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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

3-28-1991

March 28, 1991

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Arkansas Baptist



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Vol. 90, No. 7

March 28, 1991

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Arkansas Baptist

At a glance

6 Preparing your preschooler

Parents cannot begin too early preparing a child for the difficult choices she will face in life. In the second in a series on teaching children to make decisions, five principles are outlined: set limits, establish consequences, be consistent, be positive, consider the child, and don't set yourself up.

14 Sometimes forgotten

Drs. J.D. and Beth Patterson, father and daughter dentists from Searcy, have made several trips down the Amazon River to provide free dental care and share the word of Christ with the people of the Brazilian back country.

15 Page elected to lead CCF

Larry L. Page was elected March 5 to serve as executive director of the Arkansas Christian Civic Foundation. He will begin his duties May 1. The foundation works in areas of moral concern, including alcohol, drugs, pornography, gambling, abortion, and euthanasia. Page is currently vice-president and attorney for the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.

18 CLC clears path for PAC merger

Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission trustees have unanimously approved bylaw changes that would pave the way for the Southern Baptist Convention in June to merge the Southern Baptist Public Affairs Committee into the Christian Life Commission.

19 New hymnal launched

About 7,500 Southern Baptists from the United States and around the world gathered in Nashville March 14 to unveil the new *Baptist Hymnal*. Praising II, the four-day music and worship celebration, included a marathon Sing-Through-The-Hymnal session, which included Arkansans presenting their selections at 3 a.m.

19 HMB starts new campaign

A campaign to start 15,000 Southern Baptist congregations in the next 10 years was launched by the trustees of the Home Mission Board during their spring meeting in Atlanta, Ga. The board also elected new officers, including Johnny Jackson, a vocational evangelist from Little Rock, as chairman.

Cover story

ABM photo / J. Everett Bessard



Empowered!

10

The 1991 Woman's Missionary Union Convention, held March 15-16 at West Memphis First Church featured national WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien (left) and was coordinated by state WMU Executive Director Julia Ketner (right).

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Resurrection proof

J. EVERETT SNEED

The heart of the gospel is the cross and the resurrection of Christ. As the Apostle Paul said, "If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Co. 15:17). However, the proofs of Christ's resurrection are adequate to convince any thinking person that our Savior conquered death. We can prove Jesus was resurrected from the dead as adequately as we can that George Washington lived and died.

First, there is the proof of Holy Scripture. The fact that the Bible forcefully declares the historical body of the resurrection of Christ is adequate for all believing Christians. No additional proof is required.

Second, there is irrefutable evidence of a host of eye witnesses. Christ made a minimum of 10 appearances during the 40 days following his resurrection. These eye witnesses included relatives, close friends, and a gathering of more than 500.

Among the relatives who saw Christ was James, our Lord's half-brother. Prior to the resurrection, James was not a follower of Christ. After the resurrection, he became a key leader in the Jerusalem church. According to tradition, James was confronted with denial of Christ or being thrown from the pinnacle of the temple. He steadfastly refused to deny his Lord and was killed as he was cast from the temple.

Others who saw Christ included women such as Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary, the mother of James. In reading the gospel accounts, one becomes keenly aware that these women did not expect the resurrection. They were surprised, frightened, and dismayed as they first discovered that the stone was rolled away. Obviously, their fear changed to great joy when they discovered the great truth of the resurrection.

Third, the resurrection produced a dynamic change in the lives of the disciples. Immediately after the death and burial of Jesus, the disciples were bewildered and embarrassed. They were hiding themselves from the Jews. But on Resurrection Sunday, in the face of accumulating evidence, a gradual change came over all of them. The Scripture indicates that they lost all their timidity and became a militant, aggressive, dynamic company who defied their enemies and proclaimed their faith with boldness. Such an event is unparalleled in history.

The boldness of the Christians is dynamically portrayed on Pentecost. On



this occasion, Peter proclaimed with all boldness the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. When threatened by the Sadducees, priests, and others, the Christians boldly declared their intention to continue with the proclamation of these truths. The resurrection had given a new kind of courage to the followers of Christ.

Fourth, the resurrection is validated by the empty tomb. Other world religions have shrines where their founder's body is entombed. Christianity alone has an empty tomb because Christ conquered death. Skeptics have long attempted to discredit the empty tomb. For example, some have imagined that he swooned or was drugged on the cross and simply fell in the coolness of the tomb. His followers then proclaimed that he was resurrected. Obviously, it would be impossible for a man who had been nailed to the cross and whose side had been pierced by the spear to roll away the stone.

Other skeptics have declared that Jesus' body was stolen from the guarded tomb and that his disciples destroyed the body so that they could falsify the resurrection. This explanation totally fails to explain the dynamic change that took place in the lives of the disciples—a change that enabled most of them to die as martyrs.

Finally, secular history tends to confirm the truthfulness of Christ's resurrection. Flavius Josephus, a historian recording the events at time of Christ, said of Jesus, "He was the Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of principal men amongst us had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and 10,000 other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this date" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Vol. 14, chapter 3).

The question arises: Why is the resurrection important? It is a declaration of Christ's ability to complete redemption. Jesus died to save people from their sins. If he had permanently remained in the grave, he could not have redeemed the world. Christians have a message of hope for all mankind because Christ lives.

Christ's resurrection also demonstrates the existence of future life. The Scripture teaches that Christians will be the same in eternity as Christ was after the resurrection. An examination of the resurrected Christ will reveal the manner that Christians will exist in eternity. Several things are apparent: he was a substantive being, possessed a body of flesh and bone, and was easily recognized by his friends and followers. So we, too, will have a body and will know each other in heaven.

The resurrection enables us to shout with the song writer, "He arose! He arose! Hallelujah, Christ arose!" Above all, as we look at the reality of the resurrection, our fervor in spreading the gospel should be renewed.

Arkansas Baptist

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The *Arkansas Baptist* (ISSN 1040-6506) is published by the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, Inc., 601-A W. Capitol, Little Rock, AR 72201. Subscription rates are: \$7.99 per year (Individual), \$5.64 per year (Every Resident Family Plan), \$6.36 per year (Group Plan). Foreign address rates on request. Send correspondence and address changes to *Arkansas Baptist*, P. O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203, telephone 501-376-1791. Member of the Southern Baptist Press Association.

VOLUME 90

NUMBER 7

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Nelson Wilhelm, Waldron, president; Lane Strother, Mountain Home; Jimmy Anderson, Leachville; Joanne Caldwell, Texarkana; Bert Thomas, Searcy; Lyndon Finney, Little Rock; Phelan Boone, El Dorado; Harold Gateley, Fayetteville; and Don Heuer, Batesville.

DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know



Daring, believing, bold—these are words that describe the actions of our Board of Trustees of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries. On March 12, they voted to open the home for unwed mothers, which they are calling the "Promise House." Don't you love that name? This home will hold our hope and promise for every person who comes there with a pregnancy out of wedlock. It will hold out promise for every little life as it comes into the world in a caring atmosphere. It will hold out promise for the Kingdom's influence as the world sees us meeting critical human need.

But there is another side to the Promise House. It is being opened before full funding has been secured. The board, leaning on the promises of God, felt the ministry could wait no longer.

Now, there needs to be a promise from all of us. That needs to be a promise that we will see to it that this ministry is funded now and sustained in the future. Many churches and individuals have had a part already. How thankful we are for this! Many more must have a part. Please call John Ross or Johnny Biggs at 376-4791, ext. 5167, if you want to have a part. I was particularly inspired to learn that Acteens of West Memphis First Church were going to provide funds for a washer and dryer.

Another good word for young people! Four of our six weeks at the Siloam Assembly have had to be closed already. We have a total of 6,054 already registered for the six weeks. Churches need to contact the Sunday School office to identify the two weeks they can still get their young people in. I would think you will want to do this immediately.

Also, work should begin next week to remodel the bathrooms in the girls dormitories. What an exciting summer it will be at the Assembly this year! The new worship center will be electrifying. Our preachers are the best that can be found for young people. Let's pray for transforming, life changing, world affecting experiences. You are invited to share in the continued remodeling program. We are \$500,000 short of the funds needed.

Don Moore is executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

'I hid myself'

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday April 7

"I was afraid . . . and I hid myself" (Gen. 3:10).

Adam and Eve had sinned. They had broken God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden. When they heard the Lord God "walking in the cool of the day," Adam and Eve became afraid and hid themselves "among the trees of the garden."

The experience of Adam and Eve is our experience. Like them, our fallenness causes us to experience fear and to engage in deception. Like Adam and Eve, we know that fear and deception only compound

our problems.

Nowhere in our society is the problem of fear and deception more evident than when it is mixed with alcoholic beverages. The toxic tonic that is formed from alcohol and fallenness poisons human life at so many points across the continuum of life.

At the individual level, drinking masks problems. Fear of failure or success, fear of social rejection or ridicule, fear of family disintegration or work-place conflict lead many people to cover up their problems with the use of alcohol.

Within our churches, some members are unable to reconcile the social situations

ERWIN L. McDONALD

The Golden Years

'Let your light shine before men'

"You are the light of the world . . . let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16, 16 NIV).

Into their seventh year of retirement, long-time Little Rock residents Bill and Erline Bauer, who recently observed their golden wedding anniversary, are "still going strong." Their counsel to young people considering marriage: Unless you are ready to live with ever-unfolding consequences, steer clear of blind dates.

As you doubtless have surmised from this, the Bauers met on a blind date, but have so far survived the "unfolding consequences."

The open secret of this marriage, it seems, is that, despite having their separate careers, Bill as a trucker and Erline as a secretary/administrative assistant, they've been together in most things. For instance, they have been together for more the 35 years as volunteers in serving the blind. No connection with blind-dating!

For Erline especially, there has been a heightening of involvement in this ministry since she retired from the staff of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, as she has worked as a volunteer, and, since last November, as full-time employee of Little Rock's Lions World



Bill and Erline Bauer

Services for the Blind.

Baptists and active church members from their youth, it is not surprising that the Bauers find the most of their retirement-years activities in their church, Antioch Baptist Church. Bill is a deacon and superintendent of the Sunday School department. Erline directs the Sunday School kindergarten, sings in the choir, teaches a Bible class, and is secretary-treasurer of LLL (Live Long and Like It).

Currently she is secretary-treasurer of the Fellowship of Retired Baptist Workers of Arkansas and a member of University Lions Club.

The Bauers have a daughter, Mrs. Sandra Boyd, and two grandchildren, Kendra, 15, and William, 11.



which pressure them into social drinking and the church's teachings that alcohol consumption is sin. Church members may hide their drinking or drinking problem for fear of being condemned. Many churches offer few, if any, opportunities for people with drinking difficulties to break the secrecy and to tell the truth about their problem.

At the societal level, the alcohol industry fears that the truth about its product will sharply reduce profits. The industry hides the truth about health and safety consequences behind a \$2 billion annual advertising and promotional effort which glamorizes drinking. The alcohol industry contributes to drinking problems with its lack of truth telling about the ill-effects of alcohol, such as birth defects, car crashes and economic destruction.

Again and again, we see that alcohol problems cause fear and deception. Conversely, fear and deception cause alcohol problems.

Like Adam, we, too, need to learn the truth that problems can never be solved with fear and cover-ups. The Bible teaches us that hiding the truth is never a solution. The earliest pages of Scripture record how Adam responded when faced with a problem: He became afraid and hid himself. Our behavior often resembles his, especially when it is related to alcohol or chemical dependency.

The Bible teaches us that the truth can set us free (John 8:32). Truth can free us from the need to mask problems, to experience guilt about drinking difficulties, and to believe that drinking and sex, social success and athletic success go together.

The Bible also teaches us that we "can do all things in him who strengthens" us (Phil. 4:13).—Robert M. Parham, SBC Christian Life Commission

RANDALL O'BRIEN

A Pastor's Perspective

On going home again

You can go home again. Things are just different when you do. That's all. Writing from my parents' home in McComb, Miss., seems normal enough. Dad rests in his easy chair, mother cooks. I goof off. So what's different?

Much. Gone are the '57 Chevies. The ducktails. The bobby sox. The gang. Sue and Faye are grown and gone. No leather jackets, London Fogs, or Nehru coats. No cruising in my '64 Mustang. No madras plaid. Or paisley. Or "fruit loops." No bell bottoms.

Don and Chuck no longer live on Shelly Drive. Don's in Houston. Chuck in Idaho. Lana's married. And divorced. Bonanza is missing from TV. So is Ed Sullivan. Gone from radio is Elvis, Fabian, Fats Domino, the Everly Brothers, the Beatles, and the Supremes. So whatever happened to Motown? Herman's Hermits? Louie Louie?

Gone is the draft. Vietnam. The Great Society. Kent State. And Bubba Walker. Nobody could shoot a basketball in McComb like Bubba Walker. Or play drums like Jimmy Dale Hutto. Or take National Merit tests like J. D. Fly. Or look as good as Robin Wood.

Riding around McComb, I revisit the old hangouts, the "permanent" landmarks. The gym where I had my greatest year burned down. A vacant lot seems to taunt and say, "So?" Marking the spot where I was born stands a historic sign advertising parking for McDonald's.

Denman-Alford's, where I paid too much (\$20) for Gant shirts in 1967, is closed. The East McComb Ice Cream store, where my parents loved to treat my sisters and me, boarded up. The water plant where my grandpa worked for year upon year has been torn down. My father's place of work for 40 years has been relocated, the old building I remember deserted. Our old homeplace belongs to someone else. They bricked the house. So much for permanent landmarks. The old Greyhound Bus Station, once the site of civil rights violence and refuge of COFO workers, is no more. In its place? The "Oasis." Sign says "Col-

dest Beer in Town."

First job I ever had was at Hollis' Drive In, as a skinny 13-year-old car hop. Mr. J. E. Thornhill always asked for two meat patties on his hamburger. Drove a yellow Cadillac. Hollis' is gone. Sign says "McComb Federal Credit Union."

I fell hopelessly in love with Haley Mills in "Pollyanna" at the Palace Theatre on Main Street. Main Street is still there. The Palace isn't. Neither is my old barber shop on the Railroad Boulevard where I rode the horse as a kid and got flat tops as a teenager. My first date ever was to the State Theatre on State Street. It's closed. So is Pete Wade's Place, the honky tonk my Dad once loved and I hated.

Remember The Blue & White Grill? I do. Dad and I would go there rather than church on Sunday mornings. We'd drink cold chocolate milk and read the sports page. It's gone too. Gave way to the Bar-B-Que house. And the Oasis, where I played my first football card with Dad, is now a parking lot.

Just had to ride by Netterville Elementary School. There Miss Leblanc first taught me to love teachers and teaching. The school is closed. Boarded up. Windows out. Paint peeling badly. Naturally, I suppose. Guess I should've expected it too. . . .

You can go home again. Things are just different, that's all. Oliver Emmerich, the brilliant and brave editor of our Deep South newspaper, has been deceased for years. And dad's health is failing. Frankie Lynch, one of my favorite friends of childhood and adolescence is dead. So is Prentiss Smith, a classmate I always liked. Went by their houses.

One last stop. My childhood church. How would it look? . . . The same. Unchanged. St. Andrew's Church stands! Still doing those things that last. Still changing young lives with the Word of God. Thankfully, mine is one.

Randall O'Brien, is pastor of the Calvary Church in Little Rock.



SECOND IN A SIX-PART SERIES

Preparing your preschooler

by Mark Kelly

Contributing Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Parents cannot begin too early preparing a child for the difficult choices she will face in life.

In fact, a child begins making decisions as soon as she understands the word "no" and has to choose whether to obey. As she decides—and experiences the results—she first begins to connect choices with their consequences.

Gordon P. Miller, author of *Teaching Your Child to Make Decisions*, offers advice to parents who want their preschoolers to grow up able to make good choices.

Set limits

Most parents understand the need to set limits for a small child who is unaware of the dangers around him. His wellbeing depends on his parents' watchful supervision and clear teaching about what behavior is acceptable.

However, many parents fail to state the limits of acceptable behavior in specific and clear terms. Miller reminds them to use words their toddler can understand.

He also counsels parents to be careful that their discipline does not damage their toddler's self-esteem. Limits can be couched in impersonal terms so that unacceptable behavior is discouraged without belittling the child, he says. A parent might say, "No. That's not safe," instead of "No. Bad boy."

Parents also should take the time to explain why a certain behavior is wrong, Miller says. He asserts that parents need to begin early helping a child understand consequences. A child needs to know more than just that mom and dad disapprove. He also needs to comprehend why an action is right or wrong, he says.

Establish consequences

Parents must see to it that actions have consequences for the child, Miller says. If a child is to learn from

her actions, she must experience the effects, he says.

Consequences established by the parents should be appropriate to the situation, Miller contends. Both positive and negative consequences should be established. Minor disobedience deserves minor punishment; major achievement merits major reward.

Parents who do not enforce limits in effect give up control over a child's behavior, Miller argues. Failure to enforce limits also keeps a child from understanding the connection between choices and consequences and sets up a situation in which respect for the family's values fails to develop.

Be consistent

Preparing preschoolers for making their own decisions requires consistency, Miller says. Parents confuse a child when they laugh at a behavior and label it "cute" one time, then turn around later and discipline the child for the same action. If parents are inconsistent in setting and enforcing behavior standards, the child cannot develop a sense of what is expected of her.

Miller points out that consistency is primarily established in the routines of daily life: getting dressed, eating meals, taking baths, etc. The repetition of daily activities helps a child understand what is expected in various situations on a day-to-day basis.

Be positive

Preschoolers need affirmation from their parents, Miller also notes. A child who is continually criticized for her mistakes—and never praised for her achievements—becomes convinced she cannot do anything right. Eventually she will be afraid to try anything on her own.

The approval of parents is extremely important to a small child. Parental approval provides the short-term reward a child needs to achieve. However, Miller warns against setting up parental approval as the goal of

making choices. A child who grows up making choices just to gain her parents' approval is not prepared for independent decisionmaking.

Consider the child

Parents must think of their child and not themselves when they set limits and mete out discipline, Miller argues. Setting limits without regard for a child's basic needs—security, love, and self-expression—means a parent is saying yes or no with more regard for his own needs than those of the child.

Besides that, parents must be careful to treat each child as an individual, Miller says. No child should be judged by a standard set by a sibling. Instead, each child should be measured by his own abilities.

Don't set yourself up

Finally, Miller warns parents about two traps they often set for themselves.

The first trap catches parents who set themselves up as ultimate authority figures, Miller says. Rather than giving a child the tools he needs to make his own decisions, the parents simply tell the child to do something "because I say so." This leaves the child only two choices: rebellion or surrender. Neither option prepares him to exercise responsibility and make good decisions on his own. He becomes either a young adult who deliberately chooses against his parents wishes or one who must have someone else make his decisions for him.

The second trap ensnares permissive parents, who set themselves up as a child's rescuers. Since they do not enforce limits, permissive parents end up insulating their child from the consequences of bad choices, Miller says. The child grows up with an unrealistic view of the world as a place where anything goes and his desires always come first. The parents take upon themselves the impossible task of always being there to clean up the mess.

NATIONWIDE BIBLE CONFERENCE

BRIGHT LIGHT FOR DARK DAYS

A CONFERENCE FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH

April 17-21, 1991 • Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, TN

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- Panel discussions • Workshops • Praise Worship Services



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Darrell Gilyard, Victory
Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas



Jerry Falwell, Thomas Road
Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia



Joel Gregory, First Baptist Church,
Dallas, Texas



Ron Dunn, Lifestyle Ministries,
Irving, Texas



Jim Whitmire, Bellevue Baptist
Church, Memphis, Tennessee



AN INVITATION

A second Nationwide Bible Conference is being offered because of the many requests from the 1990 "Decade of Destiny" Conference. The 1991 theme is "Bright Light for Dark Days." Preachers and prophets are being assembled to proclaim His Word during these days which are becoming gloriously dark. Bellevue Church will host pastors, deacons, laymen, and wives from across our land for a time of superlative Bible preaching, panel discussions and practical workshops. In the Name of Jesus and with great anticipation, I invite you to this timely conference.

Adrian Rogers, Pastor

FOR INFORMATION CALL
901-385-5720

or write

Nationwide Bible Conference
Bellevue Baptist Church
P.O. Box 1210
Cordova, Tennessee 38018



clip & mail

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Denomination			

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Anticipated arrival time		
Flight #		

AIRLINE DISCOUNTS: Special discounts on flights are available by calling Regal Travel at 1-800-562-2076. Please inform the travel agency that you are attending Bellevue's Bible Conference.

PREREGISTRATION NOTICE: While preregistration is not required to attend the conference, all who preregister by April 8 may purchase audio-cassette tapes of the conference sessions at a 50 percent reduction. Cut-off date for preregistration is Monday, April 8, 1991.

CHILD CARE: Child care for children ages birth through 3 is available by reservation. Call the conference office at (901) 385-5720.

Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

People

Ken Dawson has joined the staff of First Church in Hughes as minister of music and youth. A native of Georgia, he worked for six years as a bank examiner prior to committing to a full-time Christian vocation. He currently is a student at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis. Dawson and his wife, Deborah, have a daughter, Rebecca.

Ben J. Rowell, pastor of First Church in Rogers, recently was honored by the Rogers High School newspaper in an article, "The Voice of the Mounties." The article was in recognition of his 13 years of service as the announcer for the Rogers Mounties basketball and football home games.

Betty Lou McKean Gibson of Jonesboro died March 10 at age 59. She was a native of Texarkana, Texas, a homemaker, and a member of First Chapel of Jonesboro. She is survived by her husband, Carroll Gibson, who had served as director of missions for Greene County Association. The two had served from 1988 until 1991 with the Mission Service Corps, serving in Vermont under the auspices of the Home Mission Board. Other survivors include three sons, David Gibson of Stowe, Vermont, Daniel Gibson of Plano, Texas, and John Gibson of Florissant, Mo.; three daughters, Naeda Beth Prud'homme of Princeton, N.J., Susan Hollis of Paragould, and Jeanne Dial of Anderson, S.C.; one brother; one sister; and 14 grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the First Chapel of Jonesboro building fund or Williams Baptist College in Walnut Ridge.

Stephen Johnson is serving as pastor of Chapel Hill Church at DeQueen, coming there from Texas. He and his wife, Deborah, have four children, B.J., Aaron, Tiffany, and Timothy.

A.J. Cole began serving March 10 as pastor of Salem Church at Nunley.

Ardell Polk will begin serving March 31 as pastor of First Church in Hector. He and his wife, Rose, will move there from Booneville, Mo., where he has been serving as pastor of Santa Fe Church.

Ray Branscum of Little Rock is serving as pastor of Antioch Church, Beebe.

Mike Lee of London, Ky., has joined the staff of First Church in Searcy as minister of youth and single adults.

Mr. and Mrs. Norman Donaldson, members of First Church in Dardanelle, recently were named Yell County Citizens of the Year by the Dardanelle Chamber of Commerce.

Tom Walker has joined the staff of First Church in Russellville as minister of education and outreach. He is a graduate of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.

Pamella West of Warren is the recipient of a Stamps Baxter School of Music Award that entitles her to participate in a two week school, selecting private lessons of her choosing. The school will be held at Belmont College in Nashville, Tenn. She was selected from participants representing 26 states and two Canadian provinces. Her husband is Billy West, pastor of Ebenezer Church in Warren.

Jeffrey Paul is serving as pastor of Emmanuel Church, Blytheville. Currently a student at Mid-America Baptist Theological

Seminary, he has pastored Mount Herman Church in Sedalia, Mo. He and his wife, Julie, have two sons, Joshua, and Jacob.

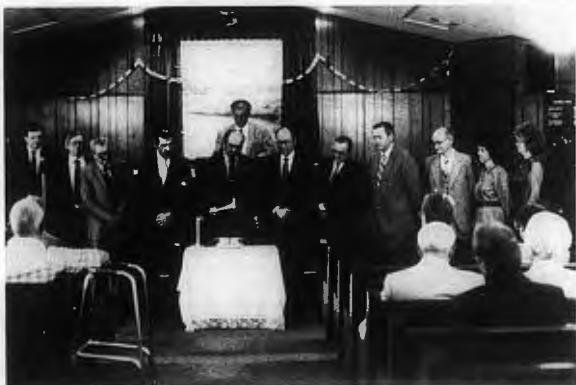
Johnny Smith is serving as pastor of Brown's Chapel, Manila.

Clay Doss has joined the staff of First Church in Horseshoe Bend as minister of music and youth, coming there from Third Street Church in Arkadelphia.

Briefly

Osceola Calvary Church celebrated payment of its indebtedness with a noteburning service Feb. 17 that was preceded by traditional morning services, a noon luncheon, and a fellowship hour. Travis Brasher and Eddie Clemons were morning speakers. Burning the note were Pastor Clemons, Carl Phillips, church treasurer, Jack Crosthwait, Bill Copeland, Ben Davis,

ABN photo / J. Everett Snead



Pleasant Hill Church, near Cabot, held a noteburning service March 10 to celebrate the congregation's complete freedom from indebtedness. In 1984, the congregation borrowed \$35,000 to construct a 3,200 square foot facility, which houses five classrooms, a kitchen, and a fellowship hall. In 1988, the congregation borrowed an additional \$10,000 to refurbish the children's educational space. Jim Edwards, director of missions for Caroline Association, delivered the morning message for the special occasion. Pictured are (left to right) Pastor Max Garrison, Al McGough, Ed Williams, John Perkins, Lynn Taylor, Ben Waddell, Jim Edwards, Ed Moore, Tom Waddell, Jan McGough, and Eva Waddell.

Dewey Davison, James Dean, Lee Fergus, Merlin France, James Mathews, Jim Wells, Tom Zielinski, Ray Adcock, Paul Burrows, Elmon McNabb, and Gerald Rainbolt.

Gravel Ridge First Church conducted a Victory Celebration service March 10 that included personnel from Little Rock Air Force Base and special music by wives of those deployed to the Persian Gulf.

Ruayan First Church in North Little Rock ordained Gene Narramore, minister of music, Tony Shoemaker, and Otis Jacoby to the deacon ministry Jan. 29.

North Little Rock Central Church recently held Home Mission Emphasis Sunday, featuring Luis Gomez, a home missionary from Deming, N.M., as speaker. The congregation also achieved a record Sunday School attendance of 547 and a record youth Sunday School attendance of 120. Ron Ford is pastor.

North Pulaski Association youth ministers coordinated an associational Sunday Night After Church rally Feb. 15 in which more than 500 persons from 15 churches participated.

Plainview First Church conducted a revival March 3-6 that resulted in a record Sunday School attendance of 108, the highest in more than five years, and 52 professions of faith. William Blackburn was evangelist. Tom M. Deere is pastor.

Elkins First Church ordained Pastor Paul Bond to the ministry Feb. 17. Council members were Farrell Ard, Larry Spencer, Terrel Gordon, and Bob Hendrix. Harold Gateley, director of missions for Washington-Madison Association, preached the ordination message, and Doyle Downing led the ordination prayer.

Western Hills Church in Fayetteville broke ground Feb. 24 on the church's three acre building site, located on Shiloh Drive in southwestern Fayetteville, where a parking lot and building site had been prepared. Pastor Frank Terry gave the Scripture reading and Harold Gateley, director of missions for Washington-Madison Association, led in prayer.

West Helena Church held a Family Fest March 10-13, featuring Ron Ford of North Little Rock, Mack and Brenda Deaton, Beck Weaver, Diana Ramey, and Vicky Adkins as leaders. Samuel Adkins is pastor.

White Hall First Church opened a Bible and tract ministry booth Feb. 24 at a flea market, located at the intersections of Highways 270 and 65. Wayne Myers and Orville Phillips reported the distribution of 214 pieces of literature.

Grady First Church has launched English classes for Hispanics. Approximately 15 adults and 13 children are participating in the classes, directed by Noreene Reed, who is being assisted by six teachers and child care helpers. Raymond Reed is pastor.

Linwood Church at Moscow is sponsoring Spanish classes on Sunday afternoon with Pastor Mark Fricke serving as instructor.

Calvary Church of West Memphis has begun a ministry in the Belvedere Apartment community that is averaging 15 each week in the Bible study directed by Charles Linebarger. Gary Hare is pastor of the sponsoring church, and Neal Stevens, ABSC church extension worker, is assisting with the work.

South Bend First Church near Jacksonville will conduct a Lay Renewal Weekend April 12-14.

South Side Church in Fordyce recently ordained Wade Totty to the preaching ministry.

North Arkansas Association mission team will be in Guatemala City June 8-15 to assist with the construction of Antloch Church. Representatives from six churches will be led by L.B. Atchison, associational director of missions.

Elkirk Church at Bergman recently purchased and installed new padded pews. Robert Norton is pastor.

Wattensaw Church near Lonoke ordained Jeff High and Jim Jones to the deacon ministry March 17. J. Everett Sneed, editor of the *Arkansas Baptist*, preached the ordination message. John Lee is pastor.

Bella Vista Church has purchased a 1991 Dodge van to be used in outreach ministries.

Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock ordained John Cooper, Norman Eanes, and Chuck Homan to the deacon ministry March 24. Stephen Hatfield is pastor.

Woodrow Church at Prim has voted to give 4 percent of its offerings to Little Red River Association and 6 percent to the Cooperative Program.



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Prayer requests

"After they prayed . . . they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (Ac. 4:31 NIV).

The Evangelism Training Day in Texarkana reported training 355 teenagers and adults in personal evangelism with 19 professions of faith. Randy Branley says, "Thank you for including this request in your Bold Mission praying."

Prayer requests:

—Pray for the youth who will attend the Youth Convention at the Convention Center in Little Rock, March 29-30.

—Pray that those attending the Golden Age Evangelism Conference will commit themselves to bold witnessing.

—Pray for the Acteens attending the 1991 Encounter for a deep commitment to missions.

Continue to pray for the Simultaneous World Mission Conferences: April 28-May 5, East, and May 12-19, West. Pray for the missionaries as they present missions and pray that those hearing will respond by renewed giving and personal commitment to mission involvement.

Pray for BSUs across Arkansas as they actively work to raise money for summer missions. Students sponsor their fellow students to serve in Arkansas, across the U.S. and around the world.

Pray for Arkansas student missionaries who will be commissioned at LTC April 7. These students serve for 10 weeks this summer as our ambassadors.

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Empowered!

1991 WMU Convention challenges members

by J. Everett Sneed
Editor, Arkansas Baptist

The approximately 600 women attending the 1991 Arkansas Baptist Woman's Missionary Union Annual Meeting were in agreement that this year's program was "truly challenging and helpful." The theme for the meeting was "Empowered."

The speakers emphasized how women can be empowered by the Holy Spirit so they can carry out the task the Lord has for them to do.

Key speakers for the March 15-16 meeting, which convened at First Church, West Memphis, were Dr. Dellanna O'Brien, executive director of the SBC Woman's Missionary Union, and Dr. Fred Loper, a physician who serves with the Home Mission Board as a national missionary for medical missions.

In each of O'Brien's four messages, she chose a woman from the Bible who had been very successful in her service to the Lord. In her first message, O'Brien chose Priscilla who was successful because: (1) she knew the Holy Spirit; (2) she knew God's Word; and (3) she knew her own gifts. O'Brien encouraged those present to follow Priscilla's pattern.

O'Brien also used a contemporary illustration of a woman who was serving the Lord in an unusual way to illustrate each of her addresses. In the first address, she shared the experience of Mary Norstorm whose husband Dwight is a businessman in China. Mary is a physician who has been living there with him. For several years, Dr. Mary Norstorm has treated people there free of charge. This provides her with a unique opportunity to share the gospel with individuals. Currently, Dr. Mary Norstorm is completing a residency in Chicago.

"At what age should parents begin to teach missions?" asked O'Brien as she began her second address. In response, she said, "You should start 20 years before a child is born."

O'Brien pointed to Timothy's mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, as individuals who assisted in preparing Timothy to be a great Christian leader in the New Testament era. She observed that Susan Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley, taught nine children for six hours a day for 20 years. Her husband, at one time, was in debtors prison. But, in

spite of poverty and adversity, Susan prayed and studied the Bible two hours every day. "If mothers are to succeed in giving proper guidance to their children, they must devote time to it," declared O'Brien. WMU organizations such as Mission Friends, Girls in Action, and Acteens also can be of great assistance in giving proper direction to children.

In O'Brien's third address she gave a Bible study on Lydia. Lydia was a wealthy business woman who was a part of a guild. She knew the art of extracting purple from the shell fish. She was a devoted woman who came to the river to worship God each Sabbath Day. After hearing the gospel, Lydia was baptized and later invited Paul and others to her home. Lydia dared to

those attending worship services range from those holding Ph.D. degrees to street people with no home. Women from Denmark are studying at the Uptown Church on how to worship. O'Brien closed by asking the question, "Do we dare to risk?"

In her closing message, O'Brien brought a Bible study based on the book of Esther. She observed that Esther literally laid her life on the line to protect God's people (the Jews) who were in exile. O'Brien asked the question, "What was Esther's secret?" First, Esther saw the opportunity that belonged to her alone. Second, Esther knew that her source of strength was in prayer. Finally, Esther took the risk knowing that the only safe place was in the center of God's will.

ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed



Dr. Fred Loper (left), national missionary for medical missions, looks at the home missions display with Diana Lewts and Cheryl Kelly at the 1991 WMU Convention.

become a Christian in spite of the ridicule that it might have brought her.

Churches that minister to multi-ethnic or mixed socio-economic groups may, like Lydia, draw criticism from more traditional models. The Uptown Baptist Church in Chicago has ministries to all kinds of people. Currently, worship services are being conducted in seven languages. There are ministries to all kinds of hurting people.

O'Brien challenged those present to risk for all of the unlovely people in the world. She quoted from Mordecai, Esther's cousin, who said, "Who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Es. 4:14c).

Fred Loper is a home missionary who serves as a national missionary for medical missions. A national missionary serves throughout the United States, working to

ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed



Dellana O'Brien (left), executive director of the SBC Women's Missionary Union, shares a moment with Julia Kötner, executive director of the Arkansas WMU.

develop missions in his area of expertise. Dr. Loper seeks to develop medical missions throughout the United States.

Loper grew up in numerous Southern Baptist churches since his father was a Marine. His desire to be a missionary developed while he was in medical school. He joined the Navigators and a church which he characterized as a congregation "whose heart and soul was missions."

Currently, Loper is a member of the Good Shepherd Church in Oklahoma City. He showed a series of slides on the interracial church which is ministering to all kinds of people with a wide variety of needs. He said, "Missions rubbed off on me while I was in medical school. I learned to desire to be in a church like the Good Shepherd. Missions is all about the gospel." Loper closed by asking, "Is your church a

place where missions can rub off on people?"

In Loper's second message, he showed a series of slides on a health clinic in El Paso, Texas. The clinic sees over 9,000 patients each year. All of the work is done by volunteers. On Sunday, the clinic is a church. Loper closed by challenging those present to act the gospel, as well as to speak the gospel.

In Loper's closing address, he talked about "risk taking." He said that in today's society we needed to deal with issues like teenage pregnancy, AIDS, suicide, and etc. He challenged those in attendance to go to the nasty places. He said, "No matter how dirty the place is, Jesus has already been there."

During the business sessions, the officers and board members of the Arkansas WMU were unanimously elected for 1991-92. Marjorie Grober of Little Rock, will serve as president; Ina Miller of Jonesboro, vice president; and Polly Reynolds of Gould, recording secretary. Those in attendance also gave a record offering to purchase magazines for home, foreign, and retired missionaries from Arkansas. This year's offering was \$3,486.89.

Carolyn Porterfield, state Baptist Women/Baptist Young Women Director, presented a feature entitled "The Place of Empowering" in each of the four sessions. Porterfield emphasized the power of the Holy Spirit that is available to every Christian. A Christian obtains the guidance of the Holy Spirit through prayer.

On Friday evening following the Parade of Flags, Porterfield observed that the Foreign Mission Board has the earth divided into three worlds: World C which is the Christian world, World B is the evangelized non-Christian world, and World A is the non-evangelized world.

World A contains almost 24 percent of the world's population. These people

possess only 5 percent of the world's income. Seventy percent of its inhabitants are Moslem. There are 30 closed countries in this world. This includes 2,000 unreached people and 1,000 "un evangelized metropolises. Of the 2,000 unreached groups, 450 of these have no churches. In the Parade of Flags there were 48 of 120 countries where Southern Baptists have mission work. The black flags which were presented represented the countries of the world that sit in darkness without the light of the world.

ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed



Sue Lindwall (left), missionary to Guatemala, talks with Beverly Coad, former missionary to Mali. Coad directed and presented special music, including one piece composed for the annual meeting by her son, David Coad.

Porterfield closed with a challenge for each person present to ask God to lead her to pray for the difficult areas, places which have limited access and untouched people.

Sue Lindwall, missionary to Guatemala and president of the Guatemala WMU, challenged women to be involved in the Guatemala/Arkansas Partnership. Lindwall said, "Women can do anything that God wants them to do. Get involved, serve the Lord here, and come to Guatemala and help us."

Testimonies were given by volunteers who had gone to Guatemala, and by volunteers serving in literacy work and caring center, nurturing children for mission service. Testimonies were also given by the Buck Rusher Family (Dr. Rusher is a Jonesboro physician) who have gone to Africa several times, and by Acteen Activators who have assisted with the migrant mission centers in Arkansas. An Acteen Activators Abroad team plans to go to Guatemala this year.

ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed



Marjorie Grober, state WMU president, stands with the Disaster Child Care Unit. The unit, built by the Baptist Men involved with Disaster Relief work, was stocked with supplies by women attending the annual meeting. Members of the Baptist Nursing Fellowship will man the unit.

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Sometimes forgotten

Local dentists minister along the Amazon

by J. Everett Sneed
Editor, Arkansas Baptist

"It's a grueling experience, but it also is extremely rewarding," declared Dr. J.D. Patterson, a Searcy dentist, regarding his five mission trips to Brazil. His daughter, Dr. Beth Patterson, a pediatric dentist, also of Searcy, has accompanied him on three trips. The younger Patterson was unable to go on the last two trips because of her work on her residency.

In spite of the obvious hardships in traveling by boat up the Amazon from Manaus to Tefe (approximately 500 miles), both of the Pattersons desire to continue this activity. These mission trips combine both the physical and the spiritual. Patterson estimated that on the five trips there have been more than 3,000 patients who have received dental work. Some of these patients have received extractions more than one trip.

Professions of faith vary greatly. On the first trip, J.D. Patterson recalls that there were only four professions of faith. But in 1989, when Evangelist Jim Wiley of Searcy accompanied them on the trip, there were 112 professions of faith.

Beth Patterson described a typical day on the Amazon. She said, "You arise at 6 a.m., cook breakfast, and bathe in the muddy Amazon."

Immediately after personal activities such as eating and bathing are completed, the first dental clinic began. At noon the Pattersons stopped for lunch, and then continued with a dental clinic. Soon after the evening meal, a church service was held. Finally, when the day was over (9:30-11 p.m.) they boarded the boat and started moving to their next location.

The boat trip boat was rough. The boat rocked and rolled and it was hot, since there were no fans to even stir the humid air. There also were bugs, mosquitoes, and cockroaches. When the boat docked at 6 a.m. the next morning, they had to be ready to start everything all over again.

J.D. said, "By the time you are nearing the end of the trip (12 to 14 days) you begin to wonder 'Is it worth it?' But, after you get to Manaus, take a bath (with no hot water), and sleep for about 14 hours, you are ready to do it all over again the next year."

Patterson gives a great deal of credit for the success of the trips to Southern Baptist Missionary Luther Williams, who has been with him on all but one of these trips. Williams sees that the boat is functioning,



On Aug. 22, 1990, Dr. J.D. Patterson received an award from the American Dental Association for his benevolent work in Brazil. Pictured (left) are Dr. Beth Patterson, a pediatric dentist in Searcy, and her father, Dr. J.D. Patterson (right), of the same dental clinic.

acts as translator, and has been the preacher in the evening services on several of the trips.

The Pattersons have many fond memories from their trips up the Amazon. For example, they have become fast friends with a man named Gideon, who lives at Catua. Catua has a church and three houses and Gideon is the patriarch of the surrounding area. Gideon, a lay preacher, preaches to the people of the area when there is no one else to do the preaching. On a recent trip, Patterson held a dental clinic in the afternoon and the people hung their hammocks on the back of the church so that they could stay and hear Pastor Luther (missionary Luther Williams) preach. The people also were pleased because they had an electric keyboard and Vonda Clark, a 1988 Ouachita graduate, was there to play her horn.

Two years ago, after J.D. Patterson held an afternoon dental clinic, Evangelist Wiley got up to preach the evening service, but people kept coming into the little church house. Finally, the pulpit area was filled and there was no more room. Elcias, the boat pilot who also plays the electric guitar, nudged Patterson and directed his attention to the trees surrounding the church. All of the trees were completely filled with people who could not get into the church.

Patterson observed that he prefers to work with the people out in the jungle area rather than those in the towns. In the

towns, he might see 100 patients and there would be 60 people in the service that night. In the jungle, he might see only 60 people in the dental clinic, but that night there would be so many that they couldn't get in the church. There are three reasons why the Pattersons see so many patients on the mission trips: (1) dentists are few and far between; (2) the dentists that are in the area usually are not well trained; and (3) the Pattersons' service is free.

Dental training in Brazil runs the gamut of highly-trained, skilled dentists to those who have very little training. Many of the dentists in the outlying areas do an apprenticeship with a dentist and then begin practicing dentistry on their own.

Beth Patterson tells of a boy in his early teens who had a tooth broken off even with the gum line. The dentist who had seen him had told him that it would be impossible for the roots of the tooth to be removed. She said, "I am not a dental surgeon, but it was very simple to remove the roots from his gums."

J.D. Patterson tells of a young dentist, who had a one-year apprenticeship with another dentist, coming to him with an article on cleaning teeth. J.D. explained to him the process and the young man said that he had no instruments to clean teeth. J.D. told him to come to church that night and he would give him a couple of instruments. After the service, J.D. demonstrated to the already practicing dentist how to clean teeth.

J.D. observed that out in the jungle areas medical facilities in general are quite primitive. One young Christian man named Junior, whom the Pattersons had met on previous trips, died before they could get him to Manaus. The only way out of the area where the 25 year-old lived was by bus boat.

J.D. Patterson observed that mission trips like this are not for everyone. But both of the Pattersons look forward to going again. They believe "this is a way that we can demonstrate our Christian faith in an effective way and enrich the lives of sometimes forgotten people."

The Pattersons are available to speak on Volunteers in Missions. They have a slide presentation that requires approximately one hour, plus time to field questions. They also can give first hand accounts of our foreign mission dollars at work. Contact Drs. J.D. and Beth Patterson at 333 East Market, Searcy, AR 72143; telephone 501-268-8634.

Page elected to head CCF

Larry L. Page was elected March 5 to serve as executive director of the Arkansas Christian Civic Foundation. He will begin his duties May 1. He is the fifth executive director of the foundation and succeeds John Finn, who retired in January.

The Christian Civic Foundation works in areas of moral concerns, including alcohol, other drugs, pornography, gambling, abortion, euthanasia, secular humanism, attacks on the traditional family, and other moral issues.

Page has a vision for the Christian Civic Foundation. He said, "It is a unique organization which is an extension of churches that enables Christians to coordinate their efforts in furthering moral concerns."

Page observes that vigilance is necessary on the part of the Christian community. True *agape* is tough love which involves absolutes. Christian love must be compassionate, but not allow morals to become relative to the situation.

Page feels that the foundation has the opportunity to proclaim the truth so as to prepare the world for the reception of Christ. He said, "The world looks for churches to stand firm against the philosophy which says, 'If it feels good do it.'"

Page desires to develop a "salt and light" philosophy. Salt not only is a preservative, but also is an irritant. When truths are proclaimed there will be some confrontation. Foundation members must be prepared for hostility because sin rebels against righteousness.



Page

The Christian Civic Foundation is composed of more than a dozen mainline denominations plus independent congregations. Page desires to increase the involvement in the organization. He said, "We can multiply our effectiveness as we recognize our mutuality. Although there are some differences, we can cooperate in the areas of moral concerns.

This can make the Christian community more effective in opposing the forces of evil."

Page feels that it is essential that the foundation continue its tradition of providing meaningful, credible, relevant information. These materials assist individuals, churches, and denominations in being effective in efforts to promote civic righteousness.

Page holds a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Arkansas in Little Rock, graduating magna cum laude. He also holds a jurisprudence doctorate from the University of Arkansas in Little Rock and is licensed to the bar. Past experience includes law clerk and assistant probation officer, deputy prosecuting attorney for Pulaski and Perry Counties, and currently vice-president and staff attorney for the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.

Page is married to the former Mickie Madden. The couple has three daughters, Sarah, 13; Jenny, 11; and Katie, seven.

Page expressed excitement about his new position. He said, "As Christians work together we can have a dynamic impact on Arkansas for the causes of Christian righteousness."

Looking Ahead

March

29-30 State Youth Convention, *Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock (DT)*

April

4 Golden Age Area Conference, *Fairfield Bay First Church (M/Ev)*

5 Golden Age Area Conference, *North Little Rock Central Church (M/Ev)*

5 Golden Age Evangelism conference, *Fairfield bay (Ev)*

6 Golden Age Evangelism Conference, *North Little Rock Central Church (Ev)*

6 "Carry the Torch" Rally Evangelism Training Day, *Bryant First Southern Church (Ev)*

7-9 Church Music Excellence Conference, *Springdale First Church (M)*

12-13 Ministry to Children in Crisis Conference, *Little Rock (DT)*

12-13 Acteens Encounter, *North Little Rock Park Hill Church (WMU)*

15-16 New Pastor/Staff Orientation, *Baptist Building, Little Rock (Ad)*

15 Area Summer Youth Conference, *Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia (DT)*

16 Area Summer Youth Conference, *Williams Baptist College, Walnut Ridge (DT)*

17 Area Summer Youth Conference, *Baptist Building, Little Rock (DT)*

18-19 Minister of Education Retreat, *DeGray Lodge, Arkadelphia (DT)*

18-19 State Youth Minister Retreat, *DeGray Lodge, Arkadelphia (DT)*

20 State Young Musicians Festival, *Little Rock Geyer Springs First Church (M)*

22-23 Key Leader Meeting, *North Little Rock Park Hill Church (Ad)*

26-27 RA Congress, *Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia (Bbd)*

28-5/5 Simultaneous World Missions Conference (Bbd)

Abbreviations:

Ad - Administration; Bbd - Brotherhood; CL - Church Leadership; DT - Discipleship Training; Ev - Evangelism; M - Music; Min - Missions; SS - Sunday School; SA - Stewardship/University; Stu - Student; WMU - Woman's Missionary Union

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State recognized for church starts

Arkansas was recognized at the Annual National Church Extension Leadership Conference as being in the top 10 states in the nation in new church starts for the second year in a row, according to Church Extension leader Jack Ramsey.

Arkansas was number seven in the number of new starts and number three in percentage of starts of population. There are presently 63 on-going missions in Arkansas. Ten missions constituted as churches in 1990. There are presently 60 (4.6 percent) of churches involved in direct mission sponsorship for new churches.

According to Ramsey, Arkansas Baptists need at least 100 more direct sponsors to help start churches in 43 identified areas where new churches are needed.

Car needed

A car is needed for Louise and James Brillhart, missionaries to Togo, West Africa, who will be on furlough, beginning June 27.

The couple will reside in a missionary home owned by Immanuel Church in Little Rock.

Any interested person or church willing to loan them a car may contact her mother, Pat Bowen, at 501-945-4474, after 6 p.m.

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Children in crisis

April 12-13 conference will deal with 'hot' issues

Stress, child abuse, divorce, AIDS, death, lack of self-esteem—all of these are issues on the agenda of the first "Ministering to Children in Crisis Conference" to be conducted by Arkansas Baptists on April 12-13. The conference will meet at First Church in Little Rock with sessions on Friday at 9:30 a.m., 1 p.m., and 7 p.m. Saturday sessions will be at 8:40 a.m. and 1:15 p.m., with adjournment at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday.

The conference is planned primarily for pastors, church staff, parents, and teachers of preschoolers and children in every area of the church program. Weekday Early Education workers also are invited to attend. "The conference offers help for all who are concerned about the issues that impact the lives of children birth through sixth grade," according to Robert Holley, director of the ABSC Discipleship Training department. The conference is sponsored jointly by the ABSC Discipleship Training department and the preschool-children's section of the Discipleship Training department at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Keynote speakers include Andrew D. Lester, professor of psychology of religion at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Lester, a recognized authority in the field, is author of *When Children Suffer: A Sourcebook for Ministry with Children in Crisis and Pastoral Care with Children in Crisis*. He will speak on "What children in crisis need

from adults," "What keeps pastors from caring for children," and "The impact of crisis on a child's faith." Bill Young, supervisor of the preschool-children's section of the Discipleship Training department, BSSB, will speak on "Children and divorce" and moderate a panel on the subject, "So, what's a church to do?" He will also lead conferences on "Stress and today's child" and "Helping a child cope with abuse."

Other conference leaders include Hazel Morris, associate professor of childhood education, Southwestern Seminary; Jan Mosely Hill, minister of childhood education, Broadway Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas; and Rob Sanders, children's specialist, Baptist Sunday School Board. Glen McGriff, director of ABSC Crisis Support, will join other program leaders in a panel-forum during the closing session of the conference. Larry Page, staff attorney, Arkansas Baptist Foundation, will discuss the moral and legal implications for a church with respect to child abuse.

The registration for the conference is \$20, which includes a noon luncheon at the host church on Friday. Reservations should be made by April 9 through the ABSC Discipleship Training department, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; telephone 501-376-4791, ext. 5160. Information about lodging is available on request.

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These words have echoed through the ages by those who have experienced mission education camps. Many missionaries recall a particular time at a GA camp as the point where they heard and responded to God's call to missions. Camp

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Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union conducts mission education camping experiences to assist churches in their tasks of teaching and leading girls in missions. This summer, two Mother/Daughter Camps will be held on June 7-8 and June 14-15. Two GA Mini-Camps will be offered July 8-10 and July 10-12. All camps will be held at Camp Paron. For more information, contact Arkansas W.M.U., P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203.

Missionaries appointed

Three Arkansas couples were among the 29 people named missionaries by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board Feb. 12 at Brington Baptist Church in Virginia.

David and Suzanne Adams will live in Germany, where he will start and develop churches.

Born in Texas, Adams grew up in Rogers and considers it his hometown. He is a graduate of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., and the University of Missouri in Kansas City.

Mrs. Adams, the former Suzanne Helmer, considers Kirkwood, Mo., her hometown. She is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee and Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville.

The Adamases have two children, Julie Suzanne and Emily Kay.

Danny and Brenda Caldwell will live in equatorial Brazil, where he will start and develop churches.

Caldwell considers Lantana, Fla., his hometown. He is a graduate of Palm Beach Community College in Lake Worth, Fla., Francis Marion College in Florence, S.C., and New Orleans Baptist Theological

Seminary. He has been pastor of Immanuel Church in Fayetteville.

A Florida native, Mrs. Caldwell, the former Brenda Carmichael, is a graduate of Connors State College, Warner, Okla.

The Caldwells have three children, Danny Wilson Jr., Matthew Thomas and Rachel Elizabeth.

Garey and Paulette Scott will live in Guyana, where he will start and develop churches.

A native of New Mexico, Scott has been associate pastor of Immanuel Church in Pine Bluff and First Church in Forrest City; he has also been a summer missionary in Arkansas.

Scott is a graduate of Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas, and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City.

Also reared in New Mexico, Mrs. Scott, the former Paulette (Polly) Greer, attended the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. She also was a summer missionary in Arkansas with her husband.

The Scotts have three grown children. All the families will go to Rockville, Va., in March for a seven-week orientation before leaving for the field.



The Adamases



The Caldwells



The Scotts

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CLC clears path for PAC merger

NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission trustees have approved unanimously bylaw changes that would pave the way for the Southern Baptist Convention in June to merge the Southern Baptist Public Affairs Committee into the Christian Life Commission.

The proposed merger would reduce from three to two the number of organizations that represent the SBC on religious liberty issues. The 1990 convention in New Orleans expanded the Christian Life Commission's program assignment to include religious liberty. The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is the other organization with an endorsed religious liberty assignment.

The terms of the proposed merger call for temporarily enlarging the CLC's trustee board by nine members and transferring the remaining nine members of PAC's board of trustees to the CLC's board. As the former PAC trustees complete their terms of service on the CLC board, their positions would be eliminated on the CLC board. Thus, by 1998 the CLC board would return to its present size of 32 members, after ballooning to 41 temporarily.

Previously, PAC consisted of 19 members, who also were members of the board of trustees of the BJC. The BJC recently adopted a new representation formula which reduces the number of SBC trustees from 19 to 12.

The proposed SBC plan calls for eliminating immediately seven ex officio PAC trustees and one at-large member, who is an agency executive. In June when the merger is scheduled to be voted upon, two of the 11 remaining trustees will complete their terms of service on the board.

After the merger, the CLC's board would choose trustees to serve on the BJC's board.

Although the merger was approved with little discussion, later during the CLC's semi-annual board meeting the subject of prayer in public school surfaced. No trustee action was taken on the issue.

In other action, trustees authorized CLC staff to invite to the CLC's 1992 annual seminar all announced, major candidates for the U.S. presidential race in 1992, regardless of their stand on abortion. The CLC's 25th annual seminar will be March 2-4, 1992, in Washington.

Trustees also asked the staff to consider the possibilities of installing a toll-free phone number for Southern Baptists wanting quick information on pending legislation in the U.S. Congress and to design a mailing program that would rapidly inform Southern Baptists about legislation.

Across the Country

April 30 deadline to commit for Crossover Atlanta

April 30 is the deadline for volunteers to sign up for Crossover Atlanta, the evangelistic effort preceding this year's annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The multi-faceted event recently has been expanded to include feeding Atlanta's homeless and poor from mobile disaster relief units. For the main evangelistic blitz, churches from outside the Atlanta area will team up with churches inside the Atlanta area. Due to coordination requirements, churches planning to participate must send a letter of commitment to the HMB no later than April 30.

Churches or individuals willing to participate in Crossover Atlanta should write to Bobby Sunderland, Home Mission Board, 1350 Spring St. NW, Atlanta, Ga. 30367.

South Carolina exec announces retirement

Ray P. Rust, 65, executive secretary-treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, announced his retirement plans effective Feb. 29, 1992.

A native of Shreveport, La., Rust assumed the position of executive secretary-treasurer March 1, 1982. Prior to that he was president of Anderson (S.C.) College for four years.

Nevada exec to retire

Ernest B. Myers, the Nevada Baptist Convention founding executive director-treasurer, will retire June 30, 1992. Myers, 65, has been Nevada's chief executive officer since January of 1979.

Myers worked 14 years with the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board as a church architectural consultant. Prior to coming to Nevada, he was director of assemblies development and architectural consultant with the Arizona Baptist Convention.

Texas Baptist board continues funding for Joint Committee

The 193-member executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas voted March 12 to provide Cooperative Program support for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs by means of a "pass-through allocation" in the BGCT Christian Life Commission budget.

Texas Baptists provided \$56,700 of the Joint Committee's budget in 1991 and the administrative committee probably will recommend about \$63,000 in Cooperative Program allocations for next year.

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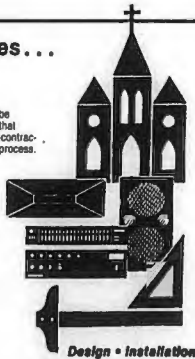
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New hymnal launched

by Charles Willis
Baptist Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)—Nashville's Grand Ole Opry House was temporarily transformed into a cathedral as the words and music of "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" filled the hall March 14 to start the unveiling of *The Baptist Hymnal*.

About 7,500 Southern Baptists and guests from across the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, Japan, Canada, Guam and Puerto Rico attended two identical evening sessions concluding Praising II. The four-day music and worship celebration marked the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's centennial year, the church music department's 50th anniversary and the hymnal's publication.



Photo / Jim Venneman

Member of Arkansas Music Men and Singing Women perform during the Sing-Through-The Hymnal marathon March 14 in Nashville, Tenn.

Congregational singing from souvenir editions of the hymnal was led by Wesley L. Forbis, hymnal editor and director of the board's church music department, and joined by singing groups from 17 states, The Centurymen and an orchestra.

Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas, and a member of the hymnal committee since its formation in 1987, was presented a copy of the hymnal. W. Hines Sims, editor of "Baptist Hymnal, 1956 edition," and Mark Edwards, president of the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference, also received presentation copies. William J. Reynolds, editor of "Baptist Hymnal, 1975 edition," had planned to attend, but was recovering from knee surgery.

Gary Cook, vice president for church programs and services at the board, noted that the Ryman Auditorium, the first home of the Grand Ole Opry, had originally been a church. "This week, the Grand Ole Opry House has become a cathedral," he said.

Earlier in the week, Praising participants heard a concert dedicated to the memories of Oklahomans James D. Woodward, Paul and Judy Magar and Mary June Tabor, who were killed in a Jan. 14 airplane crash. The concert was given by the 216 musicians in the Oklahoma Singing Churchwomen and Singing Churchmen groups. Woodward, director of the Churchmen since its founding in 1961, had planned the concert to celebrate the new hymnal.

HMB starts new campaign

ATLANTA (BP)—A campaign to start 15,000 Southern Baptist congregations in the next 10 years was launched by trustees of the Home Mission Board during their spring meeting.

In other action, trustees approved a nationwide "Key Church" concept, voted to phase out the positions for local board members, allocated additional funds from last year's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, elected officers and approved minor restructuring for the Atlanta staff, including the addition of four new positions.

The "15,000 Campaign" was suggested by HMB President Larry Lewis and unanimously approved by trustees. It calls for a special emphasis on church starting, with a goal of starting 1,500 new congregations every year for 10 years.

If successful, the campaign would assure that Southern Baptists meet their Bold Mission Thrust goal of having 50,000 churches and missions by the year 2000. Currently there are 43,419 churches and missions affiliated with the convention.



BP photo / Mark Sandlin

New officers of the Home Mission Board pictured with HMB President Larry Lewis (third from right) are Johnny Jackson, Little Rock, Ark., chairman; Ron Phillips, Hixson, Tenn., first vice chairman; Linda Principle, Brandenburg, Ky., assistant secretary; Alice Sanders, Bamberg, S.C., secretary; and Bob Curtis, St. Louis, Mo., second vice chairman.

Trustees voted to increase the 1991 budget by \$1.7 million, bringing the total budget to \$80.6 million. Primary funding for this increase will come from an

overage in 1990 Annie Armstrong gifts and from monies for delayed projects.

In other action, trustees elected new officers, listed with the photo above.

Moderates hold meetings

Fellowship solidifies, Alliance holds convocation

Fellowship

ATLANTA (BP)—The Baptist Fellowship, to this point a coalition of moderate Southern Baptists, is making plans to solidify its organization by incorporating as a legal entity, establishing a commissioning agency for world missions, and developing a permanent Coordinating Council to replace its interim Steering Committee.

That steering committee, meeting in Atlanta March 7-9, announced what it termed "significant decisions" for the future of The Fellowship. Committee members agreed on a statement of purpose, a proposed constitution and bylaws, a system of representation for its permanent council, and a working document that outlines the rationale for a proposed Missions Center.

"Our intention is not to start a new convention," said Daniel Vestal, Atlanta pastor who is chairman of the steering committee. "That is not our deliberate intention but I'm not going to be naive or dishonest and say that is not a possibility. But I do see a new association of Baptists that at this point is existing within the Southern Baptist

Convention. What will happen in the future, only God knows."

When moderates met in Atlanta last August for their first convocation, they elected the 70 members of the interim steering committee and approved an alternative missions funding program, the Baptist Cooperative Missions Program, Inc.

According to printed material released by The Fellowship, about 125 churches have contributed about \$1 million to the Baptist Cooperative Missions Program to date. Most of that money has gone to causes normally funded through the Cooperative Program. Under the new budget, some of that money is expected to go to support the proposed Missions Center and other expenses of The Fellowship.

Alliance

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptist Alliance members have strengthened relations with American Baptists and eliminated a reference to the Southern Baptist Convention in their statement of purpose.

The action was taken during the group's

March 14-16 annual convocation at Grace Baptist Church in Richmond, Va.

About 500 members registered for the three-day meeting and appeared ready to abandon confrontation with conservative leaders in the SBC and seek a new, though still unspecified, future.

Additional ties with the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. (ABC), estranged from the Southern Baptist Convention since 1845, was one widely-discussed option. SBA Executive Director Stan Hasted said he expects a married couple or two single persons financially supported by the Alliance to be appointed as missionaries by the American Baptist board of international ministries as soon as next year.

Discussions with American Baptist leaders concerning Sunday school curriculum are continuing and Alliance representatives meet regularly with a task force created by the ABC to monitor changes in the SBC.

A recommendation from the SBA board of directors that members at the convocation "affirm cooperative ventures in ministry and missions" with the ABC was approved without dissent, as was a move to eliminate a constitutional provision dedicating the Alliance to "the continuance of our ministry and mission within the Southern Baptist Convention."

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Convention Uniform

Faith celebration

by Bob Parker, interim director, Christian Civic Foundation

Basic passage: 1 Corinthians 11:17-29

Focal passage: 1 Corinthians 11:26

Central truth: Observance of the Lord's Supper celebrates his sacrifice for our sins.

Regardless of one's theological belief regarding who may partake of the Lord's Supper, the most important truth to remember is that it is indeed the Lord's Supper and not some other person's or group of persons.

While observing it our minds and hearts should be focused on what our Savior did for us on the cruel Roman cross. The victory we have over sin and Satan attained by his sacrifice is really something about which to celebrate with fellow believers.

In the first of the basic passage, we note that there should be no divisions or factions as we come together as a church to observe the Lord's Supper.

Those who get their "kicks" out of being divisive should at all times be ashamed of themselves; but even more so as the time draws near to partake of the Lord's Supper.

Our faith in Christ should especially encourage us to be united in purpose at this special hour. Such an attitude will greatly assist in reminding all how ridiculous it is as Christians to be factious or divisive.

Paul then gives great emphasis to the importance of remembering how Christ gave his body and blood for our redemption from sin and death.

Everyone of us should gratefully remember that his death was for us all. How thoughtless for anyone not to be sincerely appreciative.

In conclusion, Paul spoke of this time of celebration as being a time of self examination also. One way to conduct this testing is to read the listing of the words of the flesh and fruit of the Spirit (Ga. 5:19-23). The latter should be clearly evidenced in our lives rather than the former. If the works of the flesh are preeminent, one needs to remember that partaking in such an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment unto himself!

As humans we happily celebrate many special occasions or events, but none as important as the Lord's Supper.

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Life and Work

A lesson in humility

by Curtis Honts, Lakeshore Drive Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: John 21:15-22

Focal passage: John 21:15-17

Central truth: Peter learns humility through his boasts and denial.

As we pick up this week's passage the apostles have been riding a very active emotional and spiritual roller coaster the past several days. They had been at the top when Jesus rode into Jerusalem in what we call the triumphant entry. Through a week of confrontations with religious leaders and the revelation that one of their own would betray Jesus they hurtled downward, bottoming out with the crucifixion.

A few days later, locked in a house for fear of the Jews, they suddenly soared again when Jesus unexpectedly stood in their midst, resurrected from the grave. For Peter, felt everything more intensely, the ride was even more volatile. Besides these common experiences with the others, Peter had both boldly proclaimed his willingness to die for Jesus then denied three times that he even knew him.

Now he faces another fall as Jesus questions him about his love for his Lord. Three times Peter had denied knowing Jesus and three times Jesus now asks about his love. Verse 17 tells us that Peter "grieved" over this series of questions, but we also see that he learns from the experience. Let's examine this briefly.

Primarily, Peter has learned some humility. In verses 15 and 16 Jesus asks Peter if he loves with a godly, sacrificing love. In addition, verse 15 includes the qualifier "more than these."

Peter had boasted that if all others forsaked Jesus, he at least would remain faithful. After having seen himself in action a few days earlier when he denied knowing Jesus, Peter now humbly answers that he loves Jesus with a brotherly, friendly love and makes no comparison between his love and that of the other men.

Peter's experience demonstrates the virtue of humbleness of spirit Romans 12:3 tells us not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. Peter was so certain about himself that he made a claim that added to his shame and pain when he denied Jesus. As we attempt to live boldly for Christ, let us bear in mind the adage "there, but for the grace of God, go I."

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Bible Book

Long live the king

by J. Troy Prince, First Chapel, Jonesboro

Basic passage: 2 Samuel 1:2-4, 11-12; 2:1-4a, 8, 9

Focal passage: 2 Samuel 1:2-4; 2:1-4

Central truth: God's purpose is not defeated by the death of a particular leader.

Israel had been locked in deadly combat with the Philistines. Its army had been routed by the Philistines and fighting had become fierce. The sons of Saul had been slain. Troops were in disarray and people were fleeing for their lives.

Philistine archers wounded King Saul badly. In anguish Saul requested his armor-bearer to take his life in order to keep the Philistines from making sport of him. The armor-bearer refused Saul's request. Saul then committed suicide (2 S. 1:1-4).

A second account of Saul's death (2 S. 1:4-10) varies somewhat from the first one. David secured this information from a nameless Amalekite who claimed that he had taken Saul's life. Later that day, the Amalekite was put to death because he had "slain the Lord's anointed."

Following a time of grief and lamentation, David asked for directions from the Lord about the next move he should take. God instructed him to go up to Hebron with his household and followers. There the men of Judah came and anointed him king over the house of Judah.

David faced an uphill battle as he began rebuilding the country. Internal strife was certain. The Philistines were lurking nearby to take advantage of the new monarch and his strife-ridden country.

This lesson shows us that the life of Saul was brought to an end because of his disobedience to God's will. We also are made aware of the fact that a particular leader can be replaced with a better one. No one person is indispensable to God's work. Something must be said about God's anointed ones. They will ultimately given an account to the one who anoints them. It is best for us to leave judgment and justice in the hands of God. Finally, we get an insight into David's magnanimous spirit. There is no evidence of triumph when he learned of Saul's death; he also mourned the loss of Israel's monarch.

Following a time of grief and lamentation, David asked for directions from the Lord about the next move he should take.

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Convention Uniform

Gifts at work

by Bob Parker, Interim director, Christian Civic Foundation

Basic passage: 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 12-26

Focal passage: 1 Corinthians 12:12

Central truth: All gifts of the Holy Spirit are important and should work together as one.

To begin with, note from the first of the basic passages that there are many gifts and activities of the Spirit found among believers. There is no evidence that one is more important than another. Each gift should be exercised for the benefit of the whole body—the local church.

The coordinating agent is the Holy Spirit. It was he who, to begin with, gave the various gifts to the believers for the profit of all, not for just a few.

Paul next points that all in the church with various gifts are to be of one spirit. This included all; Jews, Greeks, slaves, and free. We today should consider this truth more seriously. There would be much less prejudice if such a spirit of unity was more prevalent among fellow believers.

Two more great truths need to be considered from these passages, regarding the working of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

First, there should be no schism or division in the body with many, diverse gifts of the Spirit. One of the greatest, if not the greatest, problems in the church at Corinth was their tendency toward division. Such a problem greatly hinders the working of the gifts of the Spirit.

In the next place, and finally, the unifying work of the various members of the body will cause rejoicing. Such rejoicing will not occur otherwise.

All can now learn great lessons from these God-inspired words of Paul, just as did those in the early church at Corinth.

In both the Old and New Testaments, both men and women of great gifts from God are noted. In some cases, such as was true with Kings Saul and David, these gifts were sadly misused. The sowing-reaping principle is clearly seen as a result.

We must prayerfully seek God's guidance and power to properly use the gifts he gives us. There may be a lost or backslidden person who could be helped spiritually and/or physically if we did so. Our society and the whole world needs to see a practice of what is preached by those of us who are called Christians.

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Life and Work

The body of Christ

by Joseph Jones, First Church, Prairie Grove

Basic passage: Ephesians 1:1-2; 6:19-24

Focal passage: Ephesians 1:1

Central truth: As saints, our position is in Christ Jesus.

The Apostle Paul sometime around the year 6 A.D. sent out four letters which were to be delivered in four cities located in Asia Minor. These letters would later be known as the prison epistles, because he wrote them while a prisoner in Rome. The epistle to the Ephesians was the first of these prison epistles to be written.

Ephesians is the most impersonal of all of Paul's letters. In fact, the words "to the Ephesians" are not in some of the letter manuscripts which would indicate that this epistle was probably to be read in several churches. This would seem to be the case, since the contents of the letter reveal church truth in general, rather than a problem or question of a specific church.

Paul begins his epistle by asserting his position as an apostle of Jesus Christ and that his commission to that office came from Christ himself. This is why I believe that Paul was Jesus' choice to replace Judas. In Acts 1:15-26, Matthias was chosen by vote and not by direct commission from the Lord. Other requirements were (1) to have seen Jesus after his resurrection, (2) to have a special inspiration, (3) had supreme authority in the church, and (4) had power to work miracles. Paul certainly fulfilled all of these requirements. There are no apostles in the church today because no one can meet the requirements.

I've already stated that this epistle wasn't written just to the Ephesians, but to all the saints who are in Christ Jesus. A saint is someone who has been set aside for the sole use of God. The Greek word for saint is "bagios" which means holy or separated. If you have been saved, then you are a saint. Now you may not be a "good" saint, but you are a saint because of your position in Christ and not because of the way you act. It is a wonderful thought for a Christian to realize that God has called him out from among the multitudes.

The last phrase in verse one ("In Christ Jesus") is the theme of Ephesians. The Christian is joined together with Christ. Praise God for the grace and peace he gives us because of our position in Christ Jesus.

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Bible Book

A step toward unity

by J. Troy Prince, First Chapel, Jonesboro

Basic passage: 2 Samuel 3:1-29a; 4:5-8

Focal passage: 2 Samuel 3:1, 20-29a; 4:5-8

Central truth: God's anointed leaders succeed in spite of political intrigue and personal feuds.

Casual reading of the larger Scripture passage reveals the continuing barbaric practices during this period of Old Testament history. Human life was not spared if it interfered with ambitions of opportunistic men.

David had been anointed King Judah by representatives of the people and consecrated to his office at Hebron. His reign from this area lasted for seven and one-half years.

During this time, hostilities between the house of Saul and the followers of David intensified. David's forces prevailed, while the power of the house of Saul decreased.

Abner, a kinsman of Saul, was the power behind the throne of Israel. He claimed to have no interest in becoming king, but did emerge as a head-strong power broker with David, Ishbosheth, the elders of Israel, and the house of Benjamin.

According to Abner, his actions were to "accomplish for David what the Lord has sworn to him (2 S. 3:9). His final conference with David ended as Abner promised to deliver the support of Israel.

Joab, fresh from a victorious raid, learned that David had struck a bargain with Abner. Joab, angered by the circumstances, plotted the death of Abner, which occurred at the city gate. David denied any complicity in the murder, and called for a time of mourning over the death of Abner.

Violence continued as Ishbosheth was murdered. His head was carried to David, who promptly had the murderers executed. Their mutilated bodies were publicly displayed as a warning to other potential opportunists seeking favor from the emerging new king.

David demonstrated that he would unify Judah and Israel by conciliation, rather than by force and compromising his convictions. Patience learned as a shepherd would be useful as he dealt firmly, but gently with leaders in a developing nation. A successful leader must have a compassionate heart and a shrewd mind, if he is to lead and unify his people.

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Court to hear FMB appeal

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—The Virginia Supreme Court has agreed to hear the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's appeal of a \$1.56 million judgment against it in a lawsuit brought by a former missionary to Africa.

The court also agreed to hear the former missionary's appeal of negligent breach of contract charges against the board that were dismissed prior to the July 1990 trial of her lawsuit in Richmond Circuit Court.

The former missionary, Diana Sue Wade, originally sought \$141 million from the Foreign Mission Board when she filed suit in behalf of her four children in April 1988 in Virginia, where the board is headquartered. Claims amounting to \$100 million of the \$141 million later were dismissed. At the conclusion of last July's five-day trial, a jury awarded the four children \$1.56 million in damages.

Wade filed her own lawsuit last November seeking an additional \$5 million in damages. That trial is scheduled to begin Aug. 12 in Richmond Circuit Court.

Wade has contended she and her children, now ages 18 to 23, suffered trauma because board officials learned her then-husband, G. Thomas Wade Jr., was sexually abusing their oldest daughter but did not disclose it to Wade. She contended her husband continued to abuse the daughter as well as two other daughters.

During last year's trial, Foreign Mission Board attorney Lewis T. Booker of Richmond argued board officials who handled the family's case acted reasonably under the circumstances.

1990 'Lottie' below '89 level

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—For the first time in 53 years, Southern Baptists will fail to surpass their giving from the previous year to the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, according to projections.

A projected 1.4 percent downturn in Lottie Moon receipts from 1990—instead of an expected 7 percent increase—will leave the

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board with about \$79 million, or \$7 million less than it had planned to spend in 1991.

"It's hard to decipher what's happening as far as giving among Southern Baptists is concerned," said FMB President R. Keith Parks. "The truth is, we don't know the reasons. We don't have any kind of actual, statistical, scientific data."



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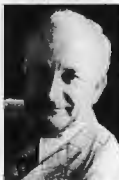
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WORLD

Noriega professes Christ

(BP) photo / William Garcia

by Greg Warner & Mark Wingfield
Baptist Press

MIAMI (BP)—Manuel Noriega, the man Americans love to hate, says he has found the love of God in an American prison.

The deposed Panamanian dictator testified to his Christian conversion in documents written and signed from his isolation cell in Miami, where he has spent the last 14 months awaiting his June trial for conspiracy to smuggle cocaine.

"I received Jesus Christ as my savior the 15th of May of 1990 at 11 a.m. in a small room, like unto a cave, in the Metropolitan Correctional Center of Dade County, Fla.," Noriega wrote in Spanish.

Noriega's spiritual conversion, which has been kept quiet for 10 months, has been substantiated by his attorney, a paralegal aide, a Miami Baptist layman, and the two Southern Baptist evangelists who led him to profess Christ. The five are among the handful of people permitted to visit Noriega, who is held in virtual solitary confinement in the prison's four-room hospital annex.

The layman, Tony Ponceti, has been Noriega's spiritual tutor since August, visiting the general weekly and leading him through a program of intensive Bible study.

After spending about 100 hours with Noriega in the one-on-one teaching sessions, Ponceti is emphatic about the convert's sincerity: "I am fully persuaded."

Noriega reportedly has asked to be baptized but he must wait until wary prison officials approve the request and find a way to have the general immersed without compromising the air-tight security that surrounds him.

Noriega's trek to faith started with a New Testament that was mailed to his prison cell by Texas evangelist Clift Brannon in January 1990. His profession of faith four months later culminated a lifelong spiritual odyssey that reportedly included dabblings in voodoo and the occult.

"We did not have an antagonistic prospect we won to Christ. We had one who was seeking God," said Brannon, who visited Noriega in his prison cell May 15-16, with fellow Texas evangelist Rudy Hernandez serving as translator. "He was reaching out to God, and we were there to tell him about the forgiveness through Jesus Christ," recalled Brannon.

The visit was requested by Noriega, whose background is Roman Catholic, after he received the New Testament in January 1990 from Brannon.

After a series of phone calls and letters over the next months, Brannon and Her-



Manuel Noriega

nandez were approved for a visit to Noriega's tightly guarded cell. According to Noriega and the evangelists, the group spent a tearful three hours in a room adjacent to the indicted dictator's cell May 15.

While prison chaplain Hiram Irtzarray looked on, the two evangelists reportedly led Noriega through the basic tenets of the Christian gospel, ending with Noriega praying in Spanish for forgiveness.

During a second visit July 19, in the presence of Brannon and Hernandez, Noriega wrote and signed a brief testimony.

The four-paragraph statement begins, "Before Christ came into my life, the realities of the materialistic world had the priority in my daily living." Noriega cited "illusions of grandeur and a heart hardened to the gospel," and added, "Jesus was to me only an image of that which was learned from traditionalism."

Now, Noriega wrote, he believes Jesus "is the son of God who died on the cross for our sins. . . and who above all things is my savior and has mercy on me, a sinner."

Although the testimony has been circulated in a few churches since July, Noriega has not been allowed to speak to the press since he surrendered to American agents in Panama Jan. 10, 1990, and was whisked to jail in Miami.

Only recently did Noriega's attorney, Frank Rubino of Miami, give permission for his story to be told to the *Florida Baptist Witness*, and Baptist Press.