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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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June 5, 1986

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Arkansas' sesquicentennial:
celebrating a unique heritage
pages 8-9

June 5, 1986

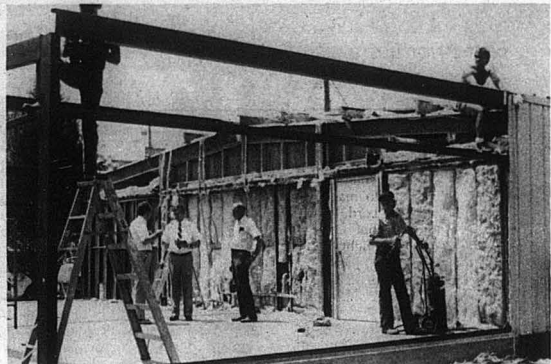
Arkansas Baptist
Newsmagazine

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



ABN photo / Millie Gill

This year Arkansas is celebrating 150 years of statehood. Among the many ways Arkansans are observing the birthday was a quilting contest hosted by the Arkansas Territorial Restoration in Little Rock. One of the entries was this hand-rendered Sesquicentennial logo created by May Parnell, a member of the Mountain Home Church (see related photos, pp. 8-9).



Furnishings, funds needed—An efficiency apartment recently built at the Migrant Mission Center at Hope is in urgent need of bedroom, living room and kitchenette furnishings. Furnishings or funds are needed immediately to prepare for two student summer missionaries who will live in the apartment this summer. Contact Bob Cross, missions center director, at 777-8219.

In this issue

5 historic moment

Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge awarded its first-ever bachelors degrees in spring commencement exercises May 16. Twenty-two seniors comprised the historic first senior class.

12 CP outstripping inflation

Southern Baptists' year-to-date increases in contributions to the Cooperative Program have stretched to three times the U.S. inflation rate, according to SBC Executive Committee President Harold C. Bennett.

Missouri exec diagnosed with leukemia

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)—Missouri Baptist Convention Executive Director Rheubin L. South has been diagnosed as suffering from leukemia. He is being treated at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis.

South has experienced health problems since November of last year. Doctors initially diagnosed the illness as anemia. In March, South was forced to cancel his travel schedule and cut back office responsibilities.

On May 12, South was admitted to Barnes Hospital suffering from pneumonia. Additional tests confirmed his blood condition had degenerated into leukemia.

South is undergoing chemotherapy treat-

ment and is expected to remain hospitalized through June, said Missouri Baptist Convention President Wally Jones, pastor of Fee Church in St. Louis.

Doctors offered encouragement about potential success of the treatments when they met with family members May 18, Jones said.

Jones said cards and personal notes reporting times of special prayer would be an encouragement to South and more appropriate than phone calls, flowers or visits.

South (a former pastor of Park Hill Church, North Little Rock) is in Room 6514, Barnes Hospital, St. Louis, Mo. 63110.

ACTS recognizes affiliates, two in Arkansas

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—The American Christian Television System prepared to launch its third year of full operation by recognizing outstanding achievements of its affiliates—including two in Arkansas—during 1985, its first year of local-program broadcasting.

The first annual ACTS Awards Ceremony recognized 22 recipients selected from more than 200 ACTS network affiliates.

"The awards honored outstanding achievements by local ACTS affiliates for superior local programming, promotion of the ACTS network and stations, affiliate management and community service," said Jimmy R. Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Radio-Television Commission and its subsidiary ACTS.

"One of the keys to the effectiveness of

the ACTS network is locally originated programs," Allen said. A key to ACTS' effectiveness is "the fact that small churches as well as large ones can find ways to use television as a tool of ministry," he noted.

ACTS of Jackson, Miss., received the Cable Affiliate of the Year Award, and UHF Channel 20, Anchorage, Alaska, received the Broadcast Affiliate of the Year Award. The Alaskan station produced more than 300 locally originated programs during 1985.

Mark Grover of the Fort Smith, Ark., local ACTS board received the Best Promotional Spot Award and the Best Christian Message Spot. Immanuel Church of Pine Bluff, Ark., received Best Human Interest Program.

ACTS is now available to 4 million households via 225 cable systems and nine broadcast affiliates and 225 cable systems.

First priorities first!

The editor's page

J. Everett Sneed



Statistics are inadequate in providing a true picture of the spiritual well-being of a church. Yet, there is something desperately wrong when a church goes an entire year without reaching a single person for Christ. It is difficult to imagine even a pastorless church not winning someone to the Lord. It is even harder to picture a pastor serving 12 months without bringing some person to Christ. But this is what is happening right here in Arkansas, as well as across the Southern Baptist Convention.

Statistics furnished by Clarence Shell in the Evangelism Department indicate there were 215 churches in Arkansas that didn't baptize a single person in 1985. In 1984 there were 192 Arkansas congregations which did not stir the baptismal waters. The same tragic phenomenon exists across the Southern Baptist Convention.

It is obvious that the opportunity for reaching the lost varies from situation to situation, but every church has lost people in the area it serves. So how can a pastor labor and pray for 12 months without reaching a single soul? How can a Sunday School officer or teacher go an entire year without winning anyone? Or, the president of the WMU or Brotherhood? Or, how could a dedicated Christian, who believes the Bible when it says people are lost without Christ, not influence someone to receive Christ as Saviour?

Too often our churches only attempt to reach people for the Master during one or two revivals a year. If a congregation is to be successful it must have a perennial approach to evangelism. Revivals are important because they focus attention upon the need for Christians to stay close to the Lord. They, also, provide opportunity to contact the lost with the gospel.

A personal evangelism program should include a prospect list, revival preparation, revivals, a Sunday School outreach program, a Vacation Bible School, and opportunities to attend a Bible youth camp. If all of these opportunities are followed, a church will reach the lost for Christ.

Perhaps the most important statistic in any church is the prospect list. Unless a church knows who the lost are, little will happen. There are various ways to obtain a list of lost or unchurched but, perhaps, the best is still the door-to-door census.

Preparation for revival is essential if the lost and unchurched are to be saved. During the "Good News: God Loves You" simultaneous revival, we had opportunity to be in a church where excellent preparation had been made through prayer and prospect cultivation. The visits Pastor John Davey and I made produced results. The small Midway Church at Judsonia had 18 additions;

nine of these were by baptism.

Many churches in our state are having dramatic results through the use of the Continuing Witness Training program. In this program in-depth training is given to every individual who participates. Each individual is taught not only to present the plan of salvation but how to respond to the various excuses which individuals under conviction use to sidetrack an individual presenting the plan of salvation.

Another program which has yielded great success in many of our churches is the Lay Evangelism School material. This approach utilizes two instruments to present the plan of salvation. The first is a small booklet which contains salvation scriptures. Anyone that can read can use the "How to Have a Full and Meaningful Life," booklet. The second ingredient is the Christian's personal testimony. The 90 second testimony is designed to tell about an individual's life before he received Christ, how he realized his need for Christ, how he became a Christian and finally, how Christ helps him in his daily life. It is possible for unbelievers to argue about the interpretation of scripture but no one can argue about what the Lord has done in an individual's own life.

Certainly, the pastor and staff should not be expected to do all the witnessing to the lost. Everyone is equally responsible for confronting the lost with the message of salvation. But the pastor can normally have more impact on the church's attitude and activities than anyone else. If the pastor's heart is full of compassion for the lost, he will be able to influence others to become involved in personal witnessing.

The best way to unify a church is to get its members interested in reaching the lost. When a congregation is actively praying and seeking those who are outside of Christ, other peripheral matters will become unimportant.

Regardless of whether you are a member of a church that is actively seeking the lost, you have a responsibility to tell others about Christ. When God examines each of us he will hold us responsible only for our own opportunities. Others may have had more opportunity but each of us is responsible for our own place of service and influence. The Scripture says, "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Cor. 4:2). Let us put our first priorities first!

Information on revival preparation manuals, continuing witnessing programs and the Lay Evangelism School are available. Correspondence should be addressed to Clarence Shell, State Evangelism Department, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203.

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Arkansas' third largest publication,
meeting the information needs of Arkansas Baptists

VOLUME 85 NUMBER 22

J. Everett Sneed, Ph.D. Editor

Mark Kelly Managing Editor

Erwin L. McDonald, Litt D. Editor Emeritus

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Letters to the editor expressing opinions are invited. Letters should be typed double-spaced and must be signed. Letters must not contain more than 350 words and must not defame the character of persons. They must be marked "for publication."

Photos submitted for publication will be returned only when accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Only black and white photos can be used.

Copies by mail 50 cents each.

Deaths of members of Arkansas churches will be reported in brief form when information is received not later than 14 days after the date of death.

Advertising accepted in writing only. Rates on request.

Opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the writer.

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Would mean disaster

In announcing his availability for the presidency of our convention, Winfred Moore gave one of the most compelling reasons why I believe he should not be elected. His exact words were: "For a long time now, I have been deeply disturbed by the direction of our convention. At the present we are headed in the direction of making doctrinal agreement a prerequisite for cooperative missions and evangelism."

Observations upon this statement will, I believe, support my concern. We are not heading in the direction he describes. We have always been there if our own pronouncements mean anything. If movement in that direction now occurs, it means we are moving back to a position from which we have strayed.

Prior to 1925 when our convention adopted a doctrinal agreement called the "Baptist Faith and Message," hundreds of our churches had already committed themselves either to the New Hampshire or Philadelphia Confessions, similar documents, both of which were doctrinal statements. In 1963 our convention adopted a revision of the 1925 statement, and it too is a statement of the doctrinal propositions of our faith.

Note the following: "Thus this generation of Southern Baptists is in historic succession of intent and purpose as it endeavors to state for its time and theological climate those

articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us" (Preamble, emphasis mine).

Our constitution also has an article which establish the qualifications of those who serve as our missionaries. It is Article IX and reads as follows: "All missionaries appointed by the Convention's boards must, previous to their appointment, furnish evidence of piety, zeal for the Master's kingdom, conviction of truth as held by Baptists, and talents for missionary service" (emphasis mine).

If Dr. Moore is interested in impeding our movement back to our original intention of doing missions and evangelism together around and upon these doctrinal statements, then, I believe his election would mean disaster, no matter how sincere and well-meaning he may be. — Eldridge Miller, Sallisaw, Okla.

Prayer, not politics

It is time to declare an end to unholy war and have peace under God.

Harsh words, name calling and nasty labels have been flung back and forth like poisoned arrows in Baptist circles lately. Southern Baptists must reject those who continue in this train. Listen neither to the candidate nor his followers who invoke hatred or mistrust.

Billy Graham told religious leaders from all over the world in a Peace Conference in

Moscow: "I would urge the leaders of nations, especially the major powers, to declare a moratorium on hostile rhetoric. Peace does not grow in a climate of mistrust."

Southern Baptists must elect a president at the convention in Atlanta who not only believes the Bible but also lives according to sacred Scripture: "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14).

There is theological diversity among Southern Baptists. Our Southern Baptist Peace Committee has verified that, without charging heresy against anyone. Sure, like you and me, they have found some too far to the left or right with whom we would like to debate the meaning of God's revelation in the Bible. That is an ancient and honorable Baptist process. Let us drop the name calling and get back to it.

For the glory of God and the renewal of progress in Bold Missions, each of us must pray for God to lead Southern Baptists to choose in Atlanta a new president who can lead us beyond this unholy war. That he must be a theological conservative or fundamentalist is inevitable; no previous president has ever been anything else.

Forget the political parties. Where is God's man for now? Once before, he led his people to David. Prayer — not politics — will find him again in 1986. — Duke K. McCall, Jupiter, Fla.



One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant

It's not enough to have the answer

One of my favorite philosophers is Charlie Brown in the "Peanuts" comic strip. I have never forgotten one series when the characters were struggling with the ancient question, "What is the answer to life?"

Lucy first asked Linus for the "the answer to life" after warning him, "Don't give me any pussyfooting or wishy-washy answers. I want cold, hard, solid answers!" He replies, "Five" and she knocks him for a loop. She gets only slightly more help from Charlie Brown, whose reply is a group of trite sayings and clichés: "A penny saved is a penny earned, practice make perfect, a stitch in time saves nine," etc. Her pianist friend, Schroeder, further angers her by saying that Beethoven is the "answer to life."

She finally remembers that "poets tell us the answer to life can be found in the stars," but, after a few impatient minutes of peering into the depths of a starry sky, stalks away muttering, "Stupid poets!"

There is both humor and sadness in my

reaction to all futile inquires about the wretched condition of our world. For Christians there should be joy and gratitude in our knowledge that we have the answer, abundant and eternal life in Christ our Savior and Lord. But there should be sorrow and even a sense of shame that we have the answer and the non-Christian world either has not received it or is unconvinced.

It seems to me three caution flags should be raised among us Christians, and especially among us 14 million Southern Baptists:

(1) It's not enough simply to know the answer, or even to have experienced the answer. All the knowledge and experience in the world are useless to the world if they are not shared. We must be about the business of sharing the answer and carrying out the mandate of the Great Commission.

(2) It's not enough simply to be in the business of sharing the answer. We must be effective in the way we share the answer; we must know how to share. We need to be bet-

ter informed about the Bible and the Savior it reveals and about the world and those billions of people in it, with all of their differences based on history, tradition, language, culture, nationality, religion, geography, and race. God will not inform us in some miraculous way if we are lazy, negligent, disinterested, presumptuous people.

(3) It's not even enough to have large numbers of informed and trained people motivated and committed to sharing the answer. We cannot be effective without wise leadership and sound organization.

Modern science and technology have made available to us the most powerful resources for communication in the history of humankind. What a tragedy if we fail to use it effectively in sharing the answer with all those questioning minds and hearts around the world.

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouchita Baptist University.

Southern Baptist College graduates first seniors

ABN photo / Mark Kally

Let's be fair

I want to first of all commend you on staying out of denominational politics in the editor's page. You have truly shown your concern for peace by that action.

However, I do find the selection of stories to be interesting. Throughout this year, we have seen numerous articles detailing the speaking engagements of Winfred Moore. The May 22nd issue again carried such an article. I suppose Charles Stanley has not spoken at any important meetings to have his remarks covered.

Henry Huff should be pleased that he had two articles expressing his views in the May 22 issue. Wouldn't it have been fair journalism to have asked Dr. Stanley's response to Mr. Huff's complaints? As it is printed, the article is one-sided and extremely political.

The article which really makes me wonder about the fairness of the press is the one about Dr. Clark Pinnock. I have no problem with Dr. Pinnock changing his mind on inerrancy. My problem is the source of the article. Michael Tutterow is listed as associate editor of SBC Today. SBC Today is commonly known as a moderate, political propaganda paper. Their motives are known by all, since they have never tried to make them secret.

The *Arkansas Baptist*, to my knowledge, has never printed an article by the *Southern Baptist Advocate* or any other conservative paper such as the *Indiana Baptist*. Why not? Let's be fair. Let the people hear both views, and then they can decide.

I'm not asking for censorship of these articles, just fairness in article selection. — Mark Brooks, Springdale

Student praises seminary

I am graduating this semester from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary with the master of divinity degree, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Dilday and the faculty.

After having attended classes at Southwestern for four years, I am a more biblical minister and Christian. I have a much greater respect for the Bible and the revelation it gives. The professors have taught me to treasure it, deal with it honestly, and to bring my life and ministry into harmony with it.

Dr. Dilday and the faculty have taught me what it is to live like Christ. . . . The Christian example of the faculty has been a source of inspiration and a compelling force to be like Jesus.

I have received a good preparation for ministry both academically and spiritually. God, through Southwestern Seminary, has begun to mold me to serve him.

Thank you, Dr. Dilday. Thank you, professors. Thank you, Southern Baptists. I hope in the years to come my service may be worthy of the great investment you have placed in me. — Scott Langston, Denton, Texas

WALNUT RIDGE—Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge awarded the first baccalaureate degrees in its 45-year history in commencement exercises May 16 in South-erland-Mabee Center.

John Wesley Atchison, pastor of Pine Grove Church, Pocahontas, was the first of 22 students to receive the four-year degree, a bachelor of arts in Christian ministry.

Randy Paul Magar, pastor of the Grubbs Church, graduated magna cum laude, his 3.776 grade point average placing him at the top of the senior class. Six other seniors graduated cum laude, with grade point averages 3.5 or higher.

Also receiving the historic first bachelors degrees were Sherry Darlene Barr of Paragould, Kendall Guy Boyd of Paragould, Kurt Dwayne Caddy of Little Rock, Chad Galon Clayton of St. Louis, Mo., Dwight Earl Cummings of Ocean Springs, Miss.

Patrick Allen Graham of Hope, Bradford Ross Hartness of Williford, Paul Wayne King of Sedgewick, Roger Charles Langlie of Green Forest, Faye Linck and James Stanley Linck of College City.

Jerry Scott Mayfield of Patton, Mo., Leonard Otila McOdongo of Kenya, Africa, Charles Asajile Mwakitwile of Tanzania, Africa, Christopher Arthur Perry of Jonesboro,

Roger Allen Pustelnik of College City, Jesse



John Wesley Atchison of Pocahontas was first in line to receive Southern Baptist College's first bachelors degree from SBC President D. Jack Nicholas.

Carl Rider of Pocahontas, Jackie Lee Thomason of Sims, Ill., William Jason Wiggins of Success, and Melvin Golden York Jr. of Brookland.



Woman's viewpoint

Mary Maynard Sneed

The people called Christians

Luke tells us it was at Antioch, in about the year A.D. 43, that the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). It was meant to describe the disciples as adherents to the cause of Christ. The word has the usual Latin termination denoting "a partisan of." So it evidently was the intention of the people at Antioch to attach to the disciples of a kind of party designation as a nickname.

Though destined to become universal, the name took root so slowly that it is found only twice again in the New Testament. Agrippa II applied the name when Paul preached repentance and remission of sin through Jesus and testified to the resurrection (Acts 26:28). Peter used the name in a letter to comfort the faithful who were being persecuted for Christ's sake (I Pe. 4:16).

The *Davis Bible Dictionary* depicts four well-known Christian symbols. The best known symbol for the Holy Spirit, derived from the Gospel accounts of the baptism of Jesus, is the dove. The oldest monogram for Jesus Christ, which is formed by placing the letters X (chi) and P (rho) together, is the Chi-

Rho. These are the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ. The fish is the first code used by Christians to avoid arrest and persecution. Inside the fish are the first letters of five Greek words which mean "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior. More than 50 forms of the cross, the chief symbol of the church, are found in Christian art.

Today the Christian is best known for the living, caring life-style which has come to be associated with his faith. Like the original Christians who turned the name from one of derision to one of honor, we too can turn the ridicule of a lost world into victory. Like Paul, we win others to Christ as we present the gospel of our resurrected Savior. This is the commission our Lord has given us to demonstrate our Christian concern for a lost and dying world.

Mary Maynard Sneed, the wife of the editor and mother of two daughters, is an active member of the Park Hill Church in North Little Rock.

Arkansas all over

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

people

Clyde Glazener observed his 30th anniversary as a Southern Baptist minister May 25 when a surprise luncheon was given in his honor at Little Rock Calvary Church where he serves as pastor.

Glazener, who was ordained to the ministry at Ponca City, Okla., has served churches in Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas. He has served as an adjunct professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and currently serves as moderator of Pulaski Association and as a member of Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is married to the former Kaye Wheeler. They have five children, Robin, Randy, Rusty, Roger and Rodney.

Ralph W. Allmon is serving as pastor of Northside Church, Horseshoe Bend, moving there from Midway Church, Melbourne where he has served for four years. Allmon spent many years ministering in Northern Illinois where he served on the state executive board. He also has been a member of the Committee on Committees of the Southern Baptist Convention. He is a graduate of Bethel College, McKenzie, Tenn.; Mid-Continent Baptist Bible College, Mayfield, Ky; and Northern Illinois University.

Wallace L. Byrd of Pine Bluff joined the staff of Second Church in Jackson, Ga., May 30 as summer youth worker. He is a member of Pine Bluff Immanuel Church and will be a senior this fall at Louisiana Tech. His parents are Mr. and Mrs. Fred Byrd of Malvern.

Joe Denton of DeQueen is serving as interim pastor of Gillham First Church.

Paul Sanders observed his 19th anniversary May 25 as pastor of Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock.

James Burleson observed his eighth anniversary May 25 as minister of music at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock.

Philip H. Briggs Jr. has accepted a call to serve as minister of music at Paragould First Church, effective June 15. He will move there from San Antonio, Texas. Briggs received a master's degree in choral directing from West Texas State University, Canyon, Texas. His wife, Kathy, has a bachelor's degree in music



Glazener

from William Jewell College. They have a daughter, Tara Michelle.

Cliff Palmer resigned as pastor of Springdale First Church May 18.

Doug Cowling is serving Stamps Church as interim music director.

Mrs. Vernon Polk was recently recognized by Tennessee Church at Texarkana in recognition of 36 years of service as a Sunday School teacher and Woman's Missionary Union leader.

Raymond E. Higgins II was recently awarded an Eddie L. Dwyer Endowed Academic Scholarship for the 1986-87 academic year at Baylor University. He is a graduate of both the University of Arkansas and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Higgins is the son of Raymond B. Higgins and the late Doris Higgins of El Dorado. He is married to the former Judy Goff of Fayetteville.



Allmon

Tim Akins has joined the staff of Fort Smith Trinity Church to assist with the young, children and bus ministries. He attends John Brown University. Akins is married to the former Hope Wimberly of Van Buren.

Steve Mize is serving as pastor of Marshall First Church, going there from four years of service as pastor of Dermott Temple Church.

David Medley is serving as pastor of Sage Church. A native of Iowa Park, Texas, he is a recent graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Medley is married to the former Valerie Riley of Corn- ing. They have one daughter, Rachel.

Bobby Hall resigned May 10 as pastor of Etowah Church to serve a church in Caraway.

Paul Kirkindall of Blytheville is serving as interim pastor of Nodena Church near Wilson.

Eugene Triplett is serving as pastor of Humphrey Church, moving there from Fordyce. Triplett, who has served other Arkansas churches, served as a mission pastor in the Indiana-Arkansas linkup.

A.W. Upchurch is serving as interim pastor of Pine Bluff Second Church.

Toby Adair is serving as interim pastor of Pine Bluff Forrest Park Church.



Pine Bluff First Church honored five workers at a recent banquet who have collectively served 194 years in various Sunday School positions. Those recognized were (left to right) Charles Bonner, W.O. Percy, Clare West, W.L. Rugg and Pauline Sanders.

Donald Stanley Anderson recently received the master of divinity degree from Mid-America Seminary. He serves as pastor of Knowles Church in Strong.

Warren Jonathan Watkins recently received the master of divinity degree from Mid-America Seminary. He is pastor of Cross Roads Church in Blytheville.

Silas Stuart Clements and **Robert Norman Good** recently received the associate of divinity degree from Mid-America Seminary. Clements is pastor of Richland Church in West Memphis. Good serves as children's church pastor at Marion First Church.

Ken Jordan, pastor of First Church, Hamburg, has resigned to enter full-time evangelism.

briefly

Mountain Home First Church deacons have divided into three groups to work in a supportive role with church staff members. Deacon officers, **Danny Ponder**, **John R. Dillard** and **Marion Billingsley**, are serving as group chairmen.

Mena First Church will observe Arkansas' Sesquicentennial June 15 with homecoming. **Dillard Miller** will be named pastor-emeritus in morning worship services which will be followed by an old-fashioned dinner-on-the-ground. **Robert E. Craig** will be afternoon speaker. A container sealed on June 14, 1936, will be opened and the contents replaced with 1986 memorabilia.

Gethsemane Church in North Little Rock recently elected **Charles Holley** to the deacon ministry and named **John Hall** and **Wallace Bell** as honorary deacons in recognition of their years of service.

Heber Springs First Church will once again minister to summer vacationers at **Greers Ferry Lake** through a Sunday morning service at the **Dam Site Park amphitheater**. **Rev. and Mrs. Jim McGill**, and **Collin** and **Freda Stark** are leaders.

Watson Chapel Church at **Pine Bluff** has launched a new Wednesday evening program which includes a fellowship meal, an officers and teachers planning time, missions education meetings and youth choir emphasis.

West Acres Chapel in **West Helena** was launched with a **May 4-11** revival that resulted in nine professions of faith. **Johnny Green** was evangelist. Sponsored by **West Helena Second Church**, the new mission is meeting in a rented building located in a new development area in **West Helena**. **Carl Fawcett**, director of missions for **Arkansas Valley Association**, is serving as mission pastor until a full-time pastor is called.

Jonesboro First Church youth are preparing for a **June 30-July 3** mission trip to **Louisville, Ky.**, where they will assist the **Jefferson Street Chapel** with backyard Bible clubs.

Hunter First Church will observe homecoming **June 29** in conjunction with the **Hunter School** reunion **June 28**. Activities will include **Sunday School**, morning worship, a noon meal and an afternoon service. **Pastor James W. Mills** reported that former members, non-resident members and former pastors will be special guests. **H.R. Early** will be speaker.

Pulaski Heights Church in **Little Rock** **Woman's Missionary Union** is assisting **Arkansas Baptist Family** and **Child Care Services** by providing needs items at the **Sunshine House**, a temporary home for abused children.

Providence Church at **Fayetteville** observed homecoming **June 1** with a morning worship service and fellowship dinner.

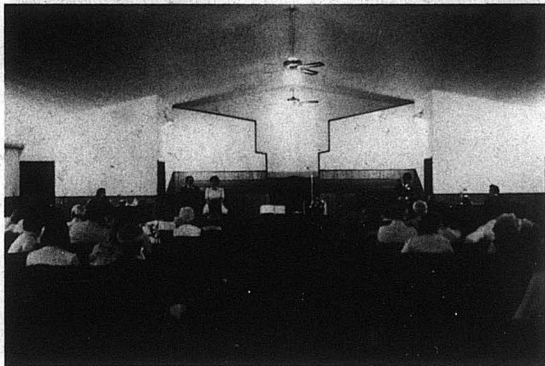
Huntsville First Church will observe homecoming **June 8**, according to **Pastor Leslie Elam**.

Benton First Church recently completed payment on its family life center. The center, financed for 25 years, was paid for in five years, according to **Pastor Randel Everett**.

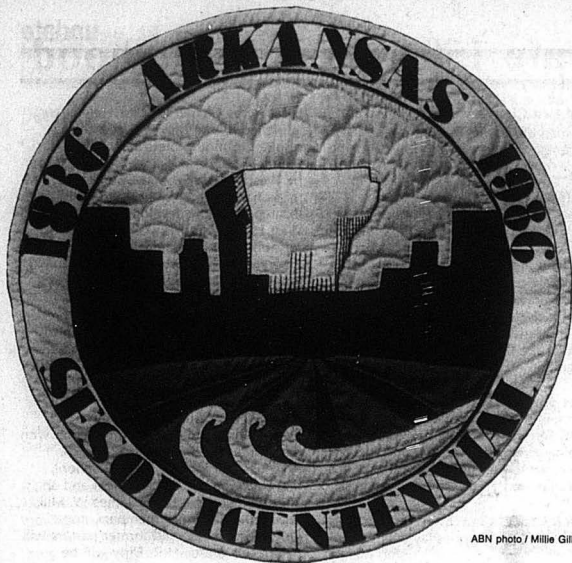
Monticello Second Church youth will leave **June 6** for **Hiawatha, Kans.**, where they will do assist with backyard Bible clubs and outreach ministries. They were commissioned for service **June 1**.

Conway-Perry Association will observe Arkansas' sesquicentennial **June 15** with a potluck dinner and program on the courthouse square in **Perryville**, according to director of missions **Refus Caldwell**. **Jesse Reed** of **Little Rock**, retired director of evangelism for **Arkansas Baptist State Convention**, will be speaker.

ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed



Henderson First Church observed homecoming **May 25** by dedicating a building that houses a 285-seat sanctuary, pastor's study, choir room, 12 basement classrooms and baptistry. The new plant, valued at more than \$175,000, was constructed by volunteer labor at a cost of \$80,000. **Pastor Donny Thrasher** said, "We are in the Baxter County growth area, and this will provide the space needed as our membership expands." Dedication program personalities included **Ken Hilton** of **Tomahawk**, a former pastor; **J. Everett Sneed**, editor of **Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine**; **Ed Powers**, director of missions for **White River Association**; **Keith Hamm** of **Mountain Home Eastside Church** and **George Camp**, building committee chairman.



ABN photo / Millie Gill



ABN photos / Millie Gill



Mada McKnight Knight, a member of Springdale First Church, and her sister, Nena McKnight Evans of Rogers, were selected as grand prize winners in a Sesquicentennial quilt contest sponsored by First Federal of Arkansas. The theme "Arkansas Yesterday and Today" is depicted in Arkansas agriculture, education, industry, sports and arts.

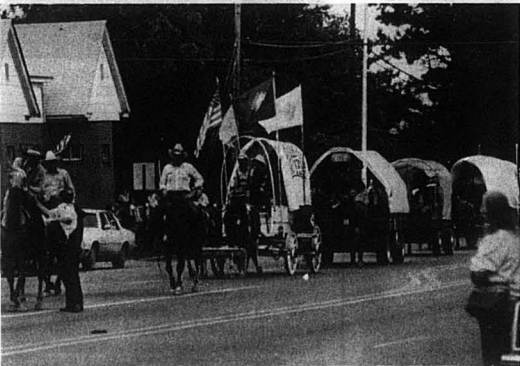
Arkansans celebrate 150 years of statehood

Arkansans are celebrating the 150th birthday of their state in a wide variety of ways. (Far left) A quilt made by May Parnell, a member of the Mountain Home Church, and featuring the official sesquicentennial logo, provided the cover for this issue of the ABN. (Left) A old-fashioned loom was part of a demonstration at the Territorial Restoration in Little Rock.



ABN photo / Mille Gill

ABN photos / Mark Kelly



Above top) Several pioneer-era buildings have been restored in a project at the Cleveland County Fairgrounds in Rison. Tours of the display are available by appointment. (Immediately above) One of the state's two sesquicentennial wagon trains pulls into Booneville as it winds its way around the state, and (right) Booneville residents respond to it's arrival in the spirit and dress of the time. (Top right) A wood carver demonstrates his craft at Little Rock's Territorial Restoration.

'Look to example of forebears,' Rison Church encouraged

by Mark Kelly

RISON — "Standing on the pinnacle of 100 years, what do you see?" Ben Elrod asked members of the Rison Church as they celebrated their church's centennial anniversary May 18.

What they might see would be the example of "those who have gone before, who were singleminded in their dedication to building the kingdom of God," suggested Elrod, a Rison native who is president of the Independent Colleges of Arkansas.

Citing the story of Nehemiah and the rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall, Elrod named four elements needed to build God's kingdom: dedicated leadership "obsessed with a vision of great human need which only God can meet," a great body of believers "so busy building the kingdom that they don't notice the opposition," a "large concern for God's great world outside the four walls of the church," and a sense of servanthood which finds people "losing themselves for the sake of others and the glory of God."

"Don't change a proven formula," Elrod challenged the people. "It's up to you to show the love of God to hungering men, women, boys, and girls."

Elrod preached from a Bible belonging to his grandfather, J.W. Elrod, a leader of the congregation in the early 1900s. Elrod himself grew up in the church and was licensed and ordained by the congregation. He eventually served as a vice-president of

Ouachita Baptist University and president of Georgetown College in Kentucky.

The Rison Church was organized in 1886 with 13 charter members. The people have built three church buildings, and 28 pastors have served the congregation.

In 1890, the church organized a Sunday School with 50 members; employed its first halftime pastor, O.M. Lucas; elected its first deacons, J.S. McMurtrey, J.M.M. Tucker, and W.B. Sadler; and sent its first recorded messengers to an associational annual meeting, the Friendship Association in Pine Bluff.

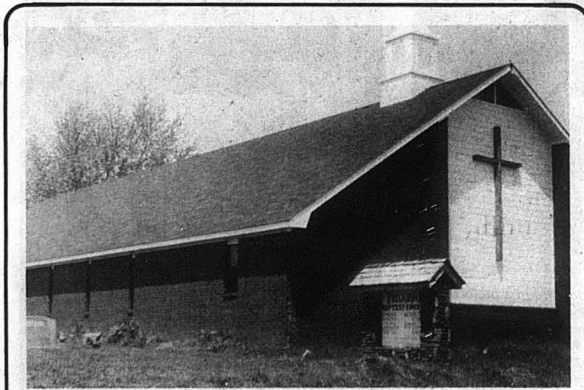
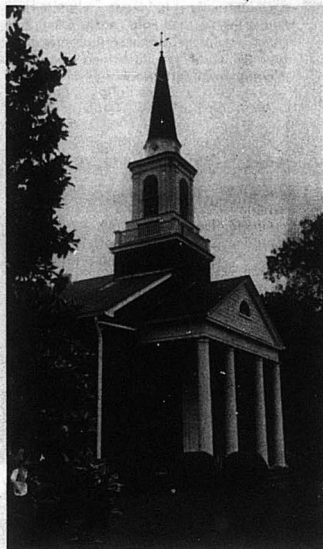
In 1906, the church built its first parsonage. In 1943, records indicate the people took an offering "to pay on Arkansas' moral debt." In 1982, the church commissioned the Glen Sutton family, who had been appointed missionaries to Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) by the SBC Foreign Mission Board.

The church's present pastor, J.T. Harvill, has served in Rison since 1968. His 18-year tenure more than doubles that of any previous pastor.

Pastor Harvill moderated the anniversary services, which included a potluck lunch, the tolling of the church's original bell, and an afternoon celebration service. Among those present for the day was Aubrey Halsell, pastor of the church 1938-40.

Mark Kelly is managing editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

ABN photo / Mark Kelly



Building dedicated—Friendship Church at Springdale recently dedicated a building that houses a 300-seat auditorium; a pastor's study; two classrooms and a nursery. The new worship center, valued at \$150,000, has an indebtedness of only \$70,000. Pews, pulpit, piano, organ and sound system were given by members. Many also donated their labor. Roy Baird and Pastor Jack Anglin served as contractors. J.B. Kyger, pastor of Fayetteville College Avenue Church, was dedication speaker.

missionary notes

Phillip Brown, journeyman to Spain, has arrived on the field to begin his two-year term of service as a minister to singles and youth worker in Madrid (address: Arturo Soria 328, 7.C. 28033 Madrid, Spain). Before he was employed by the Foreign Mission Board in April 1986, he was a minister of music and youth at Unity Church, Arkadelphia.

Mr. and Mrs. Boyd W. Hall, journeymen to Swaziland, have arrived on the field to begin their two-year term of service (address: P.O. Box 1655, Mbabane, Swaziland). He lived in Forrest City, Wynne, Batesville and Jonesboro. The former Rhonda Dismuke, she considers Pine Bluff her hometown. They were employed by the Foreign Mission Board in April 1986.

Kari Utley, journeyman to The Gambia, has arrived on the field to begin her two-year term of service (address: Baptist Mission, P.O. Box 2376, Sere Kunda via Banjul, The Gambia). She considers Little Rock her hometown. Before she was employed by the Foreign Mission Board in April 1986, she was a graduate assistant and activities adviser at Arkansas Tech University, Russellville.

Southern Baptist seminaries, schools graduate 19 Arkansans

Nineteen students with Arkansas connections graduated recently from Southern Baptist seminaries in New Orleans, La., Louisville, Ky., and Fort Worth, Texas. Two other Arkansans received diplomas from Boyce Bible School in Louisville, Ky.

Ronny A. Bramos was among 235 persons who received degrees during spring commencement at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University. He is married to the former Cheryl Stevens of Dermott.

Four Arkansas students received degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Ronald Alan Bohannon of Kensett and **Jeff Pounders** of Little Rock received the master of divinity degree. **Jane Ellen Bruns** of Pine Bluff received the master of social work degree. **Deborah Ann Adams** of Beebe received the master of arts in Christian education degree.

Fourteen students from Arkansas received degrees during spring commencement exercises at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Robert Bradley Dickson III received the graduate specialist in religious education degree. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Dickson Jr. of Pine Bluff.

Phillip Kirk Bullington received the master of music degree. He is the son of Bill Bullington, missionary to the Ivory Coast.

Receiving master of divinity degrees were **Billy Raymond Carpenter**, son of Raymond A. Carpenter of Hamburg and son-in-law of James Stone of Hamburg; **Daniel F. Reed**, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Frank Reed of Hot Springs; **Mark Alan Rutherford**, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Rutherford of Judsonia; **Morris Delon Seay**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd G. Seay of Springdale;

Michael Durell Stanley, son of Durell Stanley of Pine Bluff; **David Keith Tomlinson**, son of Hays Tomlinson of Judsonia and son-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Dunn of Searcy; and **Danny Joe Wright**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Floyd Wright of Glenwood and son-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Smith of Glenwood.

Receiving the master of arts in religious education degree from Southwestern Seminary were **Robert Nelson Boyles**, son of Jane McDonald of Searcy and Ralph Boyles of Searcy and son-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Crum of Rogers; **Susan Bunch**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Haven C. Beshires of Little Rock and daughter-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Bunch of North Little Rock;

Wesley Jay Hodges, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Leroy Hodges of Harrison and son-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. T. Henderson Brown of Harrison; and **David Roger Ivy**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Ivy of Bismarck; **Windell Lee Wood**, son of Arnold Wood of Springdale.



Bramos



Bohannon



Pounders



Bruns



Adams



Dickson



Bullington



Carpenter



Reed



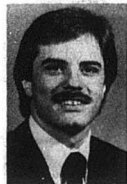
Rutherford



Seay



Stanley



Tomlinson



Wright



Boyles



Bunch



Hodges



Ivy



Wood

Working class abandoned, Redford says of Baptists

DALLAS (BP)—Southern Baptists and other mainline denominations have "abandoned the working class," Jack Redford, former director of church extension at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, said during a Texas Baptist Church Extension/Church Administration Conference at Hyde Park Church in Austin.

"We've written off millions of people simply because we have 'matured' in our worship styles and decors," said Redford, who is returning to Texas to be an associational director of missions. He noted the poor and working class no longer feel comfortable in what was begun as a "poor folks denomination."

He said Southern Baptists need to begin new churches and missions to meet the needs of low socio-economic groups, high-

lighting that need as he pointed to things he believes must break the heart of Jesus.

"He must be heartbroken at the sight of plateaued churches that don't want to grow," Redford said. While noting existing churches should be renewed, he said the emphasis should be upon starting new work.

"Lost people don't wait on our long-range plans while we fix churches' want to's; so we need to start new churches," he said.

Though an urgent need exists for church planters, seminary students and many graduates feel they must seek secular employment because there are more preachers than there are existing churches. The need for mission pastors must somehow be communicated to them, Redford said.

"We have a preacher supply that amazes all of Christendom," he said, remarking Southern Baptist seminaries graduate a surplus of 1,500 preachers annually.

Redford said the key to Southern Baptist success in church extension is a renewed awareness of the "lostness" of mankind without Jesus Christ.

"We get so busy doing our ministerial work that we forget people are lost," he said. "The supreme motivation for church planting is the knowledge that people are lost."

In order to penetrate the world with the Good News of Jesus, Steve Stroope, pastor of Dalrock Church in Rowlett, Texas, said Southern Baptists must tear down barriers of culture, comfort and complacency.

"We need to start new churches to break down some barriers," he said. "When a new church is started, it has one purpose—to reach out and bring people to Jesus Christ."

Stroope noted in a new mission every member realizes the importance of his role in the congregation, an awareness that sometimes is absent in established churches where only those with certain talents feel needed.

"We have bottlenecked the gospel. We've said to the majority of people that they cannot participate," he said. "While we emphasize the stars in the pulpit, the gospel emphasizes the saints in the trenches."

Stroope challenged conference participants to expand their vision in light of the world's non-Christians.

"God's vision for us is always greater than our vision for ourselves," he said. "We should never stop reaching out—reaching across barriers—as long as there is one lost person out there."

William M. Pinson Jr., executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, noted the historical relationship between new church starts and the number of people reached for Christ.

Pinson stressed the two-fold strategy of the Mission Texas program centers around churches: starting new churches and strengthening existing churches. Mission Texas is the five-year emphasis on spiritual awakening, developing believers, strengthening missions and reaching people through 2,000 new churches and missions.

Pinson particularly noted the effectiveness of new churches in reaching the unchurched, citing evidence it takes 25 Texas Baptists in an established church to reach one non-Christian for Jesus Christ but only seven in a new church or mission.

Giving triples inflation rate

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptists' year-to-date increases in contributions to their Cooperative Program of mission and ministry support have stretched to three times the U.S. inflation rate, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the convention's Executive Committee.

"The convention's seven-month Cooperative Program increase is 7.13 percent, compared to a Consumer Price Index of 2.3 percent," Bennett said.

Through the end of April, 1985-86 contributions totaled \$72,735,276, an increase of \$4,842,495 over the same period the previous year, Bennett reported. April contributions were \$9,954,113, an increase of \$164,289 over April of 1985.

More good news is found in reports of contributions to the SBC mission offerings, Bennett added. "The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions is 3.75 percent over the same period a year ago," he said. "And the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions is up 14.28 percent."



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Singles ministry said better, yet room for improvement

ASHEBORO, N.C. (BP)—While single-adult coordinators agree singles historically have been on the losing side when it comes to churches meeting their needs, they also foresee a changing game with an improving score.

Ministry to singles is looking up, said Ann Gardner, single-adult consultant in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's family ministry department. But she and state leaders agree churches and denominational leaders are not utilizing their full resources.

"Certainly, I can see an increase in states planning events for singles," Gardner said, "but there are other opportunities that are not being taken advantage of."

She said examples of singles who are being slighted include ethnics, military personnel and "just plain, normal singles."

Libby Potts, associate in single and senior adult ministry for the Texas Christian Life Commission, said she believes churches should minister to single adults as enthusiastically as they minister to families.

"We need to educate our churches that there are adults, who happen to be single, who shouldn't be viewed as second-class citizens," she said. "We need to further educate that it's OK to be single. Our Lord was single."

Gardner said one problem is the state Baptist conventions "need to be doing things that are more specialized. Some areas we need to speak to more are never-marrieds, single parents and singles-again, whether through divorce or death. We're just not speaking enough to ethnic groups or other specialized singles groups."

Gardner said Florida is one state doing an excellent job in its work with singles.

Jay Johnston, single adult coordinator for the Florida Baptist Convention, said Florida has set a precedent by enlisting single adult coordinators in 36 of its 49 associations.

"Florida, as far as associational work, is more advanced in single adult work," Johnston said. "I think if single-adult ministry catches on, it will have to be through associations picking up the ministry, because not every church can afford to have a single adult minister."

Johnston said associations can furnish the missing link between churches and state conventions by providing enrichment or equipping programs through the church.

Changing times has contributed to singles' need for a different type of ministry, he said.

"I definitely think today single parents need some direction from our churches," Johnston said. "Also, we seem to concentrate more on the single adults who are 35 or older, and I think we need more of a balance. From comments I've heard, younger single adults seem to feel they've been totally left out."

Several associations in Florida provide retreats, bi-monthly seminars to enrich and equip and leadership training events to better meet the needs of single adults.

Another method some states are using to identify the needs of singles is regional task forces, staffed with single adults and their leaders.

Clark Hensley, consultant for family ministry for the Mississippi Baptist Convention, said he presently is working toward creating his own singles task force.

"We are working with single-adult directors to develop a task force representing nine regions of the state to adapt and create programs for singles in our state," Hensley said.

He believes state-coordinated task forces identifying the needs of singles will become a trend. "We need to work with single adult

'We need to educate our churches that there are adults, who happen to be single, who shouldn't be viewed as second-class citizens. We need to further educate that it's OK to be single. Our Lord was single.'

directors within each association and train those people specifically as single adult consultants for their associations," he said.

Hensley said states are more apt to design single adult retreats for those unmarried adults who are undergoing crises, such as divorce, death or single parenting. "We're seeking to redesign our retreats and not just major on various crises, but on spiritual growth," he noted. "We need now to move forward to a growth experience in ministry for singles."

Potts agrees. "It's a sign of the times that our single adult people are changing," she said. "We need to move away from coping with crises so much.

"We need to start ministering to those who feel really good about themselves."

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Stanley will allow one-by-one challenges to nominations

ATLANTA (BP)—One-by-one challenges to nominees for the Southern Baptist Convention Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees will be allowed at the 1986 annual meeting, according to SBC President Charles F. Stanley.

Stanley, pastor of First Church of Atlanta, told Baptist Press he intends to allow challenges on an individual basis but will rule alternate slates out of order, regardless of what messengers decide to do about changing Bylaw 16, at the annual meeting, scheduled June 10-12 in the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

The SBC Executive Committee has recommended Bylaw 16 be changed, adding wording to allow one-by-one challenges, but prohibiting substitution of alternate slates. The action is scheduled early in the business of the convention, prior to the election of the Committee on Boards. To be adopted, the amendment must be favored by two-thirds of the messengers present and voting.

In advance of the 1986 annual meeting,

Stanley told Baptist Press he and parliamentarians he has appointed have discussed the matter and agreed to allow one-by-one challenges but to disallow alternate slates.

"I discussed the matter with (the parliamentarians) and we are all agreed that if someone wants to make a nomination for some position, fine, we will rule that in order. But I will rule it is out of order to propose a whole slate," Stanley told Baptist Press.

He noted the "bylaw is unclear," and said he still believes the effort by a single messenger to substitute an alternate slate in 1985 was both out of order and "unfair. I do not think it is right for one person to try to replace the work a whole committee has done, especially when the committee (on Committees) has worked very diligently to come up with these names."

He said in 1985 he would have allowed individual challenges, and that "is where we stand when it comes to 1986. If somebody attempts to replace the whole slate in one vote, I will rule them out of order. If they

have an individual for an individual, then we will consider that and vote on each one."

Stanley said he hopes the revision to Bylaw 16 passes, "not just for my sake, but for the sake of future presidents. The bylaw now is very unclear and what happened last year had never happened before. The change clarifies it for all of us. I think if everybody will just get honest, most people will agree it is the fairest way to do it."

In reference to his presiding, Stanley was asked why he had appointed a Church of Christ minister as a parliamentarian.

"We were given a list of 1,300 people (from the American Institute of Parliamentarians) and there was simply no way to find out what denomination these people were, or even if they had a denomination.

"We had to make our selection on the basis of expertise, experience and knowledge and Dr. McCarty was highly recommended. The fact he was a Church of Christ minister was totally unexpected," Stanley said.

State court lawsuit voluntarily dropped by plaintiffs

ATLANTA (BP)—A state court lawsuit against the Southern Baptist Convention and its Executive Committee has been "voluntarily dismissed" by attorneys for the five plaintiffs.

The suit, filed in Superior Court of Fulton County, Ga., on Jan. 23, was identical to one filed by Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Crowder of Birmingham, Ala., and two other plaintiffs in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

John Floyd, an attorney with the Atlanta law firm of Bondurant, Mixson and Elmore, which represented plaintiffs in both cases, said the Superior Court suit was dismissed voluntarily, which means it can be brought back, if plaintiffs so desire.

"Judge Hall made his ruling fairly clear," Floyd said. "It was an interpretation of the federal Constitution, which would also apply to the Superior Court in the State of Georgia. The state court could disagree with Judge


Hall, but obviously could not overrule him. If the superior court judge did disagree, Judge Hall's ruling would still stand and there would not be a complete victory."


"Therefore we feel it is more efficient to proceed with the direct appeal," he said.

Floyd indicated the dismissal "by no means is an admission of any sort that we think Judge Hall is correct. We respect him as a judge and realize the time he put in on his decision, but obviously we disagree."

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International

A people gone astray

by S. Mikael Carrier, Nettleton Church, Jonesboro

Basic passage: Jeremiah 2-6

Focal passage: Jeremiah 2:1-3,7-8,11-13

Central truth: When people decide to reject God's way and engage in sin, they do so foolishly and in spite of God's great blessings to them.

The predominant tone of this chapter is that of shock and disbelief. Verse 12 of chapter 1, "Be astonished, O heavens, at this," sets in vivid words the prophet's indictment of the sinful people.

The progression of thought is the faithlessness of God's people, the nature and necessity for true repentance and the certainty of God's judgement if such repentance is not forthcoming. Jeremiah effectively uses a literary form of his day—the "lawsuit" motif—in his appeal to the good sense of the people. The setting is a courtroom, God is both plaintiff and prosecutor as he takes his people to court.

What Israel has done is amazing and without precedent in the ancient world even among the pagan people. The prophet subpoenaed the defendants, God's people, to seek to find a nation that has acted as inconsistently as has Judah in changing gods. The foolishness of the inconsistency is intensified when it is discovered that God's people, rather than improving themselves by rejecting God's way, have on the contrary, "changed their glory, for what does not profit" (v. 11b). They have changed gods even though they are no gods (v. 10), i.e., they have no substance, no real existence.

The prophet poignantly paints the utter folly of the situation in that God's people have exchanged the most significant "somebody" in the world for a bunch of "nobodies" and "walked after things that do not profit."

Jeremiah pleads with the people who are acting senselessly by forsaking God and their commitments to him to "remember the kindness of your youth" (1:12). Jeremiah then admonishes the rebellious people to respect God's power to judge the people (5:3 & 4) and to return to the Lord who is merciful and forgiving (3:11-13,22; 4:1-4).

These words from Jeremiah are appropriate words for anyone that will take time to hear about how to get back to God when you have begun to drift or sense that you have lost some of the flavor of life that "the fountain of living water" gives (v. 13).

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Life and Work

Believers' resurrection

by Bert Thomas, Valley Church, Searcy

Basic passage: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Focal passage: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Central truth: Christ's resurrection is the hope of each believer's resurrection.

Paul, along with Silas and Timothy, spent a short time in Thessalonica. As a result of their efforts, a number of people became believers and a church was established. Paul had to leave the city because of trouble from unbelieving Jews. He sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to strengthen the church and to bring him news about their progress in the faith. Timothy's report indicated the new believers needed additional instruction.

These new believers were living under extremely difficult conditions and many believed Jesus would return within their lifetime. The death of some of the Christians before the return of Jesus disturbed them. They needed encouragement and additional instruction from Paul. He wrote First and Second Thessalonians to encourage these Christians and to properly instruct them in great Christian truths.

These letters from the pen of Paul are relevant topics for Christians today. The Word of God offers us encouragement and instructions as it did the Christians at Thessalonica.

God does not leave us guessing about the resurrection of believers. Paul expressed it this way: "We do not want you to be uninformed. . . . Our "how" is not answered, but we know that each loved one who dies in the Lord will be resurrected because of the resurrection of Jesus. This promise makes bearable the grief that separates earthly ties, leaves empty hearts, and crushes lives because death is but sleep for the believer. In God's own time he will bring those who are asleep in Jesus with him.

Can you imagine what a glorious day it will be when the believer's resurrection happens? "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God. . . ." (v.16). The grave shall not be able to hold the bodies of believers when the Lord calls! Believers who are alive will be translated. "Caught up together," "to meet the Lord," and "always be with the Lord" are precious promises to each believer. John described it this way: "He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

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Bible Book

Sin's haunting power

by Roy A. Fowler, First Church, Mountain Home

Basic passage: Nehemiah 13:4-31

Focal passage: Nehemiah 13:10-12,15-19a,23-25

Central truth: The sins of the returned Jews illustrate that self-interest leads people to repeat sins of the past even when the sins previously led to disaster.

Nehemiah returned to Babylon as he had promised (2:6; 5:14; 13:16). Upon returning, he discovered that some old sins had been committed. The high priest had cleared out a large room in the Temple and allowed Tobiah, the Ammonite official who opposed Nehemiah's wall building, to move into the Temple. This was a desecration of the house of God (13:7).

Nehemiah discovered next that the Levites and the singers had left the Temple service and gone to work in the fields (13:10), because the people had neglected to bring their tithes. They had broken their commitment with God (10:35-39). As it was then, so it is today; any church neglecting to adequately remunerate the church pastoral staff will force many to seek employment elsewhere and diminish the effectiveness of the church's ministry.

Another sin Nehemiah discovered upon returning was the neglect of worship (13:11). This led to the sin of working on the Sabbath (13:15-17). Finally, upon his return Nehemiah discovered the Jews were marrying foreign wives.

All of these old sins of the past came back to haunt the Jews. Their fathers had committed the same sins (13:18). What a lesson this should be to all parents and children.

Nehemiah had Tobiah thrown out of the Temple and all the vessels cleansed. He reprimanded the people for their forsaking the Temple and for not bringing their tithes. He once again called the Levites and the singers back to their work. The gate of Jerusalem was closed on the Sabbath and the selling of goods forbidden. Then the people were cleansed from all strangers (13:30).

Our grief over sin should be deep enough to cause Nehemiah's kind of reaction. Today many temples are being desecrated, church staff underpaid, tithes not given to God, the Lord's day abused, worship neglected and bad marriages made. The longer we allow flagrant sin to exist, the longer it will haunt us.

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Dunn asks Reagan not to send new ambassador

WASHINGTON (BP)—The head of eight U.S. Baptist bodies' Washington office has asked President Reagan not to name a replacement for former American ambassador to the Vatican William A. Wilson, who resigned May 19.

Wilson's resignation as the first U.S. ambassador to the Vatican since the mid-19th century came in the aftermath of reported embarrassment inside the Reagan administration over an unauthorized trip the 71-year-old California businessman made last March to Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi.

James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and an outspoken opponent of renewed U.S.-Vatican relations, asked Reagan in a May 21 letter to "rethink this entire arrangement," one he said is "unfair, unequal and unconstitutional." Dunn added, "We call upon you, Mr. President, to refuse to renew this ill-advised venture, a dangerous entanglement of church and state."

He wrote further, "We welcome the fact that today the United States does not have an ambassador to the Pope. Your administration's embarrassment at Ambassador Wil-

son's behavior is understandable. In fact, for many Americans, the exchange of ambassadors between our government and a church is an ongoing embarrassment."

A lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the exchange of ambassadors, brought by Americans United for Separation of Church and State and others, was dismissed in May 1985 by a federal district judge who agreed with the administration that the Constitution gives the president and Congress virtually exclusive power over U.S. foreign policy. Intervention by the courts, Judge John P. Fullam of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania ruled, would amount to a violation of the doctrine of separation of powers among the three branches of government.

That ruling was upheld April 25, 1986, by a three-judge panel of the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia. Americans United has announced it will appeal further, either to the full 3rd Circuit or to the Supreme Court. The Baptist Joint Committee has supported Americans United in its legal challenge to the exchange of ambassadors in a friend-of-the-court brief.

Huff declares candidacy for SBC vice-presidency

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Saying he believes it is time lay people take a more active involvement in the business affairs of their denomination, Henry B. Huff of Louisville, Ky., May 20 became the first announced candidate for the office of first vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1986.

An attorney and active layman in Louisville's Crescent Hill Church, Huff, 61, said he would be a nominee for first vice-president "no matter who is elected" president of the 14.4-million-member SBC. Huff currently is the convention's second vice-president.

Huff said he was persuaded that, as second vice president, he has acquired some knowledge in the convention of how it operates and believes he could make a

contribution.

"I do know parliamentary procedures," the Louisville lawyer said.

Huff believes Southern Baptists need at this time to "conserve the truth of the Bible while building bridges between us."

Referring to a recent address before employees of the Baptist Sunday School Board, he reiterated he does not feel "we can be effective soul winners when we are preoccupied doing battle with one another."

A Sunday school teacher for 35 years, Huff has taught senior men's Bible class at Crescent Hill church for many of those years. He presently is chairman of the church's deacons, is a former moderator of Long Run Association and a former president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

High court rejects Scientology appeal

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Supreme Court has foiled an effort by the Church of Scientology to expedite its challenge to a Clearwater, Fla., ordinance requiring churches to register with city officials before they are permitted to raise funds.

Attorneys for the controversial body had asked the high court to strike down the local law as a violation of the First Amendment's ban on an establishment of religion and guarantee of free exercise of religion.

But the court, in a one-line order, sent the case back to a federal district court for trial. As is customary, no reasons were given for the action.

In a brief asking the high court not to intervene, an attorney for the city wrote the ordinances were enacted "because of revela-

tions of a host of serious crimes and abuses" engaged in by church members.

In its unsuccessful appeal asking the high court to intervene now, Church of Scientology attorney Eric M. Lieberman of New York City contended the Clearwater ordinance, by requiring churches to obtain licenses before soliciting funds, even from its own members, and by imposing "massive recordkeeping and disclosure requirements," inhibits the free exercise of religion and amounts to a governmental establishment of religion.

The dispute has attracted nationwide interest because of the potential impact on churches' ability to raise funds if the Clearwater ordinance is upheld.

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