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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 93, Number 26

December 29, 1994

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IN
MINISTRY

YEAR 1

Arkansas Baptists have established 40 church partnerships and completed 31 missions projects in the first year of their three-year missions partnership with the European Baptist Convention.



Immanuel Baptist Church in Wiesbaden, Germany, is among 60 churches that are members of the English-language European Baptist Convention. The EBC and Arkansas Baptists are working together in a three-year missions partnership.

Witness training material helps identify lost friends

By Sarah Zimmerman
SBC Home Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—To begin a new witnessing training workshop titled "Friends Forever," Paul McClung asked the 34 participants to list all the lost people they knew.

After three minutes, the most names anyone had written was five, said McClung, associate director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention evangelism department.

At the end of the six-hour course, participants each listed names of 50 to 70 non-Christians. "They were overwhelmed with how many lost people they know," McClung said.

People who participate in "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" can use "Friends Forever" to help them think of 60 people who need to accept Christ, said Jack Smith, associate director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board personal evangelism department and author of "Friends Forever."

"Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" is the simultaneous witnessing effort for Christians to share Christ 60 times between Jan. 9 and March 9.

"Friends Forever" includes 12 study units designed to be taught in 30-minute segments. The units offer ways to approach people in different settings, from home to the neighborhood to the workplace.

The material also addresses the danger of waiting too long to share Christ with a non-Christian friend.

"The longer you wait to approach them spiritually, the harder it is to do and the less likely it is that you'll do it," Smith said. "It's hard to convince people that becoming a Christian is the most important thing that ever happened to you if you wait too long to tell them."

The six-hour course is considered "entry-level personal evangelism training for the 90 percent of Christians who never enroll in a soul-winning training course," explained Smith.

McClung described the material as "simple, easy to grasp and user-friendly." "I expect everyone to be a part of it because everyone has a friend," said Dean Nichols, pastor of First Baptist Church in Kenai, Alaska. "It plugs people into their comfort zone."

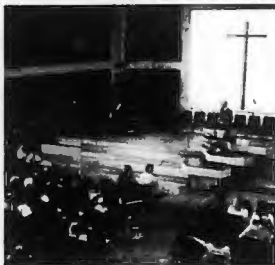
Nichols was one of several pastors who field-tested the material in 1993. He said one reason he likes the material is that it motivates Christians by a sense of responsibility to witness rather than guilt.

It also prepares people for more in-depth witness training courses such as Building Witnessing Relationships and Continuing Witness Training, Nichols added.

The "Friends Forever" book is available from HMB customer services by calling 1-800-634-2462.



Cover Story



Partners in Ministry 6-7

Immanuel Baptist Church in Wiesbaden, Germany, is among 60 English-language congregation throughout Europe that are members of the European Baptist Convention. The EBC and Arkansas Baptists currently are working together in a three-year missions partnership.

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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Trennis Henderson.....	Editor	Millie Gill.....	Executive Assistant to the Editor
Russell N. Dilday.....	Associate Editor	Becky Hardwick.....	Accountant
Colleen Backus.....	Assistant Editor	Erwin L. McDonald, Ltd. D.	Editor Emeritus

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1993-94 a 'very good year' for new churches

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Although the number of new Southern Baptist churches in Arkansas was almost 28 percent below the previous year's figures, 1993-94 was still "a very good year," according to Jack Ramsey, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department. He said 13 new Southern Baptist congregations constituted in the state in 1994, compared to 18 in 1993.

"For constituting churches, it was a very good year," he emphasized. "This is an average number of church constitutions." Noting that the 18 churches started in 1993 was a record, he added that Arkansas Baptists gained 13 new churches in 1992, 14 in 1991, 10 in 1990 and five in 1989.

Ramsey said the target goal for his office "is at least 10 new constituted churches a year and to gain a minimum of 15 congregations a year," including new missions.

Affirming that the 13 new congregations represent "excellent growth for a state the size of Arkansas," Ramsey said the new churches have diverse backgrounds, settings and growth potential.

Some of the churches experienced starts like Sweethome Church in Houston, he explained. "It was a six- or seven-year old mission that started out being in a very rural, isolated community that started out very slow and they had to overcome a lot of obstacles there."

Others, said Ramsey, experienced growth like Valley Ridge Church in Jonesboro, which took advantage of prospects and a high-growth area to build church membership.

Terry George, pastor of Valley Ridge Church, attributed his congregation's growth to "evidence of the power of God."

"Back in 1992, Stan Ballard, pastor of Nettleton Baptist Church, had a vision of reaching out to the people in the shadow of the steeple," George recalled. "The Lord was speaking to me and I volunteered. We felt there was a need to reach the unchurched and those not comfortable with going to a church like Nettleton."

"We began holding Sunday services at a tomato farm office," he recounted. "We started with eight people and in six weeks we were out of room."

With attendance increasing, George said Mt. Zion Association director of missions Harold Ray secured a mobile mission for the high growth area outside of Jonesboro.

Church constitutions: 1993-94*

11/1/93	Magnolia Road, Jonesboro
11/1/93	Bethel, North Pulaski
12/18/93	Widener
1/16/94	Piney Point, Rogers
1/16/94	Lee Creek, Van Buren
1/23/94	Sweethome, Houston
2/6/94	Sugar Side, Alma
4/17/94	Sugarloaf, Bee Branch
5/22/94	Grace, Pangburn
6/26/94	Crestview, New Blaine
9/4/94	Robinson, Siloam Springs
9/25/94	Valley View, Eureka Springs
11/27/94	Valley Ridge, Jonesboro

*The 1993-94 reporting year extended from November 1993 through November 1994.

"We went out on nothing more than faith," said George, a bivocational pastor who also works as manager of purchasing and supplier relations for Lincoln Automotive in Jonesboro. He said the residential growth in the area was cited by the state missions department as one of the best potential church fields in the state.

"We did a lot of canvassing. We went out knocking on doors, and put up fliers at grocery stores," George said. "Through that we had considerable growth and the second month our attendance was in the 30s. The word got out. We constituted in November and Sunday night (Dec. 18) we had 85 in attendance."

New churches more versatile

Ramsey said that newly constituted churches often are able to accomplish things that older, more established congregations cannot.

"Basically, they can reach people that say they are tired of the old, traditional church," he explained. "People realize the new churches are not tied to tradition as closely."

"Second," Ramsey continued, "there normally is an excitement in a new church more than there is in an older congregation."

"Third, there is usually a desire to reach out to the community more than we see in other churches and everybody gets involved in it," he noted, adding that member involvement "is the key in new churches. There are so many jobs when they start that more people are involved as a ratio."

"If I were to bring our church's growth down to one word, it would be involvement," agreed George. "Everyone comes

in with a gift and everyone has to become involved. We don't want anyone just sitting in the chairs — and when you have involvement, you have commitment."

Ramsey said new churches also generally excel in baptisms. "Normally, missions will baptize with a one to 10 ratio (one baptism per 10 members), where its one to 30 or 40 in the rest of the state."

"We had 19 professions of faith since March 1993, and numerous rededications," George noted. "We had several who have been out of church and they've rededicated and become active in teaching and visiting."

Ramsey said despite the positive church growth, Arkansas Baptists are still "very weak in reaching the lower socio-economic grouping of people, the black community and the masses that are now living in multi-housing."

Although most of the new churches "would be considered middle-income type churches," he added that new churches have been started among lower-income groups during the past two or three years.

The new group does include one black congregation, Widener Church. Ramsey said the new church brings to 13 the number of black Southern Baptist congregations in the state.

Ramsey said Arkansas Baptists help support new works and mission congregations through both the Cooperative Program and the Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering.

"About 46 percent of my budget comes from the Dixie Jackson Offering," he explained. "We can help some with pastoral assistance and with special grants for renting or leasing or repairing a building. We help buy property and we do have some limited funds to help mission pastors go to training conferences and revival experiences."

"We certainly have a financial involvement, but not in all of them," he said. "But the best thing we can give them is training, prayer support and organizational training."

Ramsey said each of the new starts confirms "that we need new congregations and that we need different kinds of congregations for different kinds of people." Noting that he is unaware of any of the new congregations negatively impacting the growth of other churches, he affirmed that each of the church starts represents "new growth" in reaching people throughout Arkansas with the gospel.

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABCS Executive Director

There was something beautiful about the melody but mournful in the lyrics of the hymn, "Day is Dying in the West." At First Church, Greenwood, we would often sing this hymn as we gathered on Sunday evening for church. It was restful in mood but left you forlorn in spirit.

It is a little like that as we finish the year. The year is rapidly dying and will soon be added to the dust of the past called history. The tests and trials, tears and trauma of 1994 will soon be past. Hidden from time are their realities but never hidden are the scars, the memories and the lingering consequences. Maybe it is good to have a time when one segment of life's struggles can be sorted out and filed away under the heading of "Things Completed."

The hymnologist went on to say, "Heaven is touching earth with rest." Blessed is that thought. Paul said that the whole creation "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now...even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." While that ultimate rest awaits the return of our Lord, is it not comforting to contemplate the possibility that through fellowship with God we can find "heaven touching earth with rest"? Maybe we could find the solace to sign off on the old and give it up in anticipation of the new year. Though His mercy and grace we can be delivered from the year's guilt, shame, disappointments and blame. He said, "I will give you rest."

The last stanza closes with "and shadows end." With the dying of the day comes the erasure of the shadows. The dying of the year can be the same way. We need to be free of the shadows in our life and ready for the new year that is dawning. Assuming that we are permitted to live and serve the Lord Jesus in 1995, our lives need to reflect that we believe the beginning of a new year is the beginning of the most exciting time of our lives and the Kingdom of God. So, "let the day die" and "let the year die." Let's take advantage of the opportunity to start over and make 1995 the spiritual spectacular God wants it to be.

RONNIE ROGERS

President's Corner

Walk for life at annual march



They would stand but they can't; they are fighting to survive even as you read this! Will you stand in their place?

While I know that marching down Capitol Avenue will not in itself reverse the Roe vs. Wade decision, nor will it bring back all the babies that have been exterminated through the brutal daily massacre called "abortion." But then again, preaching the gospel will never convert every person who hears. Then why do either? For one simple reason—because it is right.

Participating in the annual Right to Life March accomplishes several things:

1. The difference in 100 persons marching and 20,000 culminates in more support for the pre-born from politicians. Politicians may not understand calculus but they can count.

2. It affords a public forum for us to express, in a Christian manner, our resolute objections to the wanton murder of innocent children.

3. It encourages and reminds those who fight for the pre-born every day in the spiritual, political, judicial and edu-

cational realm that they are not alone.

4. It gives support to those pro-life candidates who suffer incalculably for the pre-born.

5. It sends a resounding message to the pro-abortionist that we will not retreat as long as babies are frantically fighting for their next breath of life.

6. It affords us a better alternative to the extreme unjustified killing of abortionists, than allowing their actions to be used by Satan to cause pro-lifers to withdraw from supportive peaceful means.

7. It gives us a chance to stand for life and it is always a good time to do that.

If God's preachers would lead out in standing fearlessly for the sanctity of human life, we might see the dehumanization of America reversed. Whether pastor or layman, we are called to be salt and light.

I challenge you to walk for life on January 22.

Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Church in Hot Springs, is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Personal perspectives

"It's hard to convince people that becoming a Christian is the most important thing that ever happened to you if you wait too long to tell them."

—Jack Smith, associate director, HMB personal evangelism department

"If I were to bring our church's growth down to one word, it would be involvement...When you have involvement, you have commitment."

—Terry George, pastor, Valley Ridge Church, Jonesboro

"If God's preachers would lead out in standing fearlessly for the sanctity of human life, we might see the dehumanization of America reversed."

—Ronnie Rogers, president, Arkansas Baptist State Convention

1994: a year of change, challenge, celebration

Missions partnerships in Europe and Iowa, the "True Love Waits" sexual abstinence campaign, anti-gambling efforts, Cooperative Program support and a centennial celebration for the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries were among major news items for Arkansas Baptists during the past year. The following excerpts from the pages of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* provide a brief overview of significant news events at home and around the world during 1994.

■ **JANUARY:** A record 4,500 youth attended Arkansas Baptists' "Joy Explo" Youth Evangelism Conference in Hot Springs....The Arkansas Baptist State Convention has been recognized for having the highest percentage increase in Sunday School attendance among black Southern Baptist churches....Decreased gifts to the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board have caused the agency to implement a temporary hiring freeze and conduct a study which may lead to "minimal" downsizing....Arkansas Baptists channeled more than \$15.3 million to state and national causes in 1993, exceeding the state's CP goal of \$15.2 million by \$117,838.

■ **FEBRUARY:** With more than 1.3 billion people yet to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Baptist World Alliance's "blueprint for action" will encourage Baptists around the world to make reaching "un-evangelized people" a priority....Christian Heritage Week, set for Feb. 27 through March 5 in Arkansas, has sparked controversy between Lt. Gov. Mike Huckabee and the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union....Arkansas Baptist disaster relief units were called into action Feb. 12 as residents of southeast Arkansas suffered from power blackouts and falling tree branches in a heavy ice storm.

■ **MARCH:** More than 1,100 Arkansas Baptist church leaders and staff received training and inspiration to "Perform Ministry" at 15 conferences across the state. "Perform Ministry in Jesus' Name" is the 1994 state convention theme....Russell H. Dilday, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary since 1978, was fired March 9 by seminary trustees during a closed-door session....Three Arkansas Baptist volunteers recently traveled to Kalserslautern, Germany, for the first training exchange between the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and the European Baptist Convention since the two conventions voted last fall to enter into a three-year missions partnership.

■ **APRIL:** Gary C. Huckabay was officially inaugurated March 19 as the fourth president of Williams Baptist College....Southern Baptist leaders Richard Land and Larry Lewis have joined 38 representatives of Catholic and evangelical groups in signing an unprecedented pledge of cooperation....More than 1,700 Arkansas Baptist youth have signed "True Love Waits" commitment cards, pledging sexual purity until marriage....Ethnic and political killings in Rwanda have forced Baptist missionaries there to evacuate.

■ **MAY:** Harry Trulove retired May 1 after serving exactly 20 years as president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation....A petition campaign to place a proposed amendment on the Nov. 8 ballot to expand gambling in Arkansas has raised both ire and action from Arkansas Baptists....The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has pushed its missionary force past the 4,000 mark for the first time ever....Norman Lewis, director of missions for Black River Association since 1988, has been named the state convention's 1994 DOM of the Year.

■ **JUNE:** Seven Arkansas Baptist churches are among the top 100 Cooperative Program contributors for the second consecutive year....Messengers to the 1994 Southern Baptist Convention in Florida elected Orlando pastor Jim Henry as SBC president....The Southern Baptist Convention has directed its agencies to no longer accept money channeled through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship....Southern Baptist youth exceeded their national

goal for the "True Love Waits" sexual abstinence campaign with a colorful display of 102,695 signed pledge cards.

■ **JULY:** Celebrating "a century of caring," the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries highlighted 100 years of ministry at the Children's Home in Monticello. The event is one of 10 anniversary celebrations being held this year throughout the state....Almost 14,000 Southern Baptist teenage girls and their leaders gathered in Birmingham, Ala., for the fifth National Ateens Convention....As Operation Rescue efforts attracted media attention, a few Arkansas Baptists endorsed the anti-abortion activities while others distanced themselves from the national campaign's methodology....Two of Iran's Christian leaders have been murdered in a continuing campaign by Islamic militants to exterminate Christianity in Iran.

■ **AUGUST:** Veteran Baptist missions leaders Glendon and Marjorie Grober died July 28 from injuries sustained in an automobile accident....Kenneth S. Hemphill, a Southern Baptist church growth analyst, has been unanimously elected as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary....Larry Henderson, an Arkansas Baptist minister, recently was distinguished as the highest-ranking chaplain in the Arkansas National Guard....A Home Mission Board administrative reorganization designed to save \$1.4 million will eliminate 22 staff positions.

■ **SEPTEMBER:** Marvin Peters, director of missions for North Pulaski Association, has been named PACT consultant of the year by the Home Mission Board....ACTS of Fort Smith has been named "Affiliate of the Year" and ACTS of Little Rock has earned the program series award from the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission....Congress has voted to forbid the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission from enforcing its proposed guidelines on religious harassment in the workplace....President Clinton met with Jim Henry, SBC president; Henry Blackaby, HMB director of prayer and spiritual awakening; and Rex Horne, pastor of Immanuel Church, Little Rock, in what Horne described as an "open" meeting "where we could speak our heart."

■ **OCTOBER:** "See You at the Pole," a national, student-led prayer gathering, attracted an estimated 20,000 Arkansas youth....Southern Baptist leaders must resist the temptation to control and instead restore trust to a denomination wracked by 15 years of turmoil, SBC president Jim Henry told members of the SBC Executive Committee....Gambling opponents claimed victory over proposed gambling amendments Oct. 20 as the Arkansas Supreme Court struck the last of three gambling proposals from the Nov. 8 ballot.

■ **NOVEMBER:** Arkansas Baptist messengers voted Nov. 1 to adopt a 1995 Cooperative Program budget of \$116.6 million....Arkansas Baptist State Convention president Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Church in Hot Springs, was re-elected by acclamation to a second one-year term as president...."Arkansas Awakening," a five-year ministry focus for Arkansas Baptists through the year 2000, was approved by messengers....Texas Baptist messengers voted during their annual meeting to expand the definition of their Cooperative Program to "Texas only" gifts as well as church-directed gifts to non-SBC worldwide causes.

■ **DECEMBER:** Churches preparing for missions projects in 1995 have several options in Iowa as part of the five-year partnership between the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship....Current ministry opportunities in Europe provide "a new frontier" for Arkansas Baptists, according to John Merritt, general secretary of the European Baptist Convention...."Want ads" for new Southern Baptist foreign missionaries in 1995 have topped 700.

European partnership completes first year

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

The conclusion of 1994 marks the end of the first year of the missions partnership between Arkansas Baptists and the European Baptist Convention.

Doyle Plummer, statewide coordinator for the partnership, explained that the first phase of the partnership has included matching European Baptist and Arkansas Baptist churches and associations for individual partnerships. He said there currently are about 40 partnership matches among the 45 requests that have been made by European Baptist congregations.

Plummer added that 31 missions projects had been completed in Europe by Arkansas Baptist churches during the past year. "About 100 people were involved in those projects," he noted. "The biggest group was about 14 to 18 people involved in Interflaken, (the European Baptist Convention annual training meeting). We also had two revivals, three Experiencing God conferences, one Continuing Witnessing Training, a ladies' prayer retreat, a Woman's Missionary Union training conference, a tent revival and a medical team."

Surprisingly, an Alaskan Baptist association is among the groups participating in the partnership. "The Chugach Baptist Association in Alaska has partnered with Wuppertal International Church in northern Germany and Little Stukeley Baptist Church in England," Plummer said.

"With some of the difficulties we were having matching up churches with Arkansas churches, we decided to include them," he said. "They will be considered an Arkansas partnership located in Alaska."

Recalling events during the year that shaped both the partnership and his life, Plummer said he and his wife, Betty, served as Foreign Mission Board volunteers from Jan. 15 to July 15. Their responsibilities included serving as on-site partnership coordinators and initiating partnership requests and ideas.

"Under (then-ABC Brotherhood department director) Glendon Grober and with requests from the Foreign Mission Board and International Service Corps, we went to Wiesbaden, Germany," he recounted. "We saw our primary responsibility as making EBC churches and pastors aware of the Arkansas Baptists' interest to partner with them in their ministries, and inviting them to invite us to work with them."

"The partnership was set up on the basis that we would connect each church that wanted a partner with an Arkansas church or association," he explained.

At least one Arkansas Baptist church,



however, has initiated mission work while waiting for a church partner. Floyd Lewis, pastor of First Church in El Dorado, said his congregation has sent three groups to Poland, even though there is no EBC church there.

"We are looking at the possibility of starting an international church in Warsaw," Lewis said. "The holdup has been finding someone to start that church. We have contacts in the U.S. Embassy who want to be in that group."

Despite not having an established English-speaking congregation in Warsaw, the church went forward with partnership activities. It sent a couple to three Polish cities to lead workshops with the Survival Kit, a workbook for new Christians.

"We also sent One Voice, our singles ensemble, and did something that Polish Baptists have never done before in Poland," Lewis said. "We put up a tent and did evangelistic services. The last night they had close to 300 in attendance...About 70 people indicated commitments to Christ."

He said the church also sent a Vacation Bible School team that planned for 50 children, but 250 attended. "They were elated and terrified," Lewis said of the team. "The response was incredible."

Plummer said in asking European Baptists "what they wanted out of a partnership, most wanted prayer, communication and projects such as construction, Vacation Bible School and leadership training."

"Some were specific, including day and time," he said. Some would say, "We want to start with prayer and communication

and the projects will grow."

After completing his six-month duty as on-site partnership coordinator, Plummer soon accepted stateside responsibilities. "Right after we returned, Glendon and Marjorie (Grober) were killed in an automobile accident and Don Moore asked me to serve as interim partnership coordinator," he said. He has served in that capacity since Aug. 1.

"At the time there were three to six partnerships in the works," he recalled. "Now there are 40."

Contacts create awareness

"Going out to as many churches and associations as I can" has been the key to recruiting so many Arkansas Baptist churches to partner with European Baptists, Plummer noted. Emphasizing the need to "make people in Arkansas aware of the partnership," he added, "I see someone, ask them where they go to church and ask them, 'Why isn't your church partnered?' Then we go from there."

Jim Lagrone, pastor of First Southern Church in Bryant, said the needs he saw during an October evangelism conference in Germany led the congregation to partner with Immanuel Baptist Church in Hoensbroek, Netherlands.

"Doyle got me to go and after we saw the need we chose to be a church partner," Lagrone said. "Europe is historically rich in theology but the need for Christ is great. The area has a need to see the gospel. Family ministry needs are great."

"When I got over there, the response of

the church in Bitburg (Germany) was overwhelming," he added. "They have access to the same materials we do, but want someone to help them out. Since many of the churches have military personnel, they are losing leadership all the time. It's kind of rare when you go to a place and there are people begging you to teach and begging you to stay."

Lagrone said his church plans an exchange with European Baptists in 1995. "We're praying for them every week and we have extended an invitation for the (Hoensbroek) pastor to come here and speak. We will be doing Vacation Bible School and light carpentry work there."

He urged other churches to join the partnership not only to help European Baptists, but to build appreciation for missions. "The greatest problem the younger generation has is non-appreciation for the Cooperative Program." Noting that church members "need to put their hands and feet to" missions, he added, "This is an easy way to break in some people for the first time to missions work."

With most of the partnership requests filed and projects under way, Plummer said 1995 will include the "second phase" of the three-year partnership.

"Now we're moving to a phase that will involve pastors in the European Baptist Convention and the ABCS praying and communicating, with projects growing out of that," he explained.

He added that opportunities for partnership involvement among individuals not working through a church-to-church partnership are available through his office.

Plummer is tentatively planning to remain as stateside partnership coordinator through 1995. He will coordinate his work with Harry Black, who begins work Jan. 1 as Brotherhood department director.

"Our job will be to continue to encourage churches on both sides of the partnership and to make EBC staff aware of individual volunteers," Plummer said.

He also affirmed his continuing role in soliciting Arkansas Baptists to participate in European missions, emphasizing the need for interim pastors. "The turnover there among the membership as well as pastors is frequent," he said. "Of the 60-plus churches, there's nearly always five or more that need a pastor."

"We have been asked to provide names and resumes of Arkansas Baptist pastors to serve three months to three years," he explained. "The financial situation depends on the church. Most can provide an apartment, utilities, car expenses and some can supply a small stipend. Some can't provide any."

Additional information about partnership opportunities is available by contacting Plummer at 376-4791, ext. 5190.



Steve and Lisy Murdock Mark and Laura Shook Johnny and Janet Vernon

Three couples with Arkansas ties appointed as foreign missionaries

Three couples with Arkansas connections were among 44 people named missionaries by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board Dec. 13 at Colonial Heights Baptist Church in Virginia.

The latest appointments brought the total number of new Southern Baptist foreign missionaries named in 1994 to 534. That surpasses the FMB's previous one-year total of 498 set in 1993. There currently are 4,078 Southern Baptist foreign missionaries under appointment by the FMB.

Steven and Lisy Murdock will live in Peru, where he will work in discipleship and leadership training in churches. Since 1992, they have been Southern Baptist Home Mission Board church planters in Kansas City, Kan., where he is pastor of Hope Baptist Hispanic Mission.

Murdock is the son of Rev. and Mrs. Gene Murdock of Kingsland, where his father is pastor of First Baptist Church. While growing up, Murdock also lived in Pine Bluff, Sheridan and Little Rock. He considers South Side Church in Pine Bluff his home church. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Mrs. Murdock, the former Lisy Gil Mosciaro, is a native of Bolivia. She is a graduate of the Argentine Bolivian Institute.

The Murdocks have one child, Alex Denar.

Mark and Laura Shook will live in Mexico, where he will start and develop churches.

Born in Russellville, Shook also lived in Hot Springs while growing up and lists Park Place Church in Hot Springs

as influential in his Christian growth. He is a graduate of Dallas Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Since 1992, he has been associate pastor of Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston, where his father is pastor. He formerly has served as pastor, associate pastor and youth minister of churches in Texas.

Mrs. Shook, the former Laura Duhman, considers Houston her hometown. She is a graduate of Baylor University.

The Shooks have three children, David, Sarah and Ashley.

Johnny and Janet Vernon have been named Cooperative Services International representatives to central Asia, where they will use their skills in development of CSI-related projects in developing nations.

Vernon attends Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and is a business analyst with Dillard National Bank in Arlington. A native of Missouri, Vernon considers Second Church in Jacksonville his home church. He formerly was a senior programmer and analyst at Dillard Department Stores in Little Rock. Vernon is a graduate of the College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, Mo.

Mrs. Vernon, the former Janet Worley, is also a native of Missouri and considers Second Church in Jacksonville her home church. A graduate of College of the Ozarks, she was a teacher at North Pulaski High School in Jacksonville and at Little Rock Christian School. The Vernons have two children, Jessica and Brittany, and are expecting their third child in March.

All three families will go to Rockville, Va., in January for a seven-week orientation before leaving for the field.

Three new staff members elected

Board fills positions in Brotherhood, Sunday School and chaplaincy

Personnel issues were the primary focus of the Dec. 13 meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board as board members approved the employment of three new Executive Board staff members. The board also affirmed state convention executive director Don Moore's decision to request the resignation of Dan McCauley, Baptist Student Union director at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock since 1977 (see related article on page 9).

The three new staff members are Harry Black, director of the ASBC Brotherhood department; Pat A. Batchelor Jr., youth associate and assembly director for the ASBC Sunday School department; and Dan Clevenger, chaplain at Hot Springs Rehabilitation Hospital.

Black, who currently is pastor of Natural Steps Church in Roland, succeeds former Brotherhood department director Glendon Grober who died earlier this year in an automobile accident. Black will be responsible for coordinating and supervising Arkansas Baptist work related to Brotherhood, Royal Ambassadors, disaster relief, construction ministries and overseas missions partnerships.

Describing Black as "a true disciple of the Lord," Moore affirmed that he is actively involved in missions on the associational, state and international levels. "He's been really strong in our partnership work," Moore pointed out. "He is committed to missions."

Jimmie Sheffield, ASBC associate executive director, added that Black "brings some fresh, new insights into ways we can do missions as we look to the future. He's well respected as a leader wherever he's been."

Recounting his call to the ministry, Black told board members, "I see God leading me in a continuation of that pilgrimage through ministry as state Brotherhood director. Emphasizing that he is "Southern Baptist to the core," Black added, "There is no other group that has such a commitment to missions."

Black, who has served as pastor of Natural Steps Church for four years, formerly was pastor of First Church, England, and Immanuel Church, Newport. He also has served as a pastor, associate pastor and minister of music and education for churches in Texas.

Black is a graduate of Williams Baptist



Harry Black

Pat Batchelor

Dan Clevenger

College, Hardin-Simmons University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He currently is a trustee of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries, a member of the Arkansas Baptist State RA Committee and moderator of Pulaski Association. He also has been moderator of Caroline and Black River associations. A former Southern Baptist foreign missionary journeyman to Ghana, Black also has participated in partnership missions trips to Germany, Guatemala and South Africa.

Black and his wife, Ivetta, have two children, Shadrach and Matthan.

Pat Batchelor, who will be serving in the state Sunday School department, currently is associate pastor of Cedar Heights Church in North Little Rock. He succeeds Larry Sherman who resigned in October.

Batchelor, a native of Little Rock, has previously served on the staff of churches in Jacksonville, Little Rock, Conway, El Dorado, Hot Springs and Cabot. A graduate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, he also is a former public school music teacher.

Actively involved in statewide, national and international ministry efforts, Batchelor has served as chairman of Arkansas Baptists' Super Summer steering committee. He also holds national Continuing Witness Training certification and has participated in missions trips to Germany and Mexico.

He and his wife, Patsy, have two children, Todd and Jennifer, and three grandchildren.

Describing Batchelor as "very well qualified to do this work," Moore noted that he "has been a major player in Super Summer since its inception," including responsibilities in helping recruit and train more than 700 youth workers.

"I have a great love in my heart for youth," Batchelor emphasized. Affirming

that Arkansas Baptist Assembly at Siloam Springs "has been an important part of my life," he added that the statewide youth programs and assembly events should permit Arkansas Baptists to "see thousands of young people led to Christ."

Dan Clevenger, the new chaplain at Hot Springs Rehabilitation Hospital, succeeds Roy Remont who will retire Dec. 31 following 16 years of ministry there. Clevenger previously was a

chaplain at Baptist Regional Medical Center in Corbin, Ky. A graduate of the University of Houston and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, he also formerly served as a consultant with the Baptist Sunday School Board and as an associate pastor, minister of education and church administrator.

Moore said Clevenger "is committed to God's Word and caring for others," adding that he has "specialized" experience which will serve him well in the chaplaincy position.

Clevenger "has very strong counseling skills and great interpersonal skills," agreed Jimmy Barrentine, director of the ASBC missions department. He said both Clevenger and his wife, Barbara, "will be a real strong asset to the ministry there" in Hot Springs.

Explaining his call from God to enter the chaplaincy ministry, Clevenger told board members, "God has really blessed my ministry as a chaplain." He said he believes the opportunity to serve at the Hot Springs Rehabilitation Hospital "is going to be a real blessing to me."

In addition to the personnel elections, ASBC board members organized board committees for the coming year. Committee chairmen for 1995 include Billy Kite, operating committee; Pete Ramsey, program committee; Harrel Cato, finance committee; and Jere Mitchell, executive committee.

Board members heard a report from the program committee that a study of a potential senior adult housing ministry will be made in response to a request by the board of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries.

Board members also were told that Moore and Barrentine recently were honored by the Arkansas Highway Police for their leadership in arranging Hispanic cultural understanding training for state patrol officers.

Little Rock BSU director asked to resign

By Trennis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Dan McCauley, Baptist Student Union director at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock since 1977, has been asked to resign effective May 15, 1995. Citing theological concerns as the reason for the action, Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director Don Moore reported to ABCS Executive Board members that the request was made by Moore and ABCS student ministry department director David James, who is McCauley's supervisor.

Correspondence between McCauley and Moore following the Dec. 13 board meeting has led to an agreement that McCauley will conclude his BSU work by Dec. 31, 1994, and receive full pay and benefits through March 31. That will be followed by six weeks of severance pay in accordance with established personnel policies. McCauley proposed the compromise after Moore informed him that several Executive Board members voiced concern about him remaining on staff until May.

Insisting that the action is unrelated to political controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention, Moore encouraged board members to help "lay to rest the suspicion and allegations that SBC political activity has struck in Arkansas. No one in SBC life and no one in ABCS life related to political activity had any knowledge of the problem or the action until after it was taken."

Moore reported that McCauley's views of biblical authority, extra-biblical revelation and the security of the believer "differ significantly from our common held faith" as Southern Baptists.

McCauley, who was not present at the board meeting, said the latest timetable for his departure "is kind of a win-win situation although I do feel I've been wronged....I don't think I've taught anything that's not Baptist."

McCauley, age 50, is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Monticello and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Prior to accepting the BSU position at UALR in 1977, he served as a minister of education in South Carolina and an associate pastor in North Carolina. He also served in Vietnam as a U.S. Army medic.

According to the Executive Board's Personnel Administration Manual, "An employee can be dismissed at any time if it is determined by the employer that the action is in the best interest of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention." The policy adds that "any act or behavior that in the opinion of the employer might impede the mission

or effectiveness of the convention or the Executive Board may be grounds for forced termination."

Although the action technically is a resignation rather than a forced termination, Moore invited board members to "vote to sustain the administration in its position." He said the initial agreement was for McCauley to work through May 15 and receive six weeks' severance pay.



McCauley

Several board members asked Moore why McCauley was being allowed to remain on staff until May if theology was the primary concern.

Acknowledging he had first planned to seek McCauley's resignation by Dec. 31, Moore explained, "We need to be perceived, if we err, to err on the side of mercy." Noting that his actions would serve as an example to local church leaders facing difficult personnel issues, he added, "I've seen lots of people treated without mercy."

Insisting that McCauley "isn't belligerent" and that he would not seek to undermine the administration's directives, Moore said, "The issue is we're trying to stand for truth and we're trying to be compassionate at the same time....I would really like for you to trust us to work through it." He added that McCauley could be immediately dismissed at any time if his actions or teachings warranted such action.

Following further discussion about the issue, board members voted overwhelmingly to sustain the administration's actions. The five or six board members who voted against the action indicated they were not voting against McCauley's termination but against him staying in the position through May.

Prior to the board meeting, some of McCauley's supporters distributed a written statement to several people throughout the state. "I taught students doctrine that was acceptable to Southern Baptists, trying my best to represent Arkansas Baptists," McCauley wrote. "I have been careful over the years to respect more conservative viewpoints than mine in choosing speakers for the BSU, in choosing assistants and council members, and in my own presentations to students."

Noting that "Don Moore's final word to me was that he did not have a 'peace' about my staying at UALR," McCauley's statement added that Moore "said that he felt that I would have to accommodate my

personal theology too much in order to live within the boundaries that he expects."

In an interview following the board meeting, Moore said McCauley's views "have not been taught in formal settings but have been communicated in conferences with individuals and with the staff from time to time." He said that is why the initial plan to allow McCauley to work until May "didn't hold as much hazard" as some board members feared.

State BSU director David James, who said he has "been involved in the process at every point," added that "I was involved in the final decision and believe that it is a right decision."

Noting that "this has been one of the toughest decisions that I have ever made," James emphasized, "Dan McCauley is a kind, gracious, compassionate person.

"Dan is a personal friend, personal encourager and a servant who loves his Lord deeply. This is not pushing a piece of paper across the desk. We're talking about a real person, a real family and a ministry that impacts our whole state."

Walter Draughon, pastor of Calvary Church in Little Rock, was among several individuals who contacted Moore during the decision-making process, expressing concern about the situation on McCauley's behalf. Draughon, who is McCauley's pastor, has served for the past year as Metro BSU Committee chairman.

"...both men are acting in ways true to their understandings of God's claim on their lives."

—Walter Draughon, pastor,
Calvary Church, Little Rock

"The leadership of the state convention and Dan McCauley have come to a relational impasse, and, as is true in most impasses, everyone involved experiences loss and pain," Draughon said.

"Still, I applaud Don Moore's courage to postpone the termination date so as to give Dan's relocation process some breathing room," he added. "I applaud Dan's courage to accept the fact of relational breach, practice forgiveness and set his sights on new areas of service to Christ.

"Tough decisions require deep-water faith," Draughon emphasized. "It seems to me that both men are acting in ways true to their understandings of God's claim on their lives. In the midst of impasse, we who follow the leaders simply cannot ask for more than that."

Staff changes

Stanton Cram began serving Dec. 4 as pastor of Friendship Church in Springdale. A native of Springdale, he has been pastor of several Arkansas churches, having recently completed 12 years of service as pastor of Eagle Heights Church in Harrison. He and his wife, Virginia, have two adult married children and three grandchildren.

Alfred R. Cullum is serving as pastor of Joiner Church, coming there from Wichita Falls, Texas, where he was associate pastor and education minister for West Side Church. He previously was pastor of Arkansas churches in North Little Rock, McGhee and Fayetteville. He also has been a staff member of churches in Arkansas and Florida. Cullum is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has four adult children, Cynthia Cheri London, James Timothy Cullum, Opal Marie Rountree and Alfred Reid Cullum II.

Roy Allen Parker will begin his ministry Jan. 15 as pastor of Beech Street First Church in Texarkana. A native of Clark County, he is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Parker will move to Texarkana from Baytown, Texas, where he has served as pastor of First Church since 1976. He previously served churches in Orange and Denton, Texas. Parker and his wife, Laura Louise, have a foster son, Norman Ricky Hogg of Rogers, and two sons, Michael Lance, a senior at OBU, and Jon Mark, a freshman at Brenham Junior College.

Roy Lewis, who recently retired as a full-time pastor, is serving as interim pastor of Old Union Church near Benton.

Al Gebauer has resigned as pastor of First Church in Garfield to return to do pioneer mission work in the West.

Michael Launius, a native of Nashville, has joined the staff of Claud Road Church of Pine Bluff as minister of youth. He is a freshman at Ouachita Baptist University and was licensed to preach by Ridgeway Church in Nashville.

Greg Dills is serving as interim pastor of First Church in Lepanto where he has been serving as minister of music and youth for the past three years. He is a student at Mid-America Seminary. Dills and his wife, Jodie, have two sons, Timothy and Caleb.

Morris Ratley has announced his retirement as minister of music and senior adults for First Church in Heber Springs



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By MILLIE GILL

following 12 years of service, effective Jan. 15. While in Heber Springs, he has established a full graded choir program. Ratley, a native of Montgomery, Ala., has been in the music ministry for 40 years with 17 years of those years spent at Central Church in Magnolia. In addition, he has served in Kentucky and Alabama.

Sara Ratley has announced her retirement as organist for First Church in Heber Springs, effective Jan. 15 to join her husband in retirement. While in Heber Springs she also has been a member of the adult choir, as well as assisting with other choirs. The Rattles, who are parents of four adult children, will reside in Heber Springs. They will be presented with gifts at a churchwide luncheon Jan. 15 and the evening worship will be a special musical tribute for them.

Jim Agee has joined the staff of First Church in Nashville as associate pastor with ministry to youth, children and college-age students. He previously served as youth minister at Life Line Church in Little Rock and First Church in West Memphis. Agee and his wife, Robin, have two children, Kyle and Sarah.

Dave McKinney joined the staff of Wynne Church Dec. 11 as minister of education, coming there from the staff of Nettleton Church in Jonesboro. He is a graduate of Arkansas State University and Mid-America Seminary. McKinney and his wife, Carla, have three children, Paul, Amy and Melody.

Mason Bondurant recently completed a year's service as interim pastor of First Church in Gravel Ridge. He currently is residing at 9826 Peters Road in Cabot; phone 988-5476.

Barry Grantham has resigned as minister of youth at First Church in Hot Springs. He and his wife, LeVada, are moving to Cleveland, Miss., where he will join the staff of First Baptist Church.

Roy Brooks has accepted the call to serve as pastor of Lake Ouachita Church. He has been pastor of Vandervoort Church. He and his wife, Myra, have three children, Roy Jr., Deana and Eliza.

Todd Jones has joined the staff of First Church in Stamps as youth and music director. He is a student at Ouachita Baptist University.

Church news

Brownsville Church licensed Darrell Ezell to the ministry Nov. 9. Ezell, a member of Brownsville Church, is a student at Concord High School.

Central Church of Marked Tree ordained Marshall Ghant and Charles Corpior to the deacon ministry Nov. 27.

Pearcy Church held revival services Dec. 4-7 led by William Blackburn and Clarence Hill. Pastor LeRoy Wagner reported the revival to be the best in the church's history with 24 professions of faith and 12 other decisions.

Obituaries

Pam Kirksey of Benton, age 39, died Dec. 20 as the result of cancer which had been diagnosed in April 1993. She was the wife of Greg Kirksey, pastor of First Church in Benton and immediate past president of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* board of directors. A native of Gurdon, Mrs. Kirksey was a homemaker, a member of First Church in Benton and a former writer for *Woman's Viewpoint*, a monthly column in the ABN. In addition to her husband, she is survived by a daughter, Angela Kirksey of Benton; her father, E.T. Pruitt of Gurdon; a brother, Joe Pruitt of Sherwood; and a sister, Hilda Wingfield of Arkadelphia. Memorials may be made to First Church of Benton where her funeral service was held Dec. 22.

Mary Jo (Keeling) Egl of Albuquerque, N.M., died Nov. 26. She was a former resident of Malvern where her father, the late L.M. Keeling, served as pastor of First Church.

Shirley Joplin Shreve of Hatfield died recently after an extended illness. She was the wife of Arkansas evangelist Herb Shreve and a 1955 graduate of Ouachita Baptist College. Other survivors are two sons, evangelist Herbie Shreve of Hatfield and Kelly Shreve of Mena.

Roy Melton of Brockwell, formerly of Mountain Home, died Dec. 15 at age 78. He was an ordained Southern Baptist minister, having served churches in Flippin, Cotter, Peel, Norfolk, Big Flat and Tipton Rock. He also served as director of missions for White River Association and was interim pastor of Sage Church. Survivors include two brothers, Marvin Melton of Brockwell and Leonard Melton of Calico Rock.

HMB trustees approve study report

Russell Begaye elected as director of language church extension

By Martin King

SBC Home Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—Directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board approved a six-month study of its relationships with state Baptist conventions and elected Russell Begaye to direct the board's large ethnic missions program.

Meeting Dec. 14, board members also appointed 26 home missionaries, approved a 1995 budget of \$86.7 million, 6 percent less than 1994, and defeated a request to prohibit HMB staff from submitting recommendations for the agency's board of directors.

The report of the board's special state study committee was overwhelmingly approved. The study offers 14 recommendations, including acknowledgement that "state conventions and fellowships are full partners in home missions work" and a pledge to "build relationships that foster mutual trust." It also "strongly encourages those using alternate channels for funding home missions to renew their support through the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering."

The committee was requested in June to study how the board should cooperate with state conventions that send designated funds to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship or other non-SBC entities.

Board chairman Bob Curtis, a pastor from Ballwin, Mo., said there was a tremendous misconception about the intent of the committee. "We want to strengthen relationships and will not be a party to any body or any entity or any individual or philosophy that attempts to tear down the Cooperative Program support system," he explained.

Board member Greg Martin, a pastor from Long Beach, Miss., who requested the report, said he was satisfied with the report.

During brief discussion of the report, Roger Gorby, a board member from Virginia, asked whether a recently formed group of conservative Southern Baptists in Virginia "can sign a cooperative agreement with the Home Mission Board and thereby have the right as any state convention to receive funds helping us start conservative Baptist churches in Virginia."

Lewis said the board works with any church whose messengers are seated by the national convention, but hesitates to initiate a relationship that creates or is perceived to create division. "We will wait until a group is well established. At

that time, we would consider missions support," Lewis said.

Native American Russell Begaye was chosen as director of language church extension, one of the largest Home Mission Board programs. A native of Shiprock, N.M., Begaye began his home missions career as a summer missionary in 1973. Since 1980 he has served as a national consultant and assistant director of the language church extension division.

Begaye graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles where he later served as a teacher and research assistant. He earned his master's degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and was pastor of Fort Worth Indian Mission, Fort Worth, Texas, for three years.

He succeeds ethnic missions pioneer Oscar Romo who will retire at the end of the year with 46 years home missions service.

"State conventions and fellowships are full partners in home missions work."

— HMB special study committee report

Directors also elected Jean White as associate director of church and community ministries. She has been church and community director for Catawba River Baptist Association in North Carolina since 1989. She also has served as a medical missionary in Yemen, a nurse practitioner and youth director.

In other business, board members defeated a request from director Wyndham Cook of Magnolia, Ark., seeking to prohibit the HMB "president and staff from participating in suggestion of specific individuals for service on the HMB board of directors." Cook said such involvement could lead to a division of trustee allegiance between the staff who nominated them and their SBC constituency and thus violate SBC bylaw 16 (5). That provision states that persons nominated as SBC agency trustees "shall represent the constituency of the convention rather than the staff of the entity."

Lewis acknowledged that he submitted suggestions to the 1994 SBC Committee on Nominations upon the request of its chairman, William Bell of Dallas. "I appreciated the opportunity for input and

responded with a list of persons supportive of home missions and who I felt would serve the agency well," Lewis said.

None of Lewis' suggestions were included in the committee's nominations, a fact he said shows the process is functioning as intended. Cook told Baptist Press that several persons nominated by other agency heads, however, were nominated by the committee and elected by the SBC.

The motion failed 15 to 41. Cook said he would consider pursuing the issue with the SBC Executive Committee.

The board voted to send a copy of the "Report of the Presidential Theological Study Committee" to missionary and HMB staff candidates. The document will be "an interpretive guide for a clearer understanding of Article I of 'The Baptist Faith and Message,'" according to the board's action.

The report was approved by messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting last June and commended to SBC agencies. The HMB is the only SBC agency to date to take action on it.

The document will help the board's personnel committee deal with questions concerning statements of beliefs from missionary candidates or potential staff members, said Stephen Swofford, pastor of First Baptist Church, Rockwall, Texas, and a member of the HMB personnel committee. Lewis said the report is not to be used as a substitute for Baptist beliefs outlined in The Baptist Faith and Message or as an additional statement of faith. Rather it is intended to provide a clearer understanding of The Baptist Faith and Message, he said.

Along with Romo, nine other retiring staff members with 223 total years of home mission service were recognized at the board meeting. The retirees are: Everett Anthony, director of the office of metropolitan missions, 16 years; J.C. Bradley, director of the office of associational administration, 19 years; Bill Donovan, director of institutional and business industrial chaplaincy, eight years; Beverly Hammack, director of missions ministries, 34 years; Harold Hime, associate director of church and community ministries, 11 years; Ken Neibel, associate director of new church extension, 31 years; Betty Patrick, accounts payable clerk, nine years; Nathan Porter, assistant director of church and community ministries, 27 years; and Harold Wilcox, director of church and community ministries, 22 years.

FMB adopts vision statement, sets appointment record

By Robert O'Brien
SBC Foreign Mission Board

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board got a head start on celebrating its 150th anniversary by restating its missions vision and surpassing 500 annual missionary additions for the first time in its history.

Trustees of the board, which turns 150 in 1995, adopted vision and mission statements recommended by FMB president Jerry Rankin and appointed 44 missionaries at its Dec. 12-14 meeting in Richmond, Va.

The appointments pushed the total of new missionaries named in 1994 to 534, breaking 1993's record of 498. The board's overall missionary total now stands at 4,078.

The vision and mission statements — which include input from missionaries, trustees, staff and others — focus on harmonizing board strategies with what God is doing in the world, Rankin said. They will be followed later by a set of basic principles still being developed.

The vision statement declares: "We will lead Southern Baptists to be on mission with God to bring all the peoples of the world to saving faith in Jesus Christ."

The mission statement reads: "The mission of the Foreign Mission Board, SBC, is to lead Southern Baptists in international missions efforts to evangelize the lost, disciple believers, develop churches and

minister to people in need. Leading Southern Baptists is done by mobilizing prayer support, appointing missionaries, enlisting volunteers, channeling financial support and communicating how God is working overseas."

In other action, trustees:
 ■ Voted to participate with other Southern Baptist agencies in YouthLink 2000, a major turn-of-the-century conference scheduled for December 1999 aimed at reaching youth for Christ and motivating them to serve God through Southern Baptists in the 21st century. Participation requires a cash outlay by the mission board of about \$1.15 million on a cost-recovery basis.

■ Joined the Home Mission Board in rejecting a motion, referred from the June 1994 Southern Baptist Convention meeting, that the two agencies conduct a three-year pilot project reversing the seasons when they receive their major mission offerings. Both mission boards said the request "would not be in the best interest of either offering."

■ Honored 10 retiring staff members

with 275 years of combined service.

Rankin cited the 10 retiring staff members in his report to trustees, noting their outstanding contributions over the years.

They are Clark Scanlon, 66, assistant senior vice president for overseas, with 41 years on the mission field and FMB staff; Don Lstrom, 64, director of the missionary benefits and tax department, 40 years on staff; Alan Compton, 65, vice president for communications, 34 years on the field and staff; Leland Webb, 62, editor of *The Commission* magazine, 30 years on staff.

Also, Truman Smith, 65, senior family consultant, 30 years on staff; Bob Stanley, 65, director of the news and information office, 28 years on the field and staff; Trudy English, 66, associate area director for Middle America and Canada, 27 years on staff; Judy Robertson, 55, associate area director for East Asia, 20 years on the field and staff; Sue Hertzler, 55, computer analyst, 13 years on staff; and Bob Etridge, 55, assistant vice president for strategy and marketing in the office of communications, 11 years on staff.



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Leavell to retire Dec. 31 from New Orleans Seminary

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Landrum P. Leavell II, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary since January 1975, announced his retirement to the seminary's trustee executive committee Dec. 13.

He said he will retire Dec. 31, but subsequently agreed to the committee's request to remain as Interim president until a successor is chosen.

Although the timing of Leavell's retirement was a surprise both to trustees and administrators, Leavell told trustees, "You have known for three years of my intention to retire before age 70. You sent

a committee to ask me to stay till age 70, and then go on a year-by-year basis. I was deeply gratified by this encouragement, but I am presently convinced that I am making the right decision today. This retirement will be effective Dec. 31, 1994."

Leavell told the trustee committee he would be available "to continue as needed until you name a new president" and to assist in a time of transition.

He said he and his wife, Jo Ann, plan to move to Wichita Falls, Texas, in retirement "and enter the doors of ministry God opens."

Enrollment at New Orleans Seminary has increased more than 500 percent during Leavell's presidency. The seminary has expanded to include 12 extension centers across the Southeast, as well as an on-campus baccalaureate degree program with more than 500 students. In 1991 he established on the main campus Southern Baptists' first Center for Evangelism and Church Growth.

"I do not leave feeling the best days are past. It is my judgment that the future is as bright as sunlight, and that God has an ongoing purpose for NOBTS," Leavell said.

Classifieds

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Serving Those Who Serve the Lord

Convention Uniform

Gnats and camels

By Ed Saucier, pastor,
Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith
Basic passage: Matthew 12:2
Focal passage: Matthew 12:2, 10
Central truth: It's easy to lose track of what's important when we're so hung up on what's not.

It was old, gaudy and ugly. One of those donated things from someone's mother, I think. It was a repulsive plastic flower arrangement that had center stage in my first church.

I had no idea how truly essential the thing was to the ongoing of the kingdom's work until that fateful morning when "she" showed up and "it" didn't! You should have seen the way that lady looked at me. On second thought, it's better that you didn't. I still have nightmares.

Oh, the folly of youthful pastors. You would have thought I had flooded the church! No, it was worse than that because I did flood the church one time and it didn't cause anywhere close to the commotion as the flower thing. All because of a plastic plant in a rusty pot that somehow found its way to the closet.

Isn't it bizarre how strong our attraction to certain religious "things" can become? For instance, we churchgoers can get so hung up on a brand of music, the order of service or style of preaching that worship suffers if anything changes.

We equate the way "we" do things with the way "God" would do them. Therefore any change in the way we do things is perceived as a challenge to God Himself. That's dangerous. It may be idolatry.

Jesus accused the religious crowd of His day of having more concern for their own traditions than for God's truth (v. 15:39). A stinging accusation — but right on target. These are the same people who were out hiding in the grain fields spying on Jesus and His disciples and who came to church only to see if they could catch Jesus doing something wrong (vv. 12:2, 10).

Jesus had a lot to say about things like gnats and camels, motes and beams, truth and tradition. Why? Because we're good at making mountains out of mole hills. And there's not a mole hill anywhere in the world that deserves to be thought of as a mountain. It's easy to lose track of what's important when we're so hung up on what's not. Do you suppose His accusation is still valid? Just asking.

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Life and Work

God's Son has authority

By Kenneth W. Overton, pastor,
First Church, Hopedale
Basic passage: Mark 1:14-2:12
Focal passage: Mark 1:21-27, 2:1-12
Central truth: The actions of Jesus gave credence to His teaching.

It was in the synagogue at Capernaum, home of Simon and Andrew, that Jesus began His ministry. This city also became the center for His Galilean ministry.

Jesus often took advantage of the privilege offered to visitors to speak after the reading of the Scripture. His teaching was amazing to the people. He was not like the scribes and teachers of the Jewish laws. Jesus was open and plain, basing His teaching on nothing more than Himself.

Teaching the truth by Jesus was demonstrated in power by the healing of the man. The combination of teaching and miracle showed that Jesus indeed was authority. What He said came true in His actions.

The man had times of normalcy and times of uncontrolled behavior. He probably would not have been allowed in the synagogue if he could not stay under control. During the teaching, the man came under the control of an alien spirit, evil and unclean in nature. Though this concept is difficult for most people to grasp, we cannot just dismiss it as a primitive explanation for an unknown problem. Evil spirits are a reality and under Satan's control.

The evil spirit questioned Jesus. He tried to force Jesus to be on the defensive and justify His action. But Jesus would not play the game. He did not have to justify what is right. Jesus had come to destroy everything that keeps men from being what God intended. Jesus' victory came by a simple command. The evil spirit was silenced and removed against his will.

We do not have the very words of Jesus in Capernaum but we still know what He taught. It was not that Jesus could cast out demons. Rather, by word and deed, Jesus showed that the rule of God is manifested in Himself. The intent of this moment was not to prove that Jesus was divine but that God was breaking down the rule of Satan and establishing the reign of God.

Just as Jesus did not have to justify His actions, neither does the Christian in service of God. Each Christian has the power through faith to do what Jesus had done. How would man explain this miracle today? Christian, do not try to explain it outside the faith you have in Jesus.

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Bible Book

Divine compassion

By Stan Parris, pastor,
First Church, Hope
Basic Passage: Lamentations 1:1-5:22

Focal Passage: Lamentations 3:18-25
Central truth: The effects of disobedience are great, but the lovingkindness of the Lord is abundantly greater.

Lamentations is a collection of five poems describing the desolation of Jerusalem and the deep personal and national anguish of the Jewish people. Its structure made it easy to memorize. Apparently, Jeremiah wanted them to always remember the great loss they experienced as a consequence of their sins and the hope they could claim as they remembered the lovingkindness of the Lord.

Chapter 1 provides an accurate description of the ultimate pain, loneliness, bitterness and distress of a rebellious lifestyle. If it is Jeremiah speaking (vv. 1:1-11) or Jerusalem speaking for herself (v. 1:12-22), the message is clear: Sin must be taken seriously. There are consequences of pleasing ourselves rather than God.

Chapter 2 demonstrates six results of a sinful lifestyle that apply to any individual or nation that disobeys God. Loss of power, position and prominence (vv. 2:1-2), God is set against them (vv. 2:3-4), multiplied mourning and moaning (v. 2:5), loss of meaningful worship (v. 2:6-8), loss of vision and purpose (vv. 2:9-10) and absence of comfort (v. 2:11-16). If we ignore God's warnings, we will receive the discipline we deserve and need.

Chapter 3 communicates the theme of Lamentations: The consequences of disobedience are awful, but the lovingkindness of the Lord is awesome. How wonderful to be reminded that His love never ceases. His compassion never fails and His faithfulness never diminishes (vv. 3:22-23).

Chapter 4 is a reminder that sin will ultimately be exposed regardless of how safe and secure we may feel (vv. 4:12, 22).

Chapter 5 records the prayer of Judah's survivors. Their confession in verse 5:7 and verses 5:16-17 indicates that they stopped rationalizing and took full responsibility for their disobedience. In verses 5:21-22 they humbly ask God to forgive their rebellion, restore them to Himself and renew their former glory. God's desire is to restore His people, not reject them. That's divine compassion.

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Editor's note: The sanctity of human life is the focus for all three Bible studies on Jan. 15. The basic passages for the studies are: Genesis 1:28a; Exodus 1:15-2:10; Deuteronomy 18:10a; Psalm 139:13-15; Matthew 18:10,14; 19:14-15. The focal passage is: Psalm 139:13-15.

Convention Uniform

By Ed Saucier, pastor,
Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith
Central truth: With little or no respect for ourselves, others or God, no wonder killing babies is okay.

Theologians disagree about it. Physicians disagree about it. Politicians disagree about it. Business people disagree about it. Housewives disagree about it. Teenagers disagree about it. It's as emotionally charged as any issue we've ever faced. Abortion; right or wrong? Personal choice or legalized murder? A woman's life prerogative or a baby's death penalty? Population control or lucrative enterprise?

I have my opinion and I imagine you do as well. To me abortion is an absolute injustice against the innocent. I think it's wrong and should be illegal. But I'm not surprised when I hear that so many disagree with me. Let me tell you why.

It's clear to me that God is the giver of life. From the womb to the tomb, life is God's affair, not ours. And He's serious about it. It's equally apparent to me that mankind in the 20th century has little, if any, respect for human life, not even his/her own and could care less where it came from.

I know it's an old argument, but I think it's a valid one; we've become de-sensitized over the years regarding the sacredness, or the specialness, of human life. The evolutionists have actually convinced a lot of us that we're no different from any other living animal—just smarter. If there's nothing inherently unique about being a human, then why sweat the details? Live and let live and who gives a rip!

We're a sick society. We've thrown out all those antiquated prohibitions that made past generations so stiff and repressed.

We want love without commitment, freedom without responsibility and sex without marriage. So, men are having sex with men, women are having sex with women, husbands are having sex with other men's wives, wives are having sex with other women's husbands, adults are having sex with kids, fathers are having sex with their own children and babies are having babies.

But not to worry. All it takes is a phone call, a little ready cash, and the babies are no longer a problem. It's what we call freedom these days.

Life and Work

By Kenneth W. Overton, pastor,
First Church, Marked Tree
Central truth: All human life is precious.

It seems that everybody, especially children, likes baby animals. Many stuffed toys are of baby lions, teddy bears, monkeys and tigers. We feel the same, even more so, toward a newborn child.

Christian parents recognize quickly the power of God in the creation of their bundle of joy. And the wonder is deeper than the physical. God created the intricacies of this person. What was hidden from the eyes of the parents in the mother's womb was the working of God in the innermost recesses of a new child. He not only united a bodily frame but created its inward parts, mind, soul, affections, passions. God was near.

The psalmist (Psa. 139:14) said that he would not just admire God's creation. He will acknowledge the greatness, the magnitude and marvelous ways of God. Each child is a unique and distinguished creation. Each is made to be excited about the wonder and works of God; to understand that he is a marvel of God's creation.

Everything that constituted the form and function of man was under the watchful eye of God. The meaning of "woven together" (Psa. 139:15) is the fitting of all the parts, including the physical, into the very person God wanted.

With all that we have from the Scriptures, how can we allow the destruction of people without regard or conscience?

We not only attack the adult, the teenager and the child, but the unborn. Why is it that we are more concerned with man destroying nature than the attack on the unborn? It is because we have reversed God's perfect plan for His creation.

We have allowed the sacred to be desecrated. We have let the creation of a child be seen as no more important than a beast. We have corrupted our trust in God with a trust in intelligent men.

That newborn child did not become precious only after its birth. That newborn child does not lose its preciousness when it becomes a man. All humans are precious to God from the moment of conception and they should be precious to us. The sanctity of human life did not begin with men appointing a special Sunday and week. It began with the creation by God.

Bible Book

By Stan Parris, pastor,
First Church, Hope
Central truth: To destroy life at any phase beyond conception is to kill what God made in His own image.

Human life is sacred because it is special to God. The Bible clearly distinguishes between human life and the rest of God's creative work. Genesis 1:26-28a makes it clear that man is created "in the image of God." That statement is limited to human life and it never appears relating to any other form of life.

Human life is sacred because it is "formed" by the personal, creative work of God (Gen. 2:7). This word is used of a potter molding the clay with a special skill and a touch for each individual creation." God is active in the conception of life. It is God's sovereignty that causes life to be conceived (Gen. 29:31-35; 30:17-24).

God is also active in the formation and development of the human life in the mother's womb. Jeremiah 1 states that God "formed" the prophet in the womb and also set him apart for his ministry before his birth. David wrote of God's relationship with him while he was growing and developing before his birth (Ps. 139:13-15). In that passage he refers to himself 10 times in his unborn condition with the personal pronouns "me" and "I." David declares in verse 16 that while he was in the womb hidden from the eyes of men, he was never hidden from God.

Human life is special because man is both physical and spiritual. He, alone, among God's creation, has the capacity to walk with God, talk with God, fellowship with God and worship God.

Abortion on demand is one of the greatest moral issues facing America today. Most Christians, it seems, would like to adopt a passive stance because it is more comfortable and less offensive in our society. In light of Scripture, it is that stance that could be just as offensive to God as the taking of unborn life. Every life, born or unborn, is a unique and important work of God that is to be protected and preserved. May God forgive us for our silence.

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NEWS DIGEST

CLC leaders give input on school prayer amendment

NASHVILLE, TN (BP/ABP)—The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission is lending a hand to incoming Speaker Newt Gingrich's announced plans for the House of Representatives to vote on a proposed voluntary school prayer amendment to the U.S. Constitution by July 4, 1995.

Three CLC leaders, executive director Richard Land; James Smith, government relations director; and Michael Whitehead, general counsel, met Dec. 7 with Rep. Ernest Istook, R-Okla., who has been designated by Gingrich to draft the proposal.

According to Land, "Such an amendment would prohibit the government from sponsoring religion as was done prior to 1963, but would also forbid the government and the court system from censoring or segregating voluntary student religious expression from the public school milieu."

Land's concern is that an amendment ensure that prayers are always initiated by students, not adults. As he envisions it, students could vote on who should give prayers, when and where.

Brotherhood partners with Dad the Family Shepherd

MEMPHIS, TN (BP)—Seeking to provide Christian men with positive spiritual role models and training, the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission has announced a new partnership with Dad the Family Shepherd ministry of Little Rock.

"I believe that missions begins at home. Dad the Family Shepherd targets one of America's critical needs — positive male spiritual leadership in the home," said James D. Williams, Brotherhood Commission president.

"We are excited about partnering with the Brotherhood Commission," said Norm Hoggard, Dad the Family Shepherd president. "We have ministered for years in Baptist churches and want to continue to be a servant to them, training their men to be champions in the home and in their church."

Virginia conservatives may organize new convention

RICHMOND, VA (ABP)—Virginia Baptist conservatives are weighing the possibility of starting a new state convention as an alternative to the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

The executive committee of Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, formed in 1993, has asked the group's president to appoint a committee "to study the procedures and requirements for the establishment of the (SBCV) as a separate state convention...."

If the panel's recommendations — to be reported to the SBCV executive committee no later than May 1995 — culminate in a new association of churches, it will be the first formal state schism in Southern Baptists' prolonged theological fight. It would also raise new questions about how state conventions relate to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Until a decision is made, the SBCV executive committee has "invited" churches to channel funds for the SBC Cooperative Program through SBCV, bypassing the traditional route through the BGAV.

Southwestern professor Jesse Northcutt dies at age 80

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—Jesse Northcutt, preaching professor and former administrator at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, died Dec. 13 due to complications from Parkinson's disease.

Northcutt was a member of Southwestern's faculty from 1939 until his retirement in 1984. He served as the seminary's vice president for academic affairs from 1973-79 after 20 years as dean of the school of theology.

Northcutt was considered a leading authority in the Southern Baptist Convention on preaching and pastoral ministry. By some estimates, he trained more Baptist preachers than anyone else.

RTVC promotion features interactive CD ROM

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—The Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission plans to take a place on the information superhighway in the spring of 1995. It is producing an interactive CD ROM about its work and mission.

Project leader Glenn McEowen, RTVC vice president of engineering, said the CD will be both a teaching and learning tool for those interested in the commission.

"There are many facets to the work of the Radio and Television Commission, many of which aren't as visible as others," McEowen said. "The value of this CD ROM technology is that a person can use his or her computer to learn about all or a portion of the work being done by the commission."