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### December 17, 1992

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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# ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 91, Number 26

December 17, 1992



Christmas wonder, Christmas joy  
Christmas is a Baby Boy

Sent to Earth from Heaven above  
To fill our hearts with Christmas love.



# Baptist leaders hold summit, affirm Cooperative Program

NASHVILLE, TN (BP/ABN)—Southern Baptist denominational executives from state and national entities affirmed the Cooperative Program as the "finest method available for Baptists to work together to reach a needy world" in a high-level summit conference Dec. 2-3 in Nashville.

An outgrowth of six "CP Issues Dialogues" sponsored by the SBC Executive Committee and held throughout the nation during the past year, the conference drew 33 state convention executive directors to dialogue with officials from the Executive Committee and the SBC Stewardship Commission.

After double digit growth in the 1970s and early 1980s, the Cooperative Program has leveled off during the past decade. For the past two years, at the SBC level, year-end CP gifts have totaled slightly less than the previous year.

No votes were asked for, nor taken, during the meeting but a consensus appeared in the group's mutual affirmation of the Cooperative Program.

"The forum ... provided a fine opportunity for the state executive directors to engage in frank, open discussion with the president of the Executive Committee, Dr. Morris H. Chapman, his staff, Dr. Rudy Fagan of the Stewardship Commission and his staff and Dr. David Hankins, chairman of the Executive Committee," Cecil Sims, president of the state executives' group, told Baptist Press following the meeting. Sims is executive director of the Northwest (Oregon-Washington) Baptist Convention.

Don Moore, Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director, told the

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, "The meeting was a great help to Morris Chapman in understanding the relationship between state conventions and the SBC regarding the Cooperative Program.

"A great deal of time was spent highlighting problems we now face," Moore added. "The major problem related to the Cooperative Program is the matter of trust and distrust." He said the state executive directors called on Chapman "to use his influence to see that there is broader representation in the appointment process" which has contributed to political division in recent years.

Chapman, Executive Committee president since Oct. 1, called the conference "an exceptionally good meeting."

"A quick commonality was established around our mutual affirmation of the CP and unwavering commitment to world missions," Chapman told Baptist Press.

He said the state executives were helpful to him and "showed a genuine interest in the thoughts which I expressed."

According to Moore, "Underlying and overriding everything is a basic bedrock commitment on the part of the executive directors to work with the Executive Committee in helping to strengthen the relationship between the states and the SBC and to build people's confidence in the Cooperative Program on both levels.

A number of state executives, speaking with Baptist Press informally after the meeting, expressed hope that all the entities involved have now shared their opinions, have found a consensus and are ready to work together to promote and affirm the Cooperative Program.

## Cover Story

ABN Illustration / Diane Fowler



## Christmas joy

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Luke 2:11-12

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# Arkansas Baptist

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# Making Christ known in Hong Kong

*Arkansan battles materialism, Buddhism, communism during mission trip*

By Colleen Backus

Arkansas Baptist

Battling materialism, Buddhism and communism might seem like a tall order, but it was all accomplished in a recent Hong Kong mission trip, according to Jack Kwok, director of Arkansas Baptist Cooperative Ministries. He returned Dec. 3 from a three-week mission trip to the New Territories and communist China.

"Hong Kong Mission 92" was an outgrowth of meetings of the Southern Baptist Chinese Fellowship that took place in 1990-91. An interest was expressed in witnessing efforts in Hong Kong prior to 1997, when the British will transfer power to the Chinese. This was the second year for the effort, and according to Kwok, team members "learned a lot of things that we needed to do differently and better than last year."

Kwok was part of a 15-member team, composed mainly of Chinese Americans with ties to Hong Kong. The team worked primarily with the Tiapo Baptist Church in the New Territories, although they also were engaged in Bible studies, speaking engagements and evangelism training throughout their trip.

The Tiapo church has planted a mission on the Fuheng estate, a new development area, by starting a kindergarten. The government provides space for religious organizations and societies for educational purposes. Using contacts through the mission church, team members were able to spend two weeks of their stay on the estate coaching conversational English at a secondary school.

What made the effort at the school unique was that it was sponsored by the Red Swastika Buddhist Society. School days were filled with "practice" to bring the students' technical knowledge of English to a fluent conversational level, Kwok said. Team members also administered mock exams to the students in Form Four and Five — the American equivalent of 11th and 12th grade.

After school, Kwok and other team members got together with a team of a different sort: the school's basketball team. They played basketball together, went out to eat, and had opportunities for personal witnessing.

At the end of the second week, the Chinese-American team threw a big American-style cowboy party. They sang songs, played games, then had a gospel presenta-



*ABC Cooperative Ministries director Jack Kwok coached conversational English at a Buddhist secondary school during a recent mission trip to Hong Kong. More than 25 people made professions of faith in Jesus Christ as a result of the team's efforts at the school; more than 155 were saved during the three-week trip.*

tion. More than 25 people associated with the school made professions of faith in Jesus Christ, including the head of the English department.

The team also worked with the Filipino mission of the Kowloon Baptist Church. "Filipino work is an exploding ministry," Kwok said. He explained that the ministry is mainly to Filipino women, many of them well-educated professionals who have come to be nannies in Hong Kong. Leaving behind husbands and family, the women cannot find work in the Philippines due to the political situation. They often are alone in Hong Kong, working at low-paying jobs to support their families.

Team members also conducted personal witnessing in the marketplace, on transportation and even in communist China. More than 155 people made professions of faith during the trip, according to Kwok.

Kwok's passion for sharing Christ was evidenced in continuous witnessing in

Cantonese himself, through an interpreter when necessary, any place where people had time to talk. He went to Hong Kong loaded down with tracts and Bibles. So he would not forget to leave a tract while riding the bus, he would place a tract under his leg before sitting down. Sometimes, Kwok related, a fellow bus rider would come after him, trying to return the tract, assuming Kwok had dropped it. "No, it's for you," Kwok would reply.

Whereas communism is the opposing force to witnessing in mainland China, in Hong Kong the primary problem is materialism. The residents even have a phrase for it — "How sangyi" or "good business" — and it is the driving force for the lives of many of the six million people who live in Hong Kong.

But Kwok calls Roman 1:16 the watchword of the Lord's movement among the Chinese they won to the Lord. "The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe."

## YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By **DON MOORE**  
ABSCE Executive Director

I join my voice with yours and the angelic band in singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests" (Luke 2:14 NIV). As we learn more about the significance of His coming, we can rejoice more in the celebration of His coming.

As churches, families and friends come together over the holidays, every believer needs to maximize the opportunity of lifting up the Savior, Jesus Christ, the Lord. Special programs need to urge repentance of sin and the receiving of Christ. It will be tragic if we celebrate the birth of the "evangel" without praying and working toward evangelism. Seizing every opportunity to witness throughout the holidays can turn this into the best Christmas ever. My wife and I, along with our Baptist Building staff and their families, wish for you the very best of Christmases.

Beyond your circle of family and friends, a world is worried, weary and waiting. The struggle for survival itself is crucial for so many in the world. Spiritual survival is even more critical. Apart from Christ's eternal life received by repentant sinners, there is no hope for their spiritual life.

Southern Baptists are committed to get the good news of eternal life out to every person on earth by the year A.D. 2000. Many Christians are not taking their responsibility for this seriously. Can you believe that last year, the year that the "wall came down" and the doors of opportunity swung open to missionary efforts, Southern Baptist people gave less to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering than they did the year before? I urge every pastor, deacon, finance committee member, WMU and Brotherhood member to see if you cannot use your influence to turn this tragic trend around. We need to pray, plead and lead our churches in the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Let's assume responsibility and lead our fellow Christians to new heights.

BETH ANN REYNOLDS

## Woman's Viewpoint

### All our children come home

"...And look at all those children. There they sit around the dinner table as vigorous and healthy as young olive trees. That is God's reward to those who reverence and trust Him" (Psa. 128:3b-4). Reading these verses at our meal table when our four sons were young always filled me with feelings of happiness and gratitude.

The sons are grown, and our family has now expanded to include three daughters-in-law and two grandchildren. Seating all these vigorous and healthy young olive trees at the dinner table calls for setting up the ping pong table so we can all be seated at the same table together. The one problem with this is that the men of the family are always anxious to get on with table tennis tournaments they organize at these family gatherings. The table is quickly cleared so the games can begin.

Mrs. Bush's account of her husband's response to the question, "What do you consider to be your most outstanding accomplishment?" brought to mind the difficulties we have experienced trying to arrange for all our children to come home at the same time. It is always special for any of them to come at any time, but all coming at the same time is a highlight for us all. President Bush's reply, "All my children come home" is a sentiment that I share. It is no small achievement to pull this off.

Merging the newly formed families

with the older established family can definitely be compared to the merging of cultures. The remarkable amount of coordinating necessary to even settle on an acceptable date for these homecomings must create a good profit margin for the phone companies. The varied personalities and the abundance of conflicting opinions create interesting family dynamics that sometimes call for negotiation skills. All of this makes it very important to include family harmony as a regular prayer item.

Recent media focus on family values caused me to reflect on the guidelines we used to raise our sons. Rather than read Dr. Spock, I read Proverbs and any other Scripture-based material I could find. I understand that the pediatric specialist later changed some of his ideas on what is right and wrong for raising children. The constancy of the Bible as a child-rearing guide is reassuring.

We as parents take advice from our children and appreciate the fact that they care enough to give it. We also find ourselves saying I'm sorry when we realize we need to do so. It is a small price to pay for the pleasure of having all your children continue to come home.

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

## Personal Perspectives

"Earlier we were sent to prison forcibly. Now we work where our mothers and fathers died."

- Ivan Bugati, superintendent of Baptist churches in Byelorussia

"I sense a hardening of the moral arteries among the motion picture people."

- Jess Moody, pastor, Shepherd of the Hills Church, Chatsworth, Calif.

"When I have to choose between following my convictions or compromising, I'm going to follow my convictions in spite of the controversy."

- Keith Parks, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship missions coordinator-elect

"The Foreign Mission Board is bigger than any one individual.... It is going to go on."

- Jack Bledsoe, FMB trustee; director of missions, Carey Association

# Sharing joy is a choice

■ "Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King."

■ "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy."

■ "Christmas wonder, Christmas joy, Christmas is a Baby Boy."

Christmas and joy are almost synonymous — at least for most people. The festive decorations, gift-giving and family celebrations make the world seem a little nicer place to be each December. For Christians, of course, Christmas is one of the most holy seasons of the year. The miraculous birth of Christ marked the beginning of God's promised plan of eternal salvation for all who choose to accept it.

Yet Christmas and joy are polar opposites for some people, Christians included. Depression and loneliness are common companions for many individuals as they approach Dec. 25. Those who have faced illness, death, divorce, job loss or other calamities during the past year are particularly susceptible to holiday depression.

"Christmas is supposed to be a time when everyone is supposed to be happy," notes Wynona Elder, associate professor of psychology and counseling at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. "We feel obligated to be happy and guilty if we aren't. And guilt spirals downward into depression."

She said Christians can help fight depression by refusing to give in to secular commercialism and unrealistic demands for bills.

"We have made Christmas into the kind

## STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR

By TRENNIS HENDERSON



of holiday where we spend too much money. We're expected to kind of buy happiness," Elder points out. "What we need to do as Christians is to put the real meaning of the holiday back and focus not on spending money, but on worshipping the Lord."

Part of that worship experience is found through giving. Just as God gave His Son out of a sense of love, Christians should give freely to those around us—not merely giving to check a name off our shopping list, but giving of our time and talents to those who are less fortunate.

Many churches deliver Christmas baskets filled with food for those in need. Others sponsor "angel trees" or similar projects to provide gifts for underprivileged children. That's a good start. But we should be sensitive not only to the physical needs around us, but to emotional and spiritual needs as well.

The greatest gift we can give anyone is the good news of salvation. That message

is effectively communicated in our churches through countless pageants, cantatas and live manger scenes. But the message also must be shared on a personal, individual basis.

Even when that is accomplished, the joy of Christ's birth should not be limited to one season of the year. Our lives ought to reflect the joy of Christ each day, in all we say and do.

Don't misunderstand. I'm not talking about some oblivious, head-in-the-clouds happiness that refuses to acknowledge the challenges and difficulties of life. It remains our responsibility to "rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." What I am speaking of is sharing the deep, mature joy that comes through daily encounters with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Christian vocalist Larnelle Harris recently recorded a song which declares, "I Choose Joy." The apostle Paul put it another way: "I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." What wonderful Christian testimonies. If more Christians consciously chose joy and contentment, imagine how many unsaved people would consciously choose Christianity.

Do you know Christians who choose apathy, bitterness or cynicism as part of their daily witness? My preference is to choose the lasting joy found only in Jesus Christ.

"Joy to the world! The Lord is come." How will you choose to share that joy this Christmas season and throughout the coming year?

## Be alert to concerns

Thank you for once again printing the accurate information about the "O'Hair petition." (See "O'Hair petition is simply not true," Dec. 3 issue, page 5.) I too have seen this in circulation in churches for more than a decade. Many well-meaning Christians have brought it to the pastor's attention or to mine. I have often wondered the very thing that Bill Murray has said about atheists trying to make Christians look foolish. Whether or not this has been done by them, we know that Satan wants Christians to look foolish.

I would, however, like to add one more thing to your article. These well-meaning Christians and others should never be discouraged from bringing such petitions and other needs to the attention of church leadership. We must continually be alert to petitions and issues which would affect



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

our lives and our freedoms. It is tragic that this kind of misinformation exists within the church, but we must never assume other petitions are false based on this one. As you have stated, each should be researched. Let us not let this ploy of the enemy stifle whatever future efforts we may need to make.

Lyndel Erin Hobbs  
Fort Smith, AR

## Atmosphere of suspicion

When I was a child, the Communists held their people in an iron-fisted grip. We

thought it was terrible that people were always spying on each other, making everyone suspicious of everyone else. We thought it was a terribly oppressive way to live.

The Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees, in their efforts to protect the purity of what is taught, have done a terrible thing. The covert taping of lectures to gather evidence for theological disputes is not the business of students. (See "Trustees approve motion on taping lectures," Nov. 5 issue, page 17.)

If differences cannot be dealt with openly, then there is something deeply wrong that will not be corrected by turning the students into spies. I do not believe such an atmosphere of suspicion can be from God.

Penny Burgett  
Mountain View, AR

# Local Baptists are real heroes among refugees

By Mike Creswell

SBC Foreign Mission Board

**BELGRADE, SERBIA (BP)**—Southern Baptists in America are helping feed thousands of refugees who have fled the bitter civil war in former Yugoslavia.

But the real heroes are local Baptists who distribute food from outside donors through programs run on nickels, dimes, hard work and faith.

A previously announced \$225,000 gift from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will provide food to more than 30,000 people over the next two to three months. Many of them are Bosnian families who have left their homeland with little more than their lives. Southern Baptist missionary Bill Steele is helping coordinate use of the funds.

Baptists work on all sides of the conflict, helping Croats, Serbians and Bosnians alike:

■ In Puscine, northern Croatia, Baptist layman Bratko Horvat has turned the warehouse of his electronics firm into a clearinghouse for refugee ministry. The modern facility normally filled with fax machines and copiers now bulges with food, clothing, shoes and other items. Horvat sends his own trucks around the city where 10,000 Bosnian refugees have settled. At times he even sends trucks into Bosnian territory to distribute aid.

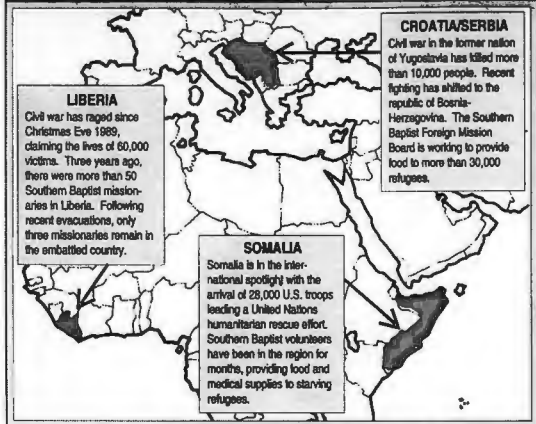
Horvat personally has preached at the front lines. He distributes food and clothing to Muslim refugees with no strings attached, but uses every opportunity to spread his faith.

■ At Sisak, Croatia, near the Serbian war front, Baptist worker Zelko Mraz flips through receipts for the food Getsemane Mission has bought with Foreign Mission Board funds: 2,400 cans of stew, 500 kilograms of noodles, 500 liters of cooking oil, 500 pounds of rice, 1,500 kilograms of sugar.

Each 21 days workers with the Baptist-led organization distribute food parcels to about 400 families the government has committed to their care. With few of their own resources, they depend on outside aid to help meet the pressing needs around them.

■ In Zagreb, Croatia's capital city, the Baptist group "My Neighbor" is using a \$25,000 gift from Southern Baptists to feed about 2,000 people for two months. The ministry, based in Zagreb Baptist

## International Turmoil



Church, operates a clothing warehouse and an extensive food distribution ministry across Croatia.

■ Danvar Baptist Church in the United Nations-protected town of the same name also depends on outside help, said pastor Misko Horvatek. With just 74 members, the church has taken on the mammoth responsibility of caring for 400 refugee families in the town of Krapina. To heighten the challenge, the church lost its entire savings account of prewar Yugoslavian currency at the bank. Church members even pay rent for some refugee families to assure them of housing.

■ At Osijek, Croatia, a major bridge near the town center lies shattered in a river that separates the town from Serblan-held territory. The city is quiet now, but many buildings are pockmarked by automatic weapons fire from previous fighting.

Toma Magda, pastor of the 50-member Baptist church here, said the congregation supports 100 refugee families with food. Some are Croatian, some Serbian and others are Bosnian, reflecting the hurt the war has dished out to all sides.

"We're delivering the food and talking with the refugees, not just handing out the food," Magda said. "We mean not only to present the gospel but to keep in touch and determine other needs."

■ In Belgrade, Serbia, two Baptist churches have joined other evangelists

to form "Bread of Life" to help feed about 1,000 people for four months with a \$25,000 gift from Southern Baptists. At a Pentecostal church that serves as a distribution center, worker Dordana Sepej has a smile and a pat on the shoulder for troubled couples who came to seek help.

■ Slovenia is the newly independent country that used to be northern Yugoslavia, with a population of about 2 million. Just five small Baptist churches worship here — part of the 500 or so evangelicals in the predominantly Catholic country. But they, too, minister to the many refugees who have fled here. About 20,000 refugees live in 65 camps while another 60,000 stay with relatives across Slovenia.

As the war drags on into the winter, hardships will increase for many refugees as weather makes already poor roads impassable. With no end in sight to the fighting, Baptists will minister for months to come.

One positive result of the war: Baptists have become widely recognized as people who give substance to their faith through service. "In the past the government persecuted Baptists. But Baptists have helped in humanitarian aid and this has helped to establish an identity," said Osijek pastor Toma Magda.

"We must move now. Now's the time to serve and evangelize and reach out," declared Branko Lovrec, leader of the Croatian Baptist Union in Zagreb.

# Baptist aid worker in Somalia beats despair

By Craig Bird

SBC Foreign Mission Board

MOGADISHU, SOMALIA (BP)—Not only the starving find survival difficult within the walls of the feeding centers and clinics of Somalia.

A deluge of death can strangle the compassion of aid workers. Too many skeletal hands pawing during food distribution, too many babies who don't wake up, too many vacant eyes staring at you — even when you close your eyes to sleep.

The American volunteer can feel the cold, hard lump of defeat in his stomach. He has wasted a morning trying to find more supplies for the rapidly emptying aid warehouse. Friends were robbed at gunpoint last night.

His adult children back home are loudly unhappy their parents have volunteered to work in Somalia, thus their names won't be used in this story. Some of his fellow Southern Baptists in the United States don't understand it either.

Now it's time to make the rounds again. Time to load the supplies in the truck. Time to determine if the driver is too high from chewing khat, a stimulant beloved by Somali men, to steer around the potholes and roadblocks successfully. Time to see more starving faces and listen to more desperate people demanding more things he doesn't have and can't get.

But instead of defeat, this day he finds victories. Small, temporary ones perhaps, but enough:

■ A former university professor, a member of the select committee that rendered the Somali language into written form for the first time in 1972, greets the American. He has recently been shot in the arm but he has some good news to share. Separated from his wife and six children more than six months earlier, he has just heard they might be at a refugee camp a hundred miles away. "It isn't very definite, but just think — they might be alive," he says with a smile.

■ A quick look through the second camp shows no sign of a man the American had met earlier. "He'd been dragged to the edge of the camp to die, but we put him on the supplemental feeding list" anyway, the volunteer says. "I guess he didn't make it." But he did. In fact, he's not at the camp because he walked with his son to get water outside the gate. Returning, he totters weakly toward the American to greet him. "I don't see how he's standing up, but at least he's still alive," says the amazed volunteer.

■ Outside of town a young girl and a sibling sit under a tree, isolated from three other groups. "She's new; she doesn't live in the camps around the feeding center," he explains. He watches her carefully eating protein-enriched porridge down

her brother's throat as he asks why she's here.

"She has parents. She isn't an orphan," he explains, a note of quiet joy underlying the discovery. "They're a couple of kilometers away but they heard there was food here. I'm glad they heard. That little boy wouldn't have lasted much longer."

■ At a clinic, the American looks in on an "exception." For logistical and practical reasons, refugees aren't allowed to live in the aid centers. But a week before a woman had brought her husband to the clinic on a borrowed donkey cart. Too weak to talk, much less stand, the 45-year-old man looked to be minutes from death. A month before the couple and four children had begun walking — with no food or water — from their rural home 100 miles away. One by one the children, the oldest age 10, had starved.

The aid staff offered to let the couple stay on the compound and constructed a lean-to of poles and heavy plastic against the back wall of the clinic. After seven days he still has not been weighed. He still cannot stand. But he's alive. The wife smiles as she tells the American volunteer how much better her husband is.

The American stands a little taller, the lump of defeat banished at least for today. He too has survived, feeding on the hope of the Somali refugees and the promise of continuing to make a difference.

## Liberia's capital packed with refugees and fear

By Donald D. Martin

SBC Foreign Mission Board

MONROVIA, LIBERIA (BP)—Liberia's besieged capital has become a massive encampment lacking adequate food, water or a cease-fire.

Since renewed fighting in the west African nation's civil war began in October, refugees seeking safety have flooded into Monrovia, swelling its population to nearly 1 million in a city built for only about 400,000 residents.

"Monrovia is a bloated and beleaguered city," explained Southern Baptist missionary Bradley Brown in a message sent via a United Nations satellite phone. "Conditions are often quite bad, with food, water and sanitation being problems."

"Houses are filled beyond capacity with people. It's not unusual for 30 to 40 people to live in one house," added Brown's wife, Carolyn. "In churches and (refugee) centers there is only enough room for people to lay down to sleep."

Monrovia's refugees are waiting out the war, wandering the streets during the day, then squeezing into the overcrowded shelters and homes for the night, she said.

More than 2,000 people now live in three Monrovia Baptist churches and Ricks Institute, a local Baptist school, said Brown. The overcrowding is made worse by a 6 p.m. curfew that confines people to the packed dwellings from dusk to dawn.

Food is in short supply, but relief groups are making sure no one starves, the missionary reported.

Only three Southern Baptist missionaries remain in Liberia — the Browns and Kenneth Nicholson. The missionaries have focused their own relief work on distributing supplementary packets containing hand and laundry soap, powdered milk and canned fish to refugees.

The city's overcrowding has made sanitation a growing problem; diseases spread quickly. In early November the Red Cross reported an outbreak of measles, which grew to at least 10,000 cases. The disease

claimed the lives of many children and young people, Brown said.

Since the measles outbreak, U.N. medical relief flights have made it possible to launch an extensive immunization campaign. Southern Baptist missionaries participated in the effort until the fighting forced most of the missionaries to leave.

The civil war, which started Christmas Eve 1989, has cost the lives of some 60,000 people. Before the war more than 50 Southern Baptist missionaries worked in the country, which was founded by freed American slaves. The war forced most of the missionaries to evacuate in June 1990. In February 1991 six missionaries returned to Monrovia to set up relief ministries. The group had grown to 14 before the latest wave of violence.

"Even though it has been frightening at times, there has been a calm assurance that we are where we should be," said Mrs. Brown. "I feel that we should be here now to do what we can for the hurting, desperate people all about us."



# Parks accepts CBF missions coordinator position amid mixed Baptist response

ATLANTA (BP/ABP)—R. Keith Parks, retired president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, has accepted the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's offer to lead its missions program.

Parks announced his acceptance of CBF's missions coordinator position in a Nov. 30 news conference at CBF's headquarters in Atlanta. He will assume the new post Feb. 1.

The CBF is an organization of Baptist moderates formed in 1991 in protest of the current conservative direction of the Southern Baptist Convention. Parks retired Oct. 31 after 13 years as FMB president, saying he felt it to be God's will in light of differences with FMB trustees over missions philosophy.

"Despite all the denominational controversy that has gone on," Parks told Baptist Press, "there's no need for us (the SBC and CBF) to compete with each other. There's so much need in the world that there's room for everyone who wants to reach people for Jesus Christ. It's not my intention to stumble over others but to focus on needy areas."

Parks, addressing a Nov. 19-20 meeting with CBF's Global Missions Ministry Group in Nashville, said he would consider the offer to lead its missions efforts if it remains Southern Baptist, recruits new missionaries instead of just ones now related to the FMB and focuses on such missions needs as unreached peoples in the "World A" population belt from North Africa and the Middle East through China.

"CBF's missions committee has strongly affirmed all of those points, plus others I was interested in," Parks said. "CBF's purpose and strategy statement are very compatible with how I feel about missions ... to lead people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to carry out the Great Commission through inclusive global missions in which all Baptists can participate." That rings true to me and is why, after much spiritual struggle, I have felt led by God to do this."

## Trustee chairman responds

Parks' decision, however, stirred a negative reaction from John Jackson, a California pastor who is chairman of FMB trustees. Jackson also issued a reaction to Parks' earlier meeting with the CBF, saying, "A gauntlet has been thrown in the

face of the FMB and Southern Baptists."

"In addition to my former statements," Jackson said "Parks' decision comes at the heart of our time for commitment to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. It appears it has been deliberately planned and orchestrated.

"I personally feel it attacks foreign missions as it is now in operation across the world," Jackson continued. "I believe this will devastate missionaries, pastors, convention leadership and Southern Baptists as a whole.

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*"There's so much need in the world that there's room for everyone who wants to reach people for Jesus Christ."*

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— R. Keith Parks

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"I wish I could say something positive about it, but I cannot see this being a help to missions, but rather extremely harmful," Jackson said.

Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president, issued a statement voicing appreciation for Parks' 38 years in foreign missions but noting he is "extremely disappointed" in Parks' new CBF affiliation.

"I continue to be dismayed by former SBC executive leaders who make statements and take actions which erode support for our missionaries at home and abroad," Lewis said. SBC missionaries are "counting on our support" through the Cooperative Program fund for national and international SBC ministries and missions, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions.

"Any actions that divert funds from these lifelines of support hurt Southern Baptist missions in general and our missionaries in particular," Lewis said.

Don Kammerdiener, FMB interim president, issued a statement which said: "I can understand why the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship wants Keith Parks to head their world missions program. He's a talented man. However, my stance is the same that I have taken ever since I was 9 years old and especially during my 30-year career in

Southern Baptist foreign missions. The best way for Southern Baptists to do foreign missions is through the Foreign Mission Board, which was created for that purpose. I encourage all Southern Baptists to unite around our heritage."

Parks said many Southern Baptists will continue to give through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and "I would pray blessings on them and never try to discourage them from doing that."

Asked about his support of a "societal" approach to missions after years of emphasizing a denomination-wide effort, Parks said, "The new generation is showing a growing lack of excitement about or commitment to the big denomination. We've seen it in the megachurches where they have tended to express themselves directly. I really believe there are trends toward a societal approach. It will challenge some people to get caught up in missions."

Parks said the 15th and 20th chapters of Acts played a role in his decision, in part because it reminded him and his wife, Helen

Jean, "that Paul and Barnabas split up when they disagreed and had two missions teams instead of one. The Lord led us to understand that He could use this situation to create another missions team which could do more work than one could by itself."

Former President Jimmy Carter, a Southern Baptist layman, offered his assistance to Parks in helping the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship get its missionary program off the ground.

Parks confirmed he had lunch with the former president in Atlanta Dec. 1, during which Carter issued the offer. He said Carter had called him to set up the meeting.

"The combination of his overseas work and his Baptist commitment and his feelings that he really didn't fit into the convention the way it was going caused him to make contact," Parks said. "He said he wants to be supportive of what we are doing at CBF and would like us to find a way he can be of assistance in the mission program."

According to sources, Carter called Parks earlier to encourage him to take the Fellowship missions post.

After Parks' announcement, Carter issued a statement commending Parks and applauding his move to the Fellowship.

"This decision gives many Southern Baptists renewed confidence in the viability and effectiveness of a comprehensive foreign mission program that will remain true to our Christian principles and those of our Baptist forebears," Carter said.

Parks also received support from a group of former SBC agency executives who said they "applaud his courage and integrity, and affirm his decision to direct the missions program of the Cooperative Baptists Fellowship." Noting that Parks "stands tall and consistently Christian" in ethical standards and conduct, the groups added, "We commend Dr. Parks to Baptists everywhere as a wise, compassionate and engaged missionary. Keith Parks always will be a model missionary for Baptists."

Those signing the letter and the institutions they formerly served include: Jimmy R. Allen, Radio and Television Commission; Grady Cothen, Baptist Sunday School Board; Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler, Woman's Missionary Union; W. Randall Lolley, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Duke K. McCall, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Darold H. Morgan, Annuity Board; and Foy D. Valentine, Christian Life Commission. Also signing was James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

### Difficult decision

Acknowledging the mixed response, Parks said he expected to be blamed for his decision. He said he struggled over the Fellowship's job offer but only because of the difficulty of starting a missions program from scratch, not because he feared the inevitable criticism that would follow.

"I made a conscious decision long ago that I could never base decisions on reactions, or what might happen, or whether people like it or not," he said. "But I had to make the best judgment I felt the Lord was calling me to make and then live with the consequences."

"When I have to choose between following my convictions or compromising, I'm going to follow my convictions in spite of the controversy or unpleasantness."

Neither was he influenced by fear the decision could hurt the FMB, he said. Rather than drawing support from the FMB, he said, the Fellowship's program can encourage many Southern Baptists who "have lost their excitement and withdrawn from involvement" to renew their commitment to missions.

"I hope he's right," said Kammerdiener. "But my hard-nosed assessment is that the only source the Fellowship has to get money is the same source (the FMB has), and I think that's competition."

## Arkansas Baptist leaders respond to Parks' decision

By Treannis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

"The Foreign Mission Board is bigger than any one individual," declared Arkansas FMB trustee Jack Bledsoe. "Our world missions enterprise is bigger than any one of us and it is going to go on."

Bledsoe, director of missions for Carey Association, offered that assessment following Keith Parks' recent announcement that he will head the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's missions program.

Both Bledsoe and fellow Arkansas trustee Wallace Edgar, pastor of Trinity Church in Texarkana, said they were deeply disappointed by Parks' decision. By contrast, Jonesboro pastor Emil Williams, moderator of the Arkansas Fellowship of Concerned Southern Baptists, said he is "tremendously pleased" by Parks' announcement.

"I am really disappointed. My heart just broke when I heard this was his choice because I dearly love and appreciate him," Edgar told the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*.

"I am sure that he is feeling in his heart that he is doing what the Lord wants him to do," Edgar continued. "But I certainly don't think it is going to help the world missions cause. It is a severe blow to the Southern Baptist Convention's world missions effort."

Bledsoe noted, "I am very disappointed in Dr. Parks for going with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Our missions approach is a cooperative approach....For years I have heard (Parks) talk about the way to support missions is cooperatively and he was always opposed to the societal approach."

"I am very, very surprised and disappointed that he would align himself with the societal approach, especially at this particular juncture in time, right in the middle of our Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and right in the middle of our emphasis to beef up our missions commitment overseas."

Assessing the impact of Parks' decision, Bledsoe remarked, "In the short run, I think it is going to have a serious impact because a lot of people are going to follow his emphasis in this

other direction. In the long run, I think we will weather the storm."

"Southern Baptists are going to be Southern Baptists," Bledsoe emphasized. "We are going to continue to support the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering."

However, he added, "I rather suspect that we are going to have a very, very difficult time in reaching the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal this year. If so, we will have to make some readjustments in our budgeting, but we will do whatever is necessary....In the long run, I feel that we will survive and everything will be all right."

Williams, pastor of Jonesboro First Church, said Parks' decision "is the single most important decision or event that has taken place since there was an organization like the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship."

"I do not feel that Keith Parks left the Southern Baptist Convention," Williams pointed out. "I believe that the emphasis of recent years has been a pull away from him and the way missions had been done....This is a way of his continuing to do what he had always been doing."

Emphasizing that Parks "is a recognized conservative minister," Williams added, "Nobody doubts the fact that he is a solid, Bible-believing person who solidly stands on the Scriptures as the inspired Word and is evangelistic to the core and is completely committed to missions. When we support missions under his leadership, we really feel like we are supporting missions as we have been doing it throughout our history as Southern Baptists."

Looking to the future, Bledsoe noted that the FMB remains committed to "working with all Great Commission Christians." He added that Parks "has a right to make his own decision whichever way he feels like the Lord wants him to go and we will support him in that. I just wish it had not happened just like it happened."

"We just don't need to get in a battle of warring back and forth in the media to say that we're right or he's wrong," Edgar remarked. "If the Lord is in this, God is going to use it. If He is not, it won't work."

## Baptist unions in former Soviet republics plan to stay together

MOSCOW (BP)—The council of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (UECB) of the former Soviet Union, wanting to maintain their unity while accepting their new political realities, unanimously have voted to initiate plans to reorganize into a new Federation of Baptist Unions.

The council, made up of leaders and senior pastors of Baptist unions in the republics and Baltic states, also voted to keep the current UECB officers, headed by President Gregori Kommandant, in place to pilot the transition from a union to a federation of unions.

While no details were settled, it was proposed that the federation be composed of the autonomous Baptist unions of the now 15 independent republics that wish to belong.

Baptist work in the former Soviet Union continues to grow in spite of economic and social upheaval and lack of resources, according to reports presented during the meeting.

In the Ukraine, some 100 new churches have been opened since the congress last met in 1990, said Jakob Dukhnonchenko, president of the Ukraine Baptist Union. Some 100 Ukrainian missionaries are preaching the gospel and starting new churches in the republic, he reported.

In Russia, 216 new churches have been

established, reported Vasily Logvinenko, president of the Russian Baptist Union.

Among other things, Logvinenko listed 31 missionaries trained in the last six months and sent with other believers to organize churches; growing prison ministry; a radio program twice a week; TV evangelism for unbelievers; 170 students in correspondence courses; and organized women's, children's and youth work.

Ivan Bugati, superintendent of the Baptist churches of Byelorussia, reported a growing prison ministry in the republic. "Earlier we were sent to prison forcibly," Bugati said. "Now we work where our mothers and fathers died."

Kommandant said Baptists in the former Soviet Union are struggling to keep up with the rapid changes in their republics.

"We have to move with the circumstances," Kommandant said. "The pace has changed so rapidly that our very conservative, slow-moving union has had to set aside certain standard procedures and run with the events or be left behind. Our principles are unchanged but our methods have changed."

While Kommandant and other UECB leaders are looking to the West for help, they are equally concerned that Baptists in the former Soviet Union provide most of the resources they need for their ministries and needs.

## Leaders encourage Russian Baptists

MOSCOW (BP)—Baptist leaders from the United States and Europe offered encouragement to Baptists in the former Soviet Union during the recent Congress of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.

Karl-Heinz Walter, general secretary for the European Baptist Federation and regional secretary for the Baptist World Alliance, announced he had secured EBF support to provide two years' salary for 40 new missionaries.

Sam James, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, told the union, "The commitment of the Foreign Mission Board (FMB) is to walk with you." He described Baptists of the Commonwealth of Independent States as "among the most praying people on earth."

Saying, "You have been through the fire and the world cannot put out the fire of Christ," BWA general secretary Denton Lotz said top Soviet leaders had repented of what they had done to the church and "now your governments need help."

"What will you do with your freedom?" Lotz asked. "God has put you through the fire so that the fire of His love will shine all through the commonwealth."

## Christmas tree will adorn Red Square

MIAMI (ABP) — A 60-foot Christmas tree will adorn Moscow's Red Square this year, signaling the start of a new tradition in Russia, which has not observed Christmas as a national holiday for 73 years.

The project, which was approved recently by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, is primarily the work of Baptist pastor Tommy Watson of Miami.

Yeltsin is expected to speak during the tree-lighting ceremony in late December, and his wife will proclaim the Christmas tree a new tradition for the orphaned children of Moscow.

Watson, who has worked on mission projects in Russia and other East European countries for years, paid for the \$63,000 tree in part with money from an insurance settlement on his house in Miami, which was damaged by Hurricane Andrew.

"Since 1917, Russia has marched its armies and paraded its war machinery through Red Square to demonstrate its military might while millions have come

out to view it," said Watson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Perrine in Miami. "I predict that more people will come to see this tree than ever viewed their war machine."

The artificial tree will be decorated with 4,300 lights and topped off with a six-foot Star of Bethlehem. A life-size mechanical manger scene will be under the tree.

"Christmas Day in Russia is celebrated Jan. 7. The tree will be lit Dec. 29, beginning the two-week holiday. A special "Red Square Christmas" program is planned exclusively for 5,000 orphans Dec. 31, during which Mrs. Yeltsin is expected to give each child a Christmas gift and a special pictorial New Testament.

Beginning Jan. 1, a theatrical children's program, "Christmas Tree," will take place daily on a special stage near the tree.

In addition to these special events, Watson said there will be different programs every day during which he hopes to

distribute more than a million gospel tracts and Bibles. He predicts that tens of millions of Russians will visit the tree.

Another special event will take place on Christmas Day. For the first time since 1918, the Russian Orthodox Church will present a program relating to the celebration of the birth of Christ. The celebration will include traditional Christmas folklore and will be telecast throughout the country.

Watson said the idea for the Christmas tree came to him last July. He contacted Deneen Alexandrow, a member of the Perrine church and a business partner who was in Russia at the time, to start working on the project. Final approval, with the signature of President Yeltsin, came only Nov. 19.

"We have worked and waited all this time," Watson said. "Don't you know the Russian Christians who have longed for years to see a Christmas tree will be rejoicing?"

# Challenging Hollywood values

Clinton urges entertainment industry to 'deglamourize sex, violence'

By Mark Kelly

Baptist Press

LOS ANGELES (BP)—President-elect Bill Clinton surprised Hollywood evangelicals when he told TV Guide recently that the entertainment industry is hurting America and should rethink "its enormous capacity to influence opinion."

Some welcomed Clinton's comments as evidence the debate over values in the media has reached the mainstream of American society.

However, Jess Moody, pastor of a prominent Southern Baptist congregation in the Los Angeles area, believes Hollywood executives have no interest in discussing the values they promote in their productions.

Clinton did not address the issues of values in the media during his campaign for the White House, which received high-profile support from prominent members of the entertainment industry.

Clinton told TV Guide he is "mortified" by some of what he sees on television. He called on Hollywood to take the lead in "deglamourizing mindless sex and violence."

The president-elect said there is "no question" the trivialization of sex and violence by the media has had a negative impact on American society. He suggested TV and movie makers could, without undermining their artistic integrity, have a major new impact on the way people view the world.

Clinton's comments reflect a growing consensus in mainstream America that Hollywood has gone overboard in its emphasis on sex and violence and has alienated itself from broad segments of the American populace.

## A threat to basic values

In a new book, *Hollywood vs. America: Popular Culture and the War on Traditional Values*, media critic Michael Medved echoes many concerns advanced in recent years by evangelical Christians such as James Dobson of Focus on the Family and Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association.

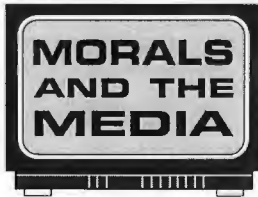
Medved, co-host of "Sneak Previews" on PBS, contends Hollywood has turned its "dream factory" into a "poison factory," producing films and TV shows many Americans see as a "threat to their basic values and a menace to the raising of their children."

Three evangelical Christians whose lives are invested in the entertainment industry

welcomed Clinton's remarks about values in the media.

Ted Bachr, chairman of the Christian Film and Television Commission and publisher of Movie Guide, said Clinton's statements point out "a growing awareness on every side of the political spectrum" that movies and TV have an enormous impact on society.

"When people on the inside and people on the left and people on the right are all talking about the same problem, you know you've got an issue whose time has come," Bachr observed.



Tom Lester, who starred for six years as "Eb" on television's "Green Acres," said he was "glad to hear Gov. Clinton saying what he said." Lester is an unabashed Hollywood evangelical and a lifelong Southern Baptist.

The time has come for the entertainment industry to take responsibility for its impact on society, Lester said. He acknowledged "the bottom line in Hollywood is making money" but called on industry leaders to ask themselves whether the profits they make justify undermining the morals of a nation.

However, Jess Moody, pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Church in Chatsworth, Calif., harbors little optimism that studio executives are willing to discuss changing the values their media expresses. Shepherd of the Hills is a Southern Baptist congregation that has a number of TV and movie celebrities as members.

"I sense a hardening of the moral arteries among the motion picture people," Moody said. "Most really don't care what the American people think."

"Many of them are making bold and rather arrogant statements: 'We don't care what the church thinks. We're going to do what we think is right, and the First Amendment gives us that right,'" Moody said. "They confuse liberty with license."

Moody, Lester and Bachr all agree Hol-

lywood largely ignores the enormous market that exists for family films.

The average R-rated film grosses \$5.5 million, while an average family film takes in \$18.8 million, Moody said. Yet TV and movie producers continue to pour most of their resources into less-profitable adults-only efforts, ignoring the massive appeal of family films.

"The perfect example is 'Home Alone,'" Lester said. "All the people who don't usually go to the theater went to see that film, and it grossed \$280 million. That's what the potential is if the studios will keep making that kind of film."

With many major studios on the verge of bankruptcy, Moody believes movie and TV producers should turn their attention to more wholesome products that would attract larger audiences. But more profits may not be the bottom line, he said.

"If Hollywood continues to make R-rated films and turns its back on family films, then you know the agenda is not money," he said.

Bachr and Lester emphasized the need for dialogue between Hollywood's leaders and their critics. They called on President-elect Clinton to encourage such meetings.

## Help define boundaries

Christians need to "help Hollywood understand what the boundaries are that they are concerned about," Bachr said. The way to do that is for Christians to join in a diverse range of groups who go to studio executives to explain their concerns, he said.

Lester said he would like to see Clinton schedule meetings between Hollywood producers and informed critics of the industry "who really know what is going on in America and have the statistics" to prove how society is being harmed by gratuitous sex and violence in the media.

"We don't need people who are pushing an agenda," Lester said. "We have enough of that. But if people who genuinely care about America came together to discuss these issues, I think there could be a change."

Lester said Christians could affect the output of Hollywood studios if "hundreds of thousands" of them wrote commercial sponsors and asked them to help make the shows more family oriented. He also called on "Christians of financial means" to get personally involved in financing wholesome alternatives for the movie-going public.

## Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

## Staff changes

**Lendol Jackson** has announced his retirement as pastor of New Hope Church, Hardy, effective Jan. 1. Sunday School attendance has grown from 24 to 86, and a new educational building has been constructed during his 12 years of service. Jackson, state coordinator of Arkansas Baptist Campers on Missions, will assist with Hurricane Andrew disaster work in Florida during January. Jackson may be contacted, for supply, interim pastorates or revivals, at 502 Candis Drive, Jonesboro, AR 72401; phone 501-933-0055.



Jackson

**Stephen Johnson** has resigned as pastor of Chapel Hill Church, DeQueen, to move to Dallas, Texas.

**Marlo Vargas** is serving as pastor of Iglesia San Juan Bautista at DeQueen. He and his family moved to DeQueen from Columbia, S.C.

**Rustin "Rusty" Morecraft** has joined the staff of First Church, Marvel, as minister of music and youth, coming there from a staff position with Ballwin Church in Ballwin, Mo. He is a graduate of Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, Mo., and Lakeland Community College, Mattoon, Ill.

**Rick Jaggars** will join the staff of Immanuel Church in Little Rock Jan. 1 as singles minister. He currently is serving as the Baptist Student Union director at Navarro College and Hill College in Corsicana, Texas. He is a graduate of Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Jaggars has done additional study at the Billy Graham Training School, Asheville, N.C., and at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Miss.

**Mark Wheeler** has resigned as pastor of Shiloh Church near Arkadelphia.

**Jacques Steib** has resigned as pastor of Marlbrook Church, Blevins.

**Chuck Pennington** is serving as bivocational pastor of Dalark Mission, Arkadelphia. Pennington, who is serving

his first church, is a former member of First Church of Sparkman and an employee of Carrier Corporation in Arkadelphia.

**Nick O'Nale** has resigned as pastor of Center Point Church, Gurdon, to move to Hot Springs.

**Eugene Hughes** is again serving as bivocational pastor of Center Point Church, Gurdon. Coming out of semi-retirement he is owner of a pew cushion manufacturing firm.

**Charles Hargett** is serving as bivocational pastor of Mount Zion Church, Arkadelphia. He is an engineer for the Corps of Engineers, working at DeGray Lake.

**Dorothy "Sam" Nall** is serving as director of education and outreach for DeGray Church. She serves as a resident room mom for Ouachita Baptist University and was an active member of Arkadelphia First Church.

**Kevin Rodgers** is serving as pastor of Widener Church. A native of North Carolina, he is a student at Mid-America Theological Seminary, Memphis, Tenn.

**Milton Andrews** of Blytheville is serving for the first time as a pastor, serving as bivocational pastor of Gilmore Church.

**Bill Tyson** of Hope has begun his first service as a pastor, serving as pastor of Lawson Church.

**Bennie Ward** has resigned as pastor of Felsenthal Church, Huttig.

**Jim Brown** has resigned as associate pastor of Cullendale Church in Camden to move to Louisiana.

**Barry Brown** began serving Nov. 22 as pastor of First Church of Wilton. He is licensed to the ministry by First Church of Murfreesboro where he was a member. Brown has enrolled as a student for the January term of Boyce Bible School.

**Loy Moody** is serving as pastor of Half Moon Church in North Central Association in his retirement years. A member of the community, he has previously served as pastor of the church.

**Wayne Witcher** is serving for the first time as a pastor, serving Angora Church, Leslie.

**Kenny Dunham** is serving for the first time as a pastor, serving Plant Church, Clinton. A bivocational pastor, he is employed by a lumber company in Conway.

**Brice Early** is serving as past-time youth director for Fairfield Bay Church. A graduate of Williams Baptist College, he is a graduate student at Arkansas State University, Jonesboro.

**Fred Ball** will begin serving Jan. 1 as pastor of Lakeshore Drive Church in Little Rock, coming there from Hiseville Church in Hiseville, Ky. A native of Little Rock, he is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Ball is scheduled to receive his Ph. D. degree from Southern Seminary this month. His wife, Kelly, is a native of Hot Springs.

**M.L. Falter** will begin serving Dec. 20 as pastor of Watson Chapel Church in Pine Bluff. He is a graduate of William Carey College, Hattiesburg, Miss., and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Falter has served as pastor of churches in Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas. He and his wife, Betty Jo, have two children, Nikeema Jo and Monty Liddell.

**Danny Von Kanel** will join the staff of First Church of DeQueen Jan. 3 as minister of music and youth, coming there from First Church of Purvis, Miss. A native of Pascagoula, Miss., he is a graduate of William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Miss., and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition to serving on the staff of Mississippi churches, he has served churches in Alabama and Illinois. He and his wife, Beverly, have two sons, Allen and Brad.

**Bill Baldrige** has resigned as pastor of First Church in Kingsland to serve a church in Texarkana.

**Jack Eaton** is serving Liberty Church, Lincoln, as part-time minister of youth. He is a student at John Brown University.

**Jeff Bennett** has joined the staff of Calvary Church in Little Rock as minister of music, coming there from First Church in Fayetteville.

**Barry Grantham** will join the staff of Hot Springs First Church Jan. 1 as minister to youth. A December graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, he has served as a youth ministry intern, interim youth minister, and minister of youth at five different Southern Baptist churches.

**Tony Battles** began his service in November as minister of youth at First Church, Ozark. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Okla., and has

attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Battles and his wife, Renee, have two sons, Justin and Ryan.

**Bob Williams** is serving East Mount Zion Trinity Church as youth director. He previously served as youth director at Antloch Church, Hot Springs.

**Milton Edmonson** is serving as interim pastor of Second Church, Clarksville. Prior to retirement, he served as pastor of several churches in Clear Creek Association.

**Jenny Turner** has resigned as assistant preschool minister of Second Church in Little Rock, effective Jan. 1. She has served in this position for more than two years.

**Delton Cooper** has resigned as pastor of First Church in Wilson, following almost seven years of service. He and his wife, Marcelee, have moved to Talhina, Okla., where, in retirement, he will be serving as pastor of Falta Church.

**Larry Wood** has joined the staff of Immanuel Church in Rogers as associate pastor, moving there from a pioneer mission pastorate in New Jersey. He and his wife, Judy, are parents of two children, Sarah and Jesse.

## Ordinations

**Board Camp Church** at Mena ordained Clifford Bentley and James Martin Sr. to the deacon ministry Oct. 11.

**Harmony Church** at Rector ordained Bill Scaggs to the gospel ministry and Doyle Spinks to the deacon ministry Oct. 25.

**West Acres Church** at West Acres ordained Fred Garrison Jr., a former member, to the gospel ministry Nov. 8. Garrison currently is serving as pastor of First Church, Lambrook.

**Pulaski Heights Church** in Little Rock ordained Charley Benson, Lowell Bentley and Scott Davies to the deacon ministry Nov. 22.

**Ravenden First Church** ordained Patrick Hovis to the gospel ministry Nov. 22 as a part of the church's 50th anniversary celebration.

**Berry Street Church** in Springdale ordained Billy D. Graham, Clarence Phillips, Dero Phillips and John "Butch" Webb to the deacon ministry Nov. 29. Richard D. Perry, pastor, served as moderator.

**Danville First Church** ordained Allan Newsted to the gospel ministry Nov. 8. Newsted is serving as pastor of Briggsville Mission. Pastor Bobby Walker directed the questioning. Jeff Cheatham, director

of missions for Arkansas River Valley Association, gave the charge to the church and the candidate.

**Lavaca First Church** ordained Daniel Green to the ministry Nov. 16. Green is serving as pastor of London First Church.

## Obituaries

**A.C. Smith** of McGehee died Nov. 14 at age 81. A member of First Church of McGehee, he was a retired employee of the county extension service and was a member of McGehee Lion's Club. Survivors include his wife, Ruth Ellen Smith of McGehee; a son, John Clarence Smith of Rock Port, Texas; two daughters, Judy Ann Roberts of Ruston, La., and Mary Ellen Smith of Cordova, Tenn.; and six grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the Little Moon Christmas Offering.

**Robert Dale Hughes** of North Little Rock died Nov. 23 at age 73. Hughes, a Baptist minister and a member of Cedar Heights Church in North Little Rock, was the retired executive director emeritus of the California Southern Baptist Convention. His death came following a Nov. 22 major heart attack and the replacement of four bypasses done in a 1981 surgery in California.

A native of Glenwood, Hughes was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist College (now university) and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was pastor of two Arkansas churches and three Texas churches before moving to California in 1948. Hughes had returned to Arkansas following retirement in 1984. Survivors are his wife, Ruth Williams Hughes; a son, Robert Don Hughes of Louisville, Ky.; a daughter, Peggy Jean Williams, a Southern Baptist missionary in France; a brother, two sisters; and six grandchildren.

## Church news

**East Side Church** in Fort Smith observed Doris Sloat Day Dec. 13. She is retiring as pastor's secretary, following more than 20 years of service.

**Fort Smith First Church** honored Guy Lamb Dec. 6. Lamb is retiring as pastoral care minister, following 12 years of service.

**Central Church** of Bald Knob was in a revival Nov. 22-25 that resulted in 49 professions of faith and 21 rededications. William Blackburn of Fort Smith was evangelist. Clarence Hill of Hot Springs served as music evangelist. Claude Gibbs is pastor.

**Harlan Park Church** in Conway dedicated a 5,400-square-foot education/fellowship building Nov. 22. The building houses six classrooms, a library, a choir room and fellowship hall with kitchen facilities. The dedication began with a potluck dinner and concluded with a dedication circle of prayer. Program participants were Lee Lawson, Faulkner Association director of missions; "Red" Baker and Gerald Jackson, former pastors; Joe Yost, building committee chairman; and Craig Chambers, pastor.

**Immanuel Church** in Little Rock deacons will host a reception Jan. 10, recognizing the 100th birthday of Grover Hemphill Sr.

Hemphill, who has been a member of the church since Oct. 1, 1911, began serving as a deacon in 1938. In addition, he served as church treasurer from 1938 to 1978 and taught a 15-year-old boys' Sunday School class from 1937 to 1940.

## Youth Evangelism Conference slated for Dec. 28-29

Several thousand Arkansas Baptists will gather in Hot Springs for the 1992 Youth Evangelism Conference Dec. 28-29. The conference theme is "Each One Reach One" and will feature youth evangelists Rodney Gage and Kelly Green. The conference will feature music from Christian recording artists Babbie Mason, Michelle Gage, and Mack and Shayla Blake.

Randy Brantley, director of the Youth Evangelism Conference, is encouraging every church that attends to bring at least one student who does not know Jesus as personal Savior. Outreach tickets are being given to churches that preregister.

The conference also will include a Monday afternoon Campus Impact Seminar. The seminar's purpose is to equip students, pastors and youth leaders in understanding the basics of student legal rights on the public school campus. Dave Hughey of Little Rock's Geyer Springs First Baptist Church and Randy Varnell of Ouachita Baptist University will lead the Campus Impact Seminars. Topics will include "What Rights Do Public High School Students Have on Their Campuses?" and "How Do You Motivate Students to Witness to Fellow Students on Campus?"

Anyone interested in attending the Youth Evangelism Conference may register at the door on Dec. 28. The registration fee is \$3 per person. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m. at the Hot Springs Convention Center. The first session begins Monday, Dec. 28 at 1 p.m.

## Tax seminars provide ministers timely information

By Millie Gill

Arkansas Baptist

A series of tax seminars designed to provide "a timely, accurate and authoritative discussion of tax reporting compliance and the impact of recent changes in the tax laws" were held recently in Harrison, El Dorado and Little Rock.

Brad Thompson, a regional manager for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, was in Arkansas to assist James Walker, Arkansas Baptist State Convention annuity representative, in providing updated tax information to Arkansas Baptists as new budget preparations begin and the tax season approaches.

"The Bible clearly says that we are to 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's,' Thompson emphasized. "Therefore it is a responsibility of the Annuity Board to assist churches and their ministers with tax laws and planning for the future."

The first step in planning for the future, Thompson noted, is to understand the tax status both as an employee and as a minister. He pointed out that ministers must file their own income tax and self-employment tax on a quarterly basis.

One tax change for churches is that "form W-2 is needed rather than the 1099," Thompson said, adding that Revenue Ruling 87-41-20 verifies the change.

Thompson encouraged ministers to stay in the Social Security program. "It will provide one-third of retirement needs," he said. "Social Security provides disability and survivors benefits, as well as Medi-

care." He recommended "Social Security for Members of the Clergy and Religious Workers," Internal Revenue Service Publication 517, as a resource for study.

Approaches to staff financial support captured the interest of seminar participants who voiced numerous questions concerning a presentation on "The Package Plan or The Financial Support Plan."

Rather than a lump-sum package plan, Thompson encouraged use of a financial support plan which includes church ministry reimbursement funds, protection coverages and personal income.

### Tax protection

"The clearer you can record expenses the better it is, especially since many ministers wives are now working and there are dual incomes," Thompson stated. "The reimbursement funds, rather than the package plan, provides far better tax protection for they show the church paying for items such as life and health insurance. If these items are paid through the package plan then they show up as income."

Thompson listed automobile expenses, conventions/conferences, books, periodicals, tapes, continuing education and hospitality as other possible reimbursement funds.

Housing allowances, even for retired ministers, were named as another possible tax deduction. "These can include all housing expenses other than food or house-

hold help," Thompson explained.

"Understand your tax status as a licensed or ordained person or a church staff employee," Thompson emphasized. "Even though there have been no recent significant changes in tax laws, encourage your church to provide you with a more advantageous way of tax avoidance."

Thompson stressed that annuity seminars are not intended as a substitute for legal accounting or other professional advice. "If legal, tax or other assistance is required," he said, "the services of a competent professional should be sought."

"The Annuity Board," he added, "stands ready to provide you with information. You may call our toll-free number 1-800-262-0511 as you prepare for the coming year. We encourage you to do all tax preparation legally, not doing things that will call attention to you or your church."

Walker encouraged Arkansas churches to contact his office at 376-4791, ext. 5114 for assistance in preparing salary packages. "Even though there haven't been many tax law changes in the last few years, we are noting a renewed interest among those who fill out the tax forms," he said. "Therefore, if the churches will call us, we will provide them with assistance and information."

Other resources for tax preparation are: *Income Tax Guide for Ministers* by B. J. Worth; *Church and Clergy Tax Guide* by Richard Hammer; and *Tax Planning for Clergy* by Manfred Holck.

### Arkansas choirs set for senior convention

An estimated 7,000 members from nearly 200 Southern Baptist churches in 17 states will compose the choir at the senior adult convention in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta April 26-28, 1993, according to choir coordinator Here Adams of the Baptist Sunday School Board church music department. Seven choirs from Arkansas are scheduled to participate.

The choir will be directed by W. Lyndel Vaught, minister of music at First Baptists Church of San Angelo, Texas.

Music for the choir will be published in April 1993 in a special enlarged edition of *The Senior Musician*. Among the titles to be included are "We Are Called to be God's People" and "Majesty Medley."

Other musical highlights of the convention will be appearances by soprano soloist Myrtle Hall and Christian vocalist Steve Green.

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## Williams Baptist College

**Guthrie scholarship established** — Florence Guthrie of Newport recently established a \$10,000 scholarship fund at Williams in memory of her uncle and aunt, Dr. and Mrs. Len Downen of Walnut Ridge. The fund will benefit ministerial/neediest students.

**Who's Who recipients** — Three students from WBC will be included in the 1993 edition of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges. The students chosen include William "Junior" Jaques, a junior from Paragould; Stephen Seale, a junior from Arkadelphia; and Eric Turner, a junior from Pochontas.

## Ouachita Baptist University

**Southwestern Bell Foundation Grant** — OBU has been awarded a \$10,525 grant from the Southwestern Bell Foundation for the purpose of hosting three one-day symposia in environmental science for high school teachers and students. Fourteen teachers will take part in each of the three symposia, and each teacher will bring one advanced student from his or her school. The symposia will make it possible for participants to use equipment rarely available outside regulatory agencies and major research universities.



**OBU Vietnam Memorial** — Ouachita president Ben Etrod (right) and Jack Martin, a senior representing Sigma Alpha Sigma, unveil the university's new Vietnam War Memorial during recent ceremonies. The concept of the memorial came from Lt. Chris Dunaway (left), now a member of the active Army. The memorial honors seven OBU alumni and a former student who lost their lives in southeast Asia.

**Ouachita continues contact with former USSR** — Two OBU professors recently traveled to Alma Ata, Kazakhstan at the invitation of Kazakh State University and the Alma Ata Foreign Language Institute. Joe Jeffers, professor of chemistry and biology and associate J. Thomas Greer, the Clarence and Bennie Sue Anthony Professor of the Bible and Humanities, lectured on biological sciences and American literature, respectively, while visiting the former Soviet republic.

In addition, the Frank G. Hickingbotham

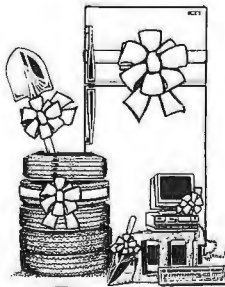
School of Business at OBU co-sponsored a group of 11 business professors, led by Arkadelphia businessman Ed Snider, in a teaching and commodity discussions excursion to the republics of Russia and Uzbekistan in November. Snider's company, UZBEK/U.S.A. Consultants was the group's other sponsor.

**Around the World study tour** — A unique around-the-world study tour for all academic majors, set for May 27-June 28, 1993, has been developed by the OBU department of communications in cooperation with *Time* magazine. The purpose of the program will be to provide student with an opportunity to earn six hours of credit in studying globally significant issues of their choice. For more information on the study tour, contact William Downs, OBU communications department chairman, at P.O. Box 3791, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; phone 245-5207.

**Music Scholarship Auditions** — The OBU School of Music has scheduled music scholarship auditions for Jan. 28 and Feb. 4 at Mabee Fine Arts Center. Auditions are for students planning to enroll for the 1993-94 academic year. For more information, contact Charles Wright, Music School dean, OBU P.O. Box 3771, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; phone 245-5129.

**Freshman takes first in music competition** — Leslie Tapson, a freshman vocal performance major at Ouachita, was a first-place winner in the 18th annual National Association of Teachers of Singing Southern Regional Conference and Auditions. The event was held recently in Clinton, Miss. Tapson is a student of May Shambarger, associate professor of music at OBU. She is the daughter of Linda and Mitch Tapson, pastor of Mount Carmel Church, Cabot.

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## Nine added to SBC study committee

BIRMINGHAM, AL (BP)—Nine additional people have been appointed to the theological study committee as part of a task force created by SBC president H. Edwin Young.

Young created a task force in September to look at "the past and study the present (Southern Baptist Convention) in order to plan, pray and dream toward the future." Young named the chairmen of the nine committees at that time and said he would name members of the committees at a later time.

Timothy George, dean of the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, and Roy L. Honeycutt, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., were named co-chairmen.

The committee met Nov. 13-14 at Beeson and announced the remaining members: William Bell, Dallas; J. Walter Carpenter Jr., Houston; Mark Coppenger, Nashville; Stephen Corts, Charleston, S.C.; Carl F.H. Henry, Arlington, Va.; Herschel H. Hobbs, Oklahoma City; Richard Land, Nashville; R. Albert Mohler Jr., Atlanta; and William Tolar, Fort Worth, Texas.

The committee was instructed by Young to use as foundational documents the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement, the 1987 report and recommendations of the SBC Peace Committee and the 1978 and 1982 Chicago Statements on Biblical Inerrancy.

"The work of our committee may result in a statement of convictions as well as specific recommendations which shall be passed along to the task force convened by Dr. Young," George told Baptist Press. "We pray for true revival and genuine reconciliation within our beloved denomination and trust that our efforts will contribute to these goals."

George said the committee voted to pursue its work in confidentiality although "we welcome and seek input from all Southern Baptists."

Future meetings are planned for Louisville and Dallas although dates were not released.

## World Changer dates announced

MEMPHIS, TN (BP)—The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission has announced 11 World Changers national work project dates for 1993.

A project in Puerto Rico and a junior high project also are scheduled.

World Changers is a weeklong missions project for Southern Baptist youth sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission. World Changers work projects include a missions education component before the youth go to their project location.

Project dates and locations for 1993 are: Houston, Kansas City, Mo., and Millington, Tenn., June 12-19; Briceville, Tenn., and Brockton, Mont., June 26-July 3; Savannah, Ga., and Canton, N.C., July 10-17; Campbell County, Tenn., July 17-24; Tuscaloosa, Ala., July 24-31; and Eastern Shore, Va., and Clarksdale, Miss., July 31-Aug. 7.

A World Changers international work project is scheduled for Puerto Rico, June 26-July 3. The World Changers junior high work project will be in Shreveport, La., July 19-24.

More information about World Changers is available from the Brotherhood Commission at 901-272-2461.

## Women's meeting slated for March

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Registration is under way for a 1993 national conference targeted to the needs of Christian women.

The National Christian Women's Enrichment Conference will be March 5-7, 1993, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. The program is being co-developed by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and Woman's Missionary Union.

A wide range of conference topics will be offered including "superwoman syndrome," achieving wholeness, health issues, intimacy and communication in marriage, juggling marriage and a career, single parenting and lifestyle witnessing.

In addition, women will take an intensive look at the issue of pornography in today's society and what they can do about it. Sessions will be led by Liz Minnick, an Austin, Texas, homemaker, speaker and volunteer lobbyist. She also is a trustee of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Featured speakers include Pam Highfill of Dallas; Mamie McCullough of Richardson, Texas; Esther Burroughs of the Home Mission Board in Atlanta; and Minette Drumwright of the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va.

The registration fee of \$65 includes all conference sessions and materials, the welcome reception and Sunday continental breakfast.

Registrations or requests for information should go to Christian Women's Enrichment Conference, Baptist Sunday School Board, P.O. Box 24001, Nashville, TN 37203; phone: 615-251-2277.

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# Construction teams still needed in Florida

By David Winfrey  
SBC Home Mission Board

FLORIDA CITY, FL (BP)—Disaster feeding units have gone home, but Southern Baptist volunteers still are rebuilding houses in southern Florida more than three months after Hurricane Andrew blew much of this area off the map.

Between 40 and 70 volunteers arrive weekly, as the emphasis has shifted from food to reconstruction, said Gary Roberts, disaster relief coordinator for the Florida Baptist Convention.

The Aug. 23 storm, with winds raging as high as 175 mph, damaged 27 church buildings in the Florida Baptist Convention, and construction teams are working on them as well.

Convention employees surveyed communities near the churches after the storm and found 366 uninsured or underinsured homeowners in need of assistance, Roberts said.

The convention is scheduled to coordinate volunteer construction teams for those homes until March 1993, but it may take longer, he said. "The monies are still

coming in, and we'll probably stay here as long as we're needed."

Meanwhile, work teams continue to contact the Home Mission Board offering help, said Hugh Roberts, a Home Mission Board volunteer construction coordinator assisting the Florida convention.

"I'm getting calls each day from major construction teams that want to go into south Florida as their annual summer missions trip," said Roberts, who is no relation to Gary. "There will be a continued need for rebuilding houses for years to come."

Construction teams are encouraged to call ahead so skills and supplies can be paired with the needs.

"I just want people to feel like they're welcome down here, but we really need to hear from them first," said Gary Roberts. "There is no cooking; no food or clothing distribution. Only construction work, and we need skilled people."

Roberts' headquarters is at First Baptist Church of Florida City, one of the hardest-hit communities. Volunteers report to the church and then go to the communities of one of the 27 churches, he said.

Mission Service Corps volunteers and Campers on Mission are needed to coordinate work at each church site for three months, Hugh Roberts said.

All volunteers should be self-contained, with food, toiletries and camping gear on an RV, Gary Roberts said.

While much of the work is physical, it often makes a difference spiritually, they said.

"We're visiting a lot of people who're not church and the SBC has made an impact on the community by the fact that we're showing we care and we're there to help them," Gary Roberts said.

Volunteers are encouraged to take "Eternal Life" booklets for witnessing, he said.

Those seeking more information or wanting to volunteer can contact the Florida Baptist Convention at 1-800-226-8584, ext. 478, or the Home Mission Board's volunteer hotline at 1-800-HMB-VOLS.

## Minister of education meeting delayed

NASHVILLE, TN — The second National Minister of Education Conference planned for Oct. 18-21, 1993, has been postponed and likely will be held in the fall of 1995.

The retirement of key personnel and restructuring of the Baptist Sunday School Board would make it difficult to plan the conference for next year, said Brooks Faulkner, senior manager of church staff support.

Will Beal, consultant with primary responsibilities for ministers of education, will be retiring Jan. 1, 1993, Faulkner said. "A new consultant in that role would have a lack of preparation time to prepare for a major national meeting," he said.

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# CLC, BJCPA agree, disagree on court cases

WASHINGTON (ABP) — The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs agree in a friend-of-the-court brief filed at the U.S. Supreme Court that the First Amendment bars discrimination against religious speech.

But, in another pending case, the two Baptist organizations disagreed on the breadth of the constitutional ban against government promotion of religion.

The BJCPA and CLC joined seven other groups in asking the high court to strike down Suffolk County, N.Y., school district's policy barring after-hours use of its facilities for religious purposes.

The religious groups argued that the district policy, which permitted non-religious after-hours use of the facilities, violated the neutrality required by three clauses of the First Amendment — those promising the government will protect free speech and the free exercise of religion but will not establish a religion.

Lamb's Chapel and its pastor, John Steigerwald, challenged the policy after Center Moriches Union Free School District refused the church's request to use school facilities to show the James Dobson film series titled "Turn Your Hearts Toward Home."

In separate briefs in a second case, both the BJCPA and CLC argued that the First Amendment's ban on a governmental establishment of religion should not prevent the government from providing an interpreter for a blind student attending a Catholic high school.

The two Baptist agencies disagreed, however, on how government should judge such cases.

In *Zobrest vs. Catalina Foothills School District*, both agencies asked the Supreme Court to reverse lower court rulings that upheld an Arizona school district's refusal to provide the interpreter for James Zobrest.

Zobrest's parents challenged the district's decision to provide interpreters for students in public and non-religious private schools but not religious schools.

The BJCPA, along with the American Jewish Committee and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, asked the Supreme Court to reverse the lower rulings by holding that the benefit sought by the student in this case does not violate the three-part test used by the court to determine whether a government action amounts to an establishment of religion.

That test, known as the Lemon test, requires governmental actions to have a

secular purpose, to neither advance nor inhibit religion and to avoid excessive entanglement with religion.

The CLC, however, asked the high court to revise the Lemon test. It was joined in its request by the Christian Legal Society, the National Association of Evangelicals, the National Council of Churches, the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the Association of Christian Schools International, the Family Research Council, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Joni and Friends and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

In a brief written by University of Chicago law professor Michael McConnell, the CLC and other parties asked the court to recast the test to prohibit "government action that accords religious institutions or activities preferential treatment over non-religious alternatives in a way that would induce or promote religious activities."


The CLC brief said a revised test would help resolve the conflict that has resulted from inconsistent application of the First Amendment's religion clauses. According to CLC attorney Michael Whitehead, the court needs to "give clearer 'signals' to direct the traffic at the intersection of establishment clause and free exercise."

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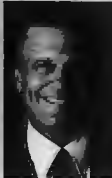
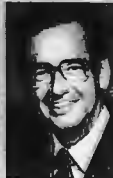
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## Court declines to review Guam abortion law

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Once again the U.S. Supreme Court has signaled that it will not permit states to criminalize or unduly burden a woman's right to abortion.

The high court announced Nov. 30 it will not review a federal appeals court ruling that struck down a Guam law that would have made most abortions a felony for the woman and medical personnel involved.

Guam's statute provided exceptions only for ectopic, or tubal, pregnancies and pregnancies in which two physicians agree that the woman's life is endangered or her health is gravely impaired.

The Supreme Court's action follows recent rulings that reaffirmed the constitutional right of women to choose abortion while permitting states to place some restrictions on it.

In upholding abortion restrictions in Missouri in 1989 and Pennsylvania in 1992, the high court generally reaffirmed the essential core of Roe vs. Wade, the 1973 decision that recognized the right to abortion before the fetus attains viability—the point at which the fetus could survive outside the womb.

However, the court moved away from

## Teen pregnancy should be national concern

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Curbing teenage pregnancy must be a national priority set by the new administration and the 103rd Congress, witnesses told a subcommittee of the Joint Economic Committee recently.

Six witnesses, including one Baptist minister, testified to the escalating, staggering social and economic costs of teens having children:

■ In the United States, more than 1 million adolescents become pregnant annually, twice the rate of any other industrialized nation. Of that number, about half give birth, and a third of those parents will have a subsequent pregnancy within two years.

■ Women who have their first child as a teenager often do not complete their education, and as a result have lower-paying jobs. Two-thirds of children under age 6 in families begun with a teen birth live below the poverty level.

■ All families begun by teenagers having their first baby in 1988 will cost the nation \$6 billion over the next 20 years.

Michael Faulkner, director of youth and urban ministries at Calvary Baptist Church in New York City, said: "The debate is not over whether or not to tell young people about contraceptives or their appropriateness in the educational setting. Rather, the focus should center on how this information is communicated, when and by whom.

"We need to be willing to set standards for young people and for the expected behavior that we have of them," said Faulkner, who advocates a message of abstinence.

Pointing to an Emory University study of 1,000 sexually active teens, Faulkner said that 84 percent of them said they wanted to learn how to say "no" to sex without offending their friends or partners.

Roe's requirement that a state must show a compelling reason to restrict abortion as a fundamental constitutional right.

The key factor, the court majority held, is whether a state unduly burdens a woman's right to abortion by placing a "substantial obstacle" in the path of a woman seeking an abortion before the fetus attains viability.

In striking the Guam law, the 9th U.S.

Circuit Court of Appeals said that "surely an outright criminalization of abortion places an 'undue burden' on the exercise of the woman's right."

Three Supreme Court justices voted to hear Guam's appeal, one short of the four votes necessary to review a case. Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justice Byron White joined Justice Antonin Scalia in dissenting from the court's decision.

Scalia argued that before a law is struck down, courts should wait to see if all or parts of the law could be applied in constitutionally permissible ways.

"I see no reason why the Guam law would not be constitutional at least in its application to abortions performed after the point at which the child may live outside the womb," Scalia wrote.

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## CLC asks Clinton not to appoint U.S. ambassador to the Vatican

By Louis Moore

SBC Christian Life Commission

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission executive director Richard Land has asked President-elect Bill Clinton to "redress a wrong" committed by former President Ronald Reagan when he appointed an ambassador to the Vatican.

"I am writing to ask you to strike a blow for these great principles by redressing a wrong done by President Reagan in 1984 when he appointed an ambassador to the Vatican," Land said in his letter mailed Dec. 2. "As a Southern Baptist, you are quite aware of the strong commitment of Baptists in general, and Southern Baptists in particular, to the principles of religious liberty and the separation of the institutions of church and state."

His request is consistent with Southern Baptist policy and statements both before and after Reagan made the appointment, Land told Clinton.

"Our conviction concerning the propriety of this policy has not wavered," Land said in his letter. "The Holy See of the Roman Catholic Church is an ecclesiastical entity, not a civil state. While it is entirely appropriate for the government to have communication and interaction with a religious organization, appointing an ambassador goes too far. It virtually

tears down the wall of separation between the government and this particular denomination, while discriminating against other religious entities which do not receive the same diplomatic benefits."

"We would oppose diplomatic status for any religious entity," Land said.

Land also said the historic Baptist stand against appointing an ambassador to the Vatican "should not be misconstrued as anti-Catholic bigotry." Land pointed out that earlier this year he had traveled to Rome with several other members of the Religious Alliance Against Pornography to meet with Pope John Paul II and other Vatican officials regarding an international anti-pornography effort.

Land's letter calls on Clinton to act out of his own Southern Baptist heritage in making the decision about the Vatican appointment.

"We ask that in light of your Baptist heritage that you revoke this policy," he said. "President Reagan and the U.S. Senate acted erroneously in deciding this matter in 1984."

## Sunday School Board revenue up

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Total revenue for the Baptist Sunday School Board's fiscal year was up \$5.75 million from 1990-91, employees were told recently.

President James T. Draper Jr. said while revenues were \$1.5 million short of a goal of \$203,877,000, product sales, "an area where employees have direct influence over results, exceeded target by \$1.5 million."

With a total revenue of \$202,373,000, Draper said revenue remaining, after deductions for product and operational expenses and contributions for SBC and state convention support, exceeded a goal of \$6,678,000 by almost \$800,000.

"All of this was achieved in the middle of a distracting transition," Draper said. "It shows the quality and dedication of our employees."

The board made direct contributions to SBC support of \$3,011,000, including \$649,000 to the SBC and \$2,362,000 to state Baptist conventions.

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PEOPLE TO DEPEND ON.

# Virginia conservatives soften talk of split

RICHMOND, VA (ABP/BP)—Conservative Virginia Baptists have softened earlier rhetoric calling for a secession from the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

In a series of six meetings across Virginia Dec. 1 and 3, conservative pastors and laity discussed the future of their movement in Virginia.

T. C. Pinckney, a member of the SBC Executive Committee and leader in the Virginia conservative faction, said there were no votes taken at the six regional meetings. He characterized any talk of a consensus about future action as "premature." He did, however, hint that a majority of people present did not seem to favor a split.

Kelly Burris, pastor of Kempsville Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, said, "Some of the pastors are saying if we move out they fear they will be left behind because their churches wouldn't be willing to go with them. We need to be very sympathetic to that and we will be sympathetic."

The conservative discussions come in the wake of the annual meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia last

month, where moderate-backed candidates, resolutions and motions won decisively.

At that meeting Pinckney was defeated in the presidential election, receiving only 24 percent of the votes. Other conservative candidates were defeated by similar margins.

Conservatives were further angered by two actions of the annual meeting. One was the approval of the 1993 BGAV budget which includes an option allowing churches to channel missions gifts to the "Vision 2000 Plan" of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which entirely bypasses SBC agencies.

The second action at the November meeting which angered conservatives was a resolution which did not condemn homosexuality as a sin and called for churches to take a pastoral approach toward homosexuals.

An attempt to amend the resolution by calling homosexual behavior "sinful and unacceptable behavior for Christians" failed, as did a constitutional amendment which would have excluded from the state

association any church which approves homosexual behavior.

Immediately following the annual meeting, rumors surfaced that conservatives were planning a split from the state association. That rumor was fueled by an informal meeting of 30 pastors in Virginia Beach Nov. 25 in which a majority reportedly wanted to create their own Virginia convention.

"I'm very sorry to see this," responded Reginald McDonough, BGAV executive director. "We've worked hard to try to be inclusive of all Baptists in this state. I did not interpret the action of the General Association in the same way that these individuals are interpreting it."

Walter Harrow, the new BGAV president, note, "I believe I speak for most Virginia Baptists in expressing regret and sorrow that this action is taking place. We have been very busy in the task of creating a framework in Virginia which would allow each church a place to stand."

"We believe honoring autonomy in the local church is the Baptist way," Harrow continued. "Virginia Baptists are able to accommodate diversity and still focus on missions."

Observers have raised questions about the implications of a possible separate conservative state convention in Virginia.

James Guenther, legal counsel for the SBC, issued a statement indicating "the SBC would be required to consider a new paradigm" if two separate Baptist bodies from the same state sought recognition from the SBC. Citing the SBC's autonomy, Guenther added that the SBC could relate to one or both of the bodies.

Pinckney said information gathered during the six regional meetings will be evaluated, and a recommendation about the direction of the conservative movement in Virginia will be made at a statewide meeting on Jan. 28 in Lynchburg.

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## Convention Uniform

### The same message

By Jack Auten, First Church, Monette  
 Basic passage: Matthew 3:1-4:11  
 Focal passage: Matthew 3:1-4:11  
 Central truth: God's requirements and Satan's tactics have not changed.

"Have you been out to hear him yet?" All of Judea was buzzing about the one called John, the Baptizer. He appeared in the wilderness, preaching about the coming of the Lord and if everybody wanted to get ready they needed to change their ways and be baptized to prove they had changed. Hundreds did.

All the commotion brought the religious leaders out to investigate and were met with a few choice names from the baptizer and a message that their heritage and law-keeping wasn't good enough for God and that they were in deep trouble with Him already. He went on to say that if they thought he was causing trouble, they hadn't seen anything yet, for the next one they heard would be greater and He would baptize with fire.

Was this the long awaited for prophet? Jesus thought so and endorsed and authenticated John's ministry by being baptized. What a baptism that was too. A voice from heaven and the visible appearance of the Holy Spirit inaugurated Jesus into His public ministry. Whereupon He left for more remote regions of the wilderness for prayer and meditation.

Forty days later, weak from the heat, hunger and thirst, Jesus was met by Satan who made three propositions. As Son of God, take advantage of it. No need to be in need or distress. As Son of God, why not live on the edge? God would always be there to protect. Have a little fun in life. As Son of God things would one day be His anyhow, but why wait? He (Satan) could speed things up if Jesus would let him.

Things haven't changed. People still depend upon things like being born in a "Christian" nation, or in a "Christian" family, or even being a church member to make things right with God. God's message is still the same. Repent, change that life, rely upon Jesus, nothing else. Satan's propositions are still the same too. Take advantage of being a child of God, saved, so live as you please, you can always be forgiven. Nothing bad is going to happen to you because you're a child of God, so live it up.

There is but one way to God. Scripture still defeats Satan.

## Life and Work

### Worthy is the Lamb

By C.A. Johnson, First Church, Paragould  
 Basic passage: Revelation 5  
 Focal passage: Revelation 5:6-14  
 Central truth: Let us worship Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who is worthy of worship.

In John's vision, the Lamb took the scroll from the Father's hand. Now God's great eternal plan would be fulfilled and creation would be set free from the bondage of sin and death. With the handing of the scroll to the Lamb, we enter into one of the greatest scenes of universal adoration anywhere recorded.

The scroll represents Christ's "title deed" to all the Father promised Him because of His sacrifice on the cross. A title deed can be opened only by the appointed heir — and this is Jesus Christ.

There are four reasons why we worship Jesus. First, we worship Jesus because of who He is. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah—the image of a lion speaks of dignity, sovereignty, courage, and victory. He is the root of David—He brought David's line into existence (deity). He descends from David—His humanity is proven. He is the Lamb — God the Son, Christ Jesus. We worship Jesus Christ because He is worthy of our worship.

We worship Jesus because of where He is. He is ascended and exalted in heaven. What an encouragement this is to Christians to know the Savior has defeated every enemy and is now controlling events from glory. Moreover, He is in the midst—the center of all that transpires in heaven. He is also at the throne. We do not worship a baby in a manger, or a man on a cross. We worship the living, reigning Lamb of God who is in the midst of heaven.

We worship Jesus because of what He does. When the Lamb took the scroll, weeping stopped and praise began. All of God's creation joined in a new song of praise—a hymn of worship — "Thou art worthy;" a gospel song — "Thou wast slain and has redeemed us by thy blood;" a mission song — sinners were saved "out of every tribe, and language and people and nation;" a prophetic song — "We shall reign on earth."

We worship Jesus because of what He has. He owns all the riches of heaven and earth. Today in glory He possesses all strength. He has received all honor and glory! He is worthy of all praise.

## Bible Book

### Relational instructions

By John D. Gerlach, Immanuel Church, Little Rock  
 Basic passage: Romans 14:1-16:27  
 Focal passage: Romans 14:1-4; 15:1-3; 16:1-4, 17-20  
 Central truth: We should always encourage and uplift our fellow believers even when we have opposing views.

How can we know what is right or wrong regarding Christian conduct that is not clearly delineated in Scripture? Is bowing, bobbed hair, mixed swimming, attending movies or the use of makeup wrong? Christians have always wrestled with questions of Christians conduct.

Paul addressed such issues in this study as he concluded his letter to the Roman church. One of the issues that had caused differences between believers in Paul's day was whether or not to eat unclean or forbidden meat. Paul stated mature believers realized Christianity had freed them from the observance of the food laws. However, neither the mature or the weak was to look down upon the other for their stand. Christians cannot allow such issues to cause barriers in the Christian family.

What then is to be our guiding principle if we are spiritually strong? The strong believer is to have consideration for the prejudices of the weak Christians and also attempt to build up and encourage them.

Paul concluded his letter to the Roman church with words of greeting and encouragement to several individuals. He commended Phoebe, who was likely the bearer of this letter to the Roman Christians, for the service she had given, and asked the believers in Rome to assist her.

He also sent greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, the husband and wife team who had helped Paul with his ministry in Corinth (Acts 18:3, 18, 26), and later in Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:19). Paul expressed appreciation and gratitude for Priscilla and Aquila personally and on behalf of the churches where they had served.

Along with these words of greeting and encouragement, Paul sent a strong warning concerning false teachers. Obviously, there were already individuals in Rome who were willing to cause divisiveness. The teachings in question were not in the category mentioned in chapter 14. These teachings were serious errors in doctrine. The Roman believers were warned not to be misled by such evil teaching.

## Convention Uniform

### The Church is born

By Sam Whitlow, Harmony Church,  
El Dorado

Basic passage: Acts 2

Focal passage: Acts 2:1-47

Central truth: Acts 1:8 is fulfilled, the Holy Spirit comes, the Church is born and moves out to evangelize the world.

On the Jewish calendar, Pentecost was 50 days after the feast of firstfruits celebrating the wheat harvest. They gathered the first fruits of the wheat and baked it into two loaves depicting on this day, 50 days after Christ's resurrection, the Church would be born and the Holy Spirit would be given to indwell every Christian. One day Christ will harvest believers as He will separate the wheat from the tares. What is our guarantee that we will be in the harvest of wheat? The resurrection of Jesus Christ and having the earnest of the Holy Spirit which is what Pentecost is all about.

The Event (2:1-8) The Holy Spirit came to indwell them, divided tongues sat on each of them to prove it; they were filled, and their response was that they began to speak in other languages.

The Effect (2:9-11) The 120 Jews began to speak in languages they did not know but those hearing did. The Tower of Babel fiasco ended in a confusion of tongues (Gen. 11:1-9) and separateness. Pentecost provided understanding and togetherness.

The Explanation (2:12-38) Some were still doubting that this was from God and tried to explain it away. Peter assures them that it is too early to be drunk on wine but not too early in the day for the Holy Spirit to work. Peter begins to explain what is going on as he tells them their own prophet Joel prophesied this in Joel 2:28-32. Joel's prophecy was "pre"-filled here and at the second coming of the One whom they have just crucified, it will be "full"-filled. He then proves Jesus is their Messiah and Savior by telling of His life, death, resurrection and ascension. He then says, "To be saved you must repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ on the basis of the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the Holy Spirit."

The Evangelizing (2:39-47) They will evangelize Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth by being sound in doctrine, praying, experiencing miracles, showing hospitality, praising God and He will add to His church.

## Life and Work

### Trust and obey

By C.A. Johnson, First Church,  
Paragould

Basic passage: Genesis 12

Focal passage: Genesis 12:1-9

Central truth: To Christians comes the call for absolute trust, the faith that takes God simply at His Word.

With Abraham God makes a third start with humanity. Adam had failed, Noah's descendants had failed, and now another attempt is being made. God chooses one man as the founder of a nation which in turn would bless all mankind. God encouraged Abraham with a threefold promise—a land, a seed, and a worldwide blessing.

Abraham's journey with God began with a step of faith—with separation being the keynote of his life. But in that separation to the will of God, he found all his peace and blessing. Separation is still the believer's duty. Sometimes it involves separation from family, sometimes from familiar surroundings, always from sin and self-will. Such separation tests the reality of our life and at the same time strengthens our spiritual fibers.

Obedience was speedy, without delay, submissive and without dispute. Abraham "went out, not knowing whither he went," but knowing whom he followed. He was beginning where every believer begins; walking in the light he had and waiting for new light to be given. There is no other way to grow in grace and to increase in the knowledge of God.

Notwithstanding the promise of God, Abraham had to wait. He had no descendants yet, he had no abiding place, and the Canaanites prevented him from possessing an inch of the country. While Abraham waited, he worshipped, content to leave all details in higher hands. Wherever Abraham pitched a tent, he built an altar and that altar was sanctified by prayer.

Abraham was not discouraged by the difficulties he met on his way, nor diverted by the delights he found. He simply pressed forward. Those who set out for heaven must persevere to the end, still reaching for the things ahead. To us also comes the call for absolute trust, for a faith that takes God simply at His Word. Like Abraham, we are to trust in the dark — "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8).

## Bible Book

### God on the march

By George O'Neal, Bella Vista Church  
Basic passage: Psalm 68, 103

Focal passage: Psalm 68

Central truth: God is moving through history in triumph over His enemies and ours.

This Psalm needs to have a drumroll and a trumpet fanfare to introduce it. It was to Israel what "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" is to the people of God today. "Our God is marching on. Glory, glory, hallelujah!" In interpreting this Psalm, it is important to remember that our enemy is not flesh and blood but principalities and powers.

I. The Petition, verses 1-3. The Psalmist asks God to stand. And when He does, His stance forces the enemy to flee. As wind He blows the enemy away like smoke. As fire He melts him like wax. Nothing can hinder Him or stand in His way. And that thought prompts the people to rejoice.

II. The Praise, verses 4-6. The God who is on the march is praised for His majesty. He is extolled for His comfort, His freedom, and His justice.

III. The March, verses 7-14. This passage is descriptive of God's leading Israel out of Egypt with the cloud of His shekinah glory. The earthquake speaks of God's presence manifested at Sinai. But later He sends the refreshing showers (verse 9). He provides abundantly for every need of His people in battle including their taking the last hill (verse 14).

IV. The Victory, verses 15-23. The presence of the Lord causes nations to respond as He moves from Sinai to the Holy of Holies in the temple. As Conqueror He receives gifts from His captives as triumphant generals were accustomed to receiving. Paul the apostle reveals that the Lord Jesus, when He ascended into heaven, gave gifts to men to equip the church for ministry (Eph. 4:8). God shares His victory over the enemy with His children.

V. The Celebration, verses 25-35. The procession of the worshippers moves to celebrate the triumph of the Lord. The finale anticipates peoples and nations around the world joining in a mighty chorus of praise and adoration for the awesome strength of God.

"Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered!" Is a crucial prayer for God's people to pray in these days. The Lord is still the Mighty Conqueror and no stronghold of Satan can withstand His power.



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## NEWS DIGEST

### SBC Cooperative Program gifts down slightly; designated up

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for November were 3.84 percent below the same month a year ago but designated gifts increased 3.98 percent over the previous year.

November 1992 CP receipts totaled \$11,734,974 compared to November 1991 of \$12,204,115. However, the November 1992 total is above the 1992-93 SBC monthly basic operating budget requirement of \$11,683,366.

For the two months of the SBC fiscal year, October and November, the total CP gifts are \$22,565,020, a 1.45 percent decrease from the previous year.

Continuing a trend, designated gifts for November 1992 reached \$2,384,109 compared to November 1991 of \$2,292,921. The year-to-date totals for the fiscal year are \$4,484,868, an 18.89 percent increase from the previous year.

### HMB volunteer chosen to represent Seminary Extension

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Seminary Extension has named Leon Boyd, a Home Mission Board Mission Service Corps volunteer, as its national consultant.

Boyd, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's town and country missions since 1987, will travel across the United States to inform Baptists of Seminary Extension programs and conduct training workshops for Seminary Extension center directors and teachers. He also will help start new centers.

Seminary Extension is an arm of the six Southern Baptist seminaries with about 1,500 students who take courses by correspondence and more than 4,000 students who take courses at extension centers.

### Annuity Board asks K-Mart to curb policy on porno sales

DALLAS (BP)—The Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention will seek a shareholder action to confront K-Mart over the sale of pornographic materials through its Waldenbooks subsidiary. Paul W. Powell, the board's president, said, "We could simply have sold our K-Mart holdings, but selling stock has no influence on the company and has no effect on the company's profitability.

"Our trustees, in both the investment committee and as a full board, have twice discussed divestment of the stock," Powell continued. "If we are not successful in our efforts, then we will divest for the sole purpose of distancing ourselves from the corporate policy."

### Texas anti-gambling group names Dan Martin director

DALLAS (BP)—Dan Martin, former news editor of Baptist Press, unanimously was elected executive director of Texans Who Care at the annual board meeting of the statewide anti-gambling coalition in Dallas. Martin, 54, succeeds longtime anti-gambling activist Sue Cox. Martin will assume the executive post for the Austin-based, non-partisan organization effective Jan. 1, 1993.

Martin is a bivocational Southern Baptist pastor and veteran journalist who spent 17 years working for daily newspapers in Texas and Colorado before entering denominational journalism in 1973. He worked for the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and served nearly a decade as news editor of Baptist Press. Most recently, he has served as a free-lance writer and pastor of Ledger Baptist Church in Ledger, N.C.

### Most Americans consider homosexuality 'immoral'

GLENDALE, CA (ABP)—A majority of Americans believe homosexual behavior is "immoral," but an even larger majority believe a person's sexual relations are nobody else's business, according to a nationwide poll.

The study, conducted among a random sample of American adults earlier this year, was funded and executed by the Barna Research Group. The organization's president, George Barna, is a Christian pollster and church-growth author.

The poll found 61 percent of Americans in agreement with the statement, "It is immoral for a person to have a sexual relationship with someone of the same sex." However, 72 percent agreed with the statement, "Nobody has the right to tell someone else what kind of sexual relationships they can have."

On related questions, 52 percent of respondents said they don't think people who are gay are born that way and 59 percent said parents of gay children have not failed as parents. Homosexual marriages are opposed by 61 percent of Americans, while the adoption of children by gay couples is opposed by 67 percent.