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June 29, 1978

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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June 29, 1978

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

Remembering 100 years
at Pickles Gap
page 6





I must say it

Charles H. Ashcraft / Executive Secretary

Baptists are many but not much

However repulsive, the statement above contains truth. That we are many is not debatable, but how much is something else. We are many because we are Bible believing, gospel preaching folk who have remarkably stayed with the priorities of evangelism and missions, never being sidetracked to lesser things. In this fashion we have come to be many and in this fashion we can come to be much.

The gospel has not changed, nor the Bible abridged, but our perception, understanding and discernment of it has improved. The goal of muchness is within our grasp today moreso than ever before. The gospel is such that it produces quality as well as quantity. Many and much are twins in the same family and are not hostile factors. When the full counsel of the gospel is implemented, the full fruits are produced.

We are doing a better job than before. The substance and the quality of our corporate existence are now being felt in our national as well as local life in that we are implementing the gospel message so it touches the whole of society. Our entry into the full arena of life with a fullness of redemptive services indicates our quest and consequent achievement of quality.

Our entry into the areas of the world's great needs and our commitment to the Christian format of human behavior assure us that we will cast aside forever the indictment we have rightfully earned in the past, many but not much. Such great world needs which introduce the subjects of world hunger, human rights, Christian citizenship, religious freedom, sexual morality and the worth of all human beings brings the gospel to its finest hour. The gospel addresses these challenging needs.

Evangelism and missions as priorities are not best served when gross injustices go unnoticed, unheard and unfelt. The same gospel which made us many will make us much. The same gospel which made us big can also make us great and there is a difference. The gospel is more than a recommended fire escape from hell. It is a message of total redemption for the totality of man as a person and as a corporate entity and object of God's consuming love. Don't you forget it. God's dreams for mortal man ascends far beyond staying out of hell. The full intent of the gospel is "God is Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (II Cor. 5:17-20). The gospel is not finished until reconciliation is finished. Quantity and quality comprise our future. We can be more than much.

I must say it!

In this issue

The cover 6



Members of the Pickles Gap Church turned their thoughts to the past as they marked the 100th anniversary of the congregation. Even old-fashioned travel was part of the celebration.

Atlanta photos 8

Some Arkansas people who attended the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention at Atlanta are pictured.

Double lessons 11-14

Sunday School lessons for two Sundays are included in this issue because the July 6 issue is one of two skipped this year to make 50 issues of the ABN.

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

Arkansas' third largest publication

VOLUME 77

NUMBER 26

J. EVERETT SNEED, Ph.D. Editor
BETTY KENNEDY Managing Editor

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This year the Southern Baptist Convention placed emphasis on evangelism and the Bold Mission Thrust. One departure, which should give impetus to the effort to evangelize and congregationalize, is the adoption of George E. Bagley's motion to involve messengers in witnessing in the 1981 convention. The motion called for the Home Mission Board to provide guidance in this effort. Under the able direction of our Home Mission Board and with the cooperation of the Program Committee and those who attend the convention, the witnessing effort should prove beneficial. Great care must be exercised both in developing the convention and the evangelistic thrust.

Dr. Bagley, executive secretary of Alabama, should be commended for his flexibility. Originally, he had hoped for the 1981 convention to be cancelled and the money to be used in the Bold Mission Thrust. Since the Convention constitution is specific in requiring an annual convention (see Article XI, 1), and other articles require the convention to last more than one day (see Article XIV), several amendments would have been required to implement his motion. After Dr. Bagley amended his own motion, the convention adopted it.

The first and most important consideration for the 1981 convention is to make certain that our witness is a positive one. It is essential to remember that lost people react differently in some areas than they do in the "Bible belt." A wrong approach could set our work back greatly and provide a negative witness for the convention. The fact that the proceedings of the convention, as well as our witnessing activities, will be closely scrutinized by the secular press gives great opportunity to either helping or hurting our efforts for Christ.

We are pleased that the Home Mission Board will provide guidance in our witnessing activities. The HMB and local Baptist pastors can assure that every person who participates in the witnessing activities is properly instructed. It will be essential that those of us who are not acquainted with the people of Los Angeles learn exactly how we should conduct ourselves in witnessing to the local populace.

Another major problem with the 1981 convention will be that of providing adequate time for business, reports, and inspiration. Even when none of the sessions are shortened or omitted, it is difficult to balance all of these segments of the convention. This year, for example, the Thursday morning business period was extended almost the entire time of the lunch break. Messengers reacted to this prolonged business session by requesting that more time be devoted to business next year. This year, also, some of our institutions felt that their time for reporting was inadequate. We commend this year's Program Committee for its excellence. But this does point up the difficult task for the 1981 Program Committee.

It will be essential that everyone cooperate if the

1981 convention is to be successful in giving impetus to our Bold Mission Thrust. It is always important that Southern Baptists make a positive impression when we convene for our annual convention. It is even more important in an area where we are weak or not well known. Tying witnessing to the 1981 convention will show that we are really serious about our Bold Mission Thrust if we bathe the effort in prayer and follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit.



**Shape a
better world,
be a
Christian
citizen.**

Observe Christian Citizenship Sunday
July 2, 1978

Sponsored by the Christian Life Commission
of the Southern Baptist Convention

Politics affects us deeply in every relationship of life. It should be entered by the people of God with Christian courage, Christian convictions and Christian commitment. The alternative is to leave the running of the land to the wisdom of unbelievers, and this alternative is completely unacceptable to Christians.

Shape a better world. Be a Christian citizen. Observe Christian Citizenship Sunday, July 2, 1978. — Foy Valentine

Guest editorial

On trying to play God

Have you ever wanted to get even? Have you ever said, "I'll make him — or her — pay for that"? Have you ever sincerely desired revenge?

Dear friend, it is one of the worst sins of which you could be guilty! You were trying to play God. It is God who knows how to even up the score. It is God who knows how best to do it. It is God who has promised that he will.

In his Holy Word (see also Deut. 32:35; Psalm 94:1; Heb. 10:30) we read: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). — Editor Jack Gritz in the **Oklahoma Baptist Messenger**



One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant / President, OBU

Faith for crises and faith for inconveniences

Most of the stories I have heard about faith on the foreign mission field have been dramatic stories of triumph over almost unbelievable obstacles, hardships and suffering. Even the testimonies here at home that we ask persons to tell over and over again tend to paint a picture of the Christian faith as something that comes into play primarily in situations of extreme crisis.

Recently I heard the missionaries-in-residence at Ouachita Baptist University, Dr. and Mrs. Orlynn Evans, share an experience from their days in the African nation of Liberia. Their experience began on the theme of faith for crisis, but soon moved into a contrasting theme of faith for times of mere inconvenience. They told of hearing the terrible news of the accidental death of the two-year-old son of an American Embassy family in Liberia. The mother was in Mrs. Evans' Bible study class.

While driving in their van some 30 minutes out from the city to the home

of the bereaved couple, the Evanses were frustrated at their inability to think of any words of comfort they might express following such a painful tragedy. To their amazement they arrived to find that the bereaved couple was actually blessing all who came to comfort them by explaining how God's power could work even in the accidental death of their young child. They explained that a non-Christian neighbor had observed their moral strength and absence of bitterness in the situation and came over to ask how they could respond to tragedy in this way. They had been praying for months for some open door that would give them the chance to share their Christian testimony with this person.

As the Evanses drove their van back home, in rapid succession their fan belt broke, they discovered their spare fan belt had been stolen, the nearest garage was found to be closed, and they became increasingly disgusted and pes-

simistic about what seemed to be in store for them in the hours ahead.

At this particular point in time one of the passengers in the van (also in Mrs. Evans' Bible study class) was so unkind as to say, "Where is your faith now, teacher?" Mrs. Evans said she was shamed by the question, especially so soon after the demonstration of tremendous faith in the overall providence of God by the couple who had just lost a child.

Even before they solved the fan belt problem, they discovered that the Christian faith works not only for major crises but for minor inconveniences — not necessarily in working miracles to solve the problem, but in sustaining and giving meaning to life during times of minor irritants or major disasters.

I cannot recall testing my faith on a broken fan belt, but it has undergone severe tests several times with empty gas tanks.



Woman's viewpoint

Marian Dickson

A page from my diary, March 5, 1978

On Thursday morning I'd stopped by the church office. As I was leaving I noticed a blank spot on the flower calendar for the coming Sunday. (People usually sign up to give flowers on meaningful dates or in honor of special

events.) Evidently March 5th had not been significant for any folks in our congregation. The date held no special significance for us either, and yet . . .

"We'll furnish the flowers for Sunday," I offered.

"The occasion?" Diane, our church secretary, asked.

"No special occasion," I replied. This is a gift for God, I thought to myself, something we can give and no one will even know except God and Diane. It's just a little way of saying, "Thank you, Lord, for all you've done for us, and to say we love You."

That was that — I thought.

The flowers cost no sacrifice and were for no special occasion. God provided the sacrifice and made it a very special occasion. (Is not everything of real value in life always because of his sacrifice?)

Last night in our home Ellen, in simple faith, trusted Jesus as her personal Saviour. This morning as she walked down the aisle making her profession of faith public, a scene was painted in my memory that will always remain:

Our pastor on one bended knee; Ellen's outstretched hand in his; A majestic bouquet of flowers — there for a very special occasion!

No news is not good news!

If news about your church has been conspicuously absent from the pages of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* and you've wondered why, ask yourself or your church staff these questions:

- *Is some person in the church responsible for sending news?
- *Do they send news before it becomes history?
- *Do they send complete information (full names, exact dates, figures)?
- *Do they give the name, address, and phone number of a person to contact for more information?

If any of your answers are "no" that's bad news. The good news is that your church can change the circumstances. Meet the criteria above and send your news to *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, Ark. 72203. Call us at 376-4791 if you have questions.

William D. "Bill" Hill

has been called as minister of music and education by Pickles Gap Church, Conway. He is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and has attended Southwestern Seminary where he did work on a master's degree in religious



Hill

education. Hill has served on the staff of churches in both Arkansas and Texas. He was a department manager for an insurance firm in Little Rock from 1958-1974 and has served as a major with the United States Army. He and his wife, Frances Marie, are parents of four children, Richard, Randall, David and Susan.

Charles Kirby

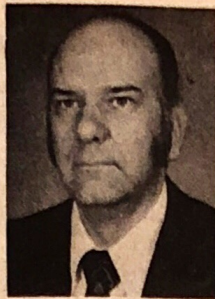
is minister of music and youth of the West Helena Church. He received the master of sacred music degree from New Orleans Seminary. Kirby has served churches in Georgia, Tennessee and Florida. He is a baritone soloist and composer of more than 50 anthems and cantatas. He and his wife, Barbara, have two sons, Lyle and Ken.

Larry E. Floyd

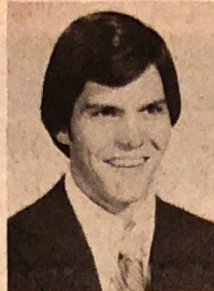
has joined the staff of First Church, Camden, as minister of education/administration. A native of Stuttgart, he is a graduate of Ouachita University and Southwestern Seminary. He has served churches in Florida for the past six years. Floyd is married to the former Tanya Garner of Little Rock. They have two children, Beth and Kyle.

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Horace Daggett were honored on their 50th wedding anniversary on June 18 by their children. A reception was given at Immanuel Church, Little Rock. Mr. and Mrs. Daggett were married on June 8, 1928, at Forrest City. Their children are S. H. Daggett Jr. of Orange, Tex., and Mrs. Carl Gray Vaught of State College, Penn. (the former Janie Ross Daggett). They have four grandchildren.

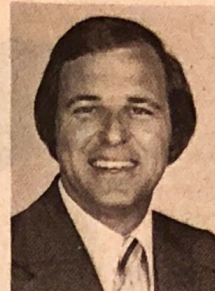
Mr. Daggett, a retired civil engineer after 27 years of service with the Arkansas Highway Department, is a native of West Point, Miss. He was formerly a Sunday School teacher and deacon in a Presbyterian church. After moving to Little Rock, he joined the Immanuel Church where he has been an active member and is now a worker in the Special Education Department of the Sunday School. Mrs. Daggett, the former Rebecca Sanders of Forrest City, attended Ouachita University. Now



Kirby



Borders



Floyd

retired, she was a primary teacher in Arkansas public schools for 23 years. She has taught both primaries and juniors in the Sunday School for over 40 years. Mrs. Daggett has been active in Woman's Missionary Union, serving as president of the Baptist Women and of the WMU. She has served on the executive board of Arkansas WMU.

Rev. and Mrs. Jack Kwok

were graduated recently from Mid America Seminary. He received his master of theology degree and she received her master of arts degree in religion and education. They were recognized as being the seminary's first husband and wife graduates. This is their third graduation together. They are graduates of Southern College and Park College, Kansas City, Mo. He is now the pastor of Eastside Church, Mountain Home.

Raymond Atwood

has resigned as pastor of First Church, Hamburg, effective June 25. He has ac-

cepted the pastorate of the First Church of Rayville, La.

Glenn Borders

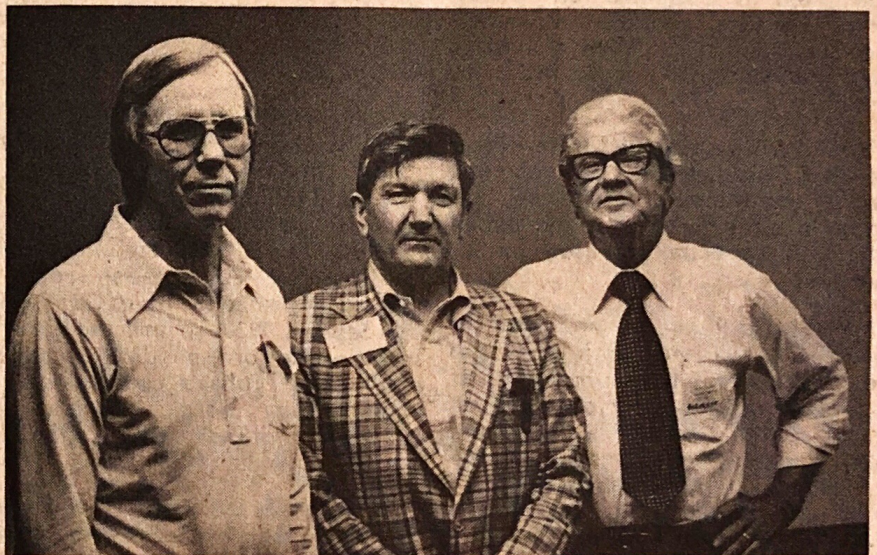
has joined the staff of Central Church, Magnolia, as ministers of activities. His ministry will include work with the youth, senior adults and the church's outreach program. He is a native of Marietta, Ga., and a graduate of Mercer University where he served as president of the Baptist Student Union, was a college council representative and junior class senator. Borders has attended Southern Seminary and served churches in both Georgia and Tennessee. He is married to the former Cile Brown of Virginia.

Carol Cannedy

is serving as summer youth director for First Church, Lewisville. She is a 1978 graduate of Ouachita University.

Oren Martin

has been called as pastor of the New Bethel Church near Heber Springs.



Jack Clack of Russellville (left) and Charles H. Ashcraft of Little Rock (right) were among the clergymen of all faiths who attended the 12th annual Economic Education Conference for the Clergy at Degray State Park. Dr. Ashcraft, Executive Secretary for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was a member of the Clergy Advisory Committee for the 1978 conference, a five-day event. James Penick Jr. (center), president of Worthen Bank and Trust Company at Little Rock, was chairman of the advisory committee.

Pickles Gap Church celebrates centennial

On the cover

The A. T. Shuffield family left the modern transportation to other church members and arrived at the church door by wagon. Shuffield drove in with his wife, Judy, and sons Alan and Pat.



Pickles Gap Church, Conway, celebrated its centennial on Sunday, May 7. The speaker for the morning service was Pastor D. P. Wilcox. It was a high attendance day with 319 in Sunday School.

Pastor Wilcox preached from I Peter 1:3-5, on "Characteristics of a People of Faith." The morning service was followed by dinner on the ground and an afternoon program featuring former pastors.

Former pastors present and speaking included P. E. Turner, John Evans, and Ken Jordan. Other former pastors sending taped greetings included Morris Smith, Harold Carter, Silas Butts and Gary Hawkins. The afternoon service was closed with special prayer for God's continued guidance of the church during its second century of sharing God's love.

The church has experienced growth under the leadership of Pastor Wilcox who became the church's 26th pastor on March 9, 1977. The church's income has increased approximately 30 percent under Pastor Wilcox's leadership. They

have baptized 30 people, and 41 have joined the church by transfer of membership. The average attendance of the Sunday School has advanced from 170 to 183.

The church was organized in 1878 by John Wesley McPike. Records do not show the exact month or day of organization. The first building which was erected was built of cut, hewn logs and the church's first name was Sulphur Springs. The congregation voted to change the name to Pickles Gap Church on Sept. 4, 1920, so that the church's name would correspond with that of the community. Today's congregation includes many fourth, fifth and sixth generations of descendants of the early founding families.

In September, 1935, T. W. Hayes was called as pastor who served the church for 22 years. Hayes led the church into a full-time ministry in 1952. The church honored Pastor Hayes, after his death, by naming the library "The T. W. Hayes Memorial Library."

The crude log building was used by the church until approximately 1909,

when it was replaced by a large frame building. In 1945, the church erected a rock building which is now serving as a part of the church's educational facility. The present sanctuary was built in 1968, under the leadership of Pastor John Evans. In 1962, a pastor's home was erected which is now being used as a pastor's study, secretary's office, music office, and pre-school Department. A new pastor's home was purchased in the Treasure Hills area.

Today the Pickles Gap Church has a membership of over 400. The 1978 budget is more than \$79,000. The church is averaging almost 200 in Sunday School with many members in the adult and senior adult bracket. On May 28, Bill Hill was called as minister of music and education.

Pastor Wilcox believes that the church has a bright future. He said, "With the growth of our community, the spirit of our members and the able work of Brother Hill, our church should continue to experience substantial growth. We are excited about what is happening in our church and the fine work that is being done by our volunteers."



LEFT PHOTO: Pastor D. P. Wilcox (left) and Sunday School Director Willis Fusilier show off a high attendance figure of 319 for centennial Sunday.

BELOW RIGHT: Pastor Wilcox (second from left) greeted former pastors (from left) Ken Jordan, P. E. Turner and John Evans.



ABOVE, LEFT: Members and friends at lunch together. The program featuring former pastors followed lunch.

LEFT PHOTO: When the ushers took the offering in the morning service, they "passed the hat" literally.



**Arkansas
people at the
Southern Baptist
Convention**



LEFT TO RIGHT FROM TOP: W. O. Vaught, Paul Sanders, Mrs. Sanders, James Burluson.

Dr. and Mrs. Cary Heard

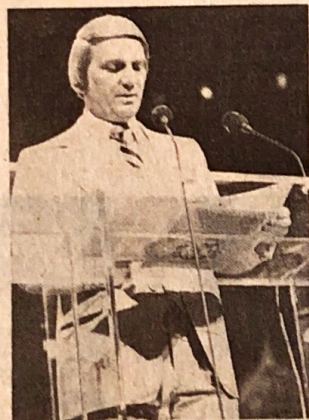
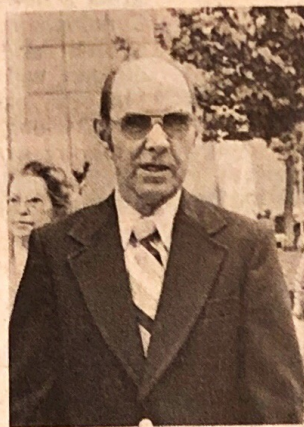
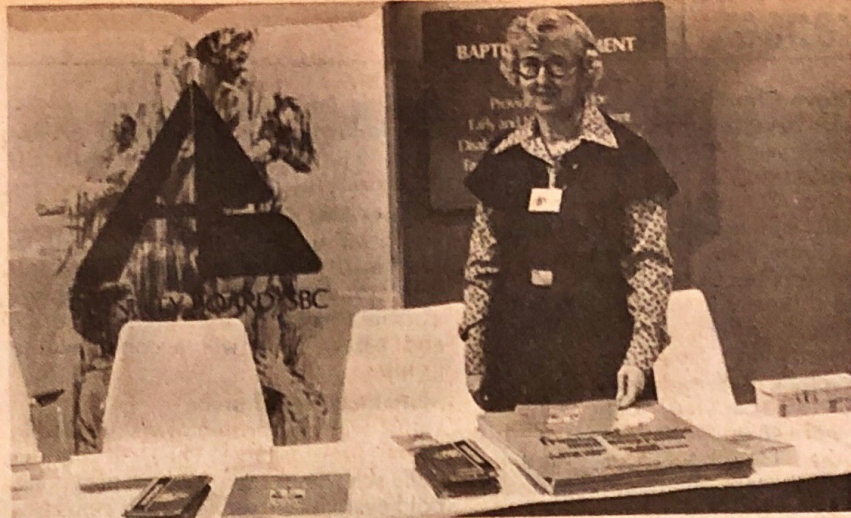
Roy F. Lewis, Charles H. Ashcraft, Mrs. Ashcraft, Mrs. Harry Trulove, Dr. Trulove

David Wilcox, Martha Wilcox, Deborah Groves, her son, Robert Groves, and their father and grandfather, D. P. Wilcox

Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Jackson

Eddie McCord

Dom Garner, Trinity Garner, and Rev. and Mrs. Jimmie Garner
(ABN photos)



LEFT TO RIGHT FROM TOP: Rev. and Mrs. C. Lamar Lifer
Mrs. Nadine Bjorkman, Arkansas Annuity representative
Norman, Robert and Bill Lewis
Leslie Riherd
Don Moseley
Don Moore
Larry Baker
Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Threet
Dr. and Mrs. Nathan Porter

Pine Grove Church, Sweet Home members have returned from Glorieta, N.M. There were 30 making the trip with two professions of faith and two surrendering to special service. The emphasis was Youth Church Training Week. Elbert Warren is pastor.

Broadmoor Church, Brinkley was host June 7-9 to a youth group; "The Peace Finders," from Pine Forest Church of Vidor, Tex. They presented two evening services and also conducted two backyard Bible schools. There were 48 pupils and leaders enrolled in the Bible schools. Larry and Betty Post were leaders. Tim Deahl is pastor of the Broadmoor Church.

Mt. Carmel Church, Cabot youth choir will be involved in a mission trip July 16-21. The trip will include visits to First Church, Heavener, Okla.; The Ouachita Prison Training Center; Siloam Springs Assembly; Immanuel Church, Rogers; four evangelistic services at Dogpatch,; and a visit to the Passion Play at Eureka Springs.

Caledonia Church members honored their pastor, Hugh Nelson, and Mrs. Nelson on their 25th

wedding anniversary. A reception was held following evening worship services on June 11. They were presented a gift by church members.

Hughes First Church youth will be in Big Piney, Wyo., July 9-22 to work in Vacation Bible Schools and lead evangelistic services. Bobby Pearle, associate pastor of the Hughes Church, and Mrs. Pearle will accompany the group.

Marianna First Church youth will do mission work in Circle, Mont., June 28-July 8. They will conduct Bible schools, present puppet programs, hold evangelistic services, and help construct a new church building. Tommy Cunningham, pastor of the Marianna church, and James Rushing, music director, will direct the activities. Wade McCorley, pastor of the Calvary Church, West Helena, will go to assist with the carpentry work. The Montana church receives assistance from Arkansas Valley Association churches.

West Helena Church youth will be going to Mt. Pleasant, Mich., to do pioneer mission work July 22-29. They will be conducting Bible

schools, backyard Bible classes, and evangelistic services. They will be assisting a church that is the only Southern Baptist Church in a five-county area of over 100,000 population. Ben Finley Jr., a lay member of the West Helena Church, will direct activities.

Quitman Church has purchased a bus to be used in ministries of the church. Bob J. Guess is pastor.

Sylvan Hills Church, North Little Rock will begin a Sunday School outreach and growth program on Sunday, July 2. The program will be called the "Campaign of the Twelve," and will include a summer study of the twelve disciples. Don Moseley is pastor.

Harris Chapel, Pangburn is in revival June 26-July 2. Johnny Sloates will be evangelist.

Pleasant Valley Church, Heber Springs is in revival June 26-July 2. David Miller, Director of Missions for Little Red River Association, will be evangelist. Henry Applegate, pastor of the Pangburn First Church, will direct music. Leon Vandiver is pastor.

Music camp for young musicians

(Last years' 4th, 5th, and 6th graders)

Ouachita University
July 31 through Aug. 3

Camp pastor

Donna Bain
First Church
Little Rock

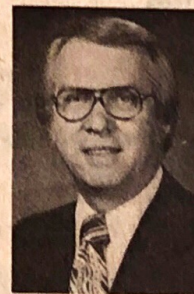


"Jesus"

Group I



Clyde Spurgeon and "Archie"
First Church, Green Forest



Archie McMillan
First Church
Jacksonville

"The Joy of
Jesus"

Group III

Tee Billingsley
Nashville, Tenn.



"The Secret
Mission"

Group II



Joan Blann
Park Place
Hot Springs

"The Best You
Can Be"

Group IV

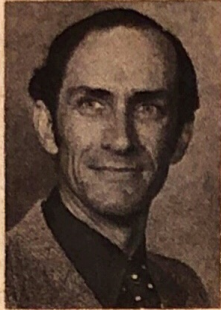
Registration deadline: July 21

(Limited to the first 600)

Church Music Department, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, Ark. 72203

People of the Word

Southern Baptists have long referred to themselves as "people of the Book". And well this may be, for the Bible has been our authority all along. So it was with the Christians of Thessalonica. The Word did not come to them in the form of a written revelation as we have it but in the inspired speaking of the Apostle Paul.



Harrison

The Word was delivered to them in spite of opposition and suffering (I Thess. 2:2). It was delivered to them without error, impurity or deceit (I Thess. 2:3). It was delivered to them under God's approval and to please him (I Thess. 2:4).

But there is more to being a "people of the Word" than merely having it delivered to you by writing or speaking. Paul states in I Thessalonians 2:13 how a church really becomes a "people of the Word".

Receiving the Word

The Thessalonians first of all "received" the Word of God's message. It was a new message to them. It was a strange message, speaking of a Messiah who had risen from the dead. But they still received it.

There were those in Thessalonica who did not receive the Word but rather drove Paul and his companions out. Furthermore, these Jews hindered Paul's deliverance of God's Word to others (the Gentiles), preventing many from being saved. Such was their rejection that wrath became their measure.

We are seeing more and more every day the evidence of those who will not receive the Word but rather, turn a deaf ear. They are like the ground which would not receive the seed (Luke 8:12). But there are many today who are receptive to God's Word. They have ears and they are hearing. These are like the ground that received the seed (Luke 8:13-15). They responded to that reception in different ways and to varying degrees, but they, nevertheless, received it.

However, it is not enough to simply receive the Word. There is more to becoming a people of the Word.

Accepting the Word

Upon receiving the Word, the Christians at Thessalonica then accepted it. The second word for "received" differs from the first in that it means "to take hold" or "to accept". The former "received" is as with the ear, and the latter is as with the heart (Luke 8:12, 15).

These people accepted it not as the word of men but as the Word of God. Acts 17:4 says that some of them believed Paul when he spoke of Jesus as the Christ and him rising from the dead. It was the power and conviction of the Holy Spirit that led them to the point of reaching out and "taking hold" of the Word that Paul preached (I Thess. 1:5).

Being a people of the Word requires that we will gladly accept the Word that we receive. We cannot stop with simply hearing the gospel. We must act upon it as the divinely inspired Word of God by committing our whole selves to its message. This will result then in a final stage of being the people of the Word.

Performing the Word

The accepting of God's Word by believing brings the performing of its work in the believer's life. Paul told the Thessalonians that the Word of God "effectually worketh" or "is set in operation" in those who believe. The word is that from which we get "energy" and "energize". So the acceptance of the Word energizes the work in the believer. It is not the believer that does the work but the Word. The believer is only the instrument used in the performance.

What is the work? Luke 8:15 says that it is bringing forth fruit. It results in the sounding out of the gospel in every place (I Thess. 1:8). It results in imitation of the Lord (I Thess. 1:6). It makes examples to be followed by others (I Thess. 1:7).

The Thessalonians were surely people

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July 2, 1978
Acts 17:1-4
I Thessalonians 2:1-2, 13-20
by Lawrence W. Harrison, pastor
Parkview Church, El Dorado

of the Word. Paul could say with all confidence that they were his hope and crown of rejoicing in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

May the 20th century churches examine themselves to make sure that their claim to being a people of the Word is not just that — a claim. But, rather, let each one make certain that upon receiving the Word, the Word is accepted. And upon accepting that Word, its performance is carried out in the energy of God's Holy Spirit.

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The dynamic gospel

July 2, 1978

Colossians 1:1-14

by Gene Petty

Ouachita University

The title for this first lesson in a new unit of six lessons is appropriate since "dynamic" denotes power, impact, shock, force, and change. All of these characteristics are applicable to the words of the Apostle Paul to the little church at Colossae during the middle of the first century and, more importantly, they are also relevant to every Christian and every church, however small, in today's world.



Petty

This gospel is framed in Paul's greeting to the small, relatively insignificant church in the Lycus Valley in a rather forceful manner. It is "God's gospel" ("by the will of God" v. 1) shared by those called into his ministry (v. 1) and sent to any and all who need to hear it, however insignificant or small by the world's standards (v. 2.).

Born in prayer (1:3-5)

The "always" is better placed at the beginning of Paul's statement and thus the meaning is that everytime he prayed for them he always was thankful for their great commitment to Christ and the three basic expressions of that commitment — faith, hope, and love. Prayer has always been the beginning of the Christian life and when Paul states that he is thankful to God when he prays for this struggling little church, he gives insight into a value system needed in our concept today.

It is important to recognize that the faith produced by the dynamic gospel has as its object "Christ Jesus" (v. 4) and not just any and every object or experience that is intellectually or emotionally appealing. Paul could be thankful for their faith because it was "in Christ Jesus" and not placed in someone or something else as is so characteristic of our faith today.

The genuineness of their Christian love is evident in that it was expressed to "all the saints" (v. 4) which means that the Colossian church embraced all of God's children irrespective of the many barriers that have always separated people from each other. Because the church was primarily composed of Gen-

tile Christians there would be a built-in prejudice against predominantly Jewish Christians and especially those from Judea. Thanksgiving was offered by Paul for their love which transcended worldly barriers and embraced "all the saints" from every known ethnic, economic, and geographic background.

The dynamic gospel produced a hope in these Christians that was "laid up" (v. 5) for them by God himself. This means that their hope was guaranteed by God and thus was eternally secure. In the first century when anyone did a favor for a governmental ruler, his name was "laid up" (i.e., recorded) in the official records of the king's court assuring him security toward whatever had been promised him in return for his favor. His reward was guaranteed by the King himself and no one could deprive him of it.

The Apostle Paul captures that idea in his use of the same phrase in regard to the Christian's hope "laid up" for him by God himself and guaranteed through the blood of Jesus Christ his only Son.

Like a newborn babe, the dynamic gospel must be nourished and strengthened in order for it to grow in the individual life and in the collective life of the Christian community.

Strengthened in sharing

(1:6-8)

One of Paul's major commendations of the Colossian church in his prayer of thanksgiving is that the dynamic gospel "which has come to you" (v. 6) is "bearing fruit and growing" (v. 6). What kind of fruit was meant by Paul and in what manner was it growing? More importantly for us, does the dynamic gospel produce the same kind of fruit in our lives today and should the growth be the same?

There are two kinds of "fruit" produced by the dynamic gospel: (1) an inner change of attitude and will, (2) and an outward result in deed and service. The dynamic gospel had given the Colossian church an inner peace, faith, hope, love, joy, along with a multitude of other inner changes and was "growing" in their lives affecting every

aspect of deed and service. A characteristic of a living organism is its ability and even necessity to grow and a dynamic faith "grows" not only in the lives of its adherents, but also in the community in which it lives in others.

Paul's statement that they learned the gospel from "Epaphras our beloved fellow servant" substantiates the fact that they were the products of a shared faith and that they themselves were also faithful in the sharing of that which had first been shared with them. It is essential for modern Christians to recapture this dynamic faith that is strengthened in sharing.

A dynamic faith is also matured in the majesty and power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matured in Christ's majesty

(1:9-11)

There are five great declarations of the need for Christian maturity from the pen of the Apostle Paul in these three verses. If the dynamic gospel is to mature in the life of the Christian and community, then it is essential that the Christian (1) be filled with the knowledge of God's will (v. 9), (2) possess spiritual wisdom and understanding (v. 9), (3) increase in the knowledge of God (v. 10, and this knowledge must be experiential knowledge, and not intellectual only), (4) lead a life that pleases God and that bears fruit "in every good work" (v. 10), and (5) be strengthened with the power available in the person and presence of God through His Spirit which allows for patient endurance in the Christian life. (v. 11).

Finalized by the Father

The last three verses of this lesson indicate that a dynamic gospel is finalized by the Heavenly Father and this finality of faith is manifested in three acts that only God can perform for his creatures. He "qualifies" us to share in the inheritance reserved for his children, he "delivers" us from evil and transfers us into the "kingdom of his beloved Son" (v. 13), and he redeems us by the blood of his Son Jesus Christ.

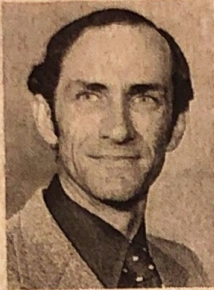
The dynamic gospel is born in prayer, strengthened in sharing, matured in Christ's majesty, and finalized by the Father.

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People with hope

July 9, 1978
I Thessalonians 4:9-18
by Lawrence W. Harrison
Parkview Church, El Dorado

Hope is defined as "favorable and confident expectation with the unseen and the future". It has to do with the happy anticipation of good. It is one of the most descriptive terms that can be applied to the Christian. The child of God has living within him the Spirit of Christ which Paul told the Colossians was "the hope of glory". He wanted the Thessalonians to ever be mindful of that fact, also. And how about us? Do the tired, defeated countenances of so many who profess a faith in Christ bespeak an absence of that "confident expectation"?



Harrison

Paul had already expressed his personal knowledge of the steadfastness of the Thessalonians' hope (1:3). It was a source of joy and thanksgiving to him when he remembered their great hope (2:19). It was to give strength to this hope that he penned the text we study today. Evidently Timothy had voiced a fear to Paul that even though the faith of the Christians in Thessalonica was strong, there were some who were questioning certain aspects of Jesus' return. It is principally to this that Paul gives attention in the text.

Characteristics of our hope (4:9-12)

People with hope in the Lord Jesus Christ should be distinguishable from those with no such hope. One great distinction is through love for one another. Part of the great Commandment is that we "love our neighbor as ourselves". This was definitely a characteristic of the church in Thessalonica, for Paul declares that they were practicing it toward all the brethren in Macedonia. Perhaps it was principally because of this that the word of the Lord had gone out from Thessalonica to Macedonia and Achaia and to every place (1:8).

Lucian, who was the Voltaire of the second century and lived many years in Antioch, bears testimony at this point. He was an undisguised enemy of the

Christian faith, but he witnessed that the Christians practiced a generous benevolence and love toward one another. "They give lavishly all that they have", he wrote. Such is the impact that the family of God can have on the lost world when love is put into practice and characterizes our lives.

This love is not the result of the teaching of men. It is a direct teaching by God into the life of one who receives, accepts, and performs the word of God. The outflow of the heart redeemed by the love of God is toward others of the same experience. John writes that this is one way we can know that we have passed from death unto life, "because we love the brethren" (I John 3:14).

This love is to characterize our lives in outward actions that Paul gives in verse 11. He says that we are "to be ambitious" (more appropriate than "to study") to (1) lead a quiet life, (2) attend to our own business, and (3) work with our own hands. This urging evidently came about because some of the Thessalonian Christians who were expecting the immediate return of Christ became diverted from the ordinary duties of life. They became restless and impatient and decided just to sit down and wait. This fostered idleness and inclined them to meddle with matters beyond their proper sphere. Their physical welfare became a burden to the rest of the church.

Indolence has never helped the witness of the church. Paul states that the reason for the church to be diligent in working is to provide proper behavior before those who are outside the church (4:12). The church is to be careful of any reflection that would be detrimental to the cause of Christ. The church is, after all, a separated people (I Peter 2:9). Another reason to be diligent is so that proper needs may be supplied. To Timothy Paul said, "if any provideth not for his own . . . , he hath denied the

faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (I Tim. 5:8). Our hope is to be carried out in diligent service and working until Jesus comes.

Completion of our hope (4:13-18)

A chief concern of the Thessalonian Christians was the fate of those of their number who died before Christ returned. They knew that Jesus was coming again for his own, but their pagan background caused them to wonder what would happen to their brethren who were dead. Was there any hope for them? Would they miss the glories of the Lord's coming? Since hope is that confident expectation of the future, the Apostle reveals that that hope will be brought to a completion, even for the Christian dead, in the Second Coming of Christ.

The hope of Christ's return for all Christians is a distinction in the crises of death between the Christian and the lost individual. Those who are not Christ's have no hope, no positive, definite hope embracing the future life. Ephesians 2:12 says, "having no hope, and without God in the world". I Thessalonians 4:13 is not necessarily an encouragement against sorrow at the death of a Christian, but means that there should be a flavor of hope in the midst of our sorrow.

Verses 13 through 18 are not intended to be a basis for the building of multitudinous details concerning the Second Coming. The minute details are simply not here.

The Lord will come at an unannounced moment, bringing with him the souls of those who have died in Christ. At his command the bodies of the dead in Christ will be raised. As they rise to meet the Lord, those who are alive will join them in the air. The completion of our hope will then be effected, for "thus we shall always be with the Lord."

Of all words that can be of strength, comfort, and hope to the bereaved, none can excell this. Let us "therefore, comfort one another with these words" as people with hope.

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July 9, 1978.

Colossians 1:15-23, 27-29

by Gene Petty
Ouachita University

The preeminent Christ

Upon entering the state of Oregon from the south along Interstate 5, a beautiful white-capped mountain is barely visible in the Northeast. As you proceed further north, it soon becomes obvious that Mount Hood dominates the entire state, and the closer you approach this magnificent mountain, the more awesome and beautiful its presence. Such is the person of Jesus Christ on the pages of God's Word and especially in the Colossian letter.



Petty

Since the etymology of "preeminent" denotes prominence and basically means "to stand out" or "stand above" others, the title for the lesson is well chosen. Christ "stands out" like a Mount Hood on the surrounding verses in this lesson. The Apostle Paul suggests four specific areas where Christ is preeminent.

Christ is preeminent in creation (1:15-17)

When Paul used the term "image" in referring to the relationship of Christ to the "invisible God", he struck a familiar chord in the hearts and minds of the Colossian Christians. When a legal document was signed by an individual, a detailed description was entered along with his signature and this was called his "image". A portrait was called an image of the individual and any kind of material likeness of a person was called his image. When Paul said Jesus was the "image" of the invisible God he was saying that we can know God by knowing Jesus; when we have seen Jesus, we have seen the Father. A modern counterpart of the term image would be our word "photograph".

The "first-born" of creation does not refer to time, but to importance and thus Paul is saying that Christ is the most significant event in all of human history and in all of creation. In verse 16 a series of prepositions is used to designate the meaning of Christ being the "first-born

of all creation". All things in creation are "in" him, "through" him and "for" him.

A climax of Christ's preeminence in creation is seen in verse 17 where he is presented as the apex and the glue of all of creation. All things "hold together" in him much like the mysterious force of gravity holds together the physical universe.

Christ is preeminent in the church (1:18-20)

Almost like a poem we read of the preeminence of Christ in the church in these verses. The melody of that preeminence is repeated over and over again in a series of beautiful metaphors. Christ is "head" of the church indicating his Lordship, control, essentialness and power over his body here on earth. He is also the beginning of the church being the first person to be resurrected from the dead and thus substantiating his entire life's work (remember, biblical record of prior "resurrections" are technically resuscitations of life and not true spiritual resurrections).

Not only is Jesus presented as the exact "image" of God, but he is also the "fullness" of God, meaning there is nothing missing in him of the Father. Such fullness is necessary or else our knowledge of the "invisible" God would be inadequate. Verse 20 also adds to the preeminence of Christ by picturing him as the means and source of man coming back into a right relationship with the Father.

The idea of "reconciliation" is that of bringing back that which had been lost. It also denotes reestablishment of a broken relationship. Christ is preeminent in the church because he is the means of such reconciliation through the cross. Without that cross there would be no reconciliation, no peace and thus no church.

Christ is preeminent in Christians (1:21-23)

A definite order is evident in this moving section of the Colossian letter.

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First Christ is pictured in his relationship to all of creation, then more narrowly, in his relationship to the church, and now more specifically, in his relationship to the individual Christian. In verse 21 Paul gives us a "before" and "after" look at ourselves. Before Christ we are "estranged" and "hostile" to our creator and to each other. There is truly chaos in our life as individuals and thus there is also confusion and chaos in our collective life as well. The idea of estrangement denotes the helplessness and hopelessness of man when left to himself.

After Christ we are "reconciled" to the Father and to each other and instead of hostility there is peace. Three adjectives describe our new state in Christ: holy, blameless and irreproachable. Each of these describe the individual Christian in his stance toward four responses in life: toward God, the world, other Christians and himself.

The preeminence of Christ grows more specific in the beautiful portrait Paul paints for us in this interesting letter. In this last section Christ's preeminence is demonstrated in the Christian's commitment to his Lord and to service in the kingdom.

Christ is preeminent in commitment (1:27-29)

It would appear that if Christ is so dominant in his relationship to the individual that this same dominance would naturally follow in terms of service, but such is not the case. It is often too easy for the Christian to ascent to a place of prominence which rightfully belongs only to our Lord. Paul is aware of this temptation in our life and he concludes this moving first chapter with the stirring truth that Christ is truly preeminent even in our commitment.

Not only is Christ the end of the Christian's commitment, but he is also the source of it. When Paul referred to "the energy which he mightily inspires within me", he was reminding all Christians of the truth that we are helpless and powerless without the breath of God in us through his Spirit.

Christ is truly preeminent in creation, in the church, in Christians and in commitment.

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If any of your answers are "no" that's bad news. The good news is that your church can change the circumstances. Meet the criteria above and send your news to *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, Ark. 72203. Call us at 376-4791 if you have questions.

Ministers wives urged to use crisis experience

by Linda Lawson

ATLANTA (BP) — More than 600 Southern Baptist ministers' wives were advised to use the experience gained from working through personal crises to help others with similar problems.

Marge Caldwell, author, counselor and lecturer from Houston, said, "Your valleys are the most important thing that will happen in your life."

She cited her father's alcoholism, the death of a fiance three weeks before their marriage, and an extended period of depression as crises that have enabled her to better understand and help people.

"Out of everything God does bring beauty and love," she said.

In bringing greetings to Atlanta, Mrs.

George Busbee, wife of Georgia's governor, urged Christians to pray often "for all those who work in making the democratic process function. Your public officials covet your prayers for themselves and their families," she said.

Officers installed for 1979 were Virjama (Mrs. John) Hamilton, Ames, Iowa, president; Grace (Mrs. Ralph) Langley, Houston, Tex., vice president; Lola (Mrs. Jon F.) Meek, Syracuse, N.Y., recording secretary-treasurer; and Margaret (Mrs. Linwood) Peterson, Roanoke, Va., corresponding secretary. Carolyn (Mrs. James) Coggin, Fort Worth, Tex., was elected president for 1980.

Info requested on Baptist college

A Benton woman is collecting information on Mountain Home Baptist College to write a history of the school. She is interested especially in first-hand information from former students and faculty members. Information or mementos of the school such as pictures, yearbooks, or other records are wanted. Contact Michele Roussel Watson, 122 South Conrad, Benton, Ark. 72015, or phone 778-5948 after 5:30 p.m.

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Attendance report

June 18, 1978

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Ash Flat, First	62	15	
Bentonville, Central Avenue	43	20	
Berryville			
First	116	42	
Freeman Heights	135	52	
Booneville			
First	293		
Blue Mountain Mission	23		
South Side	87	54	1
Bryant, First Southern	170	65	1
Cabot			
First	385	86	1
Mt. Carmel	294	131	4
Caledonia	42	22	
Camden, Cullendale First	487	92	
Charleston, First	162	49	
Conway			
Pickles Gap	185	86	3
Second	334	124	
Crossett			
First	442	81	2
Mt. Olive	273	90	7
Temple	146	75	
El Dorado, West Side	439	431	2
Forrest City, First	445	51	
Ft. Smith			
First	1337		11
Grand Avenue	977	189	5
Mission	29		
Trinity	128	26	
Fouke, First	79	56	
Glendale	37	11	
Hampton, First	165	62	
Hardy, First	113	28	
Harrison			
Eagle Heights	203	59	
Woodland Heights	120	61	
Helena, First	204	62	1
Hope, First	135	88	2
Hot Springs			
Harvey's Chapel	115	73	
Park Place	295	70	
Huntsville, First	63		
Jacksonville, First	375	44	
Jonesboro, Nettleton	221	82	
Kingston, First Southern	48	33	1
Lavaca, First	319	129	
Little Rock			
Crystal Hill	146	70	
Life Line	406	111	
Magnolia, Central	588	160	3
Melbourne, Belview	162	60	
Murfreesboro			
First	176	60	
Mt. Moriah	47		
North Little Rock			
Harmony	86	42	7
Levy	330	74	
Oppelo, First	20		
Paragould			
Calvary	252	169	
East Side	319	169	
First	395	85	
Paris, First	348	47	
Pine Bluff			
Centennial	116	33	
Central	100	34	
East Side	135	64	
First	556	62	
Lee Memorial	254	89	1
Sulphur Springs	132	75	
Watson Chapel	354	60	4
Rogers			
First	435	115	2
Immanuel	395	158	5
Russellville			
First	466		1
Second	142	49	
Springdale			
Caudle Avenue	103	90	
First	1056		7
Stanfill	40	30	
Texarkana, Shiloh Memorial	169	71	1
Valley Springs	36	16	
Van Buren, First	554	149	
Vandervoort, First	65	33	
West Helena, Second	192	94	
Wooster, First	110	34	
Yellville, First	156	80	1

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Carter urges Baptist involvement in issues

by Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP) — President Jimmy Carter challenged fellow Southern Baptists to get involved in the issues of human rights, peace, freedom, nuclear arms proliferation and the sale of armaments, terrorism, and rapidly expanding population, and world hunger.

"These are not political problems," the president declared. "They are moral problems that violate the very precepts of God in which we believe."

President Carter addressed a half-filled 16,000-seat Omni Coliseum during a Bold Mission rally as a part of the National Conference of Baptist men sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

He quipped that perhaps if Singer

guards quickly moved the hecklers out of the coliseum.

Although he commended the Southern Baptist Convention for earlier adopting a "beautiful" statement on human rights, President Carter drew applause when he declared that "passage of a resolution is not enough unless we as Americans and as Christians really reach out in our community, nation and world to defeat and destroy those denials of rights that affect people."

Cautioning the Baptist audience about being "too timid," the President warned against allowing controversy to "scare us."

He applied his principle to both the presidency and to the Southern Baptist program of Bold Mission Thrust, a Baptist plan to proclaim the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000.

"There is no doubt that adopting the Bold Mission program is fraught with problems and dangers of failure," he said. "There is danger of bringing upon yourself embarrassment if you fail, and you may be tempted not to try hard enough."

He chided Southern Baptists because "you and I were not in the forefront of

those dedicated to eliminating segregation and racism, especially in the United States." He also noted that "our forefathers were at the forefront of the protection of slavery."

"Baptists have been inclined to turn inward and stay that way," he observed.

The president challenged Baptists to be willing to take the risks, even as did such leaders as Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr., who lost their lives, in order to use their influence for good.

"Too many of us are derelict in our duty to use our influence, wealth, and power to deal with the moral issues that face us," he said.

The Baptists applauded an apparent reference to criticism of his administration, when President Carter stated that "a person who knows he is strong does not have to prove it, but can be patient and fair and gentle."

Calling for more emphasis on personhood in a dehumanized society, the President said, "We shape what our country is and hopes to be, therefore influencing people and nations throughout the world."

Christians who don't show it blamed for SBC baptism declines

by Roy Jennings

The "don't shows" were blamed June 14 for the decline in baptisms in churches of the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's largest evangelical body.

Jesse C. Fletcher, president of Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex., told the messengers that Southern Baptists' crisis is in discipleship, not evangelism.

In a keynote address, Fletcher described the "don't shows" as people who don't say a thing but the way they live and the impotence of their faith on every aspect of their lives lodge a powerful testimony against the good news.

"Because of the hosts of such people in our midst, it is my conviction that our crisis is not in evangelism, but in discipleship. Evangelism is a by-product of discipleship, not the other way around."

Fletcher said he believed Southern Baptists' discipleship crisis is caused by a failure to understand the hope of their calling as Christians.

"Too many baby Christians know they belong to Jesus Christ but they don't know what happens next. They have been told to wait for his coming, but

they don't understand the meaning of the in between time."

The Texas preacher explained that Christians are pilgrims seeking the Holy City, that the church is the forerunner of that city, and that God is preparing them to live in that city.

"Salvation does not mean that we simply receive title to a future inheritance that we file away until that time comes. Being born again means commencing a new life, and growth is inherent in commencing new life. God is about the business of changing us through growth."

When a local church's fellowship provides nurture, support and spirit-gifted ministry, it's an almost irresistible witness to millions of people waiting to come in from out of the cold, Fletcher said.

"The most effective aspect of such discipleship is the power of a changed life. 'What's happened to you?' has been the opening line of soul-winning dialogue through the centuries.

"So let us renew our pilgrimage toward that city whose builder and maker is God."

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Anita Bryant had been invited, the Coliseum might have been filled. She had spoken to a packed crowd of more than 20,000 attending the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference the preceding Sunday.

Addressing the Baptist group, the nation's most prominent Southern Baptist layman said he had never detected any conflict with doing "God's will and my political duty" as president.

"When I violate one, I violate the other," President Carter said.

He was interrupted a half-dozen times with applause, given a three-minute standing ovation at the end, and interrupted for three minutes by shouts from four hecklers, who identified themselves with the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade.

The president hardly missed a word, continuing to speak while security