Sweet potato puffs

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3 large or 5 small sweet potatoes | pinch of salt |
| ½ stick butter or margarine | marshmallows |
| 2 tablespoons sugar | cinnamon or nutmeg to taste |
| | 1 to 2 cups cornflakes |

Peel, boil until tender, then mash sweet potatoes. Add butter, sugar, salt and spices. Make into balls around a marshmallow. Roll in crushed corn flakes and bake at 375 degrees for 20 minutes.

Berry pudding

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 quart berries | 1½ cups sugar |
| 1 egg | 1 cup flour sifted with 3 tea- |
| 3 tablespoons melted butter | poons baking powder |
| ½ cup milk | |

Place berries in deep kettle. Add 1 cup water, if berries are fresh. Add 1 cup sugar and cook to boiling point. Meanwhile, mix flour, butter, the remaining ½ cup sugar, egg and milk. Stir until smooth. Drop this mixture by large spoonfuls into boiling liquid. Cover and lower fire to simmer immediately. Cook gently 20 minutes. Serve with plain cream to which a little cinnamon has been added.

Virginia Kirk, professor emeritus at Arkansas College, is a member of Batesville First Church. Jane Purtle, formerly of Batesville, now lives and teaches in Tyler, Texas. They have enjoyed cooking together for several years.

NBC mini-series focuses on early church

A 12-hour mini-series dramatizing the birth and growth of the Christian church will be aired on NBC-TV March 31-April 4, 1985.

Following the Book of Acts, "A.D." (Anno Domini, the year of our Lord) brings to life the first 35 years of Christian growth after the death of Jesus. "A.D." re-lives the first trials and triumphs of the Christian movement in the context of the Jewish and Roman culture

of the day.

"A.D." is the sequel to Vincenzo Labella's 10-hour television drama, "Jesus of Nazareth." Picking up the story at the crucifixion of Jesus, "A.D." dramatizes early Christian development through familiar New Testament stories: Pentecost, Peter's escape from prison, the stoning of Stephen and the conversion and ministry of Paul.

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

people

R. Frank Eaton of Fouke died Jan. 20 at age 94. He was a retired Baptist minister and a member of Macedonia Church No. 1, Fouke. Funeral services were held Jan. 23 at Rocky Mound Church. Survivors include one daughter, Melba Walton of Fouke; one son, Vernon Eaton of Texarkana; six grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

Rowena "Sunshine" Williamson, widow of Edgar Williamson, former director of religious education for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, died Jan. 30 in Little Rock. Mrs. Williamson, 90, was a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and had served as a consultant for the Baptist Sunday School Board. She was a member of Immanuel Church, Little Rock. She is survived by a grandson, Stan Williamson of Nashville, Tenn.; and two granddaughters, Diana Williamson of Dallas, Texas, and Jo Ann Tucker of Lauderdale Lakes, Fla.

Larry Duke is serving as pastor of the Mill Creek Church at Hot Springs.

Danny K. Wilson has joined the staff of Blytheville First Church as minister of

youth. He is a graduate of Union University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Wilson has served churches in Sallito, Miss., Germantown, Tenn., and Fort Worth, Texas. He has worked with Centrifuge, the youth retreat of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Mark Brim will join the staff of Warren First Church March 17 as minister of music and youth. He is serving as minister of music and single adults at South Side Church in Abilene, Texas. Brim is a graduate of Hardin Simmons University. He and his wife, Janice, have a son, Stephen.

Keith Burrow has joined the staff of the Plumerville Church as part-time music director. He is a graduate of Arkansas Tech University.

David Wayne Jackson joined the staff of Freeman Heights Church at Berryville Feb. 1 as minister of music and youth, going there from the Pleasant Grove Church at Harrisburg.

Robert Hutchison has begun his first pastoral service, serving as pastor of the Pilgrims Rest Church at Batesville.

briefly

Carlisle Immanuel Church recently ordained **Jonnie Hillenbug**, **Wimpy Risenhoover** and **John Almond Jr.** as deacons. Pastor **Jim Byrum** led the service.

Leachville First Church ordained its minister of music, **James Sanders Jr.**, to the ministry Jan. 27. Sanders will soon move to Little Rock where he will serve as associate pastor of the Woodlawn Church.

Lakeshore Drive Church in Little Rock ordained **Bill Falkner** as a deacon Feb. 3.

Newark Church recently ordained **Randell James** and **Ed Shavers** as deacons.

Calvary Church in West Memphis recently ordained **Thomas Nowlin** to the ministry as requested by the Beech Grove Church in Owenton, Ky.

Russellville Second Church women met Feb. 10 for the purpose of launching a missions education program for all age levels through the organization of a Woman's Missionary Union. **Cheryl Clevenger** is serving as director.

Understand aging, senior adult leaders challenged

ATLANTA (BP)—American attitudes toward aging have changed from respect to fear and misunderstanding in the last 100 years, leaders of senior adults were told in Atlanta.

"In the 1980s we have become afraid of the future," said **Ben Dickerson**, director, gerontological studies program, Waco, Texas. "This fear creates barriers to ministry." Dickerson spoke at the first National Conference on Aging sponsored by the family ministry department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Dickerson said Southern Baptists must redefine aging as a potential opportunity for growth instead of a period of life solely characterized by problems. "If we are going to become all God intends for us to be, we must accept the totality of life, which includes growing old."

According to Dickerson, today's society attaches social norms and stereotypes to senior adults, thereby limiting ministry opportunities. "The Bible speaks of the rewards of old age, but in our society we have focused too much attention on the problems," he explained.

He noted natural biological process may bring about some declines in hearing, eyesight, muscle flexibility, oxygen levels and

blood pressure. "But senior adults are not a homogenous group. Some people may not experience any of these problems while another experiences all of them to some degree."

Age grading of senior adults is misleading, he feels because, "As persons grow older they have fewer similarities. The gospel recognizes the individuality of persons and stresses a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is how we must approach senior adults."

Dickerson admonished leaders to consider the evangelism challenge the senior adult group poses. He noted there will be 32 million persons 65 or older by the year 1990.

"Our potential for ministry is unlimited," he said. "By the year 2020, one out of every four adults in the United States will be 65 or older. July 1, 1983, marked the beginning of a new time because for the first time there were more older people in this country than youth."

"Our challenge is clear, Jesus Christ gave us the mandates to seek and to save the lost, but also to be about doing good. I believe the senior adult segment of our society demands our attention." Examples can be found in the economic problems of many

elderly persons.

"Although the poverty level has dropped among the elderly from 35 percent to 14 percent in the last two decades, there are still a great many people who need our help, Dickerson said.

He cited widows who have smaller incomes since their spouse has died, persons who never gained pensions or persons who must pay for the institutional care of their spouses.

"When we look at the total welfare figures we see that only 14 percent represent the elderly, but 67 percent of the elderly on welfare are women. In addition, there are 13 million widows out there who receive no pension benefits," he challenged.

Dickerson noted in the last 15 years the federal government has tried to meet the needs of the elderly by raising social security benefits nearly 200 percent. He also listed increased medicare, medicaid and social services benefits.

But, he explained, "We are expecting the federal government to determine the needs and provide care for our elderly neighbors. We, the church, are putting our responsibility off on the government. Jesus called us to be the ministers."

Volunteers fill gaps in foreign medical missions force for SBC

Which Arkansas church has six physicians and two nurses who have volunteered to help foreign missionaries in the next few months?

Who is the North Arkansas dentist who gave a month of his time to staff a Baptist-built dental clinic in Africa while the Foreign Mission Board seeks a permanent dentist?

Which retired missionary doctor, who is a 22-year veteran of third world medicine, is currently back in Africa as a volunteer in public health medicine?

The questions may not appear in the next version of one of those "how-many-facts-can-you-retrieve-from-your-brain" games. They do illustrate the scope of Arkansas' involvement in volunteer missions to help Southern Baptist medical personnel in foreign countries.

There are other Arkansas Baptists who will go, have gone or are currently serving this way, but the stories told here show that Arkansans are sharing the load in a way that benefits missions efforts at a minimal cost to the SBC Foreign Mission Board.

Personalizing missions

The ground work already had been laid at First Church, Little Rock, when pastor John Wright got the call from missionary nurse Ruth Vanderburg the first week in January.

Vanderburg, an Arkansan, told him that the Baptist hospital in Kediri, Indonesia, where she works desperately needed a gynecologist who could serve there for a few weeks.

Before that week was up, Dr. Orman Simmons had made travel arrangements, and the next week was off to Kediri. And, another member of the Little Rock church was making plans to fill the gap after Dr. Simmons returned home.

The church already had budgeted money to help the medical missions volunteers because Pastor Wright was impressed with such needs back in November and went to the church's budget committee asking for the additional appropriation.

And, even before Vanderburg's call, Wright had received a letter from Dr. Kenneth Hinton, a pediatrician at the hospital at Kediri, stressing the need for volunteer help.

The pump was primed before the pastor shared, in a Sunday sermon, the requests from Indonesia. Dr. Wright now sees his people "really excited" and thinks other congregations would be excited about missions, also, if pastors present the needs and help them get personally involved.

"Before, our people prayed for missions; now they pray for missions done by people they know," Wright notes.

by Betty J. Kennedy

After the second gynecologist, Dr. Jim Studdard, serves as a volunteer at Kediri, an orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Earl Peebles plans to go there.

Two nurses, Patsy Hossler and Virginia Brown, are currently serving in Mali, East Africa, to help with inoculations. They responded, through the Foreign Mission Board, to a specific request from Arkansas Norman and Beverly Coad.

But there are more volunteers yet. Two internal medicine specialists from the congregation, Dr. Fred Faas and Dr. Tom Cain, are making plans to go to Indonesia in March. And Dr. George Schroeder, an ophthalmologist, will work at the Baptist hospital in Bangalore, India, next month. Dr. Schroeder will take some equipment needed there to treat eye diseases, and he is donating the equipment himself.

Dentist fills in

Southern Baptists built a dental clinic in Bohicon in the African country of Benin in 1983. But, after six months of operation the clinic had to be shut down for lack of a career missionary dentist.

In October, the clinic was open again, thanks to Ralph Bowers, a Harrison First Church member who gave a month of his time and his dentist skills.

Dr. Bowers was the first volunteer dentist with which the FMB hopes to staff the Bohicon clinic until a permanent dentist can be found.

He was aided by his wife, Genile, and two native assistants. The assistants had received training from a previous dentist and, fortunately, one spoke some English.

Photo by Melanie Campbell



Dr. Ralph Bowers and his wife, Genile, members of Harrison First Church, recently spent a month as Foreign Mission Board volunteers in Benin, Africa.

In 18 days at the clinic, Dr. Bowers treated 218 patients. He found that he was the only professionally trained dentist in the country at the time. Benin has three and a half million people.

The volunteer dentist provided mostly non-routine care, since the people normally seek a dentist only for relief of pain or to have gaps filled, according to Dr. Bowers. He thinks genetics and a healthy diet play a major role in low incidence of tooth decay, so the people have little need of fillings.

The Bowers say they went to Benin to minister to the nationals through dentistry, but they found the Christian people there ministering to them spiritually.

"We met regularly with them for worship, even though there is no organized church in Bohicon," Mrs. Bowers related. "We did not speak the language, but sensed no barrier because of the kinship we shared in Jesus Christ."

Encore for doctor

One stint in medical missions, the career variety, wasn't enough for Dr. Walter Moore. He retired and moved to Mena after 25 years of service in Baptist medical missions in Africa. Now he's back in Africa as a volunteer.

Dr. Moore, an ordained preacher and medical doctor who is a self-taught surgeon, is said to be one of the world's most knowledgeable persons in third world medicine. He was invited back to Mali after having been there a year ago to help with an inoculation program.

Public health has long been Dr. Moore's interest—he has the masters and doctor of philosophy degrees in the field—and retirement could not keep him away from aiding medical missions in the Third World.

Dr. Moore is not the only volunteer in medical missions from the Mena Church. Dr. David Freed served in India last fall. And he is not the only Arkansan who seized the opportunity because of a deep interest in missions. Patsy Hossler, the First Church, Little Rock member who is working in Mali, dreamed of being a missionary nurse since childhood, her pastor relates. She had completed nurse's training only a short while before her volunteer opportunity came.

Several Arkansans who have completed a stint as volunteers in medical missions say they recommend it and offer information to interested persons. Or individuals or churches could write Dr. Bill Givento at the Foreign Mission Board and complete an information form so their name would be on file to match with an opportunity.

Betty J. Kennedy is managing editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

Denomination's future depends on elected leaders, Ray says

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The future of their denomination is at stake when Southern Baptists elect leaders of the 14.3 million member body, says Cecil Ray.

Ray, director of the Southern Baptists' national Planned Growth in Giving campaign, wrote in the most recent issue of *Baptist History and Heritage*, "Periods of growth and harmony in the denomination have come when the purposes of leaders and people have been united toward a common goal."

Yet, Ray warns, "A fickle electorate. . . can destroy its adopted goals. More than once a Baptist convention has climaxed a long study by prayerfully adopting a worthy program or goal, only then to destroy the effort by electing a convention president uncommitted to it."

"For example," Ray continues, "to adopt a great goal for mission support through the Cooperative Program (the national unified budget of the Southern Baptist Convention) and then elect key leaders who have demonstrated little support for the Cooperative Program is to negate the goal."

Ray's comments appear in the January issue of the journal published by the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. The issue, devoted to examination of "The Leadership Heritage of Southern Baptists," includes six other leadership essays.

Ray, former general secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, says great leaders have been behind every major Southern Baptist achievement. He notes the issue of leadership is critical because history reveals the denomination goes the way of its leaders and "what happens to a denomination eventually happens to its churches."

Ray identifies three "critical issues" facing Southern Baptists and their leadership: the qualification issue, the purpose issue, and the diversity issue.

Within the qualification issue, Ray lists five observations surrounding the qualifications

of elected leaders.

First, persons are qualified by identification. "Person aligned with a movement or crusade tend to judge a leader's qualifications by how he or she relates to the movement. One who is devoted to that particular cause, loyal to the others in the movement and skillful in promoting it is considered qualified; other qualifications count little."

Qualification by demonstrated ability is Ray's second observation. He says Baptists tend to elect leaders noted for success in their professional lives, "even though successful experience in their given field may be extraneous to the position involved." Ray claims the success syndrome is dangerous when success is valued more than required leadership abilities.

Next, Ray lists qualification by knowledge. Leaders should understand the workings of Baptists well enough to make wise decisions. "To be a convention president, for example, without knowing Baptist polity is a situation fraught with trouble. To be a trustee and know nothing of the convention-assigned task of the agency or institution is dangerous," he says.

Qualification by loyalty is Ray's fourth concern. He says failure is likely when the elected leader lacks commitment to the organization's purpose. "To choose a leader whose main purpose and goal are different from those adopted by the group is bound to bring dissension," according to Ray.

Finally, a leader must be qualified as a peacemaker. "Blessed is a Christian leader whose skills bring people together. Unity rarely prevails except when leaders come primarily from the center and when they work for and within a consensus of the majority," Ray feels.

In his second section, the purpose issue, Ray asks, "Do messengers from the churches come together to chart Baptists' course in Christian missions or to state positions on doctrinal, moral, social and political issues? Is a Baptist convention's agenda primarily

that of a people with a God-given Good News story for a lost world or that of a people with a mandate for social and religious reform?"

He suggests convention interest is shifting toward issues, even though the SBC Constitution makes the missionary emphasis clear. "If the convention does shift its priority from its missionary operations to taking stands on issues, it will change Baptists' nature and denominational work," Ray warns.

Baptists, according to Ray, will have to choose which dominates: missions or issues.

Diversity is a third area of concern. Ray notes Southern Baptists were once a rural people in the South, mostly of Anglo-Saxon extraction.

Today, however, Southern Baptists are city and rural, located in the north, east, south and west. They are "highly and poorly educated, rich and poor, professional and blue-collar, and a rainbow of white, red, black, brown and yellow," he points out.

"Almost all of these Baptists agree on the central doctrines of the Christian faith while maintaining differences on such matters as the method of divine inspiration, how God created the world and how God will bring time to an end," he writes. But some Baptists like this new diversity while others find it "distasteful, even frightening."

The editorial concludes with a five-point guideline to match elected leaders with convention objectives.

1. The purpose question—What does he or she want to accomplish most if elected?
2. The unity question—Is he or she known for creating unity or divisions?
3. The loyalty question—Is this person known for supporting the denomination and its financial lifeline, the Cooperative Program?
4. The knowledge questions—Does he or she understand how the convention functions and what work it does?
5. The identification question—Who wants this person elected and why?

Grain for Africa—Jim Green, Southern Baptist missionary to Kenya, distributes corn and beans to villagers in Maundi Ni Meri in a region of Kenya hit by drought and food shortages. Residents helped Baptists bring clean water to their village by digging a ditch for a water pipeline. Money for the water project and food came from Southern Baptist hunger and relief funds. During 1984, the Foreign Mission Board allocated about \$290,000 for hunger and relief in Kenya, located just south of Ethiopia. In the background, Green's wife, Ruth Ann, greets a Kenyan woman.



(BP) photo / Joanna Pinneo

Pastors and churches need commitment to growth

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Southern Baptists have "grown a generation of church members who see non-growth as a natural state of the church," according to James Frost.

Frost, a church growth consultant who led Florida Baptist Sunday school work for nearly 14 years, currently is teaching "Principles and Methods of Local Church Growth" at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

He expresses concern about churches which are satisfied with "meager growth" and "maintenance activities." He believes much of the problem arises from pastors and staff who have focused their efforts on internal ministries and do not "have the highest priority on reaching lost people."

Frost has developed seven church growth principles over a career as a pastor, minister of education and denominational worker.

Strong, positive staff leadership is the first step to a growing church, Frost indicates. "They must have a philosophy of growth and a commitment to go," he insists. "They have to make it happen."

The pastor is the key, Frost believes, because he sets the pace and pattern for a

church. If pastors do not practice evangelism in their own lives, they will not be able to lead their churches to do so.

Biblical priorities for the congregation are another key ingredient.

A third principle involves developing a strategy for reaching people. He believes the best method for this is to make the Sunday school the church's major outreach organ.

A spirit or attitude of growth is the fourth important element in developing a growing church.

A fifth principle cited by Frost is implementation "through personal witnessing and outreach visitation."

Such an emphasis requires training pastor, staff and members "to witness their faith as part of their lifestyle" and through an organized program of visitation "focused on the unsaved and un-enlisted," Frost says.

Extension growth—extending the church's preaching and teaching ministry—is a sixth step in developing a growing church, the visiting professor explains.

"A church must multiply itself, go beyond any scheduled set of meetings and programs to go wherever people are," Frost said, "not

saying, here's our building and our schedule, come here if you want to hear the gospel."

New missions, Bible studies, resort ministries and other methods are offered as examples by Frost. He points out extension growth can require re-orientation on the part of many pastors. A pastor must "see his success in terms of building the Kingdom of God rather than simply building an organized church," explains Frost. "Their task is to reach people, whether it counts on their statistics or not."

Priority planning is the final principle Frost suggests.

"A church must lay 'holy hands' on its church calendar and plan activities and projects that get at the task they've seen for themselves," Frost argues. He adds the church also should let its priorities guide its budget and financial commitments.

Since his retirement in 1983, Frost has traveled extensively under the sponsorship of his organization, Church Ministries, Inc. He says as he teaches church growth principles, he finds "ready acceptance" on an intellectual level. "The rub is commitment," he adds.

Time, expectations exert pressure on ministers, survey says

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Time demands, financial difficulties and high expectations are primary stress producers among Southern Baptist ministers, according to a recent survey.

Seven of the top 10 stress factors identified by ministers responding to the survey, conducted by the research services department at the Baptist Sunday School Board, were related to time, particularly the lack of it. The other three factors among the top 10 related to expectations for productivity and leadership.

Financial difficulties were second overall as a source of stress, with the primary complaint being an inadequate retirement plan. Other areas mentioned were inadequate salary, house expenses, excessive car expenses, medical expenses and paying off indebtedness.

Terry Peck, consultant in the church administration department, said personal and professional expectations for ministers are multi-faceted. Also, most churches do not have a clear, written job description for the pastor.

"Ministers feel pulled in a lot of directions based on many sets of different expectations," Peck said. "Even more crucial, the survey reveals pastors and staff are not successfully coping... they are not dealing with problems realistically. Ministers are saying 'prayer and Bible study are enough,' when they really need to do those things in conjunction with a support system."

"Minister-types are involved in giving, giving, giving," Peck said. "Eventually, they will be given out unless they receive on-going

support, of which the family can be a part."

In the top 80 items which cause stress for ministers, the first four related to time. Number one, too many demands for my time, ranked 3.53 on a scale of five. Close behind were lack of study time, administration responsibilities and lack of time to visit prospects.

Several of the next items in the ranking of ministerial stressors related to expenses, including house expenses (number 16), excessive car expenses (17th), medical expenses (20th), and paying off past indebtedness (21st).

Criticism or conflict with church members ranked relatively low. Expectations were high, but direct criticism or conflict did not appear to be an area where ministers feel pressure.

Pressures of sermon preparation, for instance, was 39th (1.92) out of the 80 stressors, with number 40 (1.19) being conflicts with church members because of personality differences.

Even lower in the rankings was fear of being asked to resign (68th), criticism of sermons (73rd) and pressure from some church members to leave the church (74th).

Items which reportedly cause the least amount of stress for ministers were psychological illness of a family member (78th), divorce in the family (79) and dependence on stimulants and/or sedatives, which ranked last.

Approximately the same amount of stress was reported by the various classifications of ministers, but the causes of the stress were

not the same. For pastors, the two items with the highest percentage of stress were too many demands on my time (21.5 percent) and inadequate retirement plan (18.8 percent).

For ministers of education, the top two were too many demands on my time (21.7 percent) and administrative responsibilities (10.6 percent). The two highest for ministers of music and ministers of youth were too many interruptions and too many demands for my time.

Peck said role clarification and support groups might be the most significant actions which could prevent a great deal of stress.

"If there is an agreement, for instance, between the members and the pastor as to what to expect, it can cut down on time as a stress factor," he explained. "With planning, he can give time to priority ministry efforts which have been agreed upon by both parties."

Each of the staff classifications indicated the strongest support group was the spouse or other family members. Peck said this could indicate a need to better acquaint pastors and other staff members with support groups and the benefits of joining such a group to relieve pressures among family members.

For the survey, a random sample of 350 each was selected from the mailing lists of pastors, ministers of education, ministers of music and ministers of youth. Of the 1,400 persons invited to participate in the survey, 700 (50 percent) responded by returning completed questionnaires.

Your state convention at work

Missions

The mission pastor

The first five years of a mission are crucial. Usually, the permanent location of a church that may exist until Jesus comes back is determined.



Tidsworth

The "personality" of the congregation is established. A good or bad relationship is established with the church community. Buildings take shape, and ministries are started.

It is very difficult to change a church from the direction set in those early years. And the most important factor in determining that direction is the pastor. Church-type missions should have the very best pastors. My first pastorate at age 19 was a mission in Fayetteville. It was like a man who has never ridden a horse getting on a horse that has never been ridden. It turned out to be a great experience for me and the mission because Andy Hall and Jamie Jones were excellent coaches.

Our mission pastors deserve double honor and our full prayer support. They are shaping churches for the future! — **Floyd Tidsworth Jr.**, church extension director

Annuity/Stewardship

Planned Growth in Giving

A task force of pastors, staff members, and directors of missions formulated proposals for Planned Growth in Giving in Arkansas. Their recommendations were adopted at the convention in Fort Smith.

Planned Growth in Giving focuses on believers in churches. The first recommendation encourages churches "to participate in Planned Growth in Giving activities to strengthen and mature believers in Christian Stewardship... and set 15-year vision goals in giving."

The second recommendation encourages churches to "adopt a 15-year vision goal of increasing annually the percentage of church gifts ministering through associational missions."

Recommendation three encourages churches to adopt vision goals of "increasing annually the percentage of church gifts ministering through the Cooperative Program."

The last recommendation asks the Arkansas Baptist State Convention to "continue to move toward a 50/50 division of Cooperative Program gifts with 50 percent remaining in Arkansas and 50 percent going to world mission causes. . . by A.D.

2000."

Planned Growth in Giving is a call to commitment. It will encourage our people in the grace of giving. Churches will have a stewardship tool to develop and mature their members.

A student of Baptist history believes Planned Growth in Giving is more significant than the \$75 Million Campaign. It is an opportunity to do something great for Christ and his churches in this generation. — **James A. Walker**, director

Evangelism

CWT Seminars

We have set a goal in Arkansas to train and certify 75 churches in CWT during the year of 1985. In order to do this, it will be necessary to average 25 churches in each of the three seminars.



Shell

In order to conduct a National Training Seminar in a church, the pastor and people must be certified and trained. The pastor must attend a National Seminar and then begin the process in his local church. There must be enough trained Equipments to work with the participants in the seminar.

Our first seminar in 1985 will be with Elmdale Church in Springdale March 11-14. We will be working with Pastor Mark Brooks. Mark was trained in CWT at the Eastwood Church, Tulsa, Okla. We are expecting a good number of churches in northwest Arkansas to respond in this seminar.

The second seminar this year will be at the West View Church in Paragould May 13-16. Pastor Gary Fulton was trained in CWT at the South Side Church in Pine Bluff. Several of the churches in northeast Arkansas are responding to this seminar.

We will close the CWT Seminar training this year at Life Line Church, Little Rock Oct. 28-31. Pastor Gerald Taylor was trained in the first seminar in Arkansas at Fayetteville. Registration must be through the State Evangelism Department. — **Clarence Shell**, director

Christian Life Council

Booze, blood and Baptists

Baptists, like others, use alcohol in various ways. Externally, many have used rubbing alcohol as a muscle relaxer and cleanser of superficial wounds. Since many over the counter remedies such as cough syrup contain alcohol, Baptists have often used it in that way. Some probably overdid Hadacol several years ago.

During the War between the states, badly wounded soldiers, north and south, were given alcohol to drink as an anesthetic before amputations. The way Baptists are primarily using alcohol today is as a "recreational" beverage. Recent polls reveal that 46 percent of Southern Baptists use it that way to some extent. According to the study, 8 percent of these are alcoholics. The traditional church covenant, which is not read very much nowadays, disallows the use of alcohol as a beverage.

There are several things drinking Baptists must bear in mind. The injured body bleeds faster when there is alcohol in the blood. The speed is determined by the blood alcohol content. There is "demonic power" in that type blood. Baptists need to weigh the scriptures pro and con regarding the use of wine, for instance. Ninety or more percent of the Bible verses oppose the use of wine or strong drink.

Baptists who drink also need to be warned if they ever drive in the state of Oregon. To be DWI in that state, blood alcohol content may be as low as .05 percent. Apparently, the liquor lobbyists are not as powerful there as in Arkansas, where the B.A.C. is .10 percent. The best practical and scriptural advice is to take the Freeway—free from alcohol and other drugs! (Cut this out and give to a drinking Baptist or to anyone else it might help.) — **Bob Parker**, director

Women's Missionary Union

Home Missions Study

The Home Mission Study for 1985 is a comprehensive look at Southern Baptist mission work in the West Central states. This offers Southern Baptists an opportunity to learn about their mission work in America. There are home mission study books, teaching guides and other resources for adults, youth, children and preschoolers.

Participation in the Home Mission Study will enable you to know the specific needs of home missionaries. When you understand the needs of missionaries, you can be an informed pray-er.

March 3-10, 1985, is the Week of Prayer for Home Missions. The theme for the week is, "Who Cares?" Sacrificing your time to pray for home missions will show you care.

Our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love which shows itself in action, says 1 John 3:18, which is the scripture for the Week of Prayer for Home Missions. The challenge is to take action by studying about and engaging in prayer for the needs of home missionaries, then giving to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Make a commitment to be more informed about home missions, a participant in prayer for home missions and a giver to support home missions.

If you have any questions about how your church can be involved in the Home Mission Study, *Week of Prayer for Home Missions* and the *Annie Armstrong Easter Offering*, contact the state WMU office, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. — **Pat Glascock, GA/Mission Friends director**

Family and Child Care A special thank you

We have gone through the greatest giving season of the year. Thanks to Arkansas Baptists, gifts from churches and individuals were at an all time high in 1984. Your gifts demonstrated your love and concern for the children we serve.

In 1984 direct gifts to our agency through the churches totaled \$404,671.64 from 1,051 of our 1,266 churches. That represents a 7.8 percent increase over the previous year.

The churches listed below are the top 10 in direct gifts for 1984. (1) El Dorado, First, \$12,744.78, Liberty Association; (2) Keo, \$11,261.25, Caroline; (3) Grace, Camden, \$7,734.15, Liberty; (4) Pine Bluff, First, \$7,590.32, Harmony; (5) Geyer Springs, First, \$6,937.15, Pulaski; (6) Grand Ave., Ft. Smith, \$5,923.41, Concord; (7) Central, Magnolia, \$5,138.50, Southwest; (8) Russellville, First, \$3,784.00, Dardanelle-Russellville; (9) Paragould, First, \$3,543.46, Greene; (10) Beech Street, Gurdon, \$3,069.62, Red River.

Recently we received a letter from a group that said, "I'm sure an organization such as you has many needs. We would ap-

preciate receiving a list of ways we can help."

I know that Arkansas Baptists will continue to give increasing support to this vital ministry when you know of the needs. Please contact me at 376-4791 so I can share our slide presentation which tells the story of the ministry of Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services. Let us share this ministry in your church. — **John A. Ross, director of development**

Acteens Encounter

Beech Springs Camp
March 8-9

Jane Fray, missionary
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Author of *And a Music Director, Too*

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Bible teacher and worship leader

Organists: Bob Lindley, Pine Bluff First Church

Pianists: Peggy Pearson, State Church Music Department

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Peru

Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union Annual Meeting

First Baptist Church, Jonesboro
March 19-20

Four sessions

Tuesday: 10 a.m., 2 p.m., 7 p.m.

Wednesday: 9:30 a.m.

Features

Home and foreign missions

Commitment/candlelight service

Love offering for missionary magazines

Message by Don Moore, Tuesday p.m.

Worship in song

Promotional features

Cooperative Program emphasis

by Clyde and Archie, Tuesday p.m.

Come-and-go fellowship,

Monday, 8-9 p.m., Ramada Inn

Nursery for preschoolers

Baptist Bookstore exhibit

North central states affirm goal to double churches

DAYTON, Ohio (BP)—More than 430 participants from seven north central states reaffirmed their commitment to double the number of churches in the region by 1990.

The pastors and laypersons from the seven north central states—Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin—met at Far Hills Church in Dayton, Ohio, to hear an update on Southern Baptists' work in the region and to train for church starting in the country's mid-section.

R.V. Haygood, executive director of the Indiana Baptist Convention, told participants Southern Baptists had only 625 churches in north central and northeast states in 1946. By 1973, the number had increased to 1,758. During 1973 a steering committee established North Central States Thrust to reach people in the north central states with the gospel. The committee adopted a goal to double the number of churches in the region by 1990.

Since then Southern Baptists have begun only about 19 percent of the churches needed to meet the goal. But Haygood said other goals from the 1973 meeting have been met.

One goal of the thrust "was to turn the eyes of Southern Baptists on the area and get

linkages established between old-line state conventions and new work areas," Haygood said. "We have not doubled the number of churches by any means, but we have focused the minds of Southern Baptists on this area and we have focused the minds of Southern Baptists on a Bold Mission Thrust for our world," he explained.

Since the goals were adopted, he added, more than 50 pastors have come from Southern states to work in the region. Also, the north central states have received about \$500,000 through linkages with old-line Baptist state conventions in addition to the scores of volunteers who have flooded the area, working in church construction and other ministries.

Haygood noted currently 2,085 Southern Baptist churches minister to 60 million people—one-fourth of nation's population—who reside in the north central states. "We feel that one-fourth (of Southern Baptist churches) should be here, too," Haygood said.

Baptists will attempt to have 3,516 churches in the seven-state area by 1990, he added.

Clay Price, director of the Southern Baptist

Home Mission Board's program research department, reported six percent of the SBC's churches are in the north central states while one out of eight SBC churches started in the United States since 1972 has been in the region.

Though church starts have been high in the region, "as soon as we organize church, we start to lose churches," Price lamented. He noted the region lost two percent of its church starts per year, noting 25 percent of the churches begun in 1972 have been lost and 20 percent of the churches begun since 1973 have disbanded.

Price noted of the churches which reported they organized in 1972, 50 percent did so with 50 members or less. He added figures show one-third of the churches begun with 50 members or fewer are in trouble or dead within five years.

Price suggested Southern Baptists more closely monitor new churches, offering verbal encouragement and support to church leaders. But he also suggested Baptists look at organizing churches when they reach 100 or more in membership. "The smaller the church when organized, the greater the potential of losing it," he warned.

Church growth more than numbers, new missionaries told

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (BP)—The gospel must be central to achieve church growth, a missions leader has reminded a group of church planter apprentices.

Gerald D. Palmer, vice-president for missions for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, offered tips on church growth to church planter apprentices at their commissioning service.

The 23 church planter apprentices were commissioned by the Home Mission Board Jan. 27 in a special service at Magnolia Avenue Church in Riverside, Calif. The missionaries will begin churches in California, Hawaii and Nevada.

Reading from the New Testament book of Acts, Palmer told the new missionaries to view growth as more than numerical. Though the early church grew in numbers, he explained, it was "the quality of life" in the first century church that drew people to the church.

The early church grew because its leaders relied on power from God's Spirit, noted Palmer. The power to be on mission already has been given to Christians today, Palmer

told the group. "(God's Spirit) is with you even unto the ends of California, Nevada and Winnemucca," he added, referring to the missionaries' places of service.

The message of Christ's virgin birth, sinless life, sacrificial death, resurrection and second coming are central themes the early church proclaimed as the good news, Palmer said, and though methods may differ, "If you do not preach (these themes), nothing else is valid."

Church growth results from church members caring for one another, he continued, pointing out the early church grew when each person was considered important.

"Many people today sit on the fringe of our churches" because they feel unimportant, lamented Palmer. But as missionaries, "You must take the message that God says they're important."

Similarly, for church growth to occur, no person or group should be bypassed by the church, he said, noting the early church shattered racial and cultural barriers "until the whole target audience was every

creature."

Southern Baptists still need to make headway into crossing barriers with the gospel, so he warned the missionaries not to be slow to overcome racial differences. "Don't expect God's blessing until your heart and your church doors are open to everyone," he said. "You can't make them all come in, but you can be open to all."

Palmer warned against tending to church concerns to the exclusion of missions outreach. "Southern Baptists were born in missions, we survived in missions and we have grown through missions," he said. "Without missions, we will die. And your church will die, if you do not reach out beyond yourself."

The commissioning service, only the second such service specifically for church planters, was held in California to coincide with the state's emphasis on church starting. Of the 23 missionaries commissioned, California will receive 17.

Among those commissioned were Arkansans Mark and Candis Holmes, who will serve in San Diego, Calif.

National Baptists to build adjacent to ABTS campus

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. broke ground Jan. 24 for a multimillion dollar facility adjacent to the campus of American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tenn.

National Baptists have sponsored ABTS jointly with the Southern Baptist Convention since 1924. The NBC, Inc. is the largest black religious organization in the world with

30,000 churches and seven million members worldwide, according to Cecilia Adkins, executive director of the Sunday School Publishing Board of the NBC, Inc. which is located in Nashville.

The facility, to be known as the World Baptist Center, is the first building to be constructed by the NBC, Inc. since 1935 when the publishing board headquarters were

built, according to T.L. Jemison, president of the NBC, Inc.

In an article published in the *National Baptist Voice*, the convention's news organ, Jemison said a national headquarters is needed because the convention has grown in the number and in range of programs and ministries and a combined headquarters will allow them to work together more efficiently.

Indian church turns devastating flood into blessing

TULSA, Okla. (BP)—The rains came down and the floods came up, as the children's song says. But Bowen Indian Church in Tulsa, Okla., stood firm.

The building suffered, but the "church" is rebuilding from a May 28 flood which rose five feet in the auditorium, warped pews and piled them against the door alongside the pulpit, pushed out walls, soaked the preacher's library, ruined two buses and left mud everywhere.

But Pastor Ira Pisachubbee calls the flood a blessing because, in the rebuilding, the church is expanding its facility which had been bursting with people.

The church had grown from 40 in Sunday school when Pisachubbee became pastor in 1980 to a regular 130-150 attendance. The rebuilt sanctuary will seat nearly 300.

The church is buying surrounding land and is talking about building a new facility.

"If we really want to see something done,

this is the time to do it." Pisachubbee told his congregation, "I don't ever want us to slow down or stop. I just want us to keep going because there are a lot of people that aren't saved yet that need to be saved."

Pisachubbee thinks big. He was pastor of an Anglo church in Oakhurst for 13 years before coming to Bowen.

"Many Indian churches feel like they can't do it because they've never tried," says Pisachubbee, a Choctaw. "I've always felt anybody can do anything they want to."

Many people helped Bowen Church recover from the flood. It received \$9,000 from state and national Southern Baptist agencies. Others responded by donating an organ and supplies destroyed by muddy water. The church still needs office equipment, a bus and a van.

Although most of Bowen's members are employed, Indians as a group in Tulsa and the state are among those in the worst economic condition.

"Many have a great need," Pisachubbee admits. "It breaks your heart to see how some of them are living. We don't want them just to come to church. We want to help them with their needs." To do that, this church which is pulling itself back from the flood, has its own benevolence fund which provides food, clothing and furniture.

"Our people are ready to help in any way we can," the pastor says. "Not because we have a lot of money. We don't. We just share what we have."

Bowen is not unusual or unique, Pisachubbee insists. "It is just the way God would want a church... filled with love."

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International

The Resurrection and the Life

by William Piercy, Manila First Church

Basic passage: John 11:1-57

Focal passage: John 11:20-27, 38-44

Central truth: Our resurrection is promised.

The hope for some eternal existence is universal. Among all civilizations, there have been two strong beliefs: in a Supreme Being and in a hope for some life after death.

Job, who lived before Christ came in the flesh, shared in that hope. He looked about him and saw that when a tree or some other type of living plant died or was cut down that it would sprout out and begin new growth. He questioned for us, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:11). Archaeological discoveries have produced evidence that ancient men placed food, seeds, hunting devices and other things in the graves of their dead with the hope they would be needed in that person's next life.

The resurrection of Lazarus gave credence to the promise of Jesus that there would be a resurrected life for those who trust in him. It enlivened expectation in his followers who shared in this universal hope. This writer has had the privilege to stand before hundreds, through the years, and read these verses and claim that hope before them.

Mary and Martha shared in this common hope for eternal life. Their response was, "If you had been here, our brother had not died" (John 11:21). Jesus responded that something was more dear to life than just living. He said he was the resurrection and the life and those who trusted in him would never die. Of course, we know this means their souls would never die.

Today, most Jews believe in the immortality of the soul. There are those who trust in reincarnation. But the promise that Jesus gives is that there will be a resurrection of the body and a rejoining of the soul with the resurrected-body, all of which is capable of an eternal existence with God.

When Lazarus was brought back to life, he was not some type of spirit or a life in another form. He was just Lazarus, the same he was before he died. Surely, he continued to live in his area with his family. In order to discredit his resurrection, the Jews sought to kill him, too. "Because that by reason of him (Lazarus) many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus" (John 12:11).

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Life and Work

Power over life

by Glenn E. Hickey, DOM,
Pulaski Association

Basic passage: John 10

Focal passage: John 12:2-4; 7-11, 14-18

Central truth: Jesus' power over life can be trusted because of his purpose for us.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Power undirected by high purpose spells calamity, and high purpose by itself is utterly useless if the power to put it into effect is lacking." Chapter 10 of John's Gospel brings us to the focal point of the confrontation of purpose, power and authority between Jesus and the religious leadership of that day.

In chapter nine, the Pharisees are seen as desperate men struggling to keep their power for selfish purposes. The violent polemic of that dialogue lies in the background of chapter 10.

In Jesus is seen the perfect combination of divine power and noble purpose. His authority is gentle yet firm. His power is exercised for the purpose of leading men to the fullness of life as God intended it to be. He comes to us not as the harsh, demanding tyrant, but as the loving, caring shepherd. And yet the firmness of his authority will admit no usurpers. No false shepherds or hirelings will be allowed to take his place. They come to exploit and manipulate. He comes as the true shepherd. He knows his sheep intimately (v. 14). He is even willing to die to protect his sheep (v. 11).

There are many applications of the lesson for the present religious scene. There is no exploitation greater or more cruel than that perpetrated by self-seeking, greedy men posing as God's undershepherds. Christians need today the discernment to distinguish between those who want to exploit them and those who sincerely want to lead them.

Christian discernment of the true and the false in shepherds can be sharpened by looking for the "Jesus-like" qualities of leadership, authority and power seen in this passage. The true shepherd is concerned about what he can give to the sheep, not what he can get from them. The true shepherd knows his sheep by name. He sees every person, not as an instrument to be used, but as a unique creature of God having his own worth and dignity.

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Bible Book

Jesus' forgiveness

by George W. Domerese, DOM Clear
Creek Association

Basic passage: Luke 7:1-8:21

Focal passage: Luke 7:36-50

Central truth: Jesus' concern for the sinful woman contrasted sharply with Simon's contempt for her.

In the background passage, we find Jesus healing a centurion's servant, raising a widow's son from the dead in a funeral procession and reassuring the imprisoned John the Baptist of his identity.

The meal at Simon the Pharisee's house where Jesus had been invited was interrupted by a woman of the city. Tradition identifies her as possibly being Mary Magdalene. Actually her identity is unknown and really unimportant. The important thing was she felt a compelling need to come to Jesus and to worship him. The alabaster box of ointment in her possession indicates her intention to come to Jesus. Her actions are an indication of her commitment and devotion. Jesus does not interrupt or rebuke her.

Simon evidently knew her, at least by reputation. His religious purity as a Pharisee caused him to question Jesus as being a prophet. He had invited Jesus for a meal, but he really didn't know him as Lord. Had Jesus not been there, Simon would no doubt have had the woman put out of the house. To him she was a sinful woman, possibly a prostitute, who was to be pushed aside and ignored. People and churches without the heartbeat of Jesus have this attitude.

Jesus, knowing the thoughts of Simon, gave him a parable of two debtors. Then he reminded him that the woman as an outsider had really treated him better than he had as his host. She had become the willing servant in the forgiveness of her sins, which Jesus said were many.

Simon was concerned with being religiously proper, concerned not to become contaminated by being ever touched by such a person. Jesus was concerned with his mission of forgiveness, not willing that any should perish. Simon had no love, for he had not known what it was like to feel rejected and then forgiven and accepted. The woman was not forgiven because she loved much. Her great love showed that she was conscious of having been forgiven much.

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Sunday School Board to computerize editing

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board has announced plans for a computerized text management system for editorial and art design production of its 150 periodicals.

The system, to be installed in phases over a three-year period, has been purchased from Atex, Inc., a Kodak company.

Componets participating in the first phase of implementation are the youth curriculum and program sections in the Sunday school department, the youth/adult curriculum and art manuscript sections in the art department and the word processing section in the administrative services department. Installation

of equipment for the first phase is to be completed by early summer, according to James W. Clark, executive vice-president of the board.

"Text management will enable the Sunday School Board to make a giant step forward in its continued efforts to improve productivity and to serve Southern Baptists with efficiency and effectiveness," Clark said. "We will be able to do better work in less time in every phase of the editorial process."

Clark said the Sunday School Board's periodicals have combined circulations of more than 13 million, including distribution in 117 countries.

Church growth probe tries to 'close back door'

JOLIET, Ill. (BP)—Seeking to help "close the back door" through which new Southern Baptist churches leave the denomination by merger or death, the SBC Home Mission Board recently conducted the first of a series of New Church Growth Probe consultations.

Tom Sykes, associate director of the HMB's new church growth department, said the effort was designed to strengthen existing congregations by helping them develop strategies for the future. "We've been so busy trying to start new churches we haven't had time to help the ones we start to survive, to grow and mature," said Sykes, who led the

team of project consultants.

Sykes pointed out data provided by the Home Mission Board's research division has shown that in the last 10 years, about half of the missions started in the SBC will grow strong enough to become churches, and half will be lost by either disbanding or merging.

Since 1974, Southern Baptists have started 8,721 new church-type missions, according to a research report prepared by Rudee Boan of the HMB research division. During the same period, 3,908 (44.8 percent of the total) missions became churches. A total of 3,514 missions merged or disbanded.

Church role needed in aiding elderly

ATLANTA (BP)—The church can be an advocate of aging by taking the pro-active stance of providing services and information not only to the elderly but to their families, a Baylor University professor told an Atlanta audience recently.

Dennis Myers, professor of social work at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, spoke at the first National Conference on Aging sponsored by the family ministry department of the Sunday School Board.

Myers said the church can be an advocate for the needs of senior adults by helping persons plan for retirement, giving assistance in role-making, providing services and being informed about government and community services.

"What better place to meet the social and emotional needs of the elderly but in the church?" said Myers. "Persons in the church can be advocates of aging by being informed."

Myers believes senior adults trust persons with whom they are associated in churches. "Most senior citizens fail to utilize programs and services available for them because they don't understand how to receive the benefits or aren't aware that the services exist. Because they trust you they will listen to what you say."

Myers explained that in most cases an adult female child is the primary care-giver to an elderly person. "The church can provide support and assistance to the family

member who is feeling demands of several generations," he said.

Myers noted a church needs also to expand its senior adult ministry to the families of elderly persons who have been institutionalized.

"There are a lot of gray areas concerning resident care," he explained. "Whose responsibility is it to read letters to them (elderly persons in institutions), clip their nails, groom their hair, launder their personal items and help decorate their room?"

On a related issue, Myers said churches should take the lead in helping alter attitudes about retirement. "We must teach persons to view retirement as another career," he said. "This attitude would help them to incorporate work, education and leisure time into the new schedule."

Myers identified the acceptance of leisure time as one of the greatest problems associated with retirement. "We have associated usefulness with our jobs so long that people have difficulty accepting leisure time. It is hard for senior adults to learn to play because they have no role models."

Myers said he is optimistic churches can lead the way in making needed changes. "We can change stereotypes and eliminate the fear of growing old by preparing our children to live to be 90. We need to teach them to look at aging as an opportunity for all persons to continue living and utilizing all the gifts God has given us."

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