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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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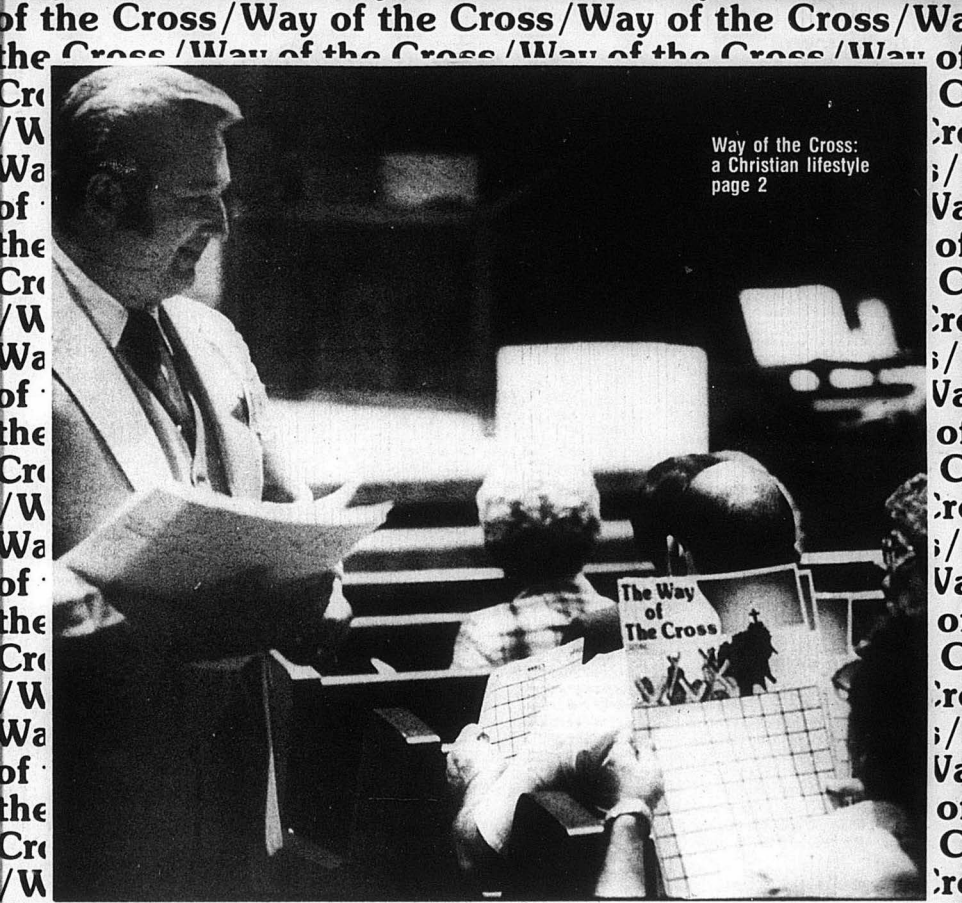
February 23, 1984

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Way of the Cross:
a Christian lifestyle
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February 23, 1984

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE



Every Baptist would agree that a deacon is one of the most important people in a church. Across the years, however, many ideas have developed as to his role. Some have viewed him as a church business manager, while others have seen him as one who keeps the pastor straight. A few have felt that the system is a way of honoring outstanding men.

The word "deacon" in the New Testament is derived from the Greek word "diakonas," meaning "servant." In the time of Paul life was cheap. A man's power or station in society was often measured by the number of servants he owned. The word "servant" might be spoken like "leper." The word was given a new and lofty meaning by the inspired men of the early church, for a deacon is a servant of the Most-High God.

It is our belief that the seven men appointed in the sixth chapter of Acts were deacons, although the name was not specifically assigned to them anywhere in this passage of scripture. These men were chosen out of a definite need. The Greek widows were complaining that the Hebrew widows were receiving a larger portion of the resources (Acts 6:1). The disciples said that it was not desirable that they should leave off the proclamation of God's word to distribute resources to the needy. The deacons functioned well. They solved the problem of fellowship as well as relieving the load of the apostles.

By the time of the writing of Philippians, the office seems to have been well established, for Paul addresses, "... all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1). As an ecclesiastical structure developed, by the end of the second century, the deacon's position had changed. From the position of lay servant he was moved to the lowest position of professional clergy.

The New Testament gives us great insight into the office, as it outlines the requirements for those dedicated servants of God. A deacon is to be one who is grave (serious). That is, he has a definite Christian purpose (I Tim. 3:8). This does not imply that he should not enjoy a good joke. Every pastor agrees that a sense of humor helps. He, also, is to be doctrinally sound (I Tim. 3:9), mature in Christian service (I Tim. 3:10), of a Christian family (I Tim. 3:12), of controlled speech (I Tim. 3:8), temperate (I Tim. 3:8), and a good steward of his possessions (I Tim. 3:8). In short, the requirements for a deacon are the same as those for a preacher, with the exception of being "apt to teach" (I Tim. 3:2).

Many concepts have developed concerning the function of deacons. They are often referred to as the "board of

deacons." This term conveys the idea of decision-making, implying that they should have responsibility of dealing with the business affairs of the church. On the other hand, it should be clearly noted that there are no levels of authority in a Baptist church. Every member is equal to every other member, and the congregation, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, must have the final decision in all matters.

Historical circumstances influenced the work of the deacons greatly. In the 1930's, for example, more than half of our congregations had the services of a pastor only one or two Sundays a month. Someone had to care for the business of the church. In most instances this became the deacon's responsibility. History reveals that they did a good job in these difficult and unorganized situations.

The Bible indicates, however, that deacons have a much more important function. The church business manager concept may have been helpful and valid for small churches of the past that had a pastor's service only on a part-time basis. In most of our churches today deacons should serve in a much wider, more vital and exciting role.

A planned deacon spiritual ministry is a system for reaching every family unit through visitation. The program, called "Deacon Family Ministry Plan," has as its main feature the organization of the church family into groups. Each of these geographic areas or equal groups is assigned to a deacon, who accepts as his personal responsibility ministering to these families.

Many benefits are derived from a "Deacon Family Ministry Plan." Each family will be ministered to more adequately. In most churches the pastor can not and should not try to visit all the families of the congregation regularly. A more frequent visitation program by the deacons will strengthen the fellowship and provide opportunity for families to more adequately understand the church's work.

If deacons are the spiritual leaders of the church, who will care for the business of the congregation? The business becomes the work of the committees. Each committee can utilize the special abilities of various members. This approach will involve many more people in the work of the church.

When the deacon's spiritual ministry concept is implemented, it will multiply the effectiveness of the church. It will free the pastor and the church staff, like the apostles in Acts, to give themselves to meditation and prayer, to teaching and training, and to caring for persons in times of crisis.

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

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

VOLUME 83

NUMBER 8

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Betty Kennedy Managing Editor

Erwin L. McDonald, Litt D. Editor Emeritus

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

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

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The Southern accent

Jerol Swaim

An anniversary year

The year 1984 conjures up various emotions. To the Orwellian reader, there has been the fear that Orwell's prophecies might be more on target than off. However, for this writer, 1984 has been a year to anticipate with delight. Not only will this year mark the twentieth year of being a part of the ministry of Southern Baptist College, but it is also the year in which I will complete the twentieth year of service in a layman's role as minister of music at First Church, Pocahontas.

Surely being in the "twentieth year" on the staff of the Pocahontas First Church gives me some license to reminisce just a little. It is very exciting to be a part of a church that is experiencing growth, baptizing new Christians into a warm fellowship and building for the future.

Under the direction of our pastor, Mark Tolbert, our church has expanded her ministry by calling a seminary-trained minister of youth and outreach. Bro. Henry, as we lovingly call him, has led our youth

in outreach and growth through Bible study, mission trips and various activities. The pregame breakfast for the high school football team became a regular event at our church.

Growth in Sunday School and preaching attendance in the last two years has resulted in over-crowded classrooms and severe parking problems. Responding to a challenge from our pastor, within the last eight weeks our people have contributed over \$40,000, over and above regular tithes and offerings, for the purchase of property adjacent to the church to provide additional classrooms and parking spaces.

Admittedly, some of us "older heads" thought we would do well to raise \$12-15,000. Yet the Lord worked miraculously in so many of our lives to provide the money to give in a time of high unemployment, a depressed economy and Christmas spending demands.

However, perhaps the most rewarding and encouraging aspect of being a part of

this Christian fellowship is to have my life touched by so many faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: choir members that are so loving and caring, bus workers who give their Saturday mornings, dependable teachers and concerned deacons.

Yet, most rewarding is the fact that it is my privilege to worship with and know so many faithful ones who may not sing in the choir, teach or "deac," but continue so consistently in their Christian witness day after day, month after month, and year after year. My, it is gratifying.

1984! To me it means 20 years of being privileged to serve in a local church and 20 years of working with a faculty and administration who likewise enjoy being meaningfully involved in the programs of their respective churches.

Jerol Swaim is vice-president for academic affairs at Southern Baptist College.



On the moral scene

John Finn

Compulsive women gamblers

Gamblers Anonymous estimates there are 12 million Americans who are compulsive gamblers, a fourth of them women.

Among the reasons given for the increase of gambling among women are availability of gambling opportunities and availability of credit.

In many states, gambling opportunities are readily available. Arnold Wexler, vice-president of the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, says, "Ten years ago, women had to get a baby sitter and go to the track or find a finko. They'd take what they could from the grocery money, or even prostitute themselves. Now they have money, can borrow it and can play the lottery at the local grocery store or drug store."

Among the many reasons for our opposition to state lottery gambling is that the lottery tickets become readily available. A gambler could purchase the tickets at the check-out counter of many grocery stores. The stores, of course, would receive five or

six percent of the sale.

It appears to me that these stores, with the legal sanction of the state, would be in the business of pushing gambling and helping to create compulsive gamblers. This writer would choose to take his business to a store not participating in the state lottery gambling.

The profile of a woman gambler is described by the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey as:

"In debt for an average of \$85,000.

"Intelligent with a 120 IQ—highest among addiction.

"Making the first bet at 13.

"Often cross, addicted to alcohol, drugs or food.

"120 times more likely to try suicide than the general population.

Compulsive gamblers suffer, but their families always suffer the worst.

In Baltimore, Md. (a lottery state) there is a gambling treatment center. The director is a specialist in how gambling affects fami-

ly life. He says, "There is a high incidence of verbal and physical abuse between spouses. The family tension is often fueled by poverty, harassment from bill collectors, and constant moving."

One Los Angeles grandmother, who is now celebrating her 19th year in Gamblers Anonymous, admits that her compulsion was so great that she robbed her son's piggy banks and cashed in her daughter's savings bonds to gamble. After her power was cut off and the banks closed her accounts, only a call to Gamblers Anonymous saved her from suicide.

Our state government has the responsibility to alleviate suffering and make possible a good life for us. Surely the citizens of Arkansas will refuse to approve state lottery gambling, for it adds to the suffering and does not promote the good life.

John Finn is Executive Director of the Christian Civic Foundation of Arkansas.

You'll be glad to know...

by Don Moore

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH							APRIL							MAY							JUNE						
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Next month in Arkansas

...Small churches are not forgotten! Southern Baptists may always be a denomination of small churches. We have never felt embarrassed over this fact. To the contrary, we have been gratified that we have been a people who go to the people where they are. Of course, there is certainly no virtue in remaining small, if there is potential for growing larger. In most of our communities there is potential for growth.



Moore

Small does not mean a poor facility, poor leadership or poor vision. In our travels the past year, we have been thrilled at what we have found in our small churches. There are needs in small churches, just as there are in larger ones. Limited staff, limited facilities, limited programs, and limited budget affect nearly all of our churches. This tends to be true more often of small church than of larger ones. This means that what the small church does needs to be carried on with greater planning, skill and efficiency.

The number of educated and professional people in small churches has increased and will increase as people flee the noisy, crime-ridden cities. Leadership, programs and activities in the small church must be constantly improving if these people are going to respect our churches and participate in them. Successful retired people in sparsely settled areas want not only acceptance, but a challenging and worthy ministry in the small church.

Special conferences are available for leaders of small churches this summer. The times and places for Small Church Administration Conferences are July 2-7, Gorieta, New Mexico and Aug. 19-24, Ridgecrest, North Carolina.

Planning, growth, motivating volunteer leadership, deacon ministry, leadership development, managing conflict, managing your time, preaching and worship, all of these will be discussed from the small church perspective. This is a great opportunity for pastors to improve their understanding and skills. Churches should invest in the growth of their pastor's ministry by making it possible for him and his wife to attend these conferences.

Thank God for our small churches.

Don Moore is Executive Director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

February 23, 1984

March 2-3, State Handbell Festivals, South at Pine Bluff First Church and North at Southern Baptist College at Walnut Ridge. First year for two locations for the mass ringing and individual choir adjudication.

March 4-11, Week of Prayer for Home Missions and Annie Armstrong Offering. Focus on Southern Baptist missions in the U.S. Offering has an Arkansas goal of \$650,000 and a national goal of \$29 million.

March 5-8, Area Strengthen Family Conferences. Meetings at seven locations to help pastors, church staff and Family Ministry Committee members prepare for strengthening family emphasis and Christian Home Week. Rallies by the association at six of the towns are also for church families.

March 9-10, Drama Festival Workshop, Camp Paron. First state-wide event to address ministry through clowning, puppetry and drama. For church staff, volunteer leaders and members of performing groups.

March 11-18, Youth Week. SBC-wide emphasis to highlight the present contributions and potential of youth in the local church. May include young people assuming leadership responsibilities.

March 12-15, Continuing Witness Training seminar, Benton First Church. One of two national training seminars this year in the state for pastors, church staff and laypersons for the evangelism program. (Registration is full.)

March 16-17, Volunteer/Part Time Music Leader Workshop, Camp Paron. Helps for music directors, pastors and

instrumentalists from churches with no full time music staff.

Way of the Cross Sunday. Suggested day to begin the six-week Sunday School attendance/enrollment campaign.

March 19, Regional 8.5 X '85 Growth Clinic, Spradling Church at Fort Smith. Helps for age-group workers and a look at Growth Spiral for Sunday School general officers.

March 20-21, Woman's Missionary Union Annual Meeting, Immanuel Church, Little Rock. Inspiration, education and challenge for missions, including a message by BWA General Secretary Gerhard Claas. A new state president will be elected.

March 22, Regional 8.5 X '85 Growth Clinic at West Memphis First Church. (See March 19 event.)

March 23, BSU Leadership Training Conference, Camp Paron. Training for newly-elected campus officers, plus election and installation of state officers and commissioning of student summer missionaries.

March 26-29, New Member Training Workshops, in Harrison, Jonesboro, Springdale, West Memphis, Little Rock, Pine Bluff, Hope and El Dorado. Pastors, church staff, Church Training Directors and leaders of new member training will be shown basic materials and approaches for starting and maintaining training.

March 30-31, Acteens Encounter, Pine Bluff First Church. One of two this winter for teen young women. Home and foreign missionaries will provide information on varied cultures at the "global village."

Cooperative Program report: January

Summary for Jan., 1984

	Year	January Gifts		
		\$ Over (under) months budget	% increase over previous year	
Received	732,079.01	1979	6,169.47	17.64
Budget	902,777.75	1980	(11,072.38)	(5.04)
Under	(170,698.74)	1981	83,762.48	12.51
		1982	59,055.26	8.72
		1983	5,348.31	2.41
		1984	(170,698.74)	(12.71)

Perhaps this huge deficit reflects the fact that some of our churches were late in sending in the January receipts. The books close on the seventh or the Tuesday following the seventh of each month. I know that all churches will give special attention to this situation.

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

Dale Cowling

has been named director of development for Youth Home Inc., an organization which provides residential care and professional treatment for adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17. Cowling is a former pastor and administrator of Little Rock Second Church.

Ben Elrod

is serving as interim pastor of the Central Church in Hot Springs.

Scott Meador

is serving Lee Chapel Church at Percy as minister of music and youth. A native of Bonham, Texas, he is a senior at Ouachita Baptist University.

Lloyd Shelton

is serving as pastor of Valley Church at Searcy, coming there from the Rossville Church. He is a graduate of Mid-America Baptist Seminary and the Mid-South Bible College. Shelton and his wife, Dianna, have two children, Jeffery and Angela.

J. B. Collingsworth

has joined the staff of Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith as associate pastor/youth. A Louisiana native, he is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Mrs. Collingsworth was formerly director of Baptist Women/Baptist Young Women for the Georgia Baptist Convention and an editor of *Royal Service Magazine*. Both are noted Southern Baptist conference leaders.

Alton Ray Hipp

has resigned as pastor of the Lone Star Church at Heber Springs.

Roger Jones

is serving as pastor of the Mount Zion Church at Banner. Jones and his family reside in the Beloit Bay area.

Herman P. Sandford

is serving as interim pastor of the Prescott First Church. He is chairman of the English department at Ouachita Baptist University.

Brenda Balch

is serving the Fort Smith Trinity Church as part-time youth director. She is a student at Westark Community College.

Wilburn Griggs

has resigned as pastor of Clarks Chapel at Paragould.

buildings

Concord Church

has voted to remodel its auditorium and to install central heating and air conditioning units. Improvement costs are estimated to be \$50,000.

Monticello Second Church

has launched a three-year improvement program that will include the purchase of an organ, a sound system and heating and air conditioning units and the repairing of the stained glass windows. Pastor John Robbins reported that improvements are estimated to cost approximately \$50,000.

Cedarville Church

recently burned a note in celebration of the payment of a 10-year indebtedness in five years. Participating were Ruben Miller, Fred Coleman, pastor Garland Hobbs, Marvin Fry, Ford Rogers and Kenneth McClendon.

Sunset Lane Church

in Little Rock will dedicate its new sanctuary Feb. 26. Services will be held from 2 to 4 p. m., according to pastor Edward Edmondson.



Searcy Temple Church held a noteworthy service to celebrate retirement of its indebtedness. Burning the note were James Kitts, chairman of the deacons; Joan Ghent, treasurer and Dean Wallis, a trustee.

briefly

Hot Springs First Church

held deacon ordination services Jan. 29 for Roy Coulter and Chuck Lane.

Baring Cross Church

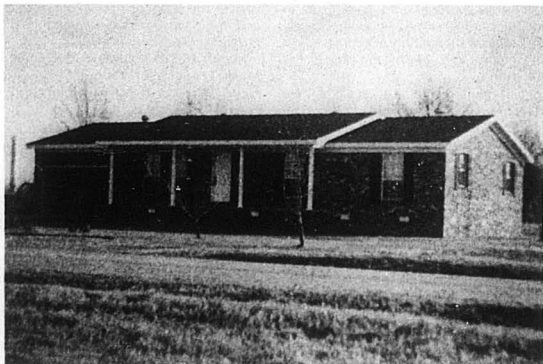
in North Little Rock has established a ministry to the hearing impaired.

Peel Church

women met Jan. 15 for the purpose of organizing a Baptist Women's group. They were assisted by Phyllis Powers, White River Association WMU director, and Jean Mabury, association BW director. Isabel McKibben was elected president. Named as group leaders were Dorothea Hicks, mission action; Joann Brown, mission study and Sylvia Owens, mission support.

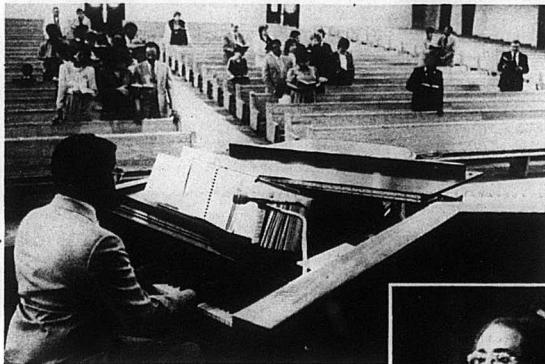
Fayetteville First Church

will host a John McKay concert at 7 p. m. Feb. 26.



Newark Southern Church recently purchased a three bedroom home, located across the street from the church. Pastor Manuel Macks and his family are now residing in the parsonage.

Little Rock black mission meets for first worship



ABN photos / Millie Gill

Grace Mission, a new black congregation on Little Rock's southwest side, met for its first worship service Sunday, Feb. 5. The congregation, sponsored by Life Line Church, hopes to reach many of the estimated 4,000 blacks living in that area of the city. Only two other area congregations serve blacks. Mission pastor Paul Williams has been working toward this first worship service since July, visiting families in the neighborhood.



(Top left) Pianist Andrew Calyin and a congregation of about 40 persons join in their first congregational hymn, "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior". (Left) Pastor Paul Williams delivers the morning message. (Far left) Life Line pastor Gerald Taylor welcomes Dorletha and David Baylock to the service. Shirley Williams, the mission pastor's wife, looks on. (Bottom left) Life Line members Mike and Donna Whitson visit with Mrs. Williams before the service. (Below) The congregation responds to an altar call prior to the morning message.



Church singles ministry needs corrected vision

Minister sees singles in different light

by Betty J. Kennedy

A myopic approach to single adult ministry by Southern Baptist churches not only causes the church to be derelict in meeting singles' needs, says Dale Younce, but it robs the singles of serving the church.

Younce, now pastor of Kingsway Church in Mobile, Ala., has been on the staff of a church directing ministry to—and through—singles. He has observations and advice about the church's relationship to this growing segment of the population.

When he was in Little Rock to speak to the state singles conference he explained that the first thing the church and leaders must do is recognize how large a group never-married, divorced and widowed adults are becoming.

Kingsway, a mission church less than a year old, is 50 percent single adult families, and the congregation is located in the fastest growing section of Mobile, a prime location for singles.

Younce cites cultural changes in the growth of the proportion of singles in the population: more acceptance of delaying marriage, more economic independence for women, and more and more divorces (though divorces declined for the first time in 20 years in 1982 and 1983).

This means more people whose needs are the same as married adults, and must be met, but in a different framework, Younce observes. "Church leaders may continue to see single adult ministry as advanced youth ministry, and not as reaching to persons with potential and gifts for service."

"I see a large resource we will not develop if we view singles only as ministry objects," the pastor explains.

Kingsway Church singles are right in the middle of the church's life, Younce observes. A single Registered Nurse supervises the preschool work, and a single serves on the Finance Committee, for example.

"Singles often have trouble seeing themselves as ministers, as part of the functioning body of believers," he thinks. But his experience is that single adults can serve well in all parts of the structure.

Church leaders' tendency has been to define "adult" as one who has married, Younce says, and that may be one of the reasons for singles' lack of confidence in their ability to contribute.

Another barrier to including singles in full participation in the life of the church that Younce notes is attitudes toward singleness through divorce. "Some pastors and church leaders do not have the vision that allows them to minister unjudgementally," he feels. "Some see unjudgemental ministering as en-

dorsing sinfulness." He compares that attitude to marking the divorced person as a criminal, though he or she has not been convicted of a crime.

Though he advocates churches dealing redemptively with the person who is divorced, Younce prescribes a far better remedy—preventing divorce. "We need to do two things at once," Younce says, "teach persons how to have good marriages, and then minister to those broken by divorce." "We have taught that marriage should be permanent but we have not taught how."

He likes the illustration of ministering that long-time Houston pastor Jaroy Webber gives. Webber advocates the church working to place a barrier at the edge so families do not fall into breakup, but he also wants paramedics on the other side to minister to the hurting.

Another step for churches ministering to singles Younce suggests is to accept the role of meeting the social needs of singles. "Wouldn't it be better to seek freedom from loneliness in the Lord's family rather than in the singles' bar?" he asks.

Why do negative attitudes about singleness crop up in the church? Younce cites culture for some of the difficulty. "Our Christianity has been colored by culture to the extent that we cannot see how the Gospel mandates our attitudes about ministering without first judging," he maintains. And that bears on ministry to singles, he thinks, because church people who view them as objects of ministry only will miss the chance to help singles develop as disciples of Christ and vital members of his body.

The remedies offered by Younce begin with training church staff. "Seminary is where we need to start," he says. "Curriculum normally does not have a place to teach about ministry to singles adults." He would like to see courses added.

Single adults have changed, he notes, but ministry lags behind. "God is creative in meeting needs of persons for whom Christ died," Dale Younce concludes, "and those of us who serve should be too." "We may need to change the culture, or we may need to move outside of the culture to meet needs."



Participants in the Single Adult Conference visit with conference leader Dale Younce after a presentation. He said churches must not view singles as only objects of ministry.

ABN photo / Millie Gill

Betty Kennedy is managing editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.



Frank Pollard, the new president of Southern Baptist's Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in San Francisco, spoke to a group of supporters in Little Rock Feb. 2 after leading Ouachita Baptist University in its annual Religious Focus Week.

ABN photo / Mark Kelly

New lesson writer begins

Gene Crawley, the pastor of First Church, Newport, begins this week writing for the Life and Work series of Sunday School lessons in Lessons for Living.



Crawley

Ordained by First Church, Forrest City, Crawley is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He currently is enrolled in the Doctor of Ministries program at Southwestern.

He has pastored churches in Palestine and Marvell, as well as Newport.

He and his wife, the former Andrea McCollum, have four children, Tad, Meg, Elizabeth and Marc.

OBU academic scholarship deadline announced

Applications for academic scholarships at Ouachita Baptist University for the 1984-85 academic year are due by March 1, Harold Johnson, director of student financial aid, has announced.

Current students, incoming freshmen and transfer students desiring to apply or re-apply for a scholarship may obtain an application form from the student financial aid office, OBU, Box 3776, Arkadelphia, AR 71923; telephone (501)246-4531, ext. 570.

Current students holding the Centennial or ACT scholarships will not need to re-apply.

Southern, Ouachita receive Sears grants

Southern Baptist College and Ouachita Baptist University were among nine privately supported colleges and universities in Arkansas which recently received unrestricted grants from the Sears-Roebuck Foundation.

More than \$7,500 was distributed in the state. The foundation released more than \$1.5 million dollars to 934 institutions nationwide.

New manager named

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Timothy T. Brendle, a hunger-relief planner for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, has been named to manage orientation of Southern Baptist foreign missionaries.

The position was left open when Frank S. Wells resigned Jan. 15 to become a pastor in Atlanta.

Brendle will set up the first program for missionary orientation in the new Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va. The first group of missionaries to be trained there will begin an eight-week session April 9.

Strengthen Families

Area Leadership Conferences
1:30-4:00 p.m.

Associational Family Rallies
7:00-8:45 p.m.

For: Pastors, staff, church and Association Family Ministry Committees

For: Pastors, staff, church families in host associations

March 5-8, 1984

● Monday, March 5

Harrison, First Church

Osceola, Calvary Church

● Tuesday, March 6

Ft. Smith, Rye Hill Church

Wynne, Wynne Church

● Wednesday, March 7

Little Rock, Lakeshore Drive Church, (afternoon only)

● Thursday, March 8

Texarkana, Beech Street Church

El Dorado, West Side Church

Leader: Ron Brewer

Minister of Family Life
Trinity Church
Oklahoma City, OK

Leader: Billy Johnson

Pastor
Dixie Church
Hattiesburg, MS

Features

- Train leaders to implement Strengthen Family emphasis
 - 1984 Christian Home Week plans
 - Bold Mission Thrust film: "Strangers No More"
 - Southern Baptist Family Ministry resources
- Encouragement and inspiration for Christian families



Sponsored by

Family Ministry Department, Sunday School Board,
Church Training Department, Arkansas Baptist State Convention

Your state convention at work

Family Ministry

Marriage retreat



Dr. Carpenter Mrs. Carpenter

Dr. and Mrs. Bill Carpenter will lead a basic Marriage Enrichment Retreat March 22-24, 1984, at the Ozark Folk Center, Mt. View, Arkansas.

The retreat, sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and the Sunday School Board, is designed for couples who have a good marriage and want to make it better. It provides couples an opportunity to join an educational experience to improve communication skills, plan marital growth and learn to deal constructively with feelings in relationships.

Bill and Shirley Carpenter are experienced retreat leaders and have led retreats in several states. Bill is a chaplain at the Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City and Shirley is a realtor. They are parents of two children.

The Ozark Folk Center Lodge provides an excellent setting for the retreat. It is located at the edge of Mt. View in the Ozark Mountains about 115 miles north of Little Rock on Arkansas Highway 5. Contact the Church Training Department for information about costs and registration procedures. Write P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203 or call 501/376-4791. — Gerald Jackson, associate

Church Training

YWCBYBDYST?

No, the above title is not some unknown word. It is just an abbreviation for four great discipleship opportunities for your youth and older children—Youth Week, Children's Bible Drill, Youth Bible Drill and Youth Speakers' Tournament.

Youth Week is a convention-wide event which emphasizes the present value and future potential of today's Baptist youth. A theme related resource pak for Youth Week '84 is available through the Baptist Book Store.

Children's and Youth Bible Drill are Bible and skills events that help older children (grades 4-6) and younger youth (grades 7-9) develop Bible knowledge and memory skills. Youth Speakers' Tournament helps older youth (grades 10-12) com-

municate their faith through a speech of their own composition.

Bible Drill and Speakers' Tournament participation begins on the church level and advances to association, district and state (youth only). The district Bible Drill and Speakers' Tournament dates and locations are as follows: (district, date, location) Northwest, Apr. 2, First, Huntville; Southwest, Apr. 2, Calvary, Hope; West Central, Apr. 3, First, Paris; Southeast, Apr. 3, First, Warren; North Central, Apr. 5, First, Mt. View; Northeast, Apr. 5, Central, Jonesboro; Central, Apr. 6, Olivet, Little Rock; East Central, Apr. 6, Wynne, Wynne. (Please note the locations for Southwest and East Central districts have been changed from earlier publications.)

If you have questions or need further information about any of these events, contact the Church Training Department, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, 72203, phone 376-4791. — Bill Falkner, associate

Christian Life Council

\$200 necktie

C. Roy Angell, a former pastor of the Central Church, Miami, Fla., was a master of sermon illustrations. One memorable illustration dealt with man's tendency to get his values mixed up.



Parker

In one sermon he tells of a mischievous burglar switching price tags. For instance, a necktie might have been tagged with the value of an overcoat and vice versa. Isaiah addressed the issue of mixed up values: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil" (Isa. 5:20). Amos spoke of those in his day "who turn justice into wormwood and cast righteousness down..." (Amos 5:7). Similarly, Job mentioned those who make "night into day, saying, 'the light is near' in the presence of darkness" (Job 17:12). Also, Jesus taught, "if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness" (Matt. 6:23).

How ridiculous to call lottery or any other form of evil good while considering the tragic consequences. Is it good to have 12 million compulsive gamblers—many of them in their teens? Is it good to have 20 million alcoholics and problem drinkers—many of them in their teens?

Pastors, politicians and other leaders must, like young King Solomon, ask God for an understanding heart and the ability to discern between good and evil (1 Kings 3:9). — Bob Parker, director

Evangelism

Objectives in evangelism

A strong objective in evangelism is to challenge our pastors and people to a deep commitment of involvement. In reaching



Shell

the lost there must be an involvement in both personal evangelism and mass evangelism. A pastor can lead his people to use the Roman Road, LES, TELL, WOW, EE or CWT. The plan really doesn't save people. The plan points people to the person, Christ, who does the saving. As Southern Baptists, we will continue to ask God's blessings upon the local church revival, simultaneous revivals, tent revivals and area crusades.

We ask each church to share in the specific objectives of evangelism. At this writing we have 490,000 plus members in our Arkansas Baptist Churches. We have 2.1 million plus population in our state. When you break this down, we could easily share Christ with each person. It is our desire to train our Christian young people to share Christ on every high school campus. We are committed to train our laity to be lifestyle witnesses. Our evangelism staff will help local churches prepare to do mass evangelism. It is our desire to share methods and motivations with directors of missions and associational chairmen of evangelism to insure an ongoing program of evangelism in each association. All of this together will challenge our churches to increase baptisms by 10 percent each year. — Clarence Shell, director

Family and Child Care Services Special . . . and sacred

Arkansas Baptists work together in providing needed ministries to families and children. What we do together is very special for it grows out of the Word of God. Not only is it special, it is sacred.

Jesus commanded it: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me;" "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not..."

The needs require it. The realities of family breakdowns, child abuse, juvenile delinquency, runaways, unemployment and a frightening "don't care" attitude of many parents produces children in need of love, care and direction for their lives.

Children deserve it. We are talking about God's creation. We believe his desire is for every child to have the opportunity to realize its full God-given potential. Every

child needs to have the opportunity to hear the gospel of love and to accept it.

Jesus lived it. The New Testament records the life of Jesus. He met people at the point of need. He had time for children. He reached out to them and made his position clear about the value of children: however were to harm one of the least of them would rather have a stone tied around his neck and be cast in the depths of the sea.

Arkansas Baptists support this ministry prayerfully and financially. We are grateful to be co-laborers with you in this vital life-giving ministry.—Johnny G. Biggs, executive director

Woman's Missionary Union "Who? Me!"

Have you ever answered a question with the phrase, "Who? Me!?" "Who? Me!?" will be the theme for the Annual Meeting of Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union on March 20-21, 1984, at First Church, Benton.

Missionary speakers, such as Gwen Williams, New Orleans; Connie Anthony, Israel, and others will sound the call to missions involvement. Bible study led by Jon Stubblefield and musical features will provide additional inspiration.

The "Who?" portion of the theme will become the individual's challenge to missions involvement. The commitment made by each in response to presented needs will provide the personal, "Me!".

An opportunity to provide magazines for those missionaries from Arkansas will be afforded you. An offering will be taken to make possible the sending of a magazine to each of our missionaries. The price of magazines and postage has nearly doubled. The effectiveness of this ministry to our missionaries depends on the generosity of the WMU Annual Meeting participants. Plan to have a part in mission support through the annual magazine offering at the WMU Annual Meeting.

There will be four sessions at the WMU Annual Meeting: March 20 at 10:00 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 7:00 p.m. and March 21 at 9:30 a.m. A nursery is provided for preschoolers at each session. Motel reservations should be made direct: Holiday Inn, Best Western, Super 8 Motel, Capri [all on I-30]. — Pat Glascock, GA/Mission Friends director

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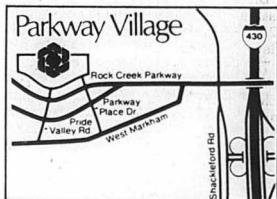
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SBC gains reported in nine areas; baptisms down

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Final statistical reports which track the annual progress of Southern Baptists in 10 key areas of church life over the past year reflect increases in membership, giving, number of churches and all church program organizations. Baptisms, however, are down from 1982.

Annual projections released in December 1983, based on the first 26,039 Uniform Church Letters received from churches, correctly predicted total membership in the nation's largest Protestant denomination would top 14 million for the first time. The final count of church members is 14,185,454, which is a 1.3 percent, or 187,202 increase over 1982. A 1.5 percent, or 209,974 increase was predicted.

Baptisms dropped below the 400,000 level this year for the first time since 1979, to 394,606. The 4.1 percent decrease (16,948) is 0.4 percent lower than projected.

The number of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention now stands at 36,531, according to the research services department of the Baptist Sunday School Board. This is an increase of 0.6 percent, or 229, for the year. There has not been a decrease in the number of SBC churches since 1931.

Included in the church total are 469 non-reporting churches, representing 1.3 percent

of the total. To be classified as non-reporting, a church does not submit an annual letter for three or more years. A church is dropped only at the direction of the association because of merger, withdrawal or because it is disbanded. A total of 201 churches were dropped last year.

Giving for mission expenditures increased 8.7 percent, or more than \$42 million, to \$529,283,289. This total is approximately \$500,000 higher than projected.

Total receipts for the SBC increased 8.1 percent, or more than \$253 million, to \$3,370,450,615. This is 0.5 percent lower than the projected total.

Sunday school, the denomination's largest program, recorded a gain of 1.8 percent, or 136,839, which makes the ongoing total enrollment in Bible study 7,815,443.

This is the fourth consecutive gain for Sunday school, marking an all-time high for the program. The 1982 Sunday school enrollment surpassed the 1964 total, the previous high. The final figure for Sunday school is 0.3 percent lower than projected.

Church training enrollment increased 2.0 percent, or 38,042, for the year, bringing the total to 1,987,390. This is approximately 9,000 fewer than the projected increase. This is the fourth consecutive increase for

church training, which has registered a total increase in four years of more than 235,000.

Ongoing enrollment for church music increased for the 18th consecutive year to a new total of 1,656,764, which is a gain of 1.3 percent or 21,990. The projection for church music was 0.4 percent higher than the actual figure.

Enrollment in Woman's Missionary Union programs increased by 2.3 percent, or 26,088, to a total of 1,175,354. The projection was almost equal to actual enrollment.

Ongoing enrollment in the Brotherhood program increased by 6.7 percent, or 35,707 last year, to a new total of 565,349. The new total is 0.8 percent lower than projected. The form for reporting Brotherhood enrollment was changed this year to allow concurrent enrollment of persons in two or more of the four Baptist men's categories.

Of the 14 million church members reported in Southern Baptist churches, it should be noted that almost four million, or more than one-fourth, of Southern Baptists are classified as non-resident members.

Information provided in the final statistical report of church programs is gathered from 35,334 Uniform Church Letters submitted to the research services department.

HMB funds assist black students preparing for ministry

ATLANTA (BP)—Gwen Williams returned to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary for her senior year completely without funds—or so she thought. Without her knowledge, she had been awarded a Home Mission Board black church relations scholarship which covered tuition.

"It was really a tremendous help," recalled Williams, now a home missionary serving as director of weekday ministries at Grace Church in New Orleans. "Most students apply for the scholarship, but mine kind of dropped in my lap. I found out later my state black church relations director had put in my name."

The fund, begun in 1952 with a \$5,000 grant from Woman's Missionary Union, increases each year through Cooperative Program gifts. So far, more than 3,000 students have received scholarships.

Grants provide assistance to black Baptist students who are preparing for full-time Christian service, primarily in Southern Baptist churches. In 1983, 300 students were awarded scholarships totaling \$95,000.

For Bill Perkins, associate director of the

HMB Black Church Relations Department and a former recipient of the scholarship funds, this long-running ministry "means we're able to assist in the educational progress of many Baptist students with abilities. And it helps them realize there are viable vocations in the church."

In the future, government cutbacks in scholarship aid will increase the need for black Baptist student support. This means, according to Perkins, the Black Church Relations Department has to be a good administrator "so we can respond to the greatest number of students in the most responsible way."

Perkins sees the program as more than dollars and cents. "The Bible suggests Christians are called to ministry and discipleship,"

he said. "As a denomination which gets its marching orders from the Bible, the Southern Baptist Convention needs to be supportive of those called out to minister."

"We're going with Jimmy, how about you?"

Minette Drumwright, widow of Huber Drumwright & SBC Foreign Mission Board; **James Coggin**, retired Pastor, Travis Avenue Baptist Church; **Dr. Bill Tolar**, Dean, Southwestern Baptist Seminary; **Dr. William Bell**, Professor, Dallas Baptist College; **Joe Hester**, Associate Pastor, Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, Alabama; **Monroe Broadway**, Pastor, First Southern Baptist Church, Redding, California; **Rick Markham**, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Perry, Oklahoma; **Dr. Lacoste Munn**, Professor, Southwestern Baptist Seminary.

WHO: Dr. Jimmy Draper, Dr. Bill Tolar, Minette Drumwright, Jim Coggin.

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Centurymen special offers rare look at China

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—A rare look at the people of China and their new-found openness to western culture is captured in the NBC-TV special "China: Other Voices," Feb. 26.

The one-hour documentary, produced by NBC in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission (RTVC), recounts a recent Chinese tour by the Centurymen, a 100-voice male chorus sponsored by the RTVC.

The Centurymen spent 13 days in China late last year, performing with the leading music organizations of that country. The chorus made Chinese history Nov. 5, becoming the first group from outside the People's Republic of China to perform in the Radio Peking Music Hall. The concert was later broadcast by the Chinese in other communist countries.

NBC is offering the network special to its affiliate stations at 1 p.m. (EST) Feb. 26. Dates and times of local broadcast of the program may vary.

missionary notes

Mr. and Mrs. C. Thurman Braughton, missionaries to the Philippines, may be addressed at P.O. Box 141, Davao City, Philippines 9501. He lived in Hot Springs while growing up. She is the former Kathleen Blount of Little Rock. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1967.

Mr. and Mrs. David L. Vick, missionaries to Argentina, are the parents of Cynthia La Nell, born Jan. 19. They may be addressed at Casilla 336, 3360 Obara, Misiones, Argentina. He was born in Fort Smith. The former Barbara Caston, she grew up in Hope. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1978.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. Walker, missionaries to Brazil, have arrived on the field following reappointment as missionaries (address: Caixa Postal 375, 64000 Teresina PI, Brazil). She is the former Beatrice Rodgers of Bauxite. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1964, resigned in 1972, reappointed in 1975, resigned in 1977 and reappointed in 1983.

Hankins' tours

Hawaii, \$779, June 5, 1984; Washington, D.C. - New York, from \$400, Oct. 6, Nov. 17, 1984; Cape Cod and New England, from \$489, Oct. 27, 1984; Fall foliage tour, from \$150, Oct. 22, 1984.

For information, contact

Rev. David M. Hankins Jr.
51 Broadmoor Dr., Little Rock 72204
Phone (501) 565-4123

Baptist MK, mother reunited in Cyprus

LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)—A missionary child who had been separated from her parents since Feb. 6 because of increased fighting in west Beirut was reunited with her mother Feb. 11 in Larnaca, Cyprus.

Ashleigh Dunn, 13, and her mother, Pat, from Mobile, Ala., were among six adults and five children from the Baptist mission in Lebanon who evacuated Lebanon along with approximately 900 other Americans.

Another missionary couple, Ed and Anne Nicholas, from Centerville, Mich., and Fort Worth, Texas, booked passage on a ship and had hoped to leave Feb. 13, but rough seas prevented their departure.

Missionaries Mack and Linda Sacco, of Gilroy, Calif., and McAlester, Okla., and their four children; Russell Futrell, of Pineville, La., and Ashleigh Dunn traveled aboard one ship while Pat Dunn and volunteers Steve and Meriam Fox, of Centerville, Ohio, were aboard another.

Ashleigh Dunn became separated from her parents when a government-imposed curfew trapped her and two of the Sacco children at their school in west Beirut. The three children were able to get to the Sacco home, also in west Beirut, the next day. But the Dunns live in east Beirut and Ashleigh could not cross the "green line" which divides the city.

Meriam Fox said shots were fired at the helicopter she and her husband were in as they left Beirut, but it was not hit.

All the mission evacuees were ferried from

west Beirut to the port city of Jounieh aboard helicopters except Pat Dunn, who traveled from east Beirut over land.

Missionaries reported American Marines handled their baggage and they were treated well during the 24-hour boat trip to Cyprus. There were doctors and a dentist aboard the ships and meals were provided. Also the Red Cross arranged for messages to be sent to the United States.

The Sacco family, after a night's rest in Cyprus, left for the States. They were scheduled to arrive in McAlester, Okla., Feb. 12. A major concern for them and for the Dunns has been the lack of regular, continuing education for their children in Beirut.

Ashleigh Dunn registered and began classes Feb. 13 at an American school in Cyprus. She and her mother plan to remain in Cyprus through the end of the semester.

Missionaries Jim and Leola Ragland in west Beirut reported Baptist churches in the city met Feb. 12 and attendance was good. "It was thrilling," said Mrs. Ragland about the service at Muisatbeh Baptist Church on the compound with Beirut Baptist School. "There were 23 people in church who needed to make decisions for Christ. All of these would count (be good witnesses) for the Lord." The group included university students, bankers and teachers.

Ragland continued to urge prayer for Lebanon, saying it is "an explosive situation that could change at any time."

Lebanese Baptist man killed Feb. 6 in Beirut cross-fire

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)—Samuel Atweh, a Lebanese Baptist, was killed in cross-fire in Beirut Feb. 6 when he ventured out to buy food for his family.

Atweh's funeral and burial were in Mon-souriyeh, an east Beirut suburb. It was not

clear on which side of the city he was killed.

Atweh, the brother-in-law of Ghassan Khalaf, president of the Lebanese Baptist Convention, died as Shiite Moslem militiamen and the Lebanese army waged a fierce battle for control of west Beirut.

New missionary becomes ill, returns home

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—A Southern Baptist missionary stricken with paralysis from Gullain-Barre syndrome in Bangladesh returned to the United States after only a month on the field.

Randy Rains arrived at Baptist Medical Center in Birmingham, Ala., late Jan. 25. Two days later he asked for a grilled cheese sandwich and a chocolate milkshake and began eating for the first time in 18 days. Rains, a native of Tennessee and former pastor in Kentucky and Indiana, has since been put on a soft diet.

At its peak the illness almost totally paralyzed Rains' legs and arms, caused his stomach muscles to malfunction and weakened his lungs. At one point he was too sick to talk and couldn't stand light or touch.

Now, however, he can feed himself, though somewhat clumsily due to partial inability to use his fingers. Doctors expect to

transfer him to a rehabilitation center as soon as his stomach muscles are working normally again. He will stay there for about two months. "We feel like he's improving every day," said his wife, the former Betty Cope of Birmingham.

Rains was diagnosed as having a slipped disc Jan. 10 and was admitted to a private clinic in Dhaka with partial paralysis three days later. By Jan. 21, when plans were made for his flight home, his condition appeared stable, but doctors feared he might develop convulsions or slip into a coma.

He arrived in Birmingham after a 33-hour flight to Washington, D.C., via London and a chartered critical care transport plane.

The Rainses had arrived in Bangladesh Dec. 23, after being appointed foreign missionaries last May. Her father, Padgett C. Cope, is a former pastor of Calvary Church, Little Rock.

Dunn challenges government's intention to 'influence' Holy See

WASHINGTON (BP)—A high ranking State Department official's assessment that sending an ambassador to the Vatican would allow the U.S. "to influence the political positions" of the Holy See has drawn sharp criticism from a Baptist church-state specialist.

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs Executive Director James M. Dunn took strong exception to remarks by Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth W. Dam before a House of Representatives appropriations panel considering a request to reprogram fiscal 1984 funds for a full diplomatic mission to the Vatican.

"For the State Department to seek a relationship allowing the U.S. to influence the political positions of the Holy See reflects an arrogant and blatantly violative posture," Dunn charged. "The very idea we would enter this relationship announcing in advance that we intend to attempt to shape the political positions of the Roman Catholic Church is contrary to everything we mean by separation of church and state."

Dam urged the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary and

Related Agencies to approve the \$351,000 reprogramming request, declaring it "will help achieve, in a cost-effective way, our foreign policy objectives."

Committee chairman Neal Smith, D-Iowa, gave no indication when the panel will make a decision on the State Department's request to reassign the \$351,000 upgrading the U.S. diplomatic mission to the Vatican. Currently, \$482,000 is budgeted for the office of presidential envoy William A. Wilson, who is non-salaried. President Reagan has nominated Wilson as U.S. ambassador to the Vatican.

In addition to State Department witnesses, Smith's panel heard from more than a dozen religious and civil liberties organizations opposed to establishment of full diplomatic ties to the Vatican. According to one witness, membership of U.S. religious bodies opposed to the move total more than 75 million according to one witness.

Baptist Joint Committee general counsel John W. Baker joined other witnesses who urged the panel to deny the reprogramming request, charging the church-state separation mandated by the Constitution

"forbids the entanglement of church and state in precisely the fashion proposed by sending an ambassador of our government to the Roman Catholic Church."

Baker further challenged the State Department's claim the U.S. is establishing relations with the Holy See as an international legal entity rather than with the Catholic Church. "This is nonsense," Baker said, insisting the Holy See cannot be distinguished from the Roman Catholic Church.

Citing Catholic definitions of the Holy See, Baker said, "it becomes clear any ambassador to the Holy See is nothing less than an ambassador to the Roman Catholic Church."

Baker also said the stated purpose of the ambassadorship "to tap into the church's vast information network" amounts to excessive entanglement of government with religion, a violation of the Constitution.

A Senate appropriations panel reconsidering the reprogramming request after its chairman, Sen. Paul Laxalt, R-Nev., initially approved it, is expected to hear from public witnesses on the subject March 5 and from the State Department March 28.

Reagan in 'full-court press' on school prayer amendment

WASHINGTON (BP)—President Reagan and members of his staff and cabinet are preparing for a "full-court press" during February to have Congress pass an amendment to the Constitution restoring oral prayer in public school classrooms according to Newt Gingrich.

Gingrich, an arch-conservative Republican member of the House of Representatives from Georgia, told two dozen evangelical pastors and student leaders Feb. 10 the upcoming debate over school prayer is "a collective battle of everyone in the world of the spirit against the forces of materialism."

Gingrich, a Southern Baptist from Carrollton, Ga., said the fight in the U.S. Senate will be led by fellow conservative William L. Armstrong, R-Colo.

Senate majority leader Howard H. Baker Jr., R-Tenn., announced Feb. 8 the Senate will consider the school prayer issue shortly after its return Feb. 21 from a brief recess.

According to Gingrich, Baker scheduled the prayer debate early in the year because of his judgment that upcoming debate over the federal budget "will dissolve the Senate into chaos."

Gingrich also said his own head count of the Senate on Reagan's amendment shows 64 or 65 votes in favor, with 67, or two-thirds of all 100 senators, needed for passage. Other estimates of the likely outcome show considerably less support for the Reagan proposal.

David Hoppe, an aide to House Republican whip Trent Lott, R-Miss., told the gathering if the president's amendment loses in the Senate it will not be considered by the House. He added a Senate defeat would

probably mean "it won't come up again in the Senate for years and years."

Before the meeting with Gingrich, a larger group of the ministers and students met at the White House with presidential assistants who told them Reagan will settle for nothing less than his own amendment. They expressed the president's opposition to a competing amendment, proposed by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, which would establish in the Constitution pupils' right to a moment of silence at the beginning of the school day.

The Hatch amendment would also give students access to school property and facilities for religious meetings on an equal basis with other student groups.

Presidential assistant Steve Galibach told the group the Hatch amendment "is out of line and not a serious possibility," and added: "The Supreme Court has never said silent prayer is unconstitutional... the Hatch amendment is an amendment to reverse a Supreme Court decision the court hasn't made yet."

Another Reagan aide, Carolyn Sundseth, said the president's amendment would resolve both the "equal access problem" and the "voluntary prayer problem."

Galibach said he hopes Hatch and Baker, who recently introduced a third amendment on school prayer, will decide to withdraw their proposals in favor of Reagan's.

Bob Riley, another White House official who addressed the group, declared, "There will be an all-out effort by the White House to push this amendment," including telephone calls from Reagan and members of his cabinet to "reluctant" senators.

Sundseth, who recently replaced Morton

C. Blackwell as assistant to the president for White House relations with evangelical and fundamentalist groups, said Reagan's amendment would forbid states from composing the words of prayers to be recited but would permit states to pass laws requiring prayers be said.

Those attending the meeting were also given a White House document stating in part, "The Amendment leaves decisions regarding prayers to state or local school authorities, and to individuals."

Additionally, according to the document, "It would establish no uniform national prayer rule, but would allow a diversity of state and local approaches free of federal interference."

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International

The service God seeks

by Wm. M. Burnett, Beebe

Basic passage: Isaiah 59:59

Focal passage: Isaiah 58:5-11

Central truth: Forms of worship are empty unless they are expressions of worship by the true followers of Jesus Christ.

"Churchianity" is an abomination. Nothing could be of less value or more dishonoring to God. There is no way for me to exaggerate the shabby wickedness of the pious fraud. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isaiah 57:20).

John called the Pharisees and Sadducees a brood of snakes, and Jesus called them white washed tombs. There is a vast difference in the weak Christian who follows poorly and the hypocrite whose selfish pride has seared his conscience. Many churches are rendered ineffective today because of these sons of Satan. It is against such hypocrisy is aimed.

The Christian need have no doubt about how to follow Jesus. The passage says that the way you treat your fellow man tells how much love and respect you have for God. Read the Sermon on the Mount carefully. When I read it I am made aware that practical Christianity is expressed in my relationship to my fellow man. Jesus says a good tree will produce good fruit (Matt. 7:17).

John equates God's love with seeing and applying our resources to it (I John 3:17). James defines pure and undefiled religion: "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27).

Personal purity of life is closely associated with our feelings, attitudes and conduct toward other people. If all people to us are souls for whom Christ died and the love of God in our hearts wishes for them the same blessing we enjoy, it will produce a purity of purpose and desire within us which leaves no room for impurity. Paul said that the followers of Jesus, constrained by the love of God, are sin-conscious, Christ-oriented and spiritually-discerning people who live in this world as if they were filling in for Jesus (II Cor. 5:14-20).

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Life and Work

Responding to Jesus

by Gene Crowley, Newport First Church

Basic passage: Mark 10:46-11:19

Focal passage: Mark 10:46-52; 11:15-18

Central truth: The living Christ commands response.

As one studies scripture, it becomes quite evident that no one who met Christ in his earthly ministry remained the same. A response to him was a certainty. The response could be negative, such as "Crucify him", or positive, such as "My Lord and my God!" There was and still is no neutrality where Christ is concerned.

The response of the chief priests and scribes (11:18) was one of fear because the religious traditions that they had so skillfully erected were in jeopardy of plummeting. Jesus had the audacity to declare that God and his Word were more important than the traditions of men. To this day, men who criticize traditions are still held in contempt and fear.

The response of the people (11:18) was one of astonishment. The religious leaders that they had known did not speak or act like Jesus. They were astonished by the words that he spoke and the miracles that he performed. However, if all there is is astonishment, the heat of the sun will wither it. Where were the same people just a few days later?

The response of Bartimaeus was the response of faith (10:48). His faith would not—could not—be silenced by those standing around. His faith pleased Christ, who in turn healed this blind beggar. His faith did not cease with the blessing, but continued by following Christ "in the way."

When confronted by the living Word of God, men still respond. The response is not always positive. However, as Christians our response to him must be one of obediently sharing his message, "Arise, he calls you," to a blinded world.

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Bible Book

God protects Jerusalem

by Glenn E. Hickey, director of missions, Pulaski County Association

Basic passage: II Kings 18:1-19:37

Focal passage: II Kings 18:5-6; 19:2-7

Central truth: God uses dedicated leadership to protect his people.

Somewhat, in the providence of God, some very good men emerge in very bad times. Such was the case of Abraham Lincoln in the tumultuous time of the American Civil War. So was it true in this closing period of Israel's pre-exilic history.

Our five-lesson series will focus upon two of Israel's finest leaders for this worst of times, Hezekiah and Josiah. In today's passage, we may see some of the qualities that made Hezekiah one of Israel's great leaders.

Note the series of affirmations concerning Hezekiah's relationship to God in verses 5 and 6. "He trusted... he held fast... he did not depart from following... he kept the commandments." It is not uncommon to find political leaders assuming a religious posture or using religious language for some political advantage. Here is a king steadfast in faith and constant in his commitment to the Lord God Jehovah.

When King Hezekiah received Sennacherib's letter demanding surrender, he faced a very difficult decision. He went up to the house of the Lord and "spread it before the Lord" according to one translation. During the difficult days of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln one said: "I am often driven to my knees in prayer by the realization that I have no other place to go."

Hezekiah had confidence in God, but he sought prophetic confirmation (19:2-7). He was unlike many autocratic leaders who purport to have direct access to God and have exclusive insight into the mind of God. Hezekiah's quiet confidence in God sought confirmation from the prophet Isaiah. He knew that when God speaks, he generally confirms his will through others.

Godly, dedicated leaders are God's gift to us. They deserve our respect, our support and our prayers.

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Reagan seeks non-profit mail rate hike

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Reagan administration again has called for large cuts in the postal subsidy which provides reduced rates for a wide range of non-profit mailers, including churches and state Baptist newspapers.

In submitting a \$926 billion budget proposal to Congress for fiscal 1985, the administration duplicated its 1984 request for \$400 million for the preferred rate mail subsidy. That amount is less than half the \$870 million Congress appropriated for fiscal 1984 and just about half the amount the Postal Service estimates necessary to preserve current rates through fiscal 1985.

Postal Service examples show non-profit rates under the Reagan budget proposal would jump 29-58 percent.

At issue is the "revenue foregone" subsidy which reimburses the Postal Service for the difference between what it charges non-profit and other preferred rate mailers and the regular mail rates. Non-profit groups benefiting from the reduced mail rates include religious, educational, scientific, philanthropic, agricultural, labor, veterans and fraternal organizations.

Although it is too early to tell what Congress will do with the administration's 1985 request, lawmakers have rejected large cuts in the revenue foregone subsidy the past two

years. The Postal Service Board of Governors earlier recommended \$731 for the fiscal 1985 subsidy, the amount necessary for a one-step increase in preferred mail rates. That proposal would put the rates at step 15 of a 16-year phasing process Congress began in 1970.

Non-profit mail users have criticized previous proposals for large increases in preferred mail rates, charging the rate hikes would significantly cripple their ability to communicate and raise funds at the same time the administration was urging private, non-profit groups to pick up the slack created by federal budget cuts in social services.

In addition to the \$400 million recommended for the revenue foregone subsidy, the 1985 budget calls for a \$52 million "reconciliation payment" to make up a 1982 deficit in preferred mail costs plus an additional \$240 million for liabilities incurred under the former Post Office Department prior to 1970.

The administration also has proposed "the Postal Service operate in the future within the amount appropriated by Congress each year, not receiving the additional amounts, such as reconciliation payments, to supplement the initial appropriation."

Annuity trustees review 1983 financial report

DALLAS (BP)—Southern Baptist Annuity Board trustees reviewed a successful financial report for 1983 and honored a retiring executive at their winter meeting.

A retirement reception honoring senior vice president and director of investments, Marvin T. York Jr., highlighted the success of a new era in the board's investment department. Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan told trustees and guests York had played an important part in developing the current retirement investment pools and funds.

He said the 1977 change allowing participants to choose their investment funds marked a significant change which increased the total assets of the board. Morgan noted the asset base of the board had tripled since York had become director of investments. York, a former trustee, took early retirement from First National Bank of Dallas to become director of the board's investment department in 1977. York will continue as investment consultant.

In his final address to the trustees, York said the board "... must continue to be an innovative organization with the flexibility of meeting the ongoing objectives." He said he thought the economic climate for 1984 would be such the board would have another successful year with good returns for Southern Baptist investments.

Other business included a report by Morgan on a board medical insurance study

regarding applicants denied coverage due to pre-existing health conditions. He noted less than six percent of the 1982 applicants to the Church Medical Plan were denied coverage under the plan. "However," Morgan said, "we must want as many Southern Baptists who want coverage under our system to be included without jeopardizing the program."

Morgan said to allow more applicants to the Church Insurance Program, the board has worked with the underwriter to alleviate some of the qualifying restrictions without creating increases of premiums for those persons already in the program.

Highlights for 1983 included record numbers in premium income, benefits paid and investment earnings.

Premium income which includes retirement insurance contributions and relief received, totaled \$98.32 million, an increase of \$12.8 million over 1982.

Retirement and relief benefits paid in 1983 were \$32.3 million while \$37.6 million was paid in insurance benefits. Investment earnings reached a record height of \$150 million, pushing the total asset base of the board to \$1.2 billion.

Contributions in retirement funds earned 11.3 percent in the fixed fund and 17.2 percent in the balancing fund. The variable fund closed the year with a value of \$4.16 per unit, while the short term funds ended the year earning 9.4 percent.

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