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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 91, Number 24

November 19, 1992



COVER

1992 Arkansas Baptist State Convention

Sutton, Kirksey, Mays elected ABSC officers

**CP budget set
at \$15.2 million**

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nine resolutions**

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**'Your church
can grow'**

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Moore challenges Arkansas Baptists to move forward

"Arkansas Baptists may go forward, but just because we may does not mean that we will," cautioned Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director Don Moore last week. "If we may go forward, then we must," he continued. "But even if we must, that still does not assure that we will."

Moore's comments came during his message to Arkansas Baptists attending last week's convention in Pine Bluff.

Preaching from Numbers 32 and Joshua 12, 13 and 22, Moore compared the challenges facing Arkansas Baptists to the challenges faced by the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness. "The time came when the children of Israel did go forward because of four crucial decisions," he explained.

"I have no interest in us staying where we are," Moore declared. "We have led out on this special emphasis on church growth because we're not willing to stay where we are."

Noting that the Israelites "made a crucial decision about fighting for their brothers," the executive director pointed out, "If Arkansas Baptists are to go forward, fighting for each other is not optional. God has called us to fight for each other."

Acknowledging that many Baptists "are more experienced at fighting with each other rather than fighting for each other," he added, "If you're not going to fight for each other, you become a point of discouragement....God has mercy on us if we don't fight for each other."

Moore said the Israelites' next crucial decision was whether "to stay where they were and be content or go into new territories that had not been encountered....The

children of Israel opted for taking a daring, risky challenge to go forward."

"Arkansas Baptists may move forward," Moore reiterated. "It all depends on whether we are willing to dare, whether we are willing to risk, whether we are willing to move beyond where we are."

"You can't go with God and stay where you are," he said. "It is not optional whether we go out. We must go out."

Moore said the children of Israel also had to determine whether they would finish the task set before them.

"It is not optional whether or not to finish the task," he insisted. "We are servants of Almighty God. We will become overcomers if we opt to finish the task."

Moore said the final decision the children of Israel faced was "whether to solve their problems or drive the wedge of separation deeper. They decided to solve their problems."

"Unless we make a decision to solve our problems, we are not going to take the land," Moore warned.

"Fighting for each other is not optional. Taking a risk is not optional. Finishing the task is not optional. Solving our problems is not optional. We must do that," Moore concluded. "When problems come, let's get together and talk and solve those problems so we can take the land."

Prior to Moore's message, ABSBC president Buddy Sutton presented Moore a plaque in recognition of "30 years of faithful and loving ministry as a pastor, leader and servant in Southern Baptist churches and 10 years of visionary leadership and ministry as the executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention."

Cover Story

APRIL photo / Little Rock



Convention officers 3

1993 ABSBC officers are: Buddy Sutton, Little Rock, president; Greg Kirksey, Benton, first vice president; and Charles Mays, Hot Springs, second vice president.

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Sutton re-elected president

Kirksey, Mays elected to serve as convention vice presidents

By Treannis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Little Rock attorney William H. "Buddy" Sutton was elected by acclamation to a second term as president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention during last week's convention in Pine Bluff.

Sutton, a member of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, was nominated by his pastor, Rex Horne. "Buddy Sutton is a man of God," Horne declared. "All that he does, he does as a man of distinction.... He is a man who answers the call."

In the only contested race for convention office, Greg Kirksey was re-elected first vice president on a vote of 256 to 196. Kirksey, pastor of Benton First Church, was elected over Ed Harrison Jr., pastor of Dollarway Church in Pine Bluff.

Kirksey was nominated by Bert Thomas, pastor of Valley Church in Searcy, who said Kirksey "has served us quite well" during the past year as first vice president. Harrison, former second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was nominated by Warren Watkins, pastor of Greenlee Church in Pine Bluff.

Charles Mays, pastor of Leonard Street Church in Hot Springs, was elected second vice president by acclamation. He was nominated by Barry King, pastor of Grand Avenue Church in Hot Springs, who noted that Mays "has remained remarkably faithful to God" even in times of difficulty.

Active Baptist layman

President Sutton and his wife, Peggy, have been members of Immanuel Church since 1959. He has been a Sunday School teacher there for 32 years and a deacon for 18 years. He grew up in Hope and is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

An active Arkansas Baptist layman, he is a member and former chairman of the Baptist Medical System board of trustees and former trustee chairman of Ouachita Baptist University. He also was chairman of the 1989 Arkansas Billy Graham Crusade and the 1990 CALL (Citizens Against Legalized Lottery) campaign.

Sutton described his first year as convention president as "a real learning experience."

"I didn't know much about the mechanics of the Arkansas Baptist convention," he acknowledged. "I've had a very uplifting year personally and have learned

"Our moral bankruptcy is just a symptom for the absence of Jesus Christ in the lives of people in our nation."

- Buddy Sutton, ABSC president



a lot more about the work of our directors of missions and all of our agencies. I was impressed that we do a lot more toward interracial ministry than I realized."

Sutton said he was willing to serve a second term as president because "I believe in what Arkansas Baptists are doing."

Insisting that "there are more qualified people in every respect to hold the position which has been given to me," Sutton said it remains fitting for the convention to effectively utilize lay leadership.

"The job that we need to do in Arkansas is so large, it can't be done by professionals alone although it's obviously a job to be directed by professionals," Sutton said. "I would hope that my service would at least symbolize a willingness on the part of laymen to join the work at a greater level of intensity than most of us have been used to doing."

"One of the things really on my heart and at the forefront of what we do is addressing our outreach to youth," the convention president emphasized. "The resources that used to exist for molding character and teaching morality have disappeared which means the church's burden has to be greatly increased."

"There could be something very good in that because that's where the burden belongs," he continued. "We're seeing some signs that the skepticism which used to exist about the church's role is disappearing and is being replaced by the realization of the absolute necessity that the church exert itself in such an effective way as to make a real difference in how people conduct themselves."

"Our moral bankruptcy is just a symptom for the absence of Jesus Christ in the lives of people in our nation. Arkansas Baptists must join in the effort to change that, with the realization that time is dread-

fully short," Sutton declared. "I'm excited that Arkansas Baptists are positioned to take that role, but it requires a realization that the job is more enormous than anything we've ever contemplated in the history of our convention."

Reflecting on last week's annual meeting, Sutton noted, "I think we've had a great two days. I think our attention was drawn to the right focus with our emphasis on church growth."

"I thought the spirit of the convention was one of the most encouraging things about our meeting," he added. "The spirit of the people was sweet, understanding and mutually supportive. There seemed to be a genuine appreciation for the benefits and the Christian duty of unity."

ABSC vice presidents

Among the officers serving with Sutton this year, first vice president Kirksey also was elected last week as president of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* board of directors. He is a former president of the ABSC Executive Board and was chairman of the *Newsmagazine* editor search committee.

The pastor of Benton First Church since 1990, Kirksey is a former pastor of Hillside Church in Camden. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Second vice president Mays has been pastor of Leonard Street Church since 1986. He previously was pastor of Calvary Church in Fort Smith, Bellaire Church in Dermott and Morton Church in McCrory.

Mays has been moderator of Garland County Baptist Association and has participated in partnership mission projects to Brazil and Guatemala. He is a graduate of Mid-America Theological Seminary.

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABCS Executive Director

Several weeks ago special recognition was given to one who had served for many years as a worker in our Arkansas Baptist churches. We read of such events in almost every issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. It is appropriate that churches do this. It is a matter of thoughtfulness, gratitude and appreciation borne of the sensitivity of God's Spirit to do this.

The Lord said, "God would not be so unjust as to forget all that you did for love of His name, when you rendered service to His people as you still do" (Heb. 6:10 NEB).

However, the recognition I refer to had special significance. My relationship to this person and the length of continuous service to the Lord in His churches made it so. It was my mother who was honored by the Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith, for 82 years of continuous service. The little country church, in what is now known as Fort Chaffee, enlisted her service at 13 years of age. Only recently did she resign from teaching an adult women's class. Yes, you are right. She is 95 years of age.

A lover of God's Word, His church, and her family, "Mom" has survived many a storm including two miscarriages, a still birth, getting six children through the depression and through school, a bout with cancer in her 70s and the loss of her companion of more than 60 years. Within the last year she has overcome surgery on both eyes, the removal of a cancerous kidney and surgery on her hand.

Of course, she has had her down days when it seemed that hope was gone. But, through it all, her God, our God, has brought her to be a beautiful and radiant overcomer. More than 50 of us, children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, will meet the day after Thanksgiving to "rise up and call her blessed" (Prov. 31:28).

At this Thanksgiving time my heart is filled with gratitude for a godly mother, who is still with us, and for a godly father, who is now with the Lord.

BETH REYNOLDS

Woman's Viewpoint

Standing amazed at great and mighty things

Driving away from the hospital I was overwhelmed by grief. The salty taste on my lips caused me to feel despair. It was hard to continue driving. Then as refreshing as a cool breeze on a very hot day came this thought, "I will show you great and mighty things which thou knowest not" (Jer. 33:3).

The salty taste on my lips was there because I had leaned forward over the hospital bed rails to kiss my unconscious daughter-in-law. She had been in a coma for six weeks. We were not encouraged by medical professionals to expect her to live. Even if by some miracle she should live, we were told it would be in a vegetative state. The head-on collision had resulted in a terrible head injury.

It has taken months, now running into two years, for Beth Ann to reclaim the motor skills that make it possible for her to open her mouth, chew, swallow and use her voice. Those were regained during the first year. This second year the focus has been on improving speech, training to develop correct thinking processes, and conversational skills. Beth Ann has worked hard with physical therapy and now walks, cares for her home, prepares meals. The fine motor skill of hand writing has been difficult to regain, but she is working on it. Beth Ann takes pains to be well groomed. I loved it when she asked me over the phone, "What can I do about my hair?"

One instance of relearning occurred

recently. Beth Ann had on several occasions dropped and broken dishes. She had been taught to throw the broken items away. As she shucked an ear of fresh corn it broke. She threw in into the trash can. Her husband asked her why she did that. She responded by saying, "It was broken."

We as a family have been so blessed to be surrounded by Christian friends. God has answered the many prayers for Beth Ann's recovery. It is amazing to see the advances she has made each time we see her. The skills of committed medical and rehabilitation specialists combined with supportive family and friends have been used to answer our prayers. It is a wonderful thing to visit Beth Ann and Teddy and enjoy the meals she prepares for us. She is a gracious hostess.

It is a great and mighty thing when I see Beth Ann standing before a church congregation giving her testimony. It is a great and mighty thing to see our son, Teddy, so committed to helping Beth Ann regain every ability and skill. The love they share is a beautiful tribute to marriage vows of "through sickness and health."

I stand amazed at the great and mighty things I have witnessed.

Beth Reynolds is a homemaker and wife of Marvin Reynolds, director of missions for Mississippi County Baptist Association.

Personal Perspectives

"Whenever Christians fuss, lost people lose."

- Ron Lewis, pastor, Richardson Heights Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas

"You can't go with God and stay where you are."

- Don Moore, ABCS executive director

"We are sitting at the crossroads marked 'dangerous opportunity,' but the opportunity is there."

- Buddy Sutton, ABCS president

"While our concern is to see churches full, God's concern is to see churches pure."

- James McDaniel, pastor, First Church, Brinkley

"If you want your church to grow, teach your people to pray."

- Ken Hemphill, church growth consultant, Atlanta, Ga.

A call to ministry, harmony, urgency

"Grow Churches" was the official theme. But that proved to be only one aspect of the 139th annual session of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Arkansas Baptists' interests and priorities and views cover a wide spectrum of topics. That diversity was clearly evident in the reports, sermons, resolutions and other agenda items presented during the two-day gathering.

Amid the diverse topics, however, an emphasis on three priorities repeatedly emerged. Those three emphases are ministry, harmony and urgency.

A call to ministry

Church growth was, without question, the primary focus of the convention's ministry emphasis. Church growth experts Ken Hemphill and Ron Lewis offered practical, challenging insights on how to accomplish successful church growth.

"Church growth is your church faithfully fulfilling the Great Commission in your unique context," Hemphill told messengers. Lewis emphasized that "church growth begins in the heart of God."

Another clear focus on church growth involved the priority projects, objectives and goals related to "Building God's Family" which were approved by messengers. The priority projects include such emphases as the Southern Baptist Church Growth Plan which is designed to aid in balanced church growth, Great Commission Breakthrough which addresses program changes needed in plateaued and declining churches and Church Arkansas, a ministry to people within their own cultural and life settings.

In addition to church growth, other ministry challenges presented last week ranged from the Mississippi River Ministry to a partnership with Iowa Baptists to prayer for spiritual awakening. Arkansas Baptists have no excuses for failing to find a ministry project in which they can become personally and actively involved.

Amid all the sights and sounds related to my first experience attending the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, a personal highlight was participating in the informal prayer service held following the Tuesday evening session. Although the day had been long and the hour was late, 40 to 50 pastors gathered at the front of the auditorium for a brief time of prayer.

I had the privilege of kneeling in prayer with two Arkansas Baptist pastors. As we paused to pray for our convention and for one another, it was a graphic reminder of the central role that prayer must play in all we do as Christians.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR

By TRENNIS HENDERSON



"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God," Philippians 4:6 reminds us. How tragic when Christians get too busy with other priorities or get caught up talking about one another rather than taking time to pray together.

Thank you, Glendon Grober, James McDaniel, H.D. McCarty and others who have taken the lead in organizing efforts to urge prayer for spiritual awakening.

A call to harmony

Arkansas Baptists' commitment to cooperation and unity was evident throughout last week's convention. Even during debates leading to divided votes—which were few—messengers went out of their way to be gracious and polite to one another. At a time in our history when outside observers expect Baptists to fight when we get together, it is refreshing to see a loving Christ-like spirit reflected among Arkansas Baptists.

One place where messengers chose to take a firm stand was in the adoption of several strongly worded resolutions. Messengers expressed—in no uncertain terms—their opposition to pornography, gambling, alcohol and drugs, abortion, homosexuality and sexual promiscuity. Similar resolutions have been adopted frequently in recent years. Last year, for example, Arkansas Baptist resolutions also addressed pornography, gambling, alcohol and drugs, and abortion.

While it is always fitting for Christians to take strong biblical stands on pressing moral issues, perhaps it is time to allow past resolutions to speak for themselves. Yes, the watching world does need to know what we stand against. But it also needs to know what we support. Where are the positive, proactive resolutions addressing church growth and Christian unity and prayer for spiritual awakening?

During the discussion about resolutions,

Rex Horne noted, "If resolutions could change the world, Southern Baptists would have changed the world long ago." Ronnie Rogers responded, "Even though resolutions don't change the world, they do express our beliefs to the world."

Both men are correct. While resolutions do not change the world, they do serve a useful purpose. The question is: What message do Arkansas Baptists want to send to the world? We must carefully and prayerfully choose which topics we highlight, being certain to tell the world not only what we oppose, but what we affirm.

One further observation about resolutions: The two resolutions addressing Bill Clinton and Al Gore will be perceived by some observers as personal attacks. Once again, messengers have the right and the responsibility to speak clearly about historic Baptist opposition to abortion and homosexual rights. But that is the easy part.

The two resolutions also pledged prayer for Clinton and Gore. As convention president Buddy Sutton eloquently stated, "We stand in a place where we have never been before...Pray for the president of the United States. God knows he needs our prayers. If we as Southern Baptists don't pray for him, God help him again."

Let's prove that Arkansas Baptist concerns are related to issues, not individuals. Faithfully pray for our fellow Arkansas Baptist as he becomes our nation's 42nd president.

A call to urgency

The call to ministry and harmony among Arkansas Baptists was frequently punctuated with a sense of urgency. All three Arkansas Baptist keynote speakers—Don Moore, Jim McDaniel and Buddy Sutton—voiced a need for urgency in responding to God's call. Moore challenged messengers to move forward with God. McDaniel called for a commitment to holiness. Sutton urged Christians to "meet the challenges of our time."

President Sutton reiterated the need for urgency during an interview following his re-election. Sharing his concern for the "moral bankruptcy" of today's society, he declared, "Arkansas Baptists must join in the effort to change that, with the realization that time is dreadfully short."

Ministry. Harmony. Urgency. Those were the underlying themes throughout last week's convention. They are fitting themes to be affirmed and adopted by every Southern Baptist congregation in Arkansas.

Messengers approve 1993 CP budget goal of \$15.2 million

A 1993 Cooperative Program budget goal of \$15.2 million and priority programs related to Arkansas Baptists' "Building God's Family" emphasis gained unanimous messenger approval during last week's Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

The 1993 CP budget is a 4 percent increase over the 1992 budget goal of \$14,624,000. The 1993 goal includes \$4,970,496 for ABCS Executive Board programs; \$8,854,000 for state programs, including Children's Home and Family Ministries, Foundation, Newsmagazine, Ouachita Baptist University and Williams Baptist College; and \$6,346,000 for Southern Baptist Convention causes.

The nine priority programs approved for the coming year focus on the convention's 1993 emphasis on growing churches.

ABSC associate executive director Jimmie Sheffield, who presented the proposal on behalf of the Executive Board, noted that each department has additional goals and projects related to "Building God's Family" and to other assigned responsibilities. He said the 1993 priorities detailed by the Executive Board staff include a total of 71 department goals and more than 300 specific projects.

Messengers also approved revisions to the overall "Building God's Family" objectives and goals through 1995.

Sheffield explained that the revisions

were needed because some goals were unrealistic and others were not sufficiently challenging. He said the revisions were designed to "make the goals attainable but challenging and more relevant to the churches' needs."

Among the new goals approved were plans to train participants from 300 churches each year in how to witness, equip 300 or more churches to develop personal and corporate prayer ministries, provide growth assistance to 400 declining or plateaued churches, and assist in the involvement of 75,000 volunteers in projects which address ministry needs.

In other Executive Board business, messengers approved a proposal to establish a committee to plan celebration events related to the ABCS' 150th anniversary which will highlight the convention's 1998 annual meeting.

In addition to approving the four Executive Board recommendations, messengers heard reports related to the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* study committee, the Mississippi River Ministry and a prayer for spiritual awakening emphasis.

The ABN study committee, established last year as a committee of the Executive Board, was chaired by Eddie McCord, director of missions for Independence Baptist Association. He reported that the Executive Board approved the committee's recommendations that the *Newsmagazine*

remain a separate agency and that the ABN board of directors be enlarged from nine members to 15.

The convention's Constitution and Bylaws Committee presented a first reading of the constitutional change which will be required to expand the *Newsmagazine* board. The proposal will be acted on during next year's annual meeting.

Tommy Goode, Christian social ministries director in the ABCS missions department, reported that the Mississippi River Ministry project affects 42 counties in Arkansas.

Noting that the effort is designed to "build bridges of hope and change," Goode told messengers "Many of us have challenged ourselves and are challenging our people to support this mission project."

He urged Arkansas Baptists to "join with us in a prayerful commitment to witness and bring a new day to people without housing, education, health care and the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ."

H.D. McCarty, pastor of University Church in Fayetteville, presented a report on prayer for spiritual awakening. More than 40 people responded to his invitation to attend a brief prayer meeting held following the Tuesday evening convention session.

In other Executive Board business, the board convened Tuesday afternoon for a brief organizational meeting. Rich Kincl, pastor of Central Church, Magnolia, was elected Executive Board president for the coming year, and Mitch Tapson, pastor of Mount Carmel Church in Cabot, was elected vice president.

Messengers affirm Parks, dedicate annual to Sneed

Affirming retired Foreign Mission Board president R. Keith Parks and honoring former *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* editor J. Everett Sneed who died in June were among items of miscellaneous business addressed by Arkansas Baptist State Convention messengers last week.

A total of 1,048 registered messengers gathered at Pine Bluff Convention Center for the Nov. 10-11 meeting.

James Sawyer, a member of Second Church in Little Rock and a former FMB trustee, proposed that messengers express their appreciation for Parks and his service to the Foreign Mission Board. Parks retired Oct. 31 after 38 years of missions service, including 12 years as FMB president.

Rather than calling for a formal vote, ABCS president Buddy Sutton suggested that messengers express their views with applause. The crowd responded by giving Parks a standing ovation.

Nelson Wilhelm, president of the ABN board of directors for the past two years, proposed that the 1992 ABCS annual be dedicated to the memory of Sneed. Messengers unanimously endorsed Wilhelm's motion.

Sneed's family was recognized twice during the two-day meeting. On Tuesday afternoon, ABCS executive director Don Moore presented Sneed's widow, Mary Ellen, and their daughters, Chere and Cathy, with a plaque honoring Sneed's "outstanding service to the life and ministry of Arkansas Baptists."

During the *Newsmagazine* report on Wednesday morning, Wilhelm presented Mrs. Sneed with a plaque honoring her husband's 20 years of service.

Wilhelm, director of missions for Concord Baptist Association, introduced one other motion under miscellaneous business. The motion, presented on behalf of Herbert Barnett, a member of Southside

Church in Fort Smith, called on the state missions department to confer with the Home Mission Board interfaith witness department to consider producing a study concerning the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus.

The motion, approved by messengers, called for the study to be used as a witnessing tool to non-Christians.

Other miscellaneous business included a request to pray for former ABCS president Mike Huckabee who was hospitalized last week with pneumonia.

FMB trustee Jack Bledsoe, director of missions for Carey Baptist Association, urged Arkansas Baptists to generously support the 1992 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

Describing conditions in Somalia as an example of need, Bledsoe noted that people there "hunger not only for the physical bread of life, but for the spiritual bread of life."

NINE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

Arkansas Baptists send message to Clinton

ARBN photo / Mills Oil

A resolution aimed at distancing Arkansas Baptists from President-elect Bill Clinton's stands on abortion, homosexual rights and distribution of contraceptives in public schools was approved by messengers attending last week's Arkansas Baptist State Convention. The resolution attracted extended debate before gaining approval on a divided voice vote.

A related resolution, which pledged prayer for Clinton and Vice President-elect Al Gore, passed without debate or opposition. It encouraged the two men "to seek standards in their administration consistent with biblical revelation."

Other resolutions approved by messengers addressed topics ranging from gambling and pornography to homosexuality and sanctity of human life.

The resolution aimed at Clinton noted that his views related to abortion on demand, homosexual rights and the distribution of contraceptives "contradict the moral and spiritual position of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention as expressed in previous resolutions." It called on Arkansas Baptists to urge Clinton to "endorse the biblical principles of the sanctity of human life, the biblical plea for sexual purity and the biblical precepts of sacred morality."

Keith Brickell, pastor of Second Church, Monticello, offered an amendment noting that "even though Bill Clinton is a member of a Southern Baptist church and a church that is a member of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention that he does not represent our views on these important issues."

Brickell said Arkansas Baptists "need to make a statement on this for the sake of our own integrity." He charged that Clinton "has made an attack against Arkansas Baptists and Southern Baptists" through his public stands.

Clinton's pastor, Rex Horne, pastor of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, responded, "If resolutions could change the world, Southern Baptists would have changed the world long ago. We have spent the past two days talking about praying, forgiving and working together. We need to give ourselves to intercession rather than resolution."

Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Church, Hot Springs, countered, "Even though resolutions don't change the world, they do express our beliefs to the world."

"We need to stand for life and against homosexuality and let the world know we stand for the Lord," agreed Ron Brown, pastor of Cotter First Church.



Convention president Buddy Sutton presides as Resolutions Committee chairman Eddie Simpson presents resolutions for messenger consideration.

Following additional debate, messengers approved both the amendment and the resolution.

After the vote, Horne told messengers, "I do not want to offend anyone. I share the views that have been expressed. I do not want any spirit of disharmony to go with us when we leave in a few minutes."

Convention president Buddy Sutton, a member of Horne's congregation, responded, "Nothing has been said by anyone that would contribute to a spirit of disharmony. We stand in a place where we have never been before. We have never had a pastor of a president of the United States." Sutton urged Arkansas Baptists to pray both for Clinton and Horne in the days and years ahead.

One other resolution which drew some discussion described pornography as "perverted, destructive and wholly unredeeming" material which "cheapens human sexuality by displaying women and children as sex objects."

Gary Hawkins, pastor of Thornburg Church in Perryville, offered an amendment calling for a boycott of Circle K, K-Mart and Waldenbooks stores because of their involvement in selling pornography. "We will stop this if we get them where their pocketbooks is," Hawkins suggested. Both the amendment and resolution gained messenger approval.

Other resolutions approved by messengers include:

■ Opposition to "any attempts to amend the state constitution to permit 'charitable bingo,' small-stakes gambling, a lottery or

any other form of gambling.

■ Opposition to "the consumption of alcoholic beverages, the use of illicit drugs and the misuse of legal drugs" and support for the adoption of an administrative license revocation law.

■ Affirmation of the sanctity of human life with an amendment expressing support for "Christ-centered crisis pregnancy centers and the Promise House."

■ Opposition to homosexual behavior as "unnatural, perverted and destructive."

■ Opposition to "the humanistic 'safe sex' message" and affirmation of "sexual abstinence outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage."

■ Appreciation to the convention officers, program committee and area churches for helping plan and conduct the 1992 convention.

In other business, Betty Harp, chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, informed messengers that the first vote on the convention's amended constitution and bylaws had been taken and approved at the 1991 convention. However, since then, the committee had discovered four areas that needed strengthening. These changes included the enlargement of the Arkansas Baptist News magazine's board of directors and three minor working changes.

She moved that the messengers rescind the 1991 vote and approve the latest amended constitution and bylaws for first vote. The motion passed without discussion and will be voted on again at the 1993 convention.

'Meet the challenges of our time'

By William H. "Buddy" Sutton
President, Arkansas Baptist State Convention

If I am the first one up at our house, I get up and I go to the kitchen and I take a left turn and reach for the cabinet on the left for a coffee cup and when I get a long-stem glass, I remember that my dear wife, Peggy, changed those about five, maybe 10 years ago, to the right side of the kitchen. If I am still interested in coffee, that is where I have to go to get the cup. That is about how quickly I learn anything.

But even I, fellow Baptists, have learned that in reading God's Word when you run across a man or a woman's name in the Bible that God has seen fit to put in there and He puts a comma after the name, and then the words "full of the Holy Spirit," you can let the hair on the back of your neck begin to come up because God is getting ready to do something. He is not ready to explain that somebody tried to do something, but failed. He is not getting ready to explain that another program that won't work was introduced, as brilliant as it seemed to be at the time. When He calls a name, comma and follows that with "full of the Holy Spirit" then you are seeing God in action ready to move through one of His servants on this earth and the action is going to be the right thing for the right time involving the right people.

In Acts 11, I want to look at those moments in history where that happened and God changed the world for all eternity. The church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas off to Antioch "for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit, and of faith and considerate numbers were brought to the Lord and he left for Tarsus to look for Saul." Now that is when God is going to change the world. Right there with a man, full of the Holy Spirit, God is getting ready to change the world. We are talking about an era of church growth which is one of the matchless ones, of course. I guess it is the matchless one of all times.

Since we learn from mistakes one might say there is nothing to be learned from those verses because there aren't any mistakes in it. The reason there weren't any mistakes is because from beginning to end God's hand was in it and the people involved in it were full of the Holy Spirit. When you do that, you follow a perfect plan and when you follow a perfect plan perfectly then a perfect result is going to come from it. There isn't any room for anything else.

There were several things remarkable about those men who had gone up to Antioch. In the first place, they knew who they were. Now they were confused about some things, I am sure. Their government

had run them out. They had been run out of Jerusalem and they were fleeing fugitives, among other things, but still they knew who they were.

They knew they were witnesses and preachers for Jesus Christ and even while they ran, even while they were on their way and after they got there, the Scriptures say they were preaching Jesus. They might not have been ordained, they might not have been trained, they might not have been qualified, really qualified as a called preacher, but they were witnesses preaching Jesus Christ. Whoever they talked to, wherever they were, whatever their circumstances were, they had not forgotten who they were.

If you asked people who knew these men who had gone to that church at Antioch while their lives were still in jeopardy, these men who had either seen or known about the stoning of Stephen, you would have gotten the same answer from everybody. They preached Jesus. We don't

"There are many churches today... concerned with too many things other than the preaching of Jesus Christ."

know what else they do, but what they care about, what they are really interested in and seemingly the only thing they care about is preaching Jesus.

Who do they preach it to? They preach to anybody and everybody wherever they are, wherever they meet them, under whatever circumstances they are. There are many churches today, many of them sadly in the Southern Baptist Convention and the Arkansas Baptist Convention that are concerned with too many things other than the preaching of Jesus Christ.

If we were to ask people who are looking at us from the outside, "What is that church interested in?" we might get a lot of answers other than they are interested in preaching Jesus Christ.

Leith Anderson in his book *A Church for the 21st Century*, makes a good point in saying that in the church in the future, the preacher and pastor should not be concerned with giving lectures in the church where half the people in the congregation already know more about the

subject than he does or he should not be concerned about trying to keep the people in the church entertained, but instead pastors should be experts in the preaching of the Holy Bible.

I had occasion to be on an airplane about a month ago, coming back from Salt Lake City. I sat by a woman, probably 30-32 years old. She was flying to Oklahoma where her mother had had a heart attack. She and her husband had moved from southern California to Montana and as the trip was a pretty long trip she told me a few things about herself and she learned that I really was interested about what was going on in her life.

She told me she had told her husband to get out of the house. "We have two young children, but we can't stand to live this way anymore and I want you out of the house." She said, "I wasn't any better than he was, but I wanted him out. We had to live separately. We decided, however, to give it one more try and to look for a church. We had a big problem in our lives and we were at the end of our way and everywhere we turned to a church we did not seem to get any help." And then she said, "There was a man who came out there and set up a church in the basement of a store and he wasn't a very impressive looking fellow, but we decided to give it a try in his store. My husband and I went to that church in the basement of that store and he wasn't a very impressive preacher, but he did tell us about Jesus and something happened to me and something happened to my husband." She went on and told me the things that had happened in their lives.

And I said, "What denomination was the man?" She said he was a Baptist. I said: "Was he a Southern Baptist?" And she kind of grinned and said yes he was. Ironically, Saturday morning Dr. Henry Blackaby, speaking at First Baptist Church in Little Rock, said 50 percent of the Baptist churches in Montana don't have a pastor.

Now, fellow Baptists, that is what growing churches is all about. If that is what growing churches is all about we have got to put some people out there through our programs. In growing churches here we have got to grow them out to there and all over the world. Need anybody ask why the theme of this convention is to grow churches?

The believers at Antioch preached Jesus to anybody and many people accepted Christ as a result of their preaching. The church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to see what it was all about, that nobody could be saved except the Jews and here was this word coming back that other people

were being saved and they sent Barnabas up there to check it out.

I don't know what everybody thought about Barnabas back in that time. We know here 2,000 years later that God didn't have a better man in all of the world to send up there for that job. Obviously that was the reason he was sent.

Barnabas saw the grace of God. It says the next he did was rejoice about what he saw. Many of us are grieved in our convention today as we see that we have lost in too many places the ability to rejoice at what someone else has done for the Lord. Instead we want to say there must have been something wrong with it. I have learned sadly as a layman that one of the things that you don't do in some of the quarters where you are is to brag on the work of another preacher. I cannot tell you how much that disturbs the momentum and the spirit and the fellowship of your people when you are heard to criticize another pastor involved in the work of the Lord. Especially if the reason is that you really can't enjoy it because there is a jealousy you can't get out of your life.

God sent a man that didn't have an ounce of that. The reason he didn't have an ounce of it is that he didn't have any room for it anywhere in his soul. One thing clear about being filled with the Holy Spirit is the fact that you don't have room for anything else. He did not discourage, he did not criticize. He encouraged and he saw the hand of God in it and he did something here in the will of the Lord that would change the world. He recognized that something was going on so big, so powerful, so awesome that he was not by himself nearly up to the task. He realized we are going to have to change the plan, the plan is too small and that is the reason for verse 25.

He left to look for Saul. He had defended him once before when others didn't trust him. He had kept up with him and knew where he was. General George Patton said he was born for one thing in this world and that was to command men in battle. When War II started and he was delivered orders appointing him to a general command, he pulled from his pocket a list of men and said get me these men wherever they are. I want them in my service. He later wrote that he had kept

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that list in his pocket and kept it updated since the time he was a young officer.

We have so many things falling in on us today that we would be crazy to think that we could handle it by ourselves. Our world is changing and changing in a way that we do not like, but I want to not be misunderstood about this. The time that we are wasting, trying and trying to change things that cannot be changed because we liked it better the other way is wasted and as Ron Lewis says, "People are being lost while that time is being wasted."

I read last week in McGuffie's fourth grade reader where children learned to read 100 years ago in public schools. They learned to read out of the McGuffie reader the story of the Creator, the story of the golden rule, the story of the Good Samaritan, excerpts from the Sermon on the Mount and an excellent essay on how to pray. Little children, fourth grade, reading those things. That is gone, ladies and gentlemen, and as much as we would grieve about it, it is gone and the church has other work to do because of that absence.

We have more work to do and we might as well quit crying about what we can't do through the government, through the schools, and through all of these other ways and say that is the work of the church and we have got to get at it and quit crying about the way things are.

We have got to turn a special hand to our young people. I think more than anything else in the world today that is what is on my heart. We are told of all of the people who are saved, 85 percent of them accept Jesus before they are 13 years old. For 1,000 of those people who are saved, only 1 in 1,000 is saved after they are 30 years old. That is where the field of evangelism is today—those children that now are harder to get to in many ways.

The Japanese, I am told, have a character in their language for which there is no

exact English parallel and it means dangerous opportunity. That is where we are today. We are sitting at the crossroads and it is marked "dangerous opportunity," but the opportunity is there. Out of all of the pain, and the hurting and the sorrow we are having today there is an opportunity that is rising up to Southern Baptists and it is rising there as to children.

Whereas 25 or 30 years ago people would not let you have their children in your church, they will today. They will if you want those children. If you want some of those 350,000 that will be born this year already drug addicted, if you want some of those single parent or institutionalized children, they will let you have them and they will let you bring them into our churches. If that is where the Word of Jesus is to be preached and that is to whom it is to be preached, that is where Baptists belong and if the machinery is not there today we have got to be for putting it in place to get it there. With that generation and with those young people lie all of our other hopes. All of our hopes for the health of our agencies, for our schools, for our Home Mission Board, our Foreign Mission Board, for the servicing of our churches, is right now in those children.

When World War II ended Winston Churchill was an old man. He wanted to cross over the English Channel on D-Day with invading troops. When they got to the Rhine River he was unrestrainable. They wouldn't let him cross the English Channel, but he insisted on going over and seeing the victorious British troops cross the Rhine River. He took a perch upon the bluff and watched those thousands and thousands of young men cross that river, many of them 60 years younger than he. They had been from Dunkirk all over the world, losing many battles, but they finally were crossing the river in victory.

One of the men standing by Churchill said, "Mr. Prime Minister, isn't that a magnificent sight?" And he said, "Yes, but wouldn't it be splendid if they had on their red coats?" You see, he was back in another generation where wearing the red coat was a badge of courage and they had passed the test in their time. He had passed it and these young men he was watching cross the river in victory had passed it in their time and he thought they had earned the honor to wear the red coat in a victory parade.

May God grant that we will meet the challenges of our time, wear the name of Christ with those who have gone on before us, and may we be joined. Would you listen to the last part? May we be joined by those younger generations brought to Christ by the efforts being made by Southern Baptists today, full of the Holy Spirit.

Testimonies affirm God's work in diverse ministry settings

Arkansas Baptists can reach people in the cities, the suburbs and every other setting, according to the testimonies of Arkansas mission pastors. Three times during the convention, messengers heard testimonies of how God is reaching into communities in both familiar and not so familiar ways.

John Veasey, pastor of Good Stewardship Missionary Baptist Church, North Little Rock, challenged churches to "be all things for all people," as he shared his testimony Tuesday morning.

Veasey said the church must reach all the world, not just the part where it is comfortable. "We can't go just to the rich, but also the poor. We can't go just to the suburbs, but into the neighborhoods," Veasey declared. "We must be the weak for the weak, we must be the poor to the poor" in order to reach them for Christ.

In his testimony, Veasey described his church members entering area neighborhoods "filled with crack, prostitution, drugs." He said residents are very suspicious of church people, "so when I go, I dress as they do."

"These are people who don't care about your church buildings. They don't care about your programs. They wonder what you can do for them. They are people in sin with the need to have God in their lives."

Veasey challenged the church to offer such people a chance to change. "We are the most powerful institution in the world. When it comes to being a child of God, the salt of the earth, if the world will follow us, it will be seasoned right."

Margarito Ramirez, who gave his testimony Tuesday afternoon, knows about the strength Christ can give. A layman, Ramirez is the pastor of the Hispanic mission in Glenwood. He also is director of a language ministry in Glenwood and Sunday School director at St. John Baptist Church, DeQueen. He also is employed full-time with Tyson Foods.

Ramirez said the need for a language

ministry provided a way to reach people for the mission. English classes were provided last year with Scriptures as a reading text. "Many people want to learn English, and at the same time we are reaching them for Christ," he explained.

The mission started with 20 people on March 4, 1992, following a brief promotion. Ramirez said with God's help and the help of Arkansas Baptist churches, the mission is averaging 32 or more people in worship with 52 people two weeks ago.

Speaking to the messengers through interpreter Elias Pantoja, of the ABSC missions department, Ramirez thanked the convention for its support. "We may not be blood brothers, but we are all redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ," Ramirez affirmed.

On the final morning of the state convention, Johnny Herrington invited messengers to attend a mission church "if you want to see enthusiasm and a gleam in people's eye."

Herrington, pastor of Sunny Gap mis-

sion chapel in Conway, said his congregation meets in a small portable chapel provided by the state convention. He described Sunday mornings as "wall to wall people where I often have to direct traffic."

With the help of Arkansas Baptists, the local association and First Church, Pickles Gap, the mission has purchased six and one half acres of land debt free. The work began with a new work probe that discovered 1,400 people in the fast-growing community with no churches. Now there are about 2,000 people in the area, including more than 40 percent who are age 18 or younger.

Herrington said he has learned two things about being a mission pastor: flexibility and faith. In spite of the difficulties of 55 to 60 people worshipping in a small area, he said no one has complained. "Complainers aren't converters. We just try to keep our eyes off ourselves and on Jesus....We need to be taking the good news to the lost."



Margarito Ramirez and Elias Pantoja

Music enhances '92 convention

"Thank You," a song sung by Christy Payne, was among the musical highlights of the 1992 Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

The song was presented at the conclusion of Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries report as an expression of gratitude to Arkansas Baptists.

Johnny Biggs, the agency's executive director, introduced Miss Payne as "a Christian with high moral values who has lived at our Monticello Children's Home for four years." Noting that she is "a resident of whom we are very proud," he said she is a senior at Monticello High School where she serves as a class officer and also is an active member of First Church of Monticello.

"Music in each session of the 1992 annual meeting was selected to complement and enhance the convention's theme," explained Lester McCullough, director of the ABSC music department.

"Changed Lives in Growing Churches" was the theme for which McCullough selected directors, soloists, choirs, brass ensembles and instrumentalists.

Ouachita Baptist University Choir, directed by Charles Wright and accompanied by a brass ensemble, and the Arkansas Master Singers and Singing Women performed during the Tuesday evening session.

Other special music included a duet by Larry Bradley, minister of music at Hot Springs First Church, and Ken Stogsdill, minister of music at East Side Church, Fort Smith; a ladies' ensemble from Watson Chapel Church in Pine Bluff; and a vocal solo by Lamar Puckett, minister of music at First Church, Mountain Home. The Arkansas Brass Ensemble greeted messengers attending the Wednesday morning session as they presented "I've Come To Tell," from the new Baptist hymnal.

Convention instrumentalists were Becky Moore, organist for Immanuel Church in Pine Bluff; Bob Dolan, organist for South Side Church in Pine Bluff; and Steve Lawson, minister of music for Immanuel Church in El Dorado.

Directors for congregational singing were David Nunn, minister of music at First Church, Fordyce; Dick Couch, minister of music at South Side Church, Pine Bluff; McCullough; and Glen Eunes, associate in the ABSC music department.

Hemphill: 'Your church can grow'

By James Preston

Special to the Arkansas Baptist

"Your church can grow because God promised it," Ken Hemphill told Arkansas Baptists during last week's Arkansas Baptist State Convention in Pine Bluff.

Hemphill, director of the center for church growth sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and the Baptist Sunday School Board, led a series of four Bible studies on church growth during the two-day convention.

Outlining basic biblical principles of church growth, Hemphill said, "Your church can grow because God promised it; a supernatural encounter with God must precede methodology; sound methodology enables us to participate in God's supernatural work; prayer initiates a supernatural encounter; and the pastor and people must be people of God, and of prayer."

"Our theology is the greatest foundation for church growth," Hemphill affirmed, "but we are in need of theological renewal. The first step is to have an experience with God through prayer life. We also need to ask: What does God desire from His church?"

Hemphill said church growth is definitely not just a fad. "Church growth is biblical. The trouble is people want 'microwaveable' church growth with instant growth. Unfortunately, a church that grows quickly can also degenerate as quickly," Hemphill said biblically based methods may be slower, but results will last because they depend on God.

'A supernatural community'

Hemphill said God's plan "to build a supernatural community" is revealed by Jesus in Matthew 16. "Jesus came to build a community with eternal significance," he emphasized. "As Paul indicated in 1 Corinthians 3, church growth is a supernatural act of God accomplished through human activity."

Hemphill said the strategy was to build "a triumphant community boldly moving into the world to proclaim the gospel." He said the keys Jesus described represent ownership, symbolizing "authority to accomplish the divine task related to access to the kingdom."

Hemphill said that when Jesus spoke of things being bound and loosed, He referred to decisions believers make. "Decisions in the life of the church are more significant than any decision made in Washington," he declared. "Nothing is as significant as the decisions that are made in your church this Sunday morning."



Ken Hemphill

In Matthew 28, Jesus handed over the keys to the kingdom, Hemphill said. At that point Jesus "asked the church to do what He had done: go and make disciples, baptize them and teach them."

"The first step to church growth is to go. We must evangelize," Hemphill insisted. He said the next step, baptism, is where the church fully incorporates converts into the body of Christ.

Finally, churches must teach. Hemphill said this is the weak link and a barrier to church growth in most churches. "We must develop leaders. We must call for deep commitment from people. Church growth is not your job, it's His job. Christ will grow His church through us if we are obedient."

Hemphill said church growth does not depend on methods but "must be preceded by a supernatural encounter with God. We are in danger of making an idol of church growth methodology. Instead, the first priority must be to develop a deep relationship with the Father. Out of such comes the motivation to reach the lost."

Hemphill pointed to the repeated question with which Jesus challenged Simon Peter's commitment in John 21. "Simon Peter was asked three times: 'Do you love me?' Could Jesus be asking us if we love Him more than the methods, and the accolades that come with success? Sometimes it is easy to exchange a passion for ministry for our passion for God."

Turning to Acts, Hemphill said church growth "is inaugurated with an encounter with the living Lord through prayer." He said the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:47 marks "the beginning of Christian empowerment, and that 'high-voltage Christianity' followed."

Hemphill said the church in Acts grew as they prayed and acted on faith, which allowed Christ to "supernaturally grow the church." Describing Antioch as an ideal model for church growth, he said growth occurred "because the hand of

God was with them, they were recognized as belonging to Christ, and they saw the grace of God."

In Tuesday night's session, Hemphill emphasized that "God has always chosen to work through human instrumentation. God's way of growing the church is through His gifted body and depends upon human leadership."

Hemphill described Jesus as the ultimate model of leadership through service. Such leadership does not negate ambition, Hemphill added, noting that "an ambition surrendered to lordship places one in optimum position to serve God in the growth of His church."

Hemphill said 1 Corinthians 11:28 describes Paul as a church leader with a "daily concern for the church in spite of all the trials he experienced. Many pastors never see the church grow because they quit before it happens."

'Passion for lost people'

One common factor for church growth is "the passion of the man in the pulpit," he pointed out. "How long ago has it been since your passion was so great you literally begged someone to come to Christ?" Hemphill asked. "You will not grow a great church without passion for lost people."

In the final convention session, Hemphill said the number one barrier to church growth "will always be having enough leadership to do the task. Only 20 percent of the people work in the church because the rest are struggling. They are saying, 'I'm not worthy and I'm not capable.'"

Noting the multitude of popular books on the subject of self-esteem, Hemphill said the trouble with them is "they cannot change the heart, only Jesus can."

Hemphill offered seven building blocks for positive self-image, including a sense of inherent worth, a sense of security, a strong self-concept, a sense of purpose, an awareness of belonging, a sense of empowerment and a feeling of personal competence. He said all seven building blocks are accomplished in an encounter with God.

Hemphill also outlined "what the Bible teaches about spiritual gifts in Romans 12," detailing key principles for church leadership.

The six principles focused on the Holy Spirit's role in developing and equipping leadership to grow the church through a renewed mind, realizing all are gifted, sober evaluation, unity in diversity, interdependence and a focus on the common good.

'Holy, Holy, Holy'

By James McDaniel
Pastor, Brinkley First Church

The subject God has placed on my heart for the hour ties in with church growth, but is a little bit different expression of it than what we have been hearing. My heart is with those who have been challenging us toward church growth, but the subject God has placed on my heart is the matter of holiness.

The passage of Scripture is Revelation 4:8. It is my conviction that the gravest question before us is not whether or not our churches are full, not whether or not we have a hearing with the world. The gravest question before us is not missions or evangelism, though those are very essential matters nor is it education. But the most sober and serious and gravest issue that we face is God Himself, and the most telling aspect about you and me is not so much what we say nor what we do, but rather what we in our hearts know and conceive God to be.

Unless it be the primary pursuit of our life to know Him, if position or fame or prestige or money or any other matter becomes a priority in our life over that of seeking to know Him, we will never understand His glory. I believe there is reason for alarm when the first question that comes from the lips of a man who is being talked to by a church about serving in a position is his salary and his benefits or what opportunities he will have to make a name for himself. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are those who are pure." Purity is indicative of singleness of purpose. No dress, no other goal. Blessed are the pure in heart, those who have a heart to know God.

We are in an hour that desperately needs to see God. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God; all these other things will fall into place." That compels us to worship a holy God.

In Revelation 4, John is in the spirit on the Lord's Day and the Lord has lifted him up and given him a vision of the Holy Place. There the Father sits on the throne of jasper. Many speculate that would be diamond. Whatever the Scriptures tell us, our eyes have never seen the beauties of God's glory. Behind the throne is a rainbow, beautiful in splendor and glory. There the Father sits on His throne, the 24 elders are gathered about the throne.

The four beasts are circling the throne. Revelation 5 tells us about the myriad, the innumerable angels that gather there with them. And as they stand before Him, one cry comes from their hearts. Hear it: "And

the four beasts had each of them six wings about Him and they were full of eyes within. The eyes of their hearts wide open to the person of God. They saw Him as he was." And what was their response? "And they rest not day and night, saying Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty! Which was, and is, and is to come." He is holy, totally separate from you and I. He is holy, completely pure while we are all sinners by nature and by choice. He is holy, omnipotent, all powerful.

The Bible speaks of us as being but air upon the scales, but being dust, but being breath. No matter how strong any of us may be, we are weak and feeble before an almighty God who simply spoke and the world was brought into existence, who spoke and He created the heavens that reach beyond us.

He is omnipotent, He is omniscient, all knowing. There are no surprises with God. He is omnipotent, ever present in time and in space. He is not limited as you and I. He is immutable, never changing. The same yesterday, today and forever, the Father of Lights with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. He is holy and His holiness is revealed within His Word. In the Old Testament in the moral law, the purity of God, the righteousness of God, His holiness comes forth in the moral law. In the Ten Commandments, in the directions and in the instructions that are given for living by the Ten Commandments we see the holiness of God. His holiness is revealed in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. When man violated his moral law, to be atoned with a holy God there had to be the shedding of blood. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. He is holy.

The high priest would go regularly and the priest with him to offer sacrifices once a year into the Holy Place. In a very sacred and holy moment, sacrifices were offered for the sins of men but they were offered again and again and again. He is holy. Until He Himself took upon self flesh and dwelt among us in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His holiness revealed ultimately in the cross. There He



ALB photo / Mike Gill

bore your sin and there He bore my sin. Taking upon Himself the sin of the world, one time for all mankind and from the cross Jesus cried out, "It is finished, it is finished."

The work of salvation completed. Salvation as we know it in regeneration, being born again, being saved, finished at the cross. Your righteousness, my righteousness adds nothing to it. It is finished! Salvation, as regeneration. Salvation as sanctification. Finished in the perfect work of Christ. Our condition still in the flesh, but our position pure as He is pure. Salvation as glorification, completed at the cross. I do not have to worry that when I die that I might lie in the grave and rot. My glorification is complete in Christ and when I see Him I shall be like Him.

Colossians 2:8 says, "In Him dwells all the Godhead bodily, in Christ Jesus." The Living Bible's paraphrase says, "And therefore when you have Christ, you have everything you need."

In a world filled with confusion, the dismantling of the Soviet Union, the chaos of Yugoslavia, the luminous threat of Red China, in Him you have everything you need. In a nation \$3 trillion in debt, 50 percent of our personal income taxes are now being spent on that debt, and cities rampant with crime. We live amidst a people with inverted morality that will allow sexual perversion to be taught in our school rooms, but not the posting of the Ten Commandments; inverted morality that will allow criminals to go free and innocent victims to suffer; and inverted morality that will allow the most life-threatening position for an individual to be in its mother's womb. In a nation lost in darkness and sin, Jesus is all you need.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:15-16, "Because He is holy, you are to be holy." If we

are His children we are to reflect it by pure and holy lives that are set upon Him.

How do we become holy? We yield to a Holy Spirit. His Spirit is holy as He is holy and we yield our lives to Him through the blood and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and ask for the filling of His Spirit on a daily basis. And we follow that with a disciplined life.

A disciplined life calls for us to have a regular time when we meet with a Holy God. When we come into His presence there should be a sense of awe and reverence that we stand before the creator of the universe, the sustainer of the universe, and the deliverer of the universe in the name and through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and ultimately its consummator. As the people of God it is necessary that we have a time that we spend with Him on a regular systematic daily basis when we come into His presence in acknowledgment of His sovereignty and praise Him and thank Him and seek His direction.

There should be a time of prayer that we draw our families together. There should be a time of prayer as we come together as churches. There should be a freshness as we meet with one another, seeking the face of God. We should be known as a people of prayer, more than a people who have adapted to Madison Avenue. We need to seek the face of a Holy God. Disciplined life calls for being in the Holy Word of God and as He is holy, His Word is holy. It is pure. Jesus said in John 17:17, "Father, sanctify them through thy Word. Thy Word is truth."

As He is holy, His Word is holy. Truth without mixture of error in the whole and in the part. Our lives need to be saturated with the Word of God. We should be reading from the Word on a daily basis.

We need to be pray-ers, we need to be students of the Word of God, memorizing it, meditating upon it, turning it over and allowing it to be expressed through our lives. Disciplined ones, we should be regular in sharing our faith as we go seeking to make disciples. Disciplined ones, going out on a regular basis and knocking on doors, sharing the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, the best we know how. Disciplined ones, as God gave to us we are to give to others of our faith, give to others through world missions. I do not know of a better means than what God has led Baptists to be involved in through the Cooperative Program, sharing the message of Christ with our community and our state and our nation and our world. We are to be disciplined ones as He is disciplined.

Holliness calls for a life yielded to the Holy Spirit, walking in discipline and confessing and forsaking sin. Oh, that we would be disturbed by sin as God is dis-

turbed by sin. It should break our hearts that we would see ourselves as God sees us. How we must learn the lesson that what one generation does in moderation, the next will do in excess. Can you look back to the Garden of Eden? If Adam and Eve had known the consequences of what they did, would they have taken another course of action? What one generation does in moderation the next does in excess. One smokes cigarettes, the next smokes marijuana; one is involved in social drinking, the next becomes alcoholic; one criticizes their pastors, the next turns their back on Christianity. Sin never stands still. We must repent of sin, confess and forsake it. If there is to be purity before God the dross must be removed.

It is impossible to deal with all of the sin omission and commission, but just a few external, and I realize the internal are more serious than the external. But we need to repent of sinful magazines, have our eyes turned away from ungodly viewing. We need to repent of sensual music and I would submit the beat as well as the words, and country as well as rock 'n roll.

We are to have pure hearts before God. There must be repentance. Perhaps the most serious threat externally to a pure

"In a nation lost in darkness and sin, Jesus is all you need."

heart before God is the television set. Instant access to bad values. Time waster. How many have thoughtlessly stood and said we would have a family altar if we had time and then sat down and watched hours of television? Let me say to you men, you have no moral responsibility to watch every football game that comes on a television set. A year later you forget who even played in them and yet we will make sacrifices to be there in front of that idol. Repent and follow as God leads in taking action in dealing with it. There must be repentance from sin. I feel that much of the dullness to the sensitivity to our spirit comes from spending hours before a moral wasteland, literally just putting our minds and our hearts in a cesspool.

We serve a holy God and the Bible says as He is holy, you be holy. "Blessed are the pure in heart; they will see God. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, all His righteousness shall be added unto you." What does that mean for you and me? What does the

holiness of God say? It says there will be judgment upon sin. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall ye also reap." Whatsoever a church sows that's what it shall reap. Whatever a convention sows that's what it's going to reap. Whatever a nation sows that is what it's going to reap and there will be judgment upon sin.

God calls for holiness because He is holy and His Word is pure and true and He calls for us to walk by it. Holliness speaks of judgment. Uzziah was judged and was struck dead. Sodom and Gomorrah was judged and fire and brimstone rained down and destroyed it. The world in Noah's day was judged and God destroyed it with a flood, saving Noah and his family.

Holliness speaks of judgment, but holliness also speaks of mercy. We serve a merciful God. Mercy so rich that He will allow His Son to come and to dwell among you and I and to shed His blood that we might know life and it abundant. And the mercy of God upon a people always hinges on God's people. You are familiar with the formula for revival in 2 Chronicles. If you would read just a little further in 2 Chronicles over to chapter 16, verse 9 the Word of God says, "The eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the whole earth seeking such as whose hearts are perfect or pure towards Him so He might show Himself strong in their behalf."

I fear that temptation is ever before us to succumb to the world's ways. In the early church the people stayed away from it because they knew when you became identified with a New Testament church you were going to be called upon to live a holy life and you were going to stand to be persecuted. I don't know but what those days are not too far from us. Romans 1:26-27 says that whenever a people begin to say it is all right for men to cohabit with men and women to cohabit with women that God gives them up and I believe that we are precariously close to confronting the judgment of an almighty God.

While our concern is to see churches full, God's concern is to see churches pure, calling for righteousness and holiness and godliness. Yes, we are to bear a burden for a lost world and we are to confront every man and woman and every boy and girl in the world with the lordship of Jesus Christ, but it is under the instructions of a holy and a righteous and a pure God that we must go. And the eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the whole earth, looking for a man, for a woman, for a boy, for a girl whose heart is pure towards Him.

Would you be that man, that woman, that boy, that girl that would say, "Lord, live or die, sink or swim, I want to know you?" May it be!

Arkansas Baptists elected to service

Executive Board

Terms to expire in 1995:

Arkansas River Valley.....	Jeff Paxton, Dover
Ashley.....	Billy Kite, Crossett
Benton.....	Terry Eaton, Decatur
Benton.....	Pat Robinson, Cave Springs
Benton.....	Dennis Cottrell, Siloam Springs
Black River.....	Tim Hight, Newport
Buckner.....	Randy Hogan, Waldron
Caddo River.....	Jody Gannaway, Glenwood
Caroline.....	Mitchum Tapson, Cabot
Central.....	Jerry Mixon, Hot Springs
Central.....	John Haughton, Hot Springs Village
Clear Creek.....	Robbie Jackson, Clarksville
Concord.....	Bruce Tippit, Fort Smith
Concord.....	Phil Whitten, Fort Smith
Delta.....	Bob Fisher, Portland
Faulkner.....	John Greer, Conway
Greene.....	Bob Kinnett, Paragould
Harmony.....	Gary Akers, Pine Bluff
Independence.....	J. R. Hull, Mountain View
Liberty.....	Eugene Johnson, El Dorado

Mississippi.....	Sedric D. Wesson, Blytheville
Mount Zion.....	John Matthews, Jonesboro
North Arkansas.....	Merle Milligan, Harrison
North Central.....	Larry Loggins, Clinton
North Pulaski.....	Cary Heard, North Little Rock
Ouachita.....	Dillard Miller, Mena
Pulaski.....	Gearl Spicer, Little Rock
Tri-County.....	Ronald F. Lacey, Forrest City
Washington-Madison.....	Jere Mitchell, Fayetteville
Washington-Madison.....	H. D. McCarty, Fayetteville
District 1.....	Virginia Cram, Harrison
District 6.....	Barbara Hassell, Stuttgart
District 7.....	Carolyn Pendergraft, Blevins

Term to expire in 1994:

Liberty.....	Lowell Snow, Junction City
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Terms to expire in 1993:

Concord.....	Ed Saucler, Fort Smith
Greene.....	Dan Minton, Paragould
District 8.....	Pam Worrell, Pine Bluff

Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries

Terms to expire in 1995:

Emmett Chapman, Scott
Joe Statton, Magnolia
Jeff Cheatham, Russellville
Dean J. Anderson, Greenwood
Kathryn Starr, Fairfield Bay
Charlene Wells, Star City
Term to expire in 1993:
Jane Jones, Fayetteville

Arkansas Baptist Foundation

Terms to expire in 1995

Clifton Bond, Monticello
Warner Garner, North Little Rock
Roger Harrod, North Little Rock
Byron Eisman, Little Rock
Sherwin Williams, Arkadelphia

Arkansas Baptist

Historical Commission

Terms to expire in 1995:

District 5 - Clarence Allison, Little Rock
District 7 - Mary Nell Turner, Hope
Member at Large - Raymond Reed, Grady
Term to expire in 1993:
District 6 - Clyta McAtee, Forrest City

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Terms to expire in 1995:

District 1 - Cliff Palmer, Rogers
District 2 - Brenda Bruce, Newark
District 8 - Lucie Hagins, Fordyce

Baptist Memorial Health

Care System, Inc. Memphis

Terms to expire in 1995:

John B. Dickey, Paragould
Bryan Moery, Wynne
Oral Edwards, Forrest City
Term to expire in 1993:
Watson Bell, Searcy

Baptist Student Union

Terms to expire in 1995:

District 2 - David Johnson, Mountain Home
District 3 - Roy Runyan, Jr., Swifton
District 5 - Lee Lawson, Conway
District 5 - Lonnie Gibbons, North Little Rock
District 6 - Doug Grubbs, Clarendon
District 8 - Sharon Stanley, Warren
Term to expire in 1993:
District 2 - Keith Byrd, Batesville

Ouachita Baptist University

Terms to expire in 1995:

Richard Wells, Bentonville
Johnny Heflin, Little Rock
Albert Rusher, Brinkley
Gall Pennington, Arkadelphia
Joe Bill Meador, Fordyce
Bill Clark, Little Rock
George H. Dunklin, Pine Bluff
Dorris H. Yamell, Searcy
Term to expire in 1994:
H. E. "Pete" Raines, Stuttgart

Williams Baptist College

Terms to expire in 1995:

R. Wendell Ross, Fort Smith
Frank Shell, Batesville
Sonny Simpson, Little Rock
Jimmy Garrison, Heber Springs
Ledy Withchen, Helena
Larry Sloan, Walnut Ridge

Coday Fowler, Brinkley

Charles Colquitt, Lewisville

Term to expire in 1993:

Gordon Topping, Pine Bluff

State Joint Committee

Cooperative Ministries

with National Baptists

Dillard Miller, Mena
Tom Darter, Dermott
Don Moore, Little Rock
Danny Veteto, Gravel Ridge

Constitution/Bylaws Committee

Terms to expire in 1995:

Dayid Napier, Little Rock
Jim Harris, Little Rock

World Hunger Committee

Terms to expire in 1995:

Lehman Fowler, Brinkley
Lawson Hatfield, Malvern

1993 Convention

Program Committee

Term to expire in 1995:

D. C. McAtee, Forrest City

1997 Convention

Date: November 11-12, 1997

Place: Park Hill Baptist Church, North Little Rock

1993 Convention Preacher

Preacher: Dale Thompson, Fort Smith

Alternate: David Uth, Camden

Pastors called to 'rise up and stand firm'

ASB photo / Mike Gill

Southern Baptist Convention president Ed Young was one of six out-of-state speakers who preached during last week's Arkansas Baptist Pastors' Conference. The conference, held prior to the state convention, focused on the theme, "Rise Up and Stand Firm."

Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, was the conference's closing speaker. Stepping off the platform and into the crowd, he said his message contained "20 points and four suggestions."

Young said 10 hindrances to church growth include location, a committee-led church, a "right-size" mentality, negative preaching, fear of debt, improper use of time by staff leadership, a staff without a boss, a threatening atmosphere to outsiders, exaggerated "evangelistic" counting and shabby buildings.

He said effective growth principles include leadership, ample parking, visibility, a praying church, discernment of gifts, shared visions, quality, constant change and preaching the Bible.

"I don't know how we take morning worship and the Word of God and make it boring," Young remarked. "People go where there is life. The good news is God is going to be with us in our mistakes and our successes."

Prior to Young's message, Texas evangelist Michael Gott and Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., both preached sermons about faithfulness and vision in ministry.

Gott noted that a lame man healed in the book of Acts is described in Acts 4:22 as "above 40 years old."

"Why would God say that?" Gott asked. "Did God put that there to say that authentic miracles are very rare but miracles in the lives of people over 40 years of age are almost non-existent? Have we aged beyond the point of miracle-working power in our lives?"

Gott cautioned that many ministers are gripped by the "security syndrome" and "maintenance ministry" which "is absolutely grieving the Holy Spirit."

"When was the last time you felt the incredible evidence of the miraculous work of God in your life?" Gott continued. "God honors an expectant faith and an expectant faith honors God....Ask God for that fresh touch upon your life tonight."

Elliff warned the Monday evening crowd that "every one of us can come to a point in our ministry where we get satisfied." Describing Jacob's encounter with God at Jabbok, Elliff said, "Examine the kind of circumstances that will call you to a meeting with the Lord." He said such



1993 Pastors' Conference officers are (left to right) Dale Thompson, pastor, First Church, Fort Smith, president; Nathaniel Simpson, pastor, Life Line Church, Little Rock, vice president; and Terry Easton, pastor, First Church, Decatur, secretary.

circumstances may include desperation, destitution, dread and demand.

Elliff also examined the conduct which characterizes a meeting with God, including resistance, revelation and requests.

Evaluating the consequences which come from a meeting with God, Elliff said such an encounter produces a new description, a new dynamic, a new devotion and a new distinction. "If there is anything that should characterize the pulpits of America, it is that we are God's men," Elliff concluded. "God help us to get to Jabbok."

On Monday morning, Jim Lagrone, pastor of First Southern Church in Bryant, preached from Psalm 20:7-8. He challenged pastors to revive churches by standing firm in love, in walk and in faith in order to "recapture Jesus in our midst."

Grant Ethridge, pastor of Lavaca First Church, described "the secrets of a successful church." Preaching from Acts 2, he said, "You've heard it said that God has not called us to be successful. He has called us to be faithful. Well, if a church is faithful, it will be successful."

Ethridge said the early church provides a model of success in their contribution, their celebration and their commitment.

In the final message of the morning, Ralph Smith, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, emphasized that "God is able to deliver us."

Reminding pastors that God delivered Daniel while he was still in the lions' den, Smith added, "God may not deliver you from your trouble, but God will deliver you in your trouble."

In the afternoon session, Dale Thomp-

son, pastor of Fort Smith First Church, warned that there is a truth crisis in America today "with mind engineers who want to indoctrinate us to think correctly."

"We have become a secular society, moving toward a pagan society," he declared. Citing Colossians 2:8, he urged pastors to stand by God's Word as the only hope of "unchaining the world from the lies and the chains of the new thinkers."

Ron Lewis, a church growth consultant and pastor of Richardson Heights Baptist Church in Richardson, Texas, and David Walker, pastor of Alamo City Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas, also preached during the afternoon session.

"What does it take to grow a church?" Lewis asked. He said Jesus never described how to grow the church; He just said go make disciples.

"Once you get your mind on enlarging the size of heaven, it won't matter what size your church is," Lewis said. "As you help enlarge heaven, your church will get a few as they are on their way to heaven."

Walker challenged pastors to join "the fraternity of the burning heart."

Identifying David with the burning heart fraternity, Walker noted, "David had a heart on fire for the Lord."

"Reputation means nothing to those in the fraternity," Walker said. "The passion of the burning heart is to exalt the Savior."

Mark Brooks, president of the 1992 Pastors' Conference and pastor of Elmdale Church in Springdale, told participants Monday night, "My prayer is that God indeed has captivated your heart and that we will never be the same after tonight."

Hemphill shares keys to effective church growth

"The definition of church growth is a church in its local context fulfilling the Great Commission," Ken Hemphill told religious educators during their annual pre-convention meeting held last week at Immanuel Church, Pine Bluff. Hemphill is director of church growth for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Baptist Sunday School Board.

In keeping with the convention theme of "Growing Churches" the Arkansas Baptist Religious Education Association (ABREA) pursued the details of church growth with Hemphill.

One key, Hemphill said, is motivating the laity to church growth principles. The first step to that end is to communicate those principles. "We underestimate what people need to know about the church," Hemphill emphasized. "One of the greatest barriers we have in church growth is communication."

Another key is spiritual awakening in the life of the church, Hemphill explained. "The carnal state is not interested in church



ABREA officer for 1993 are: (left to right) Bruce Raley, minister of education, Walnut Street Church, Jonesboro, first vice president; Pat Raiton, ABSB Sunday School department, secretary; and Jerry Gay, minister of education and music, First Church, Stuttgart, president. Not pictured is Larry Grayson, minister of music and education, Baring Cross Church, North Little Rock, second vice president.

growth," he said. "Church growth creates change, is hard work, needs leadership and costs money."

It is much easier not to grow, he pointed out, adding that often church members think "we exist for ourselves and we're

happy." When spiritual awakening occurs, Hemphill asserted, the church will ask the right questions and growth can begin.

"There is no secret to all growing churches," Hemphill commented. "Find out what works best in your situation."

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Ministers' wives affirm priority of prayer

ABN photo / Mills GM

By Millie Gill
Arkansas Baptist

"You need to be a faithful prayer partner to your husband," urged Barbara Cunningham. "He needs your prayer support as much as he needs anything. Let him hear you daily call his name, even if it is a whispered prayer in his ear as he leaves for the church office."

Mrs. Cunningham of Waco, Texas, the wife of a Southern Baptist minister, was the keynote speaker for the 1992 Arkansas Baptist Ministers' Wives Conference held Nov. 9. "Partners in Prayer" was the theme for the conference held at South Side Church of Pine Bluff.

"As ministers' wives we all live in a glass house, whether we like it or not," Cunningham declared. "It is a part of being in the ministry, and without prayer we really can't make it."

She encouraged the wives to ask God to give them a merry heart. "Leughter has carried me and my husband, Milton, through many difficulties while serving in a local church, as well as while serving as missionaries to Africa.

"I encourage you to not only pray for your husband, but to also pray for your children," she added. "As you pray for God's guidance in rearing them, also trust them to God and know that He will take care of them."



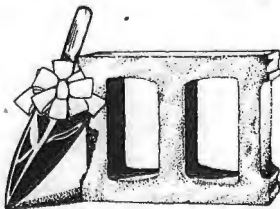
Ministers' Wives officers are: (left to right) Sandy Hinkson, Little Rock, 1993 retreat chairman; Nan Maxwell, Little Rock, 1994 retreat chairman; Vicki Wickliffe, Des Arc, president; Rachael Preston, Stamps, vice president; Julie Hester, Little Rock; 1994 retreat co-chairman. Not pictured is Jane Draughon, Little Rock, secretary.

Conference seminars focused on "Time Management and the Minister's Wife," led by Cunningham and "Family Altar Ideas for One to a Dozen" led by Helen Hambrick, a member of First Church of Pocatontas and a national resource consultant for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Bobbi DeBusk of Pine Bluff, 1992 conference president, moderated the business session in which 1992-93 officers were elected.

A fashion show, in which two three-piece basic suits became 30 different outfits, highlighted the luncheon hour. Special music was presented by DeBusk, Penne Hines and Donna Couch, staff wives of the host church.

This Christmas, help build up the body.



David Groseclose is declaring the hope of Christ in the land where Jesus himself walked. "He's active in The Haifa Baptist Center, which he says is "perhaps the fastest-growing Baptist church in the country right now."

David is awaiting the day his church can find a lot on which to build, with funds

already set aside from the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Pray that David's church members will find land to build a church. Pray, too, that Baptist churches in Israel will continue to declare hope for others as they grow spiritually and numerically. And pray that more churches will be started in Western Galilee.



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Baptist Foundation, Children's Homes, ABN report progress

Messengers heard reports from agency heads representing the diverse ministries of the Foundation, Children's Homes and state Baptist paper.

Harry Trulove, director of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, first moved that the agency's amended charter and bylaws be approved and the motion was adopted on voice vote. The changes included updating language to bring it into compliance with similar changes being made in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Charter and Bylaws. He then reported that the agency currently has \$32 million under management.

He explained that a program set up last year with the Oklahoma foundation to provide low-interest church loans was not able to be implemented due to a drop in the Federal Reserve rate, which Oklahoma could not afford to meet. However, the Arkansas foundation has been assisting with short-term loans for church construction.

Part of the role of the Foundation is to provide obedience to God's laws through compliance with the laws of the land, providing good stewardship through es-

tate planning and charitable trusts, Trulove commented.

Johnny Biggs, director of Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries, came to the podium with news that few agency heads could top—a baby boy had been born the previous night at Promise House and was on his way to an adoptive family.

Biggs expressed gratitude to Arkansas Baptists for helping extend the love of Christ to more children and youth than any other time in the agency's 98-year existence. He said that he, too, believed in a place called hope. But for him, and Arkansas Baptists, those places include the Monticello Children's Home, emergency receiving homes including one under construction, boys' home, boys' ranch, Promise House, and area and satellite offices.

Arkansas Baptists' gifts have been from the heart, not prompted by man but by the

spirit of God, Biggs said. Their "ministry of love" has responded to changing needs of children in Arkansas, and that love has turned into action by providing the necessities of life for hundreds of children throughout the state.

Nelson Wilhelm, out-going president of the board of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, honored Mary Maynard Sneed, widow of former ABN editor J. Everett Sneed, by presenting her with a plaque honoring his 20 years of service. Wilhelm also recognized the ABN staff for their service during the interim period following the death of Sneed and the election of a new editor. He then introduced editor Trennis Henderson, who spoke of his goals for the future of the *Newsmagazine*.

Henderson addressed three specific priorities: financial strength, journalistic integrity and circulation growth.

Circulation growth, Henderson explained, concerns not only the ABN, but Southern Baptist papers everywhere. He suggested that messengers take a fresh look at the *Newsmagazine*. "Watch us, read us, and see if we can minister to Arkansas Baptists for the cause of Christ," Henderson challenged.

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Church Treasurers
Finance Committee Chairmen
Accountants

NOVEMBER 30 7:00 p.m.
First Baptist Church, Harrison

DECEMBER 1 7:00 p.m.
Second Baptist Church, El Dorado

DECEMBER 2 9:00 a.m.
Shuffield Auditorium
Baptist Medical Center, Little Rock

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Key to growth? 'A fresh breath from God'

By Colleen Backus
Arkansas Baptist

"What is the irreducible minimum of church growth?" Ron Lewis queried messengers to the 1992 Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Lewis, a church growth consultant and pastor of Richardson Heights Church in Richardson, Texas, continued leading messengers through a maze of questions to discover the answer.

It used to be that Sunday School was the key to growth, Lewis asserted. It still is important, but is only one part of the key. "Is it the preaching service?" he questioned. Not necessarily, Lewis said, because preaching without music and other elements would fall flat.

Space is often an integral part of any

church growth equation, Lewis commented, but again, space is only part of it. "There are lots of growing churches that don't have the 'right space,'" Lewis said. Age grouping falls into a similar slot; it is helpful but is not the overall key to growth.

The irreducible minimum of growing any church is God, Lewis said. Much like the DNA that provides a unique genetic signature for each human being, God is the DNA of growing any church.

"You cannot grow a church without vision," Lewis said. "A catalytic conversion must take place in a church for it to grow.

"What is the catalytic conversion?" Lewis asked. "It is the vision that hits the church through leadership." Often the vision grows dim when church members resist growth efforts. Drawing on Isaiah 6, Lewis said the vision should last until there is nobody left to hear the word.

"We need a fresh encounter with God to clear the dimmed vision," Lewis exhorted. "You can't have an encounter with God without change.

"God won't drag your church kicking and screaming into the future," he contin-

ued. Speaking to the general decline in Southern Baptist churches, Lewis warned that "God has passed us by and given His promise to those who would lay down their lives."

That touch of God is the key to the growth experience, Lewis said. "The way to put wind in the sails of your church today is a fresh breath from God."

In a second message drawn from Luke 5, Lewis explored another facet of growth. "It's not that you have the right answers, it's that you ask the right questions."

He explained that the right question in this instance is: "Where did the multitude come from?" Tracing Christ's actions back to Luke 4:17, where Jesus read the scripture in the synagogue, Lewis said that is the key. After Jesus read the scripture, the crowd tried to push Him off a cliff, but He passed through them unharmed. After that He went on teaching and healing, and each member of the multitude came with the same question, "What is in it for me?"

"When Jesus drew a crowd, He eventually started dealing with individuals," Lewis said. When He first encountered Simon, the first thing He asked was for Simon to help Him, explained Lewis. "It all begins with one small step of obedience."

A Christian must come to the stark reality that "God is better than I am," Lewis emphasized. "When you turn the church over to Jesus, rather than doing it your way, then it can grow," Lewis said. "Let's try it again."

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PROGRAM PERSONNEL

Lyle E. Schaller

Schaller is a pastor and church growth consultant with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. He has served churches in Arkansas, Missouri, and Tennessee. He is a frequent speaker at church growth seminars and has written several articles on church growth.

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Exhibits offer something for everyone

Exhibits at last week's Arkansas Baptist State Convention offered a glimpse of Arkansas Baptist life.

Providing information to messengers face to face is why the booths are so popular, said Paul McClung, associate director of the ABSCE evangelism department. He said their booth allows the evangelism department "the personal contact with people, the one-on-one conversation that probably is the most valuable way to promote what we do."

The audio tape booth is always a popular exhibit. Within five minutes of a sermon's conclusion, an audio cassette of the message can be purchased, explained Jerry Calaway, of Omega Media Ministries,

Tyler, Texas. He said they provide this service to many religious conventions. "People like to purchase the tapes of those messages that were especially inspirational to them," he pointed out.

Bob Barnett, manager of the Little Rock Baptist Book Store, said people "love to hang around the tables of books to visit and shop." He said there is a constant flow of people through the bookstore's exhibit. "Folks come looking for us," Barnett said. "We are always having some kind of sale during the convention. I look for some of the same people every year."

Fellowship drew many people to the exhibit area. Rex Pilcher, associate pastor at Parkway Place Church in Little Rock

said the exhibit area was a good place to see people he hadn't seen in a while. "Of course, the snacks and coffee are a big draw too," he added.

Bill Dixon and his wife, Snookie, said they enjoy seeing old friends. Dixon is dean of students at Ouachita Baptist University and Mrs. Dixon is minister of education at Arkadelphia First Church.

Both appreciated the easy access to the exhibits. "It's such a nice, open area, which is very helpful," Mrs. Dixon said, "I enjoy the fellowship and seeing the things going on around the state."

David Holder, pastor of Sylvesterino Church, Fouke, said, "I like to see the handouts and the new programs. You are able to see things you might otherwise have missed. I usually go home with a lot of stuff."

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Williams, Ouachita look to the future

Jimmy Millikin, president of Williams Baptist College, briefed messengers on a four-point objective that he hopes to accomplish by the year 2000. The objectives include: perception, people, programs, and projects.

In the area of perception, he hopes to make Williams well known within a 75-mile radius around the college. The two-

fold "people" objective deals with students and faculty. Student enrollment posted a 23-year high of 612 students in the fall of 1992. In addition, Williams continues to attract faculty with good academic credentials and Christian background.

In the program area, Millikin commented that although Williams is fairly new at being a four-year college, it is "growing up" as an institution. Capital improvement projects continue to be a great need.

Millikin stressed the importance of Christian higher education. "Our country needs individuals trained by Christian teachers in a Christian environment to prepare them for leadership in our country," he said.

Ben Elrod, president of Ouachita Baptist University, took messengers on a personal tour of the institution's past, present and future through a look at the lives of three students.

Last year, former OBU student Alla Dzhiembaeva, a native of Kazakhstan, was presented to the convention in an emotional reunion with her roommate, Beth

Ann Rankin, who had led her to faith in Christ. Elrod read a letter from Alla which noted her service as a summer missionary to refugees, her translation of two Christian books into Russian, and her imminent return to Russia, where she will be a teacher in a new religious journalism department at a university in Moscow.

Elrod also recounted the inspiration of a current student, Chris Rice, who is a member of OBU's development council. When he graduates, he will be the 11th college graduate in his family; nine of his siblings have graduated from OBU. Elrod said Rice's father is a sharecropper and his mother is a housekeeper who have instilled in their children a determination to get an education to be used in service to their fellow man and God.

In the future, Elrod said, Lane Searcy Stroud, his eight-year-old grandson will attend an even stronger OBU in 2003.

Currently, the university's fall undergraduate enrollment is 1,266. Income in the form of gifts and grants from donors reached the \$9.79 million level in 1991-92 and the university was able to construct the Harvey and Bernice Jones Performing Arts Center which opened recently.

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Convention Uniform

God's messenger

By S.D. Hacker, DOM, Rocky Bayou Association

Basic passage: Jeremiah 1:1-20;
8:22-9:3; 20:7-13

Focal passage: Jeremiah 1:4-10;
8:22-9:3; 20:7-13

Central truth: God's message, though unpopular, must be delivered.

Jeremiah's ministry spanned a period of radical changes. All Judah gained during Josiah's reforms was swept away as she turned and began to allow the worship of the gods of Canaan, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. This ultimately led to her destruction as a nation.

(1) Jeremiah is called (1:4-10). God detailed the conditions for Jeremiah's call (1:5,7-8) and set him apart with absolute authority to execute righteousness and condemnations (1:9-10).

(2) Jeremiah laments (8:22). Why was there no healing? Religious compromise caused unnecessary killings. The unfaithful, liars would ultimately take over the land (9:13). The prophet wept over a nation's gradual drawing away from God.

(3) Jeremiah is commissioned to deliver unpopular messages (9:2-3). Jeremiah suffered greatly from those who were indifferent to his messages. Jeremiah confessed his frustrations (20:7-8).

Many of God's ministers suffer persecution from some of the people. Some say a minister's rejection, and/or his termination from a pastorate, is due to his inexperience and lack of skills to handle church strife, indicating that fault lies with the minister.

Many ministers, like Jeremiah, must work through painful ordeals and feelings of abandonment. Some quit, but Jeremiah realizing the fires of God burning deep within (20:9) could not quit.

(4) Jeremiah continues to prophesy (20:11-12). Jeremiah continued to prophesy in spite of the accusers who expected him to give up. He remembered who had called him, whom he served, and who protected him (20:11). He had delivered God's message and not his own.

Jeremiah sought vindication for his treatment and punishment for his adversaries. God truly rescued his servant from the cruelty of wicked people (10:12-13).

Still today, God knows the wickedness of men's hearts. He gives the message to his servants, and he expects them to deliver it. He still protects his messengers.

Life and Work

Straighten things out

By Hess Hester, pastor, Markham Street Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Titus 1:1-3, 5, 9-11,
13-16

Focal passage: Titus 1:1-3, 5, 9-11,
13-16

Central truth: Being true to the Bible encompasses all of God's counsel and all of one's life.

Titus, like Timothy, was one whom Paul had personally led to the Lord. Unlike Timothy, Titus was not timid. In fact, Paul apparently had given him a number of very difficult ministry assignments, most the least of which is this one to the island of Crete. The church there was in a state of terrible disorganization and was under doctrinal attack from both sides. Paul's challenge for Titus was to "straighten out (v.5) the situation.

First, make sure the leaders of the church are committed to the whole counsel of God's word. (v. 9) It's a simple matter to make a lot of noise about the Bible. That's what Titus' opposition was doing (mere talkers and deceivers' v. 10). But, to be committed to the whole counsel of God's Word requires a certain depth of integrity.

Titus' opposition used parts of God's Word as a means of their own selfish ends and thus were a divisive and destructive force in the Cretan church. To uphold one part of God's Word and take actions which deny another part displays lack of spiritual integrity. True church leaders must have the integrity to deal faithfully with the whole counsel of God's Word.

Second, Paul tells Titus to 'rebuke them sharply, so they will be sound in the faith.' (v.13) To be an encourager is fun, but to be one who is willing to reprove or rebuke is tough. It requires deep spiritual conviction and courage-conviction that a behavior demands rebuke and courage to do it. When you rebuke you take a stand upon God's Word but you also perform the rebuke in the manner prescribed by the Word.

Finally, Paul identifies another major flaw in the opposition (v.16) Their behavior does not attest to what they claim to believe. They claim to know God while living ungodly lives. Hypocrites. Paul spares no adjectives in identifying such a lifestyle as detestable, disobedient, and unfit." The caution for all of us is to make sure that life matches lips...the lips of God's Word.

Bible Book

God's plan for Israel

by Randy Maxwell, pastor, South Highland Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Romans 11:1-36

Focal passage: Romans 11:11-26

Central truth: God has a definite place for Israel in His eternal plan proving that God's Word can be trusted both in keeping His promises to them and to us today.

Paul has already shared God's past election of Israel in chapter 9 and Israel's present rejection in chapter 10. In chapter 11, Paul declares Israel's future restoration and presents proof that God is not through with His chosen nation. In presenting his case, Paul uses several witnesses, including himself. He begins the chapter by asking, "Did God reject His people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descent of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin."

Paul then looked back at the prophets. Through them God had declared that the nation would recognize Him as their Messiah, repent, and receive Him as Savior. Israel is still God's elect nation, whom He chose for His own. The fact that most of the nation rejected Jesus when He was on this earth is no proof that God has finished with His people.

Then in vs. 11, Paul uses two illustrations to confirm his argument. The first is that of a lump of dough. The reference here is to Num. 15:17-21. The first part of the dough was to be offered to God as a symbol that the entire lump belonged to Him. The basic idea, thus, is that when God accepts the part, He sanctifies the whole. Therefore, if God accepted Abraham, the founder of the nation, God was setting aside his descendants as well.

The second illustration is that of an olive tree, a symbol taken from Jeremiah and Hosea. Please keep in mind, though, that Paul is not discussing the relationship of individual believers to God, but the place of Israel in God's plan.

The roots of the tree support the entire tree, referring again back to the patriarchs who founded the nation. God's promise to those men sustains Israel even today. Yet, many of the Jewish people did not believe when Jesus came. Paul pictured them as branches broken off. It was at this point that a "wild branch", the Gentiles, were "grafted in." In God's own timing and in His own way, no matter how far Israel may stray from the truth of God, the roots are still good and He will keep His promises.

Convention Uniform

Cause to rejoice

By Jack Auten, First Church, Monette
Basic passage: Hebrew 1:1-4;

Ephesians 1:3-14

Focal passage: Hebrews 1:1-4;

Ephesians 1:3-14

Central truth: God's plans for humanity focus in His son, Jesus.

Long ago God spoke to man through visions, animals, prophets, angels and other means, in varying degrees of fullness, with man never being able to fully comprehend God's message.

Things have since changed. God's message has now been clearly revealed by someone far more qualified than animals, prophets, or even the angels; someone who was responsible for creation itself. Someone who became physically involved in the welfare of man, someone who has shown man exactly what God is like, someone so exalted by God that there is none greater in heaven, earth or anywhere. That someone is God's Son, Jesus.

The message which God's Son has so clearly revealed is that even before the creation of the world, God had already chosen a people to be his adopted family that would bring to him joy and praise. Entrance into God's adopted family would be solely through the work of God's Son, thus eliminating any human effort or merit. Knowing how to live as a member of God's family and the ability to live such a life would not be left to human wisdom or strength, but provided by God, Himself, through His Spirit, who would be given to each person entering into God's family by trusting in God's Son.

Some unclear things have now become clear. There is purpose and reason behind everything and God is the one with the purpose and reason. It is God's plan to draw to Himself from the human race, a people, a family for the purpose of loving and being loved in return.

It is through God's Son, Jesus, that His plan is being worked. From creation of the world to the end of time itself, God's Son is the one through whom God's plan is being fulfilled.

The human race is the recipient of all of God's planning and working. God has left absolutely nothing for man to do to become eligible to be included in His plans. It is God's plan, it is by the completed work of God's Son, and it is by invitation of God's Spirit that God's family is being gathered. Man contributes absolutely nothing.

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Life and Work

Godly living

By C.A. Johnson, First Church,
Paragould

Basic passage: Titus 1:3

Focal passage: Titus 2:11-14; 3:1-8

Central truth: God's grace enables us to live godly lives.

Paul devotes much of this letter to Christian truth and conduct, but he did not think of Christian truth and conduct apart from God's grace. The same grace that redeems us also reforms our lives and makes us godly. We can discipline ourselves to say "no" to impiety and irreverence that characterized our unsaved lives. By grace, we can deny those cravings that are characteristic of the world in its estrangement from God. We can become disciplined in self-control (an inward change), to live upright (an outward change), and to be godly (an upward change). The dynamic of this new life is the great expectation of the coming of Jesus Christ (v. 13).

Paul felt believers should produce a favorable impression on the non-Christian world. In 3:1-8, he lists six qualifications for a Christian and points out the motivation for godly conduct.

(1) Law-abiding: Unless laws are kept, life becomes chaotic. Christianity does not insist that man ceases to be an individual, but he must realize he is also a member of a group (see Rom. 13:1-7; 1 P. 2:13-17).

(2) Active in service: Our heavenly citizenship does not absolve us from responsibilities as citizens on earth. Christians should demonstrate good public spirit, thereby proving that Christianity is a constructive force in society.

(3) Careful in speech: The good citizen will be as careful of words he speaks as of deeds he does.

(4) Tolerant: This does not mean we give up our principles, but we are never to be so opinionated that our way is the only way.

(5) Kind: Acting in courtesy and forbearance—justice plus mercy.

(6) Gentle: Christians should know when to be angry and when not to be angry, be patient, bear wrongs, and be ready to help others.

Our motivation to such godly living is to consider what we once were, what we are now, and the promise of eternal life with Christ in the future. God had made abundant provision for this renewed life through Jesus Christ!

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Bible Book

Call to commitment

By John D. Gerlach, Immanuel
Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Romans 12:1-21

Focal passage: Romans 12:1-13, 16-18

Central truth: Believers are to commit themselves to living an obedient and consecrated life.

How is the gospel to be lived out in everyday life? There are numerous books, courses and teaching that help believers to answer such a question.

In chapter 12 of Romans, Paul begins to answer this question. Paul takes Christianity out of a "Sunday only" mentality and puts it in the most practical terms possible, in application to daily living. Paul focuses upon having a right relationship with God, ourselves and others.

Right relationship with God (Rom. 12:1-2). God calls every believer to yield themselves totally to God. We are to be walking, talking, living, breathing sacrifices that serve and worship God at church, work, school, and home. Our strong motivation to live in such a manner is from God's mercy and compassion He freely gives to each of us.

The demand we are given by God is to make a radical change. This transformation occurs in our inner self and is an ongoing process throughout all of life. Our mind must be renewed to the point of offering every moment and action of life to God.

Right relationship with ourselves (Rom. 12:3-8). Throughout Paul's writings the thought is woven of the church being a body. Each part of the body completes its own assigned task to enable the body of the church to function as God intends. We must use the gifts that God has given us, realizing our motivation must be one of service and not prestige. Only then will our life and the church be all God intends.

Right relationship with others (Rom. 12:9-13; 16-18). Our everyday, ordinary dealings with others are to be characterized by love. Agape love results in actions and attitudes that show love in a practical way. Paul specifically illustrates love in action in several ways: love without hypocrisy, giving others honor, a zeal in serving, an enduring hope, constant in prayer, a humble spirit, avoiding revenge, and living at peace with others. Our love is spotlighted in the arena of our dealing with Christian brothers and sisters as well as how we reach out in love to an unbelieving world.

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CONVENTION REPORTS

Baptist congregations challenged to pursue growth

The theory behind growing churches was not the only emphasis of the 1992 Arkansas Baptist Convention. The practice of growth also was emphasized by Jimmie Sheffield in a "Grow Churches" presentation.

In Arkansas 68 percent of churches are not growing, including 41 percent that are in decline, according to Sheffield, ABSC associate executive director. He presented a video which explored three Arkansas churches pursuing growth with varying results.

In Arkansas' population, 47 percent or 1.1 million are unchurched. The ratio of churches to population has decreased from 1:1,500 in 1970 to 1:1,800 in 1990.

Arkansas Baptists respond to world hunger needs

Tommy Goode, chairman of Arkansas Baptists' World Hunger Committee, expressed appreciation to Arkansas Baptists for their response to the needs of hungry people around the world through the World Hunger Offering.

Goode presented Diana Lewis, a volunteer with the Central Baptist Association feeding project. The project feeds lunch to children in Malvern and Dixonville during the summer when school lunches are not available.

Goode also presented Stan May, a missionary to Zimbabwe, who recognized the feeding ministry of Arkansas missionary Ron Langston in that country. May said the ministry gives the Zimbabwe people "not only food for a day, but the bread of life."

Christian Civic Foundation monitors legislation

Larry Page, director of the Christian Civic Foundation, reported on the lobbying work of the CCF which Arkansas Baptists help support.

The good news, Page reported, is that two constitutional amendments that earlier appeared likely to be on November's general election ballot did not appear. A title to repeal the state's constitutional prohibition against a lottery and the Reproductive Choice Amendment both fell short in signature collection.

Page also brought attention to the "bad news" - those issues still needing action, including gambling, abortion and homosexual rights.

ABN photo / Mills GM



Cooperative Program awards - Recipients of Arkansas Baptist CP awards include (left to right) David Napler, administrator and associate pastor, Immanuel Church, Little Rock, first in total CP gifts; David Newberry, pastor, First Church, Crossett, first in CP undesignated receipts in churches with members over 1,000; Tim Reddin, pastor, Barcelona Road Church, Hot Springs Village, first in per capita giving; Gregg Greenway, pastor, First Church, Almyra, first in undesignated CP gifts in churches with a membership of 300 to 1,000; and Marshall Boggs, pastor of Woodland Heights Church, Harrison, first in undesignated CP receipts in churches with a membership of 50 to 300. Not pictured, Cassville Church, Deer, first in undesignated CP gifts in churches with a membership of 50 or less.