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January 3, 1985

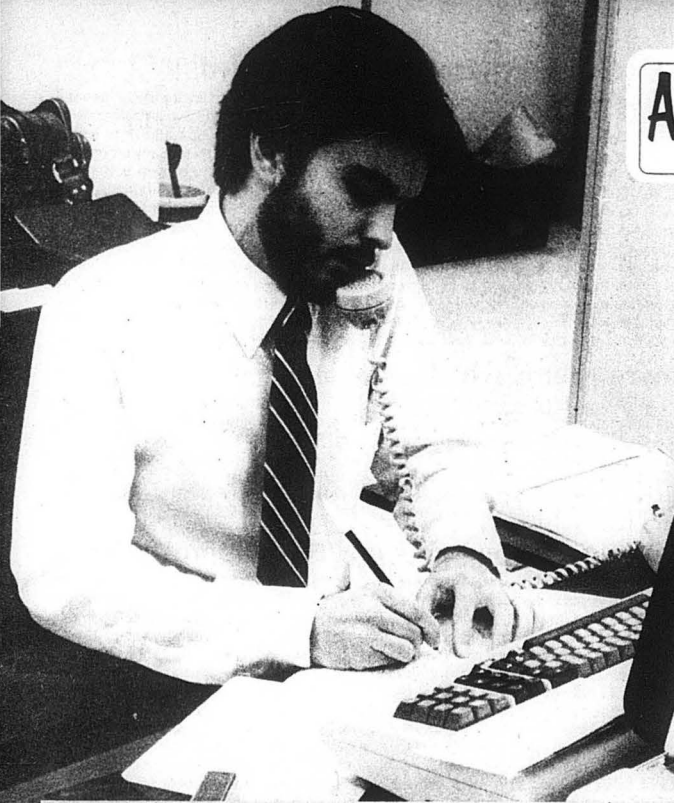
Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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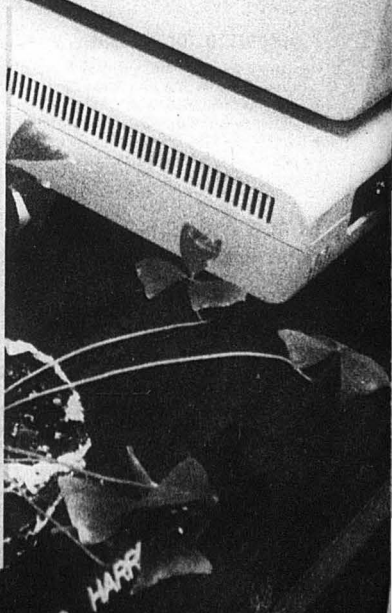
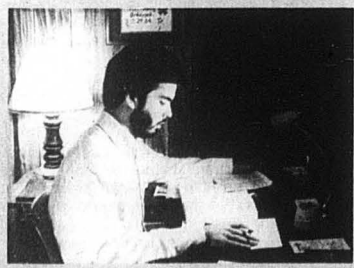
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January 3, 1985
Arkansas Baptist
NEWSMAGAZINE



SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

**Bivocationalism:
shape of the future?**
pp. 8-9



On the cover



ABN photo / Millie Gill

Though many may not realize it, fully one-fourth of the ministers in Southern Baptist churches work at jobs in addition to their church ministries. Bivocational pastors such as Steve Harrelson of North Point Church, Little Rock, still are far from the exception in Arkansas Baptist life. An article and photo spread on pp. 8-9 deal with the topic of bivocational pastors.

In this issue

7 preparing for revival

Key Baptist leaders from across the state of Arkansas gathered at Camp Paron Dec. 6-7 to acquaint themselves with what one man hopes will be an "earth-shaking awakening" in the U.S., the 1986 simultaneous revivals being planned under the theme, "Good News America, God Loves You."

12 nuts and bolts

Arkansas Baptists' Executive Board got down to work in its annual organizational meeting last month, electing committees and a new associate for the Evangelism Department. A complete Nominating Committee report appears on p. 14.

CUAG victory celebration scheduled

A "victory feast" celebrating the overwhelming defeat of Amendment 66, the ill-fated casino gambling proposal crushed in the November general elections, has been planned for Tuesday, Jan. 29, at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock.

Sponsored by the Christian Civic Foundation of Arkansas, the barbecue dinner is open to all who supported the grass-roots campaign to defeat the constitutional amendment which would have allowed casino gambling in 17 locations in and around Hot Springs.

Arkansas was one of only two states to

defeat legalized gambling proposals as voters in four states approved five gambling issues. More states adopted some form of legalized gambling in 1984 than in any other single year. Missouri voters approved both a state lottery and pari-mutuel gambling.

Proceeds from ticket sales will eliminate an outstanding debt of \$7,000 remaining from the campaign.

Tickets are available at \$10 each from CUAG's assistant campaign manager, Candice Whitmore, c/o Advice and Arts Plus, Suite 225, 1900 North Main, North Little Rock, AR 72114.

Boyce J-term schedule announced

"Interpreting the Parables" and "Contemporary Evangelism" will be the course offerings when Boyce Bible School opens its J-term in Little Rock Jan. 4.

Ralph Davis will teach "Interpreting the Parables" in three Friday class sessions from 6-10:30 p.m., Jan. 4, 11 and 18. W.T. Holland

will teach "Contemporary Evangelism" in three Saturday sessions, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Jan. 5, 12 and 19. The classes will be held at Arkansas Rehabilitation Institute at 12th and Wolfe Streets.

Contact Lehman Webb at 376-4791 for registration details.

Annie Armstrong gifts up; HMB approves 48

ATLANTA (BP)—Southern Baptists' gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions totaled more than \$24.7 million as of Dec. 7, about a 10 percent increase over the same period in 1983, board of directors for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board were told during their December meeting.

HMB President William G. Tanner told directors the board had received more than 85 percent of the AAEO goal for a total of \$24,762,776.61. The figure, more than \$2.2 million above the same period in 1983, "speaks well of our people, especially in these difficult economic times," said Tanner.

Tanner also told board members Cooperative Program funds for the board were about \$2 million under its 1983-84 allotment, though total SBC gifts through the Cooperative Program hit an all-time high. Tanner added the shortfall had been predicted and did not adversely affect the board's work during 1984.

In other business, board of directors ap-

pointed six missionaries, five missionary associates and eight church planter apprentices. Also, directors approved 18 people to receive field pastoral assistance and 11 mission pastors to receive assistance, including the first woman pastor to be approved for church pastoral assistance.

Debra Griffith-Woodberry of Raleigh, N.C., minister of education and youth for Ridge Road Baptist Church in Raleigh since 1980, was approved to receive board support. She will serve as pastor of Broadneck Baptist Mission in Annapolis, Md.

Appointed missionaries were Larry M. and Clista A. Fisher of Barstow, Calif., who will work in East Bay Association in San Leandro, Calif., where he will be director of missions; Henry Joe and Martha C. Rampey of Fort Worth, Texas, to be director of Christian service ministries in York Association, York, S.C.; and Terry M. and Elizabeth Robertson of Grand Island, N.Y., who will serve as director of missions for Frontier Association, Buffalo, N.Y.

Texas Baptists give \$3 million for state missions

DALLAS (BP)—For the first time, Texas Baptists have given more than \$3 million through the Mary Hill Davis Offering for state missions.

Receipts for the offering totaled \$3,041,732, a 13.98 percent increase over the \$2,668,486 received during the same period in 1983.

This is believed to be the largest amount ever received for a Southern Baptist state missions offering in one year.

The amount received thus far represents 95 percent of the 1984 goal of \$3,184,840. The largest amount ever received in a single year for the state missions offering was \$2,847,859 last year.

"It was only four year ago that we passed the \$2 million mark in giving to state missions, said Joy Fenner, executive director-treasurer for Texas WMU. "We are thankful that Texas Baptists have responded to the needs of our state in such a marvelous way."

Charles McLaughlin, director of the Texas Baptist State Missions Commission, said, "Giving over the 1984 Mary Hill Davis Offering goal would be an answer to prayer. It is significant that all of the money above the goal will go to help begin new work. But it also provides the vital momentum for Texas Baptists toward their \$30 million Centennial Offering goal to help build 2,000 new churches and missions in our state by 1990."



One of the basic precepts of Christianity is that we are all to care for and to assist others. Because of the sinful nature which remains, even in the lives of those who have had an experience with God, this is often difficult. But the scripture clearly teaches that we are our brother's keeper.

One of the great compliments paid to Christians of the Second Century was paid by an infamous man named Lucian. He was surnamed "the Blasphemer," because this Greek sophist and satirist attacked everything of value, including Christ. However, among his satirical writings on Christianity, he said, "It is incredible to see the ardour with which the people of that religion help each other in their wants. They spare nothing. Their first legislator put it into their heads that they are all brethren."

The early followers of Christ had captured one of the basic concepts of Christianity. They understood the responsibility of each Christian for others, regardless of the presence or absence of the usual ties that bind people together. They saw this responsibility as being expressed in human action.

The question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is not a new one. The first to raise this question was Cain. His birth was evidence to Eve of God's good pleasure, as she exclaimed, "I've got a man from the Lord" (Gen. 4:1). However, Cain's total monopoly of his parents was short-lived when the second son, Abel, came into the home.

Cain's responsibility in the family was to do the farming, while Abel's was to tend the sheep. Both brought offerings of sacrifice to God, but God was more pleased with Abel's offering (see Gen. 4:4-5). Resentment, hate and jealousy smoldered within Cain until he killed his brother.

God asked Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?" "I know not", he replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Thus, Cain compounded his error with lies.

This question has been repeated many times. Although most Christians would never verbalize it, we often portray it in our actions. Yet, Paul clearly stated, "As touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (1 Thess. 4:9).

Love is not validated without some definite expression. On the human level, to love someone and not express it is a contradiction. Love can and should be expressed verbally. But the greatest expression of love is in our actions.

Love on the divine level must find expression, also. God has told us in his Word that he loves us. But the supreme expression

of God's love is found in his actions. "God commendeth his love toward us," Paul writes, "in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

In all areas of life, we are our brother's keeper. This is true in both the physical and the spiritual areas. The Bible makes a clear connection between the two. Amos, perhaps more than any other Old Testament prophet, spoke out concerning oppression and the need to alleviate it.

One of the most vivid scenes painted by Christ was that of the last judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). In this, Jesus emphatically teaches that we are our brother's keeper. Our Lord's point is that to one who has had a personal experience with him, helping others will be a normal way of life.

Jesus lists a number of deeds things that are so simple anyone can do them. The true servant of Christ will, without thought, give a meal to the hungry and water to the thirsty, cheer the sick, welcome a stranger and visit the prisoners.

The true servants helped others, without realizing they were serving Christ. They helped their brothers because it was the normal thing for Christians to do. A dramatic contrast is found in the attitude of the wicked. They said, "If we had only known that it was you, Lord, we would gladly have helped. But we thought those who were in need were not worthy of help."

John, the beloved disciple, summarized the Christian's responsibility to others as he asked, "Whosoever hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother has need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (1 John 3:17).

The spiritual and ethical issues are familiar to all Christians. Do we have a responsibility for our unsaved neighbors? Do we have anything to say about civil rights? Do we have any obligation to work for honesty in business and integrity in government? Do Christians have an obligation to speak on war and peace? Do we have a word on separation of church and state? Whatever affects society is to be of concern to Christians.

The extension of God's kingdom is a spiritual chain. It starts with the one who has had a life-changing experience touching another. These touch two others. The four touch four others, until the ends of the earth have heard God's great love.

Cain's question, in his mind, required a negative answer. The answer of Christianity is that we definitely are our brother's keeper. God has granted to his children the joy of reaching out to others in Christian love.

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VOLUME 84

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One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant

Young man bites old dog

We have been told it is not news when a dog bites a man, but the reverse will get a front page headline. Not long ago I as told a story of unselfishness that ought to be given that kind of press prominence. The special interest in this story is that the person involved is a college student, all-too-often branded with the "What's-in-it-for-me?" image. The headline could be not merely "Man bites dog," but "Young man bites old dog."

Our director of student financial assistance at Ouachita, Harold Johnson, told me a remarkable story about a student who came in to complain that he is receiving too much financial assistance. It seems he properly receives certain kinds of income (Veterans Administration benefits, U.S. Army Reserve pay and Reserve Officers Training Corps wages) that do not count as financial aid and do not materially lessen his eligibility for

receiving assistance from other government programs for student aid.

This unusual young man came first to suggest that he reject the "Pell Grant" which he was entitled to and, instead, work at a student job at Ouachita rather than to receive so much gratuitous assistance. He was concerned that many students needed assistance more than he did. Mr. Johnson informed him that although it is possible to reject the grant, this would simply turn the money back to the Federal government and would not make more money specifically available for Ouachita students, while working for pay at Ouachita would actually reduce the amount of work assistance available for his fellow students.

They then discussed a different approach, accepting the grant but working in a campus job on a no-pay basis. This would save

Ouachita "College Work-Study" money which could be offered to another student who needed it. He liked the arrangement and accepted it with the assurance that he would be personally contributing to the financing of his college education at Ouachita and not taking away from other students.

At a time when college students often receive a bad press—and often deserve it—it is encouraging to have the opportunity to give a good press to a college student who deserves it. In an era when many wring their hands and lament the absence of the free lunch, it is refreshing to hear of the student who doesn't want a free lunch.

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University.



The Southern accent

Steve Lemke

Southern Baptists are fundamentalist Baptists

Some Baptist churches seek to portray themselves as more conservative than Southern Baptists by calling themselves "fundamentalist Baptists." A careful examination of their doctrine, however, reveals that there is little basic difference between their position and that of Southern Baptists.

The five basic tenets of fundamentalism, according to its classic statement in *The Fundamentals of Torrey, Chapman and Gordon*, were the verbal inerrancy of Scripture, the deity and virgin birth of Christ, the substitutionary atonement of Christ, the physical resurrection of Christ and his bodily return to earth. These five basic fundamental beliefs are all affirmed in the Baptist Faith and Message statement, as well as every Baptist confession we have on record. I know of no Southern Baptist church that would disbelieve any of these five fundamental beliefs. I know of no Southern Baptist college or seminary which teaches contrary to these important doctrines. Southern Baptists are, then, fundamentalist Christians.

It is important in these days of controversy among Southern Baptists about who is more conservative than whom that we do

not lose our sense of perspective. Compared with most other major Christian denominations in our land, Southern Baptists are distinctively conservative. Tell most people you are a Southern Baptist and they assume that you are a fundamentalist. That is our reputation and our heritage. It is always a legitimate concern that we maintain our convictions about these fundamental doctrines. May it ever be so that our name is synonymous with a conservative theology.

On the other hand, comparing conservative with conservative to see who is more conservative can degenerate into spiritual pride and pharisaism. We must be careful that in defending the faith we do not begin attacking each other. All Southern Baptists are conservative. We should therefore concentrate our efforts on saving a lost world, rather than engaging in spiritual one-upsmanship.

Let's share our conservative heritage and fundamentalist convictions in a spirit of Christian love!

Steve Lemke is professor of religion at Southern Baptist College.

Letter to the editor

Thanks, Baptist Press

Joe Ford, associate vice president of the HMB evangelism section, is quoted in the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* as saying that the Baptist Press coverage of our denominational controversy is "a direct cause for the decline in baptisms in our convention."

I find that most interesting. It seems to be that when things are going well, there are always more than enough people around to take credit. When things aren't going well, however, it is usually easy to find a scapegoat—in this case the Baptist Press. Mr. Ford evidently comes from the school of thought that says you need to shoot the messenger that brings the bad news.

I, for one, give thanks for our Baptist Press that trusts us enough to give us the facts. Keep it up, Baptist Press! We need you.
—Layne E. Smith, Fayetteville

Southern College annual rated 'first place'

Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge received a rating of "first place" for its 1984 yearbook, *The Southerner*, recently.

The evaluation came from American Scholastic Press Association of Wheatley, N.Y., which critiques college yearbooks throughout the country.

Student editor of the publication was Marsha Cooper of Almyra.

Don Moore

You'll be glad to know...

...Our challenge is most inspiring as we begin the new year of 1985. From the stand point of world evangelization, the need has never been greater! From the stand point of renewal in the church, surely the need has never been greater! From the standpoint of human suffering, has there been a more desperate hour of need? The heroic efforts and developments of modern man have not made the church less relevant. In fact, she becomes increasingly significant in the face of these mounting needs.



Moore

As we begin the new year, I pray that there will be a rededication of our lives to Jesus and his churches. The church must be at her best when the world is at its worst. What judgment must fall on us, if we fail in this hour. All of us, paid and volunteer leaders, need to rise to a new level of faithfulness in the positions we fill. Our financial support needs to be increased to our churches. Our prayer support and appreciation for our churches must increase. The vision of the churches reaching their community and touching a lost world must be intensified.

At this writing it appears, based on our projections, that there will have been a six percent decline in the number Southern Baptist churches have won and baptized in 1984. Hopefully, this year's Lottie Moon offering will see a reversal of a two-year trend in which we have fallen short of our foreign missions offering goal.

Declining mission support, declining conversions and increased strife are awfully strong indicators that the hand of God is being withdrawn from us as a group. You may venture a thousand reasons for the condition. There is one simple but painful solution. True repentance, in which love and obedience to Jesus Christ becomes our magnificent obsession, will allow God to bless as he desires.

Let's make 1985 the year we act upon 2 Chronicles 7:14. Otherwise, history may record we are accomplices in the greatest crime since Calvary, the squandering of resources and opportunity in a world of such need.

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

Two writers begin lesson commentaries

Two new writers begin this week with Sunday school lesson commentaries in "Lessons for Living."

Sandra Ann Hinkson begins with the Life and Work series lessons. The former Sandra Polos of North Little Rock, Hinkson is a homemaker and mother of two teenagers.

A graduate of the University of Central Arkansas, Hinkson is director of the Adult I Sunday School department at Markham Street Church, Little Rock and is a special worker for the ABSC Sunday School Department, where her husband, Ed, is assistant director.

George Domeresse begins writing the Bible Book series commentaries this week. Domeresse is director of missions for Clear Creek Association. He has previously serv-



Hinkson



Domeresse

ed as pastor of churches in Little Rock, Van Buren, Greenwood and Clarksville. He has served on the ABSC Executive Board.

He is married to the former Wanda Faye Woodard and has three children.



Woman's viewpoint

Lynda Rogers Burgess

Christians perspective

As an old year ends and a new year begins, most people find themselves making New Year's resolutions. I thought about that for awhile, and it became clear to me that as Christians we should be looking forward to a new year with anticipation. However, this would be the perfect time to look back on the old year and count our blessings. We have so much to be thankful for!

None of these blessings would be considered important by the world, but to someone who is beginning to view life a little differently—through the eyes of faith—the things which often seem mundane and unnoticed by secular society loom large on the list of blessings for those who have committed their lives to Jesus Christ.

First of all, I believe it is true that "the best things in life are free." Those things which are so often taken for granted, your husband's loving glance when you greet him at the door at the end of a long, hard day, your child's look of gratitude when you take the time to listen, the pleasure of preparing your

family's favorite meal on a cold winter's evening, the feeling of warmth and joy when you greet the Lord at the beginning of the day, the warmth and crackle of a log fire in the fireplace, these are the things which really make life worthwhile.

Everything in life takes on a different hue when we look through the eyes of faith. As Christians we should have a different perspective from the world. Everything we need is already provided. "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

My New Year's resolution? I resolve this year, Father, to learn to look at things through your eyes. Help me to take the time to appreciate the little things in life. Let me make a habit of counting my blessings all year 'round, not just once a year!

Lynda Rogers Burgess is a Hot Springs homemaker and freelance writer. She directs the Junior High Sunday School department at Park Place Church, Hot Springs.

John Havlik dies after bypass surgery

ATLANTA (BP)—John F. Havlik, retired director of evangelism education and writing for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, died Dec. 10 of a heart attack following quintuple bypass surgery a week earlier.

Havlik, 67, had worked with the nationwide Baptist mission board for 17 years before his retirement in March 1982. Previously, he was director of evangelism for Baptist state conventions in Louisiana and Kansas, was adjunct professor of evangelism at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., and was pastor of con-

gregations in Texas, Missouri and Kentucky.

The native of Milwaukee, Wis., was a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Kan. Survivors include his wife, Anna Mae Havlik of Atlanta; a daughter, Mrs. Brenda Roach of Atlanta and two sisters and a brother in Oklahoma.

The family has requested contributions be made to the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board hunger relief fund in lieu of flowers.

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

people



Overton
two children, Christina and Adam.

Kenneth Overton is serving as pastor of the Arkansas City Church, moving there from the Wilmot Church. He is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Overton and his wife, Hope, are parents of

Millrene (Mrs. Jack) Atkins died Dec. 17 at age 57. A former missionary to Guatemala, she was a native of Camden and a member of First Church, Shirley. She is survived by her husband Jack E. Atkins; a son, Jack D. Atkins of Pine Bluff; a daughter, Mary Margaret Atkins

50th anniversary—*Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith, celebrated its golden anniversary with special services Dec. 14-16. Former pastors speaking to the congregation were James Pleitz, now of Park Cities Church, Dallas; Lloyd Cloud, now of Ouachita Baptist University; Don Moore, now executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention; and Clifford Palmer, now pastor of First Church, Springdale. At right, Pastor James Bryant takes a moment after morning worship to counsel with a man considering church membership. In 50 years, the congregation has grown from 20 charter members to nearly 4,000 resident members. They have built three sanctuaries and six educational buildings. Former pastor Moore, preaching in the Sunday morning service, challenged the church to set faith goals and maintain their commitment to fellowship and teaching the Word of God. "Churches are built, souls are saved and disciples are made by people who pay a price," Moore reminded the congregation.*

of Little Rock; a brother, William J. Cook of Camden; two sisters, Mrs. Tom Watts of Camden and Sarah Margaret Lewis of Houston, Texas; and two grandchildren.

Isaac Newton Gates, a member and former pastor of First Church, Morrilton, died Dec. 17 at age 73. Born at England, he is survived by three sons, John Gates of Georgetown, Calif., and Jim and Melvin Gates of Little Rock; a daughter, Martha Stobaugh of Center Ridge; a brother, Millard Gates of Ferndale; seven grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

Charles Belknap of Monticello will begin serving Jan. 6 as interim pastor of the Dermott Church.

Darryl Kilker is serving as pastor of the Guernsey Church at Hope. He was recently ordained to the ministry by the Hickory Street Church in Texarkana.

Ken Jansen has joined the staff of the Sylvesterino Church at Fouke as music director.

Roy Lewis of Little Rock is serving as interim pastor of Pleasant Hills Church in the Sardin community.

J.D. Webb resigned Dec. 30 as pastor of the Oak Grove Church at Ashdown.

briefly

Harrison First Church recently voted to build an outdoor recreational complex for family sports activities and to purchase a 25-passenger bus. Ralph Bowers is complex committee chairman.

Corinth Church at Hamburg recently ordained Don Walker to the ministry.

Judsonia First Church will hold a lay-renewal weekend Feb. 15-17 with G. B. Hambrick as coordinator.



ABN photo / Mark Kelly

bookshelf

Frustration

by Frances Carroll
(Prentice-Hall; Englewood Cliffs, NJ)

For all Christians who don't want to give into feelings of depression, helplessness or anxiety, here's advice on ways to alleviate frustration. In addition to learning what the Scriptures teach about frustration, readers will discover how to use the resources God has provided to win the battle against this dreaded enemy.

Six Arkansans graduate from Southern, Boyce

Six Arkansans graduated Dec. 14 from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Boyce Bible School in Louisville, Ky.

Among 225 persons honored in Southern's 154th commencement were **Sharon Ann Odom** of Greenbrier, master of arts in Christian education; **Raymond Duke Wheeler** of Hughes, **Alan James Lynch** of Conway and **Robert Lynn Turner** of Blytheville, all receiving the master of divinity degree.

Danny G. Brown of Clinton and **William Thomas Neal** of Benton received diplomas in Christian ministry from Boyce Bible School. (Photos not available for four grads.)



Odom



Wheeler

Workshop prepares leaders for simultaneous revivals

by J. Everett Sneed

The annual Evangelism Workshop was held at Camp Paron Dec. 6-7, 1984. The purpose of the workshop was to prepare associational evangelism directors, directors of missions and other key individuals to train leaders for the 1986 simultaneous "Good News America, God Loves You" revivals.

The kickoff training was provided for the 54 participants by Richard Harris, director of mass evangelism for the Home Mission Board, Atlanta, Ga.; Clarence Shell, ABCS director of evangelism; Glendon Grober, evangelism associate; and Floyd Tidsworth, ABCS director of church extension.

Dr. Harris said, "Some believe revival meetings are on their way out in America. But a study of the Uniform Church Letters shows that the number of revivals conducted by churches are actually increasing.

"Although revivals are not utilized as effectively as they should be," he continued, "they are of vital importance because they focus on the saved being revived and the lost being reached for Christ."

Harris said the simultaneous revivals could provide another "earth-shaking awakening" in America. "The keys," he said, "are to believe God for a supernatural work and aggressively share Christ. This means preparation in prayer and methodology."

Shell said that the strength of preparation will depend on the persons enlisted as associational chairmen. He listed a number of qualifications for the Good News America Steering Committee chairmen. Shell said that

the chairman should be one who (1) is a committed Christian and has a keen interest in evangelism; (2) has administrative gifts; (3) is willing to work hard; (4) is able to motivate and lead people; and (5) is willing to give his time to assure success with his particular assignment.

Shell said that there are a few important dates every association should place on its calendar. The associational Good News committee members should be enlisted immediately. From January to March the associational committee should receive and study the Good News associational guide.

"One of the keys to a good revival is preparation," Shell said. In May state Sunday School Training Clinics for evangelistic People Search and scripture distribution will be conducted. Rallies to prepare and encourage church members to be involved will be held in August and September. The People Search and scripture distribution will actually take place on Oct. 20-26.

Shell said, "The response of the directors of missions and evangelism leaders in the state was tremendous." Everyone present committed themselves to prepare for a great spiritual awakening.

Harris concluded the workshop by challenging participants to "Pray and plan as if everything depended on God. And to work as if everything depended on men."

J. Everett Sneed is editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed



Richard Harris, director of mass evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board keynoted a Dec. 6-7 workshop designed to prepare associational leaders to train local leadership for the 1986 simultaneous revival emphasis. "Good News America, God Loves You." Harris (left) is pictured above with Clarence Shell, ABCS evangelism director, and Glendon Grober, evangelism associate.

SBC fights add frustration to missionaries' job

WACO, Texas (BP)—Frustration is built into foreign missions.

There are not enough volunteers to match personnel needs. Budgets shift frequently under the stress of inflation and currency changes. The distance from home is measured both in miles and in time.

Both Southern Baptist missionaries Al and Peggy Cummins felt those frustrations on the mission field in Nakuru, Kenya.

When they returned to the United States on furlough earlier this year and found out about the fussing and bickering in the Southern Baptist Convention and threatened cutbacks in Cooperative Program giving, they became angry.

On the mission field, the Cummins didn't understand what was happening within the convention back home. "We really didn't have any inside information," Cummins said. "But I hadn't been home a week

until I began to hear the charges of churches withholding Cooperative Program money. You know, that's the lifeway of doing things."

Cummins said he finds it unusual attempts to stop the flow of Cooperative Program dollars haven't hurt anyone but the mission enterprise. He said it is like the old saying: "the ones we love most, we hurt most."

Said Cummins, "I know there's not a one of those folks out there that would deliberately do this to hurt missions. But somehow they've got it in their heads that they're going to hurt a seminary or a college. But you know, those places have got millions of dollars. The only ones I've seen so far that have been cut up have been those that are out there trying to do the work of the Lord on the field."

The very thing that pulls Southern Baptists together is mission causes around the world, Mrs. Cummins said. "That cements our rela-

tionships, and yet it's the very thing that's suffering by all this bickering. That's very hard to take. You've got your own problems in adjusting your life and trying to solve your own convention problems abroad, and then you've got this underlying insecurity from home. It makes it hard.

"I'm astounded at Christianity at times, especially during this very difficult time in the world," Cummins said. "We've got 40,000 people dying a day, and yet the most important thing we've got going over here is fussing. You know, God Almighty is going to hold us accountable for this like we've never seen before. I'm surprised God hasn't settled this already.

"When you have an issue this tremendous, of life and death to so many people, and when there is so much shouting and tumult going on over here so that you can't hear the cries, then Satan has won."

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Bivocational pastors: A rising tide; the wave of the future?

by Betty J. Kennedy

It may be too early to speak of a trend, but the signs are there. Southern Baptists are moving toward more and more bivocational ministers.

Statistics gathered by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to portray the typical SBC church show that approximately 25 percent of churches have a pastor who has employment apart from the church.

Figures gathered from Uniform Church Letters for 1983 show 9,026 churches out of a total of 36,531 reporting bivocational pastors. In Arkansas, the percentage is slightly higher—352 churches out of 1,266 have pastors also employed outside the church. That's 27.8 percent.

The HMB's planning research services department, under the direction of Phillip B. Jones, used the Uniform Church Letters to draw a picture of the church led by a bivocational pastor and compared those churches to congregations served by "full-time pastors." The results may be surprising.

The fact is that the church with a bivocational pastor compares very favorably to the others in growth and baptisms.

Though churches in the state not having bivocational pastors tend to be about two and one-half times as large as bivocational pastor congregations, the bivocational church compares well in growth of resident members. The bivocational churches grew 5.1 percent in resident members for 1980 and 1983, while non-bivocational churches had 3.0 percent more resident members for the same period.

In baptisms, the bivocational-led congregations varied from full-time churches only slightly—3.4 baptisms per 100 church members for the non-bivocational church and 3.2 where the pastor is bivocational.

The image of the bivocational pastor and the bivocational church needs to change, explains Arkansas Executive Director Don Moore.

"When we offered a group of bivocational pastors some help in understanding retirement programs, we found many were past that point. They wanted information on tax sheltering their other income."

Dr. Moore has been committed to the state convention helping the bivocational pastor and has tried to tailor the help to the pastor's schedule. Association-wide meetings on Saturdays have been held, with the cooperation of the directors of missions. It was at these meetings that

Moore discovered the other vocations of these pastors include teaching college and owning businesses, as well as farming, clerking and building.

"Many are doing as well financially as the one-vocation pastor of many of our small churches," Moore concluded. It is the ministering skills where many bivocational pastors have requested help at these meetings, Moore reported.

"At these meetings, we not only shared information about the state convention and the helps we offer the small church," he explained, "but we got them to complete a questionnaire about needs they want us to meet in their ministry, personally."

"One pastor told me he thought that meeting was the first time anyone at the Baptist Building even acted like they knew the bivocational pastor was out there," Moore related.

The state convention will continue to try to get bivocational pastors to explain their special needs and gear some meetings to their schedules, according to Moore. He is aiming at a weekend fall retreat and may even try to arrange to have another area pastor fill the pulpit for that bivocational pastor so he and his wife can attend.

In whatever the state convention offers to help the bivocational pastor, Moore likely will be trying to get across the idea that the "shared ministry" concept is an idea whose time is come. The projection of a critical oversupply of trained ministers for places of service in the next few years leads Moore to advise young ministers to nurture a second vocation to provide a livelihood while they minister.

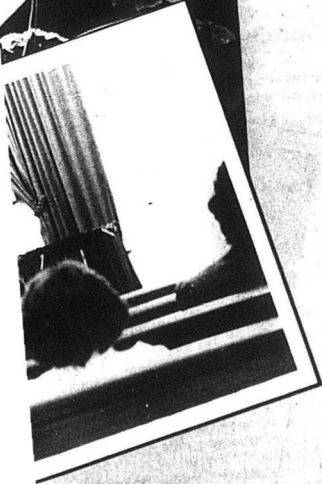
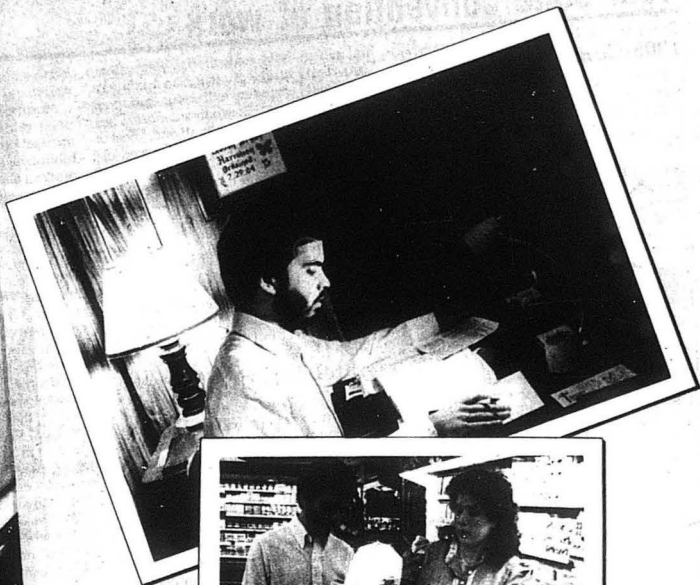
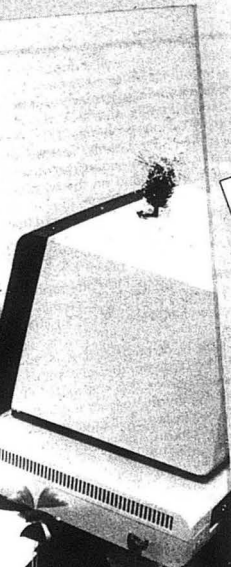
Because the two-vocation, rural, small church pastor is becoming less and less the exception in Arkansas and the entire Southern Baptist Convention, the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* is making plans to focus on the bivocational pastor during 1985. Features, how-to articles, success stories from these churches and even more on the bivocational trend in ministry are helps being readied for the year. This week's cover features the many roles of a young Arkansas bivocational pastor.

Suggestions for these helps are welcome and should be sent to J. Everett Sneed, editor of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, at P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203.



ABN photos / Millie Gill

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



On the cutting edge—Bivocational ministers like Steve Harrelson, pastor of North Point Church, Little Rock, are on the cutting edge of ministry in Arkansas and the Southern Baptist Convention. Nearly 28 percent of Arkansas' Baptist churches employ bivocational ministers, and the percentage is increasing. Harrelson, who has attended the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and Boyce Bible School, is employed in the central credit office of Sears, Roebuck and Co. in Little Rock. His wife is the former Cindy Passmore.

Your state convention at work

Sunday School

1985 Conferences

Eleven leadership conferences are scheduled for Glorieta, Ridgecrest and Winona Lake Conference Centers for 1985:



Ratton

Glorieta, June 7-13, June 13-19, June 19-25, June 25-July 1, Aug. 19-23 (Small Sunday School Week) and Oct. 21-25. Large Sunday School Week); Ridgecrest, July 13-19, July 19-25, July 25-31 and July 31-Aug. 6; Winona Lake, Ind., Aug. 5-9.

The schedule for the first four conferences at Glorieta, and the first four conferences at Ridgecrest begins with supper on the first day and concludes with breakfast on the last day.

The Aug. 19-23 Glorieta conference will be targeted to churches with a Sunday School enrollment under 150. The Oct. 21-25 Glorieta conference will be targeted to churches with more than 1,500 enrolled in Sunday School or an average attendance of 750 or more.

For reservation information, write to: Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, Box 8, Glorieta, NM 87535 or Ridgecrest Conference Center, P.O. Box 128, Ridgecrest, NC 28770. Information about the Winona Lake Conference can be secured from the Conference Center Division, Baptist-Sunday School Board, 127 Ninth Avenue, North, Nashville, TN 37234.

All conference reservations should be mailed on Feb. 1, 1985. — **Pat Ratton, preschool consultant**

Family and Child Care Our children

"Let me tell you about my children", is a phrase often used to begin an enjoyable conversation between friends, or sometimes, even strangers. We parents love to talk about our children.

Arkansas Baptists "parent" about 400 children per year through the ministry of Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services. Many more are helped through our other ministries. Our children come to us with needs which have developed in their lives due to neglect, abuse, uncaring and family dissolution. Our staff wants to help them cope with these realities and to develop a strong spiritual foundation on which to build their lives.

We received a refreshing letter this week from a physician who treats our children.

"I just wanted to express to you how much you and the Home have impressed me and my staff over the years. Your work with these youngsters is extraordinary, for I continually

find all of them exceptional youngsters. They demonstrate a caring and concern that occurs so often with your group of children that it is more than accident. They are mannerly and disciplined and, most of all, they seem happy. I have expressed my observations to scores of people over the years, but am not sure I've ever told you and your staff. You should all be proud of your accomplishments with these children.

"Please relay my sentiments to your staff for they are as impressive as are the children."

Aren't you happy to hear this about "our" children? I am. — **Johanny G. Biggs, executive director**

Church Training Media Library Conference

The annual Church Media Library Conference will be Jan. 7, 1985, at the Central Baptist Church in North Little Rock. James



Jackson

Rose and Jack Lewis, consultants with the Sunday School Board's Media Library Department, will lead workshops at the conference.

The conference will include two workshops: "The Media Library Serving the Church" and "BTN Workshop".

James Rose will lead the media library workshop and Jack Lewis the BTN workshop. "The Media Library Serving the Church" is designed to help improve the church's media library ministry and extend its services to more church leaders and members. The "BTN Workshop" will overview BTN (Baptist Telecommunications Network) as an educational and inspirational tool for the local church. It will interpret resources for using BTN effectively, preview portions of selected BTN messages, present BTN's educational benefits to the church. This conference will answer questions for churches considering subscribing to BTN.

Conference sessions are scheduled for 9:30-11:45 a.m. and 1:15-4:45 p.m. Monday, Jan. 7, 1985. The conference is sponsored by the Church Training Department. — **Gerald Jackson, associate**

Christian Life Council Aliteracy

The head of the Library of Congress in Washington recently called illiteracy and aliteracy the "twin menaces" of democracy. Illiteracy is the inability to read. Aliteracy is being able but unwilling to read. There is a third menace: lack of communication

between people. There is a tendency to be suspicious of others we don't know.

Most people know how to read so, at this point in time, aliteracy and lack of communication are serious problems. This is in reference to human relations. Instead of reading and coming to conclusions on our own, too often we depend on the opinion of others.

We must willingly and regularly read the Word of God. We should read the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. It's not perfect; neither are we! Read good Christian literature. This should include biographies of great Christians and the accounts of significant mission movements in Christian history.

Our big lack of communication is not with people. The large number of committee meetings and one-on-one confrontation attest to that. We ought to communicate with God. The one place Jesus commends prayer is in the "closet." We have no right getting upset with the lack of prayer anywhere else if we don't spend time alone daily with God.

Wounds on the Southern Baptist body would be healed if we were more spiritually literate and communicative with God. — **Bob Parker, director**

Church Training Training for youth leaders

Many exciting things are happening across our state and convention related to discipleship training for youth. The heart of this excitement is DiscipleLife, a growth plan for Youth Church Training.



Faulkner

Youth leaders, staff members and pastors will have an opportunity to learn more about DiscipleLife during the Area Youth/Adult Church Training Workshops, Jan. 21-24. Specific training related to conducting Youth Church Training, organization, use of literature, shared leadership and much more will be led by experienced leaders in state and church staff positions.

Each workshop will begin at 7:00 and end by 9:00 p.m. Choose a date and location most convenient for you.

Jan. 21: Elmdale Church, Springdale; First Church, Mountain Home; Walnut St. Church, Jonesboro; First Church, Blytheville; or Immanuel Church, El Dorado.

Jan. 22: First Church, Harrison; First Church, Batesville; First Church, Forrest City; Beech Stret Church, Texarkana, or South Side Church, Ft. Smith.

Jan. 24: Second Church, Russellville;

South Side Church, Pine Bluff; First Church, Monticello; First Church, Hot Springs, or Olivet Church, Little Rock.

Plan now to participate in this significant training opportunity. For more information, contact the Church Training Department. — **Bill Falkner, associate**

Evangelism

Witness Commitment Day

It's wonderful to be alive in 1985. Our prayer is that you will have a very happy new year. As we approach this new year, our minds and hearts reach out to the multitudes of people in our communities who do not know our Lord and Savior. Our best statistics show that we have nearly one million evangelistic prospects in Arkansas.

Jan. 13 has been designated as Witness Commitment Day in our churches. This will be a wonderful opportunity for you to make a personal commitment to help someone come to know Jesus.

Each pastor has been challenged to preach a personal witnessing message on that day. He will call you to make a commitment to introduce a friend to Christ. I hope that you will hear again the words of our Lord as he states to his church, "Ye shall be my witnesses".

Our number one goal in Arkansas Evangelism is to share Christ with every lost person. This will only be achieved as our lay people become involved in personal witnessing.

I hope that each church will set a goal

to win and baptize 10 percent more than last year. You can help fulfill Bold Mission Thrust by involving yourself in personal evangelism. — **Clarence Shell, director**

Missions

Empire builders

Being new as a state staff member gives one a certain amount of unusual freedom for a time. So it is with this column, since



Tiddsworth

I do not know anybody like this (yet, and I hope never) in Arkansas.

A great barrier to new work may be the pastor who wants to build an empire for himself. It is all right for people to be brought into the kingdom just so it is through his church.

His church may be located in the middle of 20,000 people. Five hundred of them are involved in his church. But he does not want another new Baptist congregation started "on his field."

Furthermore, down the road 10 miles is another community of 3,000. Empire Builder has three families coming from there to his church. According to him, the Associational Missions Development Program (Missions Committee) must not consider a new work there because it is "his field." (A church in the neighborhood could reach up to 20 percent of the population.)

Usually the majority of Empire Builder's church members do not feel as he does. But he often uses the phrase "our church feels."

Let us pray "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." — **Floyd Tiddsworth, church extension director**

Stewardship

Celebrity asks for favor

Why would a well-known TV star write me a letter? I found out when I opened the envelope. An institution had enlisted the



Walker

services of the celebrity to solicit funds. She wanted me to give \$10 or even more.

A TV preacher made an emotional appeal for my support. In return for my gift, I was promised a certificate and a small gift. The cause was worthy and his appeal honest.

Just a few weeks ago, our church asked us to sign our commitment cards for 1985. Planned Growth in Giving will encourage Baptist church members to set 15-year vision goals.

Of the three above requests, which one has the most appeal and is in keeping with the teachings of the scriptures? The answer will determine our giving patterns for 1985.

The local church budget is the best channel for believers' tithes and offerings. Members determine ministries when they approve the church budget. The church is obligated to follow the wishes of the members.

1985 will probably witness a cutback in government services and increased demands on local churches to meet human needs. Churches will continue to respond to world hunger. This is a good year to start a new trend, upward, in percentage giving, forever remembering the Bible's emphasis on tithes and offerings. — **James A. Walker, director**

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Executive Board elects committees, employs evangelism associate

by J. Everett Sneed

ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed

The Executive Board of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention convened on Dec. 13 at Geyer Springs First Church, Little Rock. In the annual organizational meeting, the major items of business were the election of committees and the employment of an associate in the Evangelism Department.

Larry Sherron was employed to take the position formerly filled by Wes Kent, who has gone back to seminary to complete his degree.

The board, also, voted to provide Sherron a \$5,000 interest-free loan to assist in the purchase of a house in the Little Rock area. These interest-free loans are provided for new professional employees only and must be paid back in a two and one-half year period.

The Executive Board, also, voted to accept the nominations of the convention Nominating Committee for two unexpired terms. State Nominating Committee Chairman Eddie Simpson, pastor of Lonoke Church, presented the names of D.P. Wilcox, to fill a 1986 term for Faulkner Association, and Leonard Williams, to fill a 1985 term for Big Creek Association. Both men were elected by acclamation.

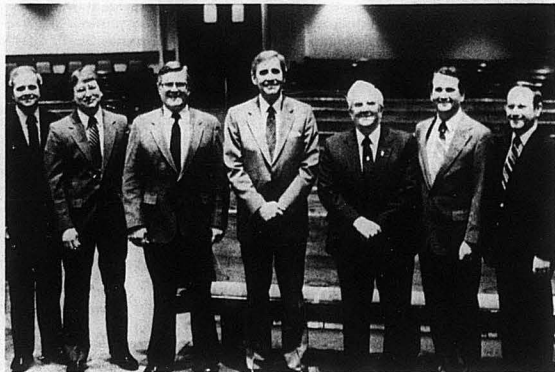
When a vacancy occurs on any board, the state Nominating Committee nominates an individual to complete the unexpired term. The Executive Board, which serves as the legal trustee of the convention between annual sessions, elects those nominated for the balance of the unexpired term.

Program Committee Chairman Jim Adams, pastor of Beech Street First Church, Texarkana, appointed two committees. On the Retreat Center Committee are Bonnie Margason, Al Sparkman and Bruce Tippitt.

Those appointed for the Pastors' Retreat Committee are Rich Kincl, A. Hilton Lane, S. Mikael Carrier, and John Matthews.

The Program Committee, also, recommended that the 1985 state convention close with the Wednesday evening session, as it did in the 1984 annual meeting. The recommendation was adopted unanimously.

Executive Director Don Moore opened the



Members of the Executive Committee of the Executive Board of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention for 1985 are (l to r) Jon Stubblefield, Joe Statton, Don Moore, Jim Adams, James Shults, Allen Thrasher and Eddie McCord, chairman.

board meeting by saying, "There are a number of positive things to report, but one which is not is the decline in baptisms." He stated that baptisms at this point are down 896 from last year. Last year, we baptized a total of 1,315. Dr. Moore encouraged prayer in this matter.

Moore reported that two churches—Calvary, Hope, and First, Mena—would provide four matching scholarship funds each for ministerial students who were unable to find sponsoring churches. Under the new policy adopted by the Executive Board in August 1984, a ministerial student must find a church which would sponsor him by providing \$100 each semester toward his ministerial scholarship of \$350 per semester. The wife of a ministerial student must have a sponsor which would provide \$50 each semester in order to receive a scholarship of \$175 each semester. The reduction of \$100 and \$50 for ministerial students and their

wives became necessary in order to avoid depletion of the ministerial scholarship fund.

Executive Board President Eddie McCord, pastor of Highland Heights Church, Benton, told the board that this is an important year with the emphasis on Planned Growth in Giving. He said that it was an honor to be on the board but it was, also, a great responsibility.

McCord promised to do his utmost to preside fairly and to see that all members address the chair at all times when speaking. He said, "We may have our differences of opinion on some matters, but these will be minimized, if we all pray before coming to each meeting."

Following the meeting, an orientation was held for new trustees of all the agencies, institutions and the Executive Board.

J. Everett Sneed is editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

(See Nominating Committee report on p. 14.)

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- Springdale, Elmdale Church
- Mt. Home, First Church
- Jonesboro, Walnut Street Church
- Blytheville, First Church
- El Dorado, Immanuel Church

Tuesday, Jan. 22, 1985

- Ft. Smith, South Side Church
- Harrison, First Church
- Batesville, First Church
- Forrest City, First Church
- Texarkana, Beech Street Church

Thursday, Jan. 24, 1985

- Russellville, Second Church
- Pine Bluff, South Side Church
- Monticello, First Church
- Hot Springs, First Church
- Little Rock, Olivet Church

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Executive Board Nominating Committee Report

Operating Committee, James Shults, chairman

1985

Bernard Beasley (Dist. 2)
Jere Mitchell (Dist. 1)
Ferrell Morgan (Dist. 4)

1986

Nina Hamilton (Dist. 7)
Jimmy Shults (Dist. 8)
Atherton Hiatt (Dist. 3)

1987

Bill Burnett (Dist. 6)
Cary Heard (Dist. 5)

Executive Board President, Eddie McCord

Convention President, Jon Stubblefield

Program Committee, Jim Adams, chairman

1985

Jimmy Burks
Pete Crager
Rick Erwin
Bill Ferren
Walter McNew
Melvin Thrash
Emil Williams
Rich Kincl
Russell Burbank
Bryan Moery
Bonnie Margason
Clyde Glazener

1986

Marquita Butcher
Alfred Gallent
Klois L. Hargis
Doris King
A. Hilton Lane
H.D. McCarty
Robert McDaniel
James Newman
Ben Rowell
Al Sparkman
Harold Stephens
Nelson Wilhelm
Tate Woodruff

1987

Jim Adams
Sardis Bever
Norma Lee Bowers
S. Mikael Carrier
Ron Ford
Jimmy Garner
M.M. Hill
Thomas Hinson
Ted Houston
Norman Lewis
John Matthews
Herman McCormick
Ed North
Steve Patterson
Troy Prince
Ted Richardson
Bob Stender
Bruce Tippit

Finance Committee, Joe Statton, chairman

1985

Randall Cross
Betty Gibson
Bill Gresham
Billy Hammonds
Helen Henson
Carl Kluck
Captain Lovell
Ray Meador
George O'Neal
Ron Raines
Leonard Williams
Bob Wilson
James Wilson
Leonard Williams

1986

George Domerese
Don Elliott
Gary Fulton
Curtis Mathis
Charles Osborne
Ken Price
Dorothy Ritter
Keith Robbins
Gerald Taylor
Dale Thompson
Allen Thrasher
John Wikman
Dillard Miller

1987

Billy Boyd
Winfred Bridges
Dennis Dodson
Charles Fager
James Gattis
Clytee Harness
Milton James
Greg Kirksey
Maxine Murphy
Eugene Ray
John Ross
Paul Sanders
Joe Statton
Mark Tolbert
James Weedman
D.P. Wilcox

Executive Committee, Eddie McCord, chairman

Eddie McCord, Executive Board president
Jon Stubblefield, Convention president
Allen Thrasher, Nominating Committee chairman
Jim Adams, Program Committee chairman
Joe Statton, Finance Committee chairman
James Shults, Operating Committee chairman

Nominating Committee, Allen Thrasher, chairman

1985

Ray Meador

1986

Allen Thrasher
Gerald Taylor

1987

Jim Adams
Dennis Dodson

Christian Life Council, Jim Burks, chairman

1985

Jim Burks
Emil Williams
James Wilson

1986

Harold Stephens

1987

Norma Lee Bowers
Clyde Glazener
Joe Statton

International

Signs of new life

by Randy Maxwell, West Church, Batesville

Basic passage: John 4:39-54

Focal passage: John 4:39-42; 46-54

Central truth: True commitment results in God's blessings but occurs only when we place our trust in Jesus as the Savior of the world.

In the events which occurred in Samaria, we find a pattern for today as the gospel is spread and individuals discover who Jesus really is.

First, the Samaritans were introduced to Christ by the woman whose eyes had been opened to the reality of Jesus' deity. We vividly see here the importance of our Christian witness. As Paul asked, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" God cannot deliver his message to those who have never heard it unless there is someone to deliver it.

Once the Samaritans had been introduced to Christ, they sought his company by asking him to remain there for awhile. It is true that a man must be introduced to Christ, but it is equally true that once he has been introduced, he must himself make that commitment of faith. Others may lead us to the friendship of Christ, but we must claim and enjoy that friendship ourselves.

As we take that leap of faith, there comes that tremendous discovery which in turn leads to surrender. The Samaritans discovered Jesus to be more than a prophet, an expert psychologist and ever more than a good example. They discovered him to be the Savior. Jesus not only reveals our imperfections and demonstrates the way we ought to live, Jesus rescues us from the evil and hopeless situation in which we find ourselves in our natural state. Indeed, he breaks the chains that bind us to the past and provides a presence and a power that enables us to meet the future.

In the story of the courtier, we find this royal official swallowing his pride by hastening 20 miles to beg a favor from a carpenter. Yet this official knew Jesus was more than a carpenter, and he refused to be discouraged when Jesus tested his earnestness.

Because this man's faith was sincere, Jesus honored that faith by healing the man's son. Only when we take Jesus at his word and walk by faith, will we realize the full blessings that our Savior has for each of us, his children.

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Life and Work

Seeing Jesus as Savior

by Sandy Hinkson, Markham Street Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: John 1:35-51

Focal passage: John 1:35-39, 43-49

Central truth: Jesus can be seen as Savior through other Christians, the scripture and Jesus himself.

Looking at these verses in John, we see John the Baptist pointing to Jesus and declaring him to be the Savior. In verse 36, John says "Behold the Lamb of God!" Immediately two of John's disciples that were with him left to follow Jesus. How well their actions spoke of John and his leadership. John had been sent to prepare the way for the Savior, and now he was pointing his followers to Jesus.

As believers and witnesses of God's redemptive love, we need to point others to Jesus. Sometimes we substitute leading people to a Sunday School class or a church for leading them to a personal saving relationship with Christ. Once John the Baptist believed in Jesus, he directed his two followers to Jesus, who in turn shared their faith with their immediate circle of loved ones. Statistics show us that few people accept Christ as Savior without first having someone share a Christian witness.

The scriptures were used by John the Baptist and Philip as they shared about Jesus. If we read and study the scriptures today, we too can use the Word to lead someone to Christ. Revelation of Christ as our Savior and conviction of our need of a personal relationship with Christ can be acquired as we study the scriptures and as we lead others to do the same.

Jesus revealed himself to Nathanael (vv. 47-49). As Jesus shared with Nathanael his knowledge of Nathanael's character and activities prior to their encounter, Nathanael's doubts and skepticism gave way to faith and belief. Today Jesus reveals himself to us through the person of the Holy Spirit. We, too, can have a personal encounter with Jesus.

The normal attitude of a Christian is to want to be involved in helping others see Jesus as Savior.

Are you normal?

If not, why not accept the challenge of Reach 5 in '85 and begin to share your personal testimony and the scriptures with some one in need of a Savior?

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Bible Book

John's birth announced and accomplished

by George W. Domesere, DOM, Clear Creek Association

Basic passage: Luke 1:1-80

Focal passage: Luke 1:1-4; 13-25; 76-80

Central truth: John the forerunner prepared the way of the Messiah.

Luke addresses his gospel to Theophilus, a person unknown to us. There are indications that it was written especially for Gentiles. The writer takes pains to explain Jewish customs and sometimes substitutes Greek names for Hebrew. Verse 4 is a key verse in which Luke declares his intent and purpose to Theophilus and to us that we might know the certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed.

The angel Gabriel appears to Zacharias the priest as he ministers in the temple and announces to him that his lifelong prayer has been answered. Elizabeth is to bear him a son. He is told to name his son John and that there will be joy and gladness at his birth. But because he is old and Elizabeth is well-stricken in years, he doubts God. The price of his doubting God was that he would be dumb and not able to speak from that day until the day of the circumcision of John. When we doubt God, we shall not be able to speak for him effectively.

When Zacharias wrote, "His name is John," he became a mouthpiece for God. He was filled with the Holy Ghost, praised God and prophesied. There was great joy and victory when he was finally able to speak again. He prophesied, "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way" (v. 76).

We should learn that God can and does do what seems impossible to us. He has as much power now as then. John was not to use strong drink or wine in order that he might best do the service that God had for him. Healthy minds and bodies are essential to maximum service.

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Hunger gifts head for record year

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptist hunger experts are hoping generous giving in December will mean another record year for the Southern Baptist Convention's program of worldwide hunger relief.

Through Nov. 30, total gifts to hunger funds administered by the Foreign and Home Mission Boards had surpassed \$4,679,000, more than 10 percent ahead of the 11-month figure for 1983.

The Foreign Mission Board reported 11-month receipts of \$4,258,373 for overseas hunger relief, while the Home Mission Board received \$421,181 for domestic hunger relief.

John Cheyne, human needs ministries consultant at the FMB, said his office expects gifts to overseas hunger relief to reach \$1 million more than the record total for 1983.

Cheyne pointed out the FMB this year already has appropriated more than \$3 million for Africa, including \$1.6 million devoted strictly to emergency food distribution.

Nathan Porter, HMB national consultant for domestic hunger, noted December and January are usually "the two biggest months" for hunger relief as funds are channeled to the two mission boards following

observance of World Hunger Day in many Southern Baptist churches in October.

December receipts, along with an increase generated by recent implementation by several state conventions of the 80/20 division suggested by the Southern Baptist Convention (80 percent of undesignated hunger gifts to overseas hunger relief and 20 percent to domestic hunger relief), are expected to bring 1984 domestic hunger relief totals beyond the 1983 figure.

Foy Valentine, executive director of the Christian Life Commission, which coordinates Southern Baptist awareness and action on hunger issues, interpreted the anticipated record in gifts for hunger relief as "an encouraging sign of growing awareness" of the world hunger crisis.

"These increases reflect significant progress toward a Biblical perception of authentic Christian witness, compassionate Christian ministry and effective Christian social action in behalf of the hungry," he said. "As long as hunger continues to devastate the weakest and poorest of people on the earth, Christians are compelled to act compassionately and responsibly to help the hungry in Jesus' name."

Poverty burden shouldered by blacks, hispanics

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Latest statistics on poverty in America provide "a graphic and undeniable illustration" that the issues of racial reconciliation and economic justice are "inextricably related," according to W. David Lockard of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission.

Lockard, responding to figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau, noted that as the number of Americans living in poverty increased in 1983 for the fifth consecutive year, blacks and Hispanics continued to share a disproportionate share of the burden. Based on Census Bureau figures, a black person is three times as likely to live in poverty as a white person, Lockard pointed out. And a Hispanic person is more than twice as likely to live in poverty as a white person.

The poverty level for 1983 was defined by the Census Bureau as an annual income of \$10,178 for a family of four.

The poverty rate among all Americans in 1983 rose to 15.2 percent, highest since 1965 when the rate was 17.3 percent. But among blacks, the poverty rate rose to 35.7 percent, highest since 1967. The black poverty rate has climbed each year since reaching its low point of 30.6 percent in 1978.

The poverty rate among Hispanics in 1983 declined to 28.4 percent after reaching an all-time high of 29.9 percent the previous year.

In sharp contrast to blacks and Hispanics, the poverty rate among whites was 12.1 percent.

"Let's be honest about what these figures mean," said Lockard. "For many black and Hispanic persons, the so-called 'economic

recovery' is a meaningless myth. To persons caught in the clutches of poverty, our high-sounding pronouncements about social and economic justice carry a hollow ring."

Lockard added that Southern Baptists should be "particularly chagrined" by the findings of a recent study that underscored the problem of poverty in the South, "the Southern Baptist Convention's own backyard."

The study by the Southern Regional Council, based on detailed examination of census data, found the poverty rate in the 11 Southern states rose dramatically in the past four years, ending a 20-year decline.

More than 18 percent of the region's residents in 1983 lived below the poverty line, the study showed. In contrast, the poverty rate in the South in 1979 had reached a low of 15.6 percent.

Hardest hit were blacks. The SRC estimated that the poverty rate among Southern blacks in 1983 was 39 percent, with more than 60 percent of families headed by black women falling below the poverty level.

The states covered by the report are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Tennessee and Virginia.

"These findings are a sobering reminder of how easy it is for those of us who are fortunate to become complacent about the institutional and social factors which tend to favor us while inflicting hardship on others," Lockard said. "The Scripture is both clear and strong in its mandate for God's people to work for economic justice."