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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Reaching our nation
with the good news
pages 8-9

March 1, 1984

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE



HMB photo / David Ball

Arkansians like Robert Murray of Carlisle know that operating a family farm requires a tremendous investment of time and energy, often making it difficult to find time for traditional church involvements. Reaching groups like this is part of the home missions challenge Southern Baptists will be addressing during the Week of Prayer for Home Missions March 4-11.

Missions frontiers call for new approaches

BIRMINGHAM, AL.—Creativity and innovation are musts if Southern Baptists are to reach people for Jesus Christ in a world full of increasingly specialized and ever-changing new frontiers, according to William G. Tanner.

Tanner, president of the SBC Home Mission Board, will be one of 14 million Southern Baptists spending March 4-11 in special prayer for home missions.

The theme for this year's annual week of prayer is "New Visions, New Frontiers".

"Without a Christian conviction to move beyond the ordinary, many, if not most, of our nation's people will not be reached for our Lord," Tanner said.

Renewed commitment to home missions is needed today because it is becoming more and more difficult, time-consuming and, perhaps, even unpopular to include "outsiders", Tanner indicated.

These people are found outside the walls of our church building, outside our lifestyles

or outside our social group, Tanner said. "Great strides have been made by some churches to reach all people in their community in the face of racial, cultural and social prejudices, but much remains to be accomplished," Tanner explained.

A revitalized commitment must also manifest itself in the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, Tanner added. Last year receipts fell approximately \$2.4 million short of the \$25 million goal. This deficit did not decrease need, he said.

The 1984 offering goal is \$29 million. Offering receipts will be used to support ministries and field ministries in the United States, its territories and parts of Canada.

The Home Mission Board supports more than 3,430 missionaries who serve in all 50 states, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the American Virgin Islands and Canada. The HMB also provides resources for and equips churches and associations to minister in their own communities.

Shortfall expected unless giving increases

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will have to cut its budget by nearly \$2.8 million before the end of the year unless Cooperative Program giving picks up, says the Foreign Mission Board's treasurer.

Giving is up 6.51 percent over 1982-83, but the convention operating budget calls for an 11.91 percent increase, reported Carl Johnson in the February meeting of the Foreign Mission Board. Because the Foreign Mission Board has been allocated 50 percent of the convention's basic operating budget, its budget will have to be cut 50 cents for every dollar that falls short, he warned.

"We are always alert to a possible shortfall in the Lottie Moon Christmas offering," he said, "but the possibility of a shortfall in the SBC basic operating budget adds a new dimension to budget planning."

Johnson noted two states, Arkansas and Florida, are setting the pace in giving this fiscal year by increasing Cooperative Program gifts to convention causes by 15.32 percent and 23.56 percent, respectively.

Board members heard Southern Baptists gave a record \$6.1 million for relief ministries during 1983 and more than \$7.2 million was allocated. During December and January, more than \$920,000, including \$461,136 to initiate a major developmental project in the Moretan area of Togo, was allocated.

The Moretan area, where North Carolina Baptists will carry out a three-year partnership missions project, had no Christian witness until Baptists held crusades there last fall. Plans call for agriculture, community health, vocational training, water development and road and bridge improvements, as well as evangelism.

In this issue

7 "the Lord worked a miracle"

When ABCS Christian Social Ministries Director Pete Petty led two Puerto Rican Baptist Student Unions in a clowning seminar and worship service, 25 persons professed faith in Jesus. Local CSM director William Tua called it "a miracle".

16 defunding effort fails

The SBC Executive Committee has voted without opposition to maintain the funding of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, despite a request to defund from the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

MK Prayer Calendar

Home and foreign missionary kids who attend college on the Margaret Fund

March

- 3 Byron Ray Hall (Kenya) OBU Box 3892, Arkadelphia, AR 71923
- 5 Bryan L. Bullington (W. Africa) OBU Box 3810, Arkadelphia, AR 71923
- 8 George Robertson (Senegal) OBU Box 4213, Arkadelphia, AR 71923
- 16 David Gately (Korea) 16 N. Locust, Fayetteville, AR 72701
- 24 J. Reade Mitchell (Tanzania) OBU Box 3614, Arkadelphia, AR 71923

Corrections

In the Feb. 9 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, a computerized report incorrectly listed the 1983 annual contribution of the Midway Church to Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services. The amount

should have been \$236.27.

In the Feb. 23 issue, the March calendar incorrectly listed the location of the WMU annual meeting March 20-21. It will be held at First Church, Benton.



There is some difference of opinion regarding the Baptist editors' dealing with controversial issues. Some believe that nothing controversial should ever be carried in our denominational papers. Others feel that every week something of a controversial nature should be discussed. This editor believes that the primary purpose of our Baptist state paper is to help churches and individuals to reach more nearly the stature God intended for them to attain. This means that he must sometimes deal with controversy. His purpose must always be to help, never to hurt.

Professional surveys have been made across the years asking whether editors of denominational papers should deal with controversial issues. The vast majority have answered in the affirmative. In our own non-professional and sketchy surveys we have had the same response. Many have added that it should be done responsibly and constructively.

Perhaps, it would help to understand that journalism, as a profession, uses at least three major communication tools. First and most important is the basic news story, through which the reader is kept abreast of current events, without the element of personal interpretation. Second is the feature story, which presents a person, object or event that is assumed to be of special interest to the readers from the point of view of the writer. Finally, we have the editorial, column or review, which reflects the conclusion of the writer (editor, columnist or reviewer), who brings together what he considers to be the relevant facts on an issue of public concern, in an attempt to persuade others. It should be evident that letters to the editor fit in the last category.

If caution is more crucial to the editor, it is, perhaps, because he is more aware than most of the nature and extent of the controversy. Those who believe that the editor should remain silent on all controversial issues are usually ready enough to express their own views. They have, also, overlooked several important matters. These are: (1) that the Bible teaches the individual priesthood of the believer; (2) that a tenet of Baptist faith is openness and freedom; (3) that our own democracy is built on the free exchange of ideas; and (4) that a Baptist editor often has, by virtue of his office, access to information that others may not have.

James L. Sullivan, past president of the Sunday School Board and the Southern Baptist Convention, said that there

are two elements which influence our decision-making process. "One is the priesthood of the believer. The second is the autonomy of the local congregation. Because we, as Baptists, feel that these are clearly set forth in the scriptures, we are forbidden ever to violate the conscience of an individual believer or to seek to coerce the members of an individual church. . . . The local congregation should be cautious lest it violate the conscience of its own members by autocratic or dictatorial methods and leadership inappropriate for a New Testament-like church. . . . Pastors who are dictatorial. . . will someday pay a high price for this deviation from Baptist heritage (*Baptist Polity as I See It*, page 61-62).

The New Testament teachings on church polity and the individual priesthood of the believer, as basic concepts of our Baptist belief, will inevitably produce some controversy. Any attempt to hide differences in Baptist life will fail. Controversies will be shared by word-of-mouth. The "rumor mill" frequently distorts the facts, resulting in an intensification of the differences.

Although openness will sometimes result in a difference of opinion, even among Baptists, this should not be alarming. The evaluation of new ideas should be viewed as a wholesome, enlightening and rewarding experience. It is only through the exploration of new ideas that any individual will grow intellectually and spiritually. Naturally, one should evaluate all ideas by the Word of God. That which is contrary to the Bible is false.

The intent of dealing with controversial ideas is to provide information and to cause each person to think for himself. Information provided by leaders with recognized Baptist ties, committed to the Baptist way and with an understanding of Baptist history can often provide a helpful perspective. Finally, each person must take the available information and make his own decision under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

When an editor or a pastor claims his right to speak out on a controversial issue, he must also shoulder the responsibility which goes with that freedom. The responsibility demands that he inform himself to the best of his ability of all the facts, that he deal with them honestly, and that he never use his position to belittle the ideas of others. Let's guard with our lives our God-given right to speak responsibly the truth as we see it in love.

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

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

VOLUME 83 NUMBER 9

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

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Change overdue

I have always enjoyed T. B. Maston's articles in the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. He demonstrates an unusual perception of issues, which is rare in our denomination today.

His recent article on New Testament concepts of ministry and ordination is outstanding, and I find it encouraging that someone of his influence and stature can grasp the changes which must be made in our church structure.

Too many of our members are forced, by gender and/or race, to find other outlets for energies which could be and should be utilized by the church.

I realize that change is gradual, but in this case, it is overdue.—**Barbara Coogan, Mena.**

Stand by the Jews

Genesis' 13th chapter, [says], "The Lord said to Abram, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust

of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length if it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."

President Reagan and the Congress have some of our Marines near Israel to help keep the peace. Israel has only about 3½ to 4 million people, but their enemies have about 80 million or more.

President Truman helped the Jews in 1948 to get back in a nation. President Kennedy did not help them. Mr. Nixon helped them during his first term but not in his second. Spain several hundred years ago persecuted the Jews. They paid dearly for it.

Israel is about the only friend we have in that area, and we are the only one she has there. The Bible teaches that the Jews will come to the Lord Jesus Christ, and some are now. **F. W. Finch, Monticello.**

BYPU rebirth

I don't remember when I first heard of Baptist Young Peoples Union, "BYPU", but it was before 1930. BYPU was an excellent way to train young people to speak to a group, and it got young people involved in church work. Many people have given BYPU credit for their success in the field of

commerce.

After a while adults wanted the training, and it became Baptist Training Union. Then later it was Training Union.

In our public schools we had the new math that was thought by some people to be the greatest thing in this century. You don't hear much about it any more.

We always have someone who wants to make a change, even if it is just for change's sake. So, now we have Church Training, which seems to be Sunday School at night with larger classes. This develops a few "super stars", but does it really train the common church member?

There is no need to despair. Some young man fresh out of the seminary with a doctors degree in religious education will discover a brand new and exciting way to train young people in church work and give them self-confidence when speaking to a group of people. The new method will have to have some modern, space-age name, but, we older people will recognize it for what it is: the rebirth of BYPU.—**Ben Fried, Mena**

Grateful for support

During the next few weeks, thousands of Southern Baptists will be involved in the an-



One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant

What Arkansas can teach the nation

Congratulations are in order for Senator David Pryor, Representatives John Miller and Lloyd George, and Arkansas Legislative Council staff member Bill Goodman. Senator Pryor recently invited the other three to come to Washington to share with congressional leaders some good news and good know-how from the people and the government of the state of Arkansas. For a change, Arkansas was number one in the nation, rather than forty-ninth or fiftieth.

Miller, George and Goodman told the Joint Congressional Committee on Taxation how, for 39 consecutive years, the Arkansas state government has avoided the frustrating operating deficits that have plagued our national government. When our nation seems to lack the wisdom or courage, or both, to put an end to the disgraceful practice of deficit spending year after year, isn't it remarkable that poor little Arkansas has found a way to operate in the black for almost four decades?

The story told by our three "fiscal missionaries" from Arkansas before an audience of skeptical senators and congressmen, took

about two hours and focused on the 39-year-old Arkansas Revenue Stabilization Act. This law achieves a balanced budget by requiring the governor and the legislature to establish a list every two years, ranking all proposed state expenditures in order of importance. Top priority items are assured of receiving funds, but lower priority items have little change of funding, and state spending simply stops when the tax revenue is gone. No one claims it is a perfect law, but it does one thing very well. It produces financial integrity and responsibility, and prevents us from spending money we don't have. That's not a bad achievement for a state that ranks near the bottom in such things as personal income and education.

I realize the problems of national government finance are far more complex than those of the state of Arkansas, and I have heard a bushel basket full of arguments against a constitutional requirement for a balanced budget. Even so, I believe it violates Christian morality for individuals or institutions to live above their means year after year.

I am painfully aware of the budget pressures that make it difficult for Christian educational institutions to operate in the black, which makes it all the more remarkable that Ouachita Baptist University has been able to balance the budget for 13 consecutive years. A lot of staff and faculty members, as well as friends and supporters of Ouachita, have worked very hard to make this possible. When the president of the Mabey Foundation, or the Kresge Foundation, asks whether Ouachita operates within its income, it is a good feeling to be able to answer with a firm "yes". As important as charitable foundations are, it is even more important to be able to give that same answer to some 450,000 members of Arkansas Baptist Churches who own and operate Ouachita.

Arkansas' Revenue Stabilization Law may not be the right way to stop our nation's runaway deficits, but we really need to find a way, and soon.

Daniel R. Grant is the president of Ouachita Baptist University.

nal home missions study as a part of the Week of Prayer for Home Missions. Excellent materials have been prepared by the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union.

In the adult book entitled *We Spell Missions A*M*E*R*I*C*A*, there is a section which includes comments on ordination of women. It gives the personal testimony of one young woman, a student at a Baptist seminary, who felt God's call to Christian service and sought ordination.

I regret the mission study book implied the Home Mission Board approves ordination of women, even though it did not say so directly.

The Home Mission Board has taken no position on the question of ordination of women, believing ordination is a local church matter. Ordination is not a qualification for appointment as a missionary by the Home Mission Board. The statements in the mission study book reflect only the personal viewpoints of the writer and persons quoted, not official policy of the Home Mission Board.

There is also a quote which I feel we have used inappropriately. The quotation from a seminary professor states, "... On foreign soil Southern Baptist women such as Lottie

Moon have achieved virtual sainthood for performing roles for which they would have been ostracized in the U.S. From West Africa to East Asia, missionary women are ordained and preach and pastor regularly. That fact of foreign missions needs to be acknowledged openly."

This quotation from an address by the professor appears here out of its original context. I feel that this is inaccurate if applied to our Southern Baptist foreign mission work, and it was inappropriate for the Home Mission Board to publish such a comment. I regret any problem this many cause either the Foreign Mission Board or the professor.

Personally, I am grateful to God for the support and involvement of women in home missions and pray that the 1984 home mission study will inspire thousands more men and women to involvement in missions at home and abroad.—William G. Tanner, Atlanta, Ga.

Letters to the editor expressing opinions are invited. Letters should be typed double-space and must be signed by one person, though the name may be withheld on request. Letters must not contain more than 350 words and must not defame the character of persons. Letters must be marked "for publication." Only original letters will be considered.

You'll be glad to know...

by Don Moore

...We have the rarest treasure known to man. Since 1970 the world has grown by almost 1 billion people. This puts the population now past 4.7 billion. By 2000 the number of people on the earth is projected to be 6 to 7 billion. Every one of these people can be changed as individuals. We have the only real everlasting hope for all of these people.

Character, dignity, peace and purpose all result from a proper relationship with Jesus Christ. Anyone who could change that many lives that significantly must be classified as exceedingly precious. Jesus is that! His Father said he was the "only begotten (one of a kind) Son."

This gift of life—his life—to us is mind-boggling. A man of the mental powers of the Apostle Paul even called it a mystery.

Scripture speaks of this treasure as "the pearl of great price" and as being of such value a person should "sell all they have" in order to buy the treasure. Of course, it can't be bought, it's free.

It is this good news that prompts all missionary and evangelistic activity. It is this fact that calls forth heroic sacrifice and generous giving. It is for communicating this truth that folk are called into ministry and churches are born.

This treasure drenched in blood, heralded by martyrs, and blackened by the fires of persecution, remains the chief joy of every Christian and the song of all creatures around his throne.

Two very painful facts pull me back from this contemplative bliss. First, most of the individuals in the world have never heard of this treasure. Second, 199 of our Arkansas churches reported no one baptized this year. Many here in Arkansas are without God's gift of eternal life. I fear that many of us may have ceased believing that Jesus is the "rarest treasure."

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

Losing ground at home?

Southern Baptists have not started enough new churches to keep up with population growth. Between 1970 and 1980, 21 states lost ground in population-to-church ratios. Had the ratio been maintained, there would be 40,646 churches now, instead of 36,302.



Moore



Woman's viewpoint

Henri E. Walker

Oh, for the faith of a child

I was teaching my church training class of older children a lesson on faith. I wanted to show them how much faith it takes to turn your life over to God and let him tell you what you should do with it. Using in illustration from the teacher's quarterly, I held up a sheet of paper.

"Here's a blank piece of paper," I told the children. "I give it to you. Are you willing to sign your name to it, and then let someone else write on it when he wants you to do? Your signature means you're agreeing to do whatever that person writes down."

I expected a hearty "No" from all. But the children didn't follow my lesson plan. Silence fell upon the class. Finally, Terri spoke: "It depends on who writes on it."

Still certain none of them would sign anything before finding out who they were signing. I persisted. "Okay," I said, "can you think of anyone you'd be willing to trust that much?" Again I waited for their "No."

However, Terri quickly replied, "Yes, I'd be willing for you to write on it." Surprised, I asked, "You mean you'd trust me to write whatever I chose on your signed paper?"

Then Terri added simply, "We know you wouldn't have us do anything that wasn't good for us."

Now it was my turn to be silent, for I was humbled by their response. This was not the lesson I had so carefully planned. I had prepared to teach these children about faith. Instead, they had unwittingly taught me.

The simple, undoubting, pure faith of children in a mere teacher showed that trusting God should not be hard. These children knew I often failed. But they also knew I loved them, so they trusted me with their lives. Do we adults show God that kind of faith?

We know God never fails. We know, too how he love us and wants only the best for us. But do we trust him as freely with our lives as these children trusted me? Oh, for the faith of a child.

Henri E. Walker is a home-maker and part-time employee of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. A native of North Carolina, she enjoys writing, singing and needlework.

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

William Rex Holt Jr.

has accepted the call to become pastor of Central Church in Jonesboro. A native of Bay, he is currently serving as a Southern Baptist missionary in Togo, West Africa. Holt studied at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro and received his master of divinity degree from South western Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served in staff positions in two churches in Texas as well as pastorates in Texas and Arkansas. He will train replacement leaders in Togo before beginning his ministry at Jonesboro. He is married to the former Sherry Puckett of Caraway. They have two children, John Mawuli and Sarah Elisabeth Kafui.



Holt

Tom Greer

is serving as interim pastor of Pulaski Heights Church in Little Rock. He is chairman of the English department at Ouachita Baptist University.

Milton Wilson

is serving as pastor of Temple Church in Crossett, coming there from Riverside, Calif.

Bill Barnett

is serving Sherwood First Church as part-time minister of music. He is choral director at Northeast High School.

briefly**Geyer Springs First Church**

in Little Rock has voted to enter its second Together We Build program. An educational building for adults will be constructed and an area will be remodeled for preschool children.

Jonesboro University Church

held deacon ordination services Feb. 19 for Fred Burrow, Ralph Cook, Raymond Gray, Terry Gage and Gene Cagle. The ordination council included Leon Minick, Mount Zion Association Director of Missions Harold Ray, Kenny Worthington, Del Nelson, Carl Richardson, Alfred Thornton, J. C. Gage, and Leon Gray, Aubrey Douthitt and pastor Al Kerst. This was the second ordination service in the history of University Church.

Spradling Church

in Fort Smith ordained Scotty Bates as a deacon Feb. 12. Garland Hobbs, pastor of Cedarville First Church, led the ordination council, assisted by Spradling pastor Ron Williamson.

Blanche Williams

was honored Feb. 19 by Fayetteville First Church for her 50 years as a member.

David Lee

has joined the staff of Springdale First Church as minister of instrumental music, coming there from Casper, Wyo.

Thurman Riggs

was recently recognized by Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock for his eight years of service to the van ministry.

Dorothy Watkins

has retired from 12 years of service as music secretary to the Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith.

Jim Gossett

is serving as music director of the Fellowship Church at Huntington, coming there from Booneville First Church.

Phil Costener

has resigned as minister of music/youth at Waldron First Church.

Howard Laner

has resigned as pastor of the Evening Shade Church at Waldron.

Kelley Grubbs

has resigned as pastor of Hazen First Church to become pastor of the Murray Lane Church in Sikeston, Mo., following 14 years of service at the Hazen church. Grubbs and his wife, Linda, and their sons, Kyle and Jason, moved to Missouri Feb. 20.

John Sammons

is serving as pastor of the Owensville Church. He moved there from North Little Rock where he served as minister of youth at Sylvan Hills First Church.

Jack Barnes

has accepted the call to serve as pastor of the Highfill First Church at Siloam Springs. He will move there from Omaha.

Jimmy Karam

of Little Rock, a businessman and member of Immanuel Church, is speaking in Arkansas churches, including Marshall Road Church in Jacksonville Feb. 29; Forest Highlands in Little Rock March 4 and First Church of Texarkana, Texas, March 18.

Tom Tidwell

is serving as pastor of the Oak Grove Church at Van Buren. He is a graduate of Northeastern State University in Oklahoma. He and his wife, Cathy, have three children, Jody, Stephen and Cara.

buildings

Oseola First Church recently burned a note to celebrate the final payment of the note on "First Place", a residential property now being used for educational space and family recreational activities. The seven-room building features a kitchen, bathrooms and a fireplace and is equipped with a variety of table games for all ages. The renovated garage, including carpeting, insulation and paneled walls, provides a meeting place for Royal Ambassadors. Participating in the noteburning were (left to right) Erus Bradshaw, treasurer; Wendell Harris, deacon chairman and Bob Wilson, pastor. Not pictured is J. B. Strickling, chairman of the properties committee.

Crucial Questions for Christians

by Glen D. McGriff

Dr. McGriff, My pastor-husband is well aware that family life is not what it should be. While he is aware of the problems and has promised to make changes, nothing seems to improve. What am I to do? Is he simply not serious?

Let me assure you that your husband is probably very serious and sincere. He most likely has every intention of improving family relations. Desiring change does not remove the difficulties inherent in that process. Your husband does not appear to be resistant or defensive to you and your awareness of problems. That in itself is encouraging.

In answer to "what am I to do", may I simply offer a few observations. First, let me say that change is at best very difficult and sometimes limited. Relational expectations are often very high, especially among church-staff persons. Normal human limitations are sometimes lost in a maze of idealism. Individual difference also exists in ability to effect change when there is agreement that such change is desirable.

Another factor that might be helpful is to remember that both time and effort are required for what you desire. Both you and your husband have demands upon your time. The things upon which your time is now expended require an output of energy. If family life is to improve both time and energy will be demanded. That simply means that some things now being done will of necessity go undone. This may require a honest re-evaluation of your priorities.

Most Christian families agree upon the importance of family life, but so is the growth of the church, the strength of the fellowship, and the development one's career ("ministry"). Persons cannot give first priority to their career and expect preeminence in family life and relational vitality. When primary energy is expended in work, however worthy that work may be, family life and relationships will fail to thrive. Only in fantasy is family life enriched apart from a heavy investment of time and energy.

Glen D. McGriff is director of the Ministry of Crisis support, Arkansas Baptist State Convention

Inquiries, comments or questions to be used anonymously in this column should be sent to Questions, Ministry of Crisis Support, Medical Towers Building, Suite 660, 9601 Lile Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205.

Labels focus of national CSM meeting

SAN JUAN, P.R. (BP)—A negative gospel, filled with labels and given to excluding those different from ourselves, is not the gospel of Jesus Christ, speakers at the annual meeting of Christian social ministries agreed.

More than 50 state and national Christian social ministries personnel met in Puerto Rico to do manual labor (everything from repair a concrete building to painting) and discuss trends in Christian social ministries in the United States.

The state leaders were challenged to drop labels while ministering to people.

Noting a Southern Baptist church decision to deny baptism to several Haitians who had made professions of faith in detention camps, Cecil Etheridge, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board national consultant on ministries to the blind and migrants, claimed, "We preach a gospel of inclusion but practice one of exclusion."

Etheridge also called on state leaders to lead the way in changing Baptists' perception of the blind, focusing on ability rather than disability. Southern Baptists will see a case in point when a blind singer/pianist performs during the 1984 Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City, Mo., this June.

Mary Dan Kuhnle, director of Sellers Baptist Home and Adoption Center in New Orleans, echoed Etheridge's sentiments and called on the group to help Baptists drop the labels of "unwed" mother and father and "illegitimate" child, saying the labels dehumanize people caught up in the circumstances of pregnancy outside of marriage.

Ed Lilly, director of Baptist Rescue Mission in New Orleans, extended the list. Alcoholics and drug abusers are not "bums" and "drunken bums." Only three percent of those who abuse alcohol or drugs wind up on skid row, he noted. The other 97 percent "are out among us, even in our churches." He cautioned against preaching "a lot of negativism," because such tactics ostracize people, "driving them away from the church and a God who loves them."

During the past two years Lilly has spoken in more than 40 public schools throughout the nation in an effort to educate teens about drugs and alcohol abuse. He also has expanded the mission to include beds for women and children, and noted during the past year the mission averaged caring for more than 250 people per night.

In addition to discussing trends in Christian social ministries, CSM state and national workers shed their administrative roles and practiced what they preach, helping Puerto Rican Baptists develop their own Christian social ministries projects.

Blue jean, T-shirt clad CSM workers were divided into six work groups and assigned throughout Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, part of the Puerto Rico Association.

Projects ranged from painting walls and doors at the Baptist Seminary in San Juan to building bookshelves for the St. Croix (Virgin



ABN photo / Millie Gill

Pete Petty, ABSC director of Christian Social Ministries, recently led two Puerto Rican Baptist Student Unions in a clowning ministry that resulted in 25 professions of faith.

Islands) seminary extension center library; from painting rooms to be used for a Baptist center to patching concrete walls and repairing wooden eaves at a Chinese and Spanish church. An Atlanta layman and hardware store owner, donated 86 gallons of supplies for the projects.

William Tua, director of CSM for Puerto Rican Baptists, said the work teams had encouraged and strengthened Baptist work.

He applauded Pete Petty, director of CSM for Arkansas Baptists, for training two Baptist Student Union students in clowning and then leading them in a worship service that resulted in 25 professions of faith in a rural Puerto Rican community. "The Lord worked a miracle," said Tua. "Just for that one happening this meeting was worth it."

Tua said the CSM workers' contributions had enabled him to move ahead with plans to open a Baptist center in his home community in San Juan. A food and clothes closet will be housed at a Baptist church where one group painted, the first step toward beginning weekend ministries.

Tua also noted conferences on alcohol and drug abuse by Lilly and workshops on literacy by HMB CSM staffer Mildred Blankenship made Puerto Rican leaders more aware of the need for an expanded CSM program on the island.

Unemployment, now cresting 20 percent, divorce and alcohol and drug abuse are problems island pastors must deal with, explained Tua. He added more Baptist volunteers are needed to lead similar workshops. To help Puerto Ricans hard-hit by unemployment, Tua also pleaded for volunteers to teach residents to grow and can their own food and to provide job skill training.

According to the 1980 census, more than 103 million people in the United States, or 46 percent of our nation's population, are living in the 50 largest cities. However, in these same cities, Southern Baptists have only 17 percent of their churches and 25 percent of their church members. Detroit, pictured here, is a 1983 Mega Focus City, a plan developed by the Home Mission Board to evangelize and minister to the cities.



HMB photo / Karen Mitchell

NEW

Week of Prayer May

Annie Arms National G

NEW



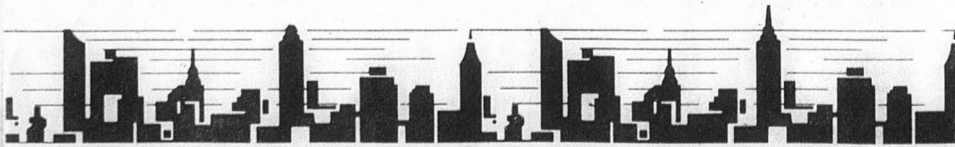
HMB photo / Mark Sandlin

Cold Bay Church in Cold Bay, Alaska, meets in a WWII quonset hut. The 200 residents of Cold Bay, located on an Aleutian peninsula, are virtually isolated. A ferry arrives only four times a year. Round-trip fare to Anchorage is \$600.



HMB photo / Mark Sandlin

The number of Southern Baptists in Puerto Rico has tripled in the past year. Glenview Church in Ponce is trying to overcome an obstacle caused by growth. Student Sunday School classes must meet under the carport; adults meet on the rooftop.



VISIONS

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FRONTIERS

As no other area of ministry, chaplaincy is open to persons of all races, ages and both sexes. George Hall (in wheelchair) is a volunteer chaplain with the Newport Richey Sheriff's Department, a job that involves meeting people where they are, even if that's in jail.



HMB photo / Mark Sandlin



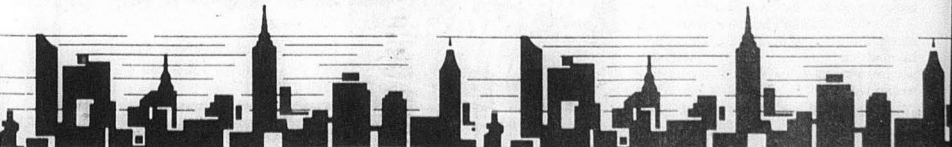
HMB photo / David Bell

Reaching specialized groups of people presents a challenge to Southern Baptists. Family farms in America, like this owned by Robert Murray of Carlisle, Ark., face arduous farm routines, long work days and hard economic times.



HMB photo / Mark Sandlin

Surveys made of multi-family housing reveal that less than one percent are being touched by a Christian witness. Multi-family housing like this apartment complex in San Juan, Puerto Rico, is increasing popularity and desirability.



Your state convention at work

Church Training

Conserving the results

Conserving the results of evangelism is of concern to many people. It should be. We continue to lose approximately 50 percent of all of our converts, either to inactivity or to the ranks of the non-resident members. Yet, we have available to us the resources and approaches that can help us with this critical concern.

Pastors, staff members, Church Training directors and others who lead new member training will be introduced to these resources and approaches at the Area New Member Training Conferences the week of March 26. The conferences will introduce the new Administrative Guide for New Member Training, along with a wide variety of other materials.

The conferences will meet on Monday night, March 26, at Eagle Heights Church in Harrison and at First Church, Jonesboro. The Tuesday night conferences will meet at Elmdale Church, Springdale and First Church, West Memphis. On Wednesday the conferences will meet at Immanuel Church, Little Rock and East Side Church in Pine Bluff. The Thursday conferences will meet at First Church, Hope and West Side Church, El Dorado.

The time of the conferences will be 7-9:15 p.m., except Wednesday. The Wednesday conferences will meet 1:30-3:45 p.m.

Conference leaders include Steve Williams and James Cartwright, consultants in the Church Training Department at the Sunday School Board, along with personnel from the Arkansas Church Training Department. — Robert Holley, director

Family and Child Care Services

Christian foster homes needed for children

"A child has many reactions to being placed away from his own home. No amount of preparation can remove from deep down inside a feeling that he is being abandoned and that he has no control over his change of living status. More often than not, he feels himself responsible and seeks for some specific aspects of his own behavior upon which he can fix the blame."

This thought, lifted from a current child care publication, pinpoints a common problem which faces many of the children with whom we work: "something must be terribly wrong with me". Psychologists tell us that children often blame themselves for fami-

ly failures.

We in child care want to help the child obtain a more realistic picture of his own worth as an individual, created by God, and to develop his individuality to its fullest potential. Often we feel, and always for the pre-school age child, his needs can best be met in a Christian foster family setting. Children who need the close relationships of parental figures are placed with Christian foster parents.

Foster parents draw the child into their family circle of love and balance this love with the essential ingredient of discipline. These foster parents want to help the child become what he has the capacity to become. Our staff supervises the foster homes and are always available to help the foster parents work with the children.

During the past year, our agency joined hands with a number of Baptist families across our state in providing foster care for 34 children. We need additional foster homes. If you are interested in this ministry, please contact one of our workers. — Johnny G. Biggs, executive director

Stewardship Department

God is faithful

One of the joys of being a missionary is that of seeing young Christians experience the thrill of faithful stewardship. One of those who comes to mind is a tailor named Blaise. Blaise had been a Christian only a few weeks when we studied stewardship in the new Christian's class. After the class Blaise asked me how to figure his tithe. At that time he was an apprentice, making only \$24 a month. I was tempted to tell him that God did not expect someone as poor as he to tithe, but I realized that this would not be true to the teaching of the Bible. I showed him how to figure his tithe, and he dutifully brought his tithe the following

Sunday.

Then Tuesday disaster struck. His boss fired him "because he was spending too much time going to church and reading the Bible." I must confess that I was almost mad at God. Here I tell Blaise that God promises to supply our needs if we tithe, he starts titling, and now God allows this to happen.

But God is faithful. A few days later a missionary mentioned that she had a sewing machine for sale and wondered if I knew anyone who might want to buy it. I told Blaise about it and he was overjoyed. The price was about a fifth of what a machine would normally cost. He had just enough saved to buy the machine and pay a month's rent on a small room where he opened his own tailor shop. In his first month in business he cleared almost \$100, and his business has been growing ever since. Yes, God does honor those who honor Him!—Edwin Pinkston, missionary to Ivory Coast

Music Department

Need a music worker?

Our Summer Music Missionary program will be available again this year to those churches who wish to plan a week of music experiences for their folks. Lisa Nevin and Tina Murdock, two talented young ladies, worked with adults, youth and children in a different church each week last summer, and the response was excellent.

This is the third year for this program, and we're planning to provide two missionaries again. They will be available each week during June and July and will be scheduled on a first-request basis.

If this would meet a need in your church, contact the Church Music Department for further information about available dates, program content, and costs.—Ervin Keathley, director

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1984-85

Your state convention at work

Family Ministry

Senior Adult Celebration

"Celebrating the Senior Years" will be the theme of the third annual Senior Adult Conference to be held May 24-26 on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University.



Kerr

Horace Kerr will also lead conferences for leaders of senior adult ministry, including pastors, staff members, senior adult coordinators and associational senior adult leaders. He will also speak in the general sessions on ministering to senior adults. He is the author of *How to Minister to Senior Adults in your Church*.

Agnes Pylant, author, teacher and entertainer, will speak at a banquet that will open the conference on Thursday night. She is the author of *Three Score and Ten—Wow!* and numerous other books for senior adults. Agnes, 83 years young, lives in Jacksonville, Fla.

C. S. and DeLois White of North Little Rock will be the guest musicians for the conference. C. S. will sing and direct the

music and DeLois will be the accompanist.

To register or secure additional information write: Senior Adult Celebration, Church Training Department, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock 72203. — Robert Holley, director

Sunday School

A special place

The Arkansas Baptist Assembly at Siloam Springs is a very special place to hundreds of people. Some accepted Christ under the big tabernacle. Others met the person they were to marry. Some have felt God's call to missions, church staff, pastor or other special place of service. Many give of their time each summer to help others experience the same kind of encounter with God.

What is going to happen to that influence in a few years? What about after you die? One way to insure that you continue to minister to hundreds of young people is to provide endowment money for the Arkansas Baptist Assembly. Earnings from endowments can be used to provide improved facilities, or make possible using the best preachers from across the Southern Baptist Convention, or other concerns you might have.

Cooperative Program funds provide approximately one-third of our annual budget needs. The remainder is raised from camp fees and rentals. That does not leave much for the extra things that would make the Assembly an even greater blessing. If the Lord places this idea on your heart, con-

tact the Arkansas Baptist Foundation to learn how you can continue to minister to hundreds of young people at the Arkansas Baptist Assembly, even after the Lord calls you home.—Freddie Pike, director

Christian Life Council

Unfair opportunists

People like the ancient Amalekites are not a dying breed. They are still with us. It's recorded that the children of Israel were



Parker

urged to remember how the Amalekites had met them as they journeyed to the land of promise. They also were to remember how the Amalekites attacked weak and weary stragglers at the end of their line or march and that they did not fear God (Deut. 25:17-18).

God-fearing statesmen like the late Brooks Hays are not adverse to finding and applying moral principles of the Bible. Principles such as the Golden Rule forbid taking unfair advantage of society's poor and weak. Before politicians or citizens of a state promote legislation which would further milk money needed for bare necessities from the poor, the Amalekites should be remembered. False hopes extended the poor by promoters of such as lottery gambling don't often take into account that many become and remain poor because of tantalizing opportunists who sometimes use as a ploy the promise that good causes will benefit.

Too many hopes have already been exploded in our state. We already have too many "hope makers" at Hot Springs and West Memphis. Let's not enlarge the problems.—Bob Parker, director

It's on the drawing board . . .

Program personnel:

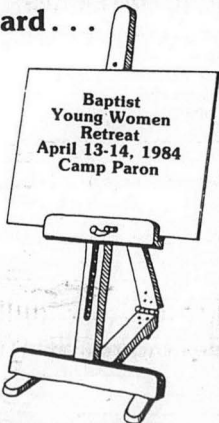
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Laura Spiegel, Brazil
Carla Carswell, Japan
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Beer, cheesecake poster ban lifted at Baylor

WACO, Texas (BP)—Keeping posted about Baylor University is getting easier.

In recent days major newspapers in Houston, Dallas, Austin and Waco, Texas, as well as the Associated Press, have reported a controversy at the Baptist school over students decorating their dorm rooms with beer advertisements and pin-ups.

The posters were banned by the Baylor administration in January, but university President Herbert Reynolds rescinded it after learning about it in the student newspaper.

Reynolds said Baylor's stance on alcohol and its opposition to degrading women by displaying lewd photographs is well-known.

"It is important . . . our student body know

we are reasonable people and can readily differentiate between those matters which may bring lasting harm to their lives and those which are relatively harmless and of a transient nature," Reynolds told *Baptist Press*.

"Just because an individual has a beer poster in his room does not mean he is going to sit in his room each night and drink a six-pack. There is a world of difference between our concern for student health and safety and what they want to put up in their rooms."

The issue apparently is a spin-off of a Baylor decision to place three fraternities on probation for not registering an off-campus

party and serving alcoholic drinks.

The *Houston Post* coverage of the suspensions was illustrated with a photograph of a student's room with a beer poster and part of what appeared to be a fold-out picture of a nude woman. The outline noted, "girls, beer a no-no except on posters."

Jimmy D. McClusky, the dean for men's programs, said the publicity partly contributed to a decision to ask students to remove the posters. The Baylor student handbook states, "lewd and obscene posters or other such displays are not permitted in the residence halls."

Reynolds said posters which "demean the women of our society" by being "lewd and lascivious" would be removed. But, he told a Dallas newspaper, he used to enjoy Betty Grable pinups himself. "I think the ban was well-intentioned but is equating the poster with the deed," he said. "If you cry 'wof' enough on things, then pretty soon what you have to say doesn't amount to much."

missionary notes

Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Carthwright, missionaries to Upper Volta, have completed language study in France and arrived on the field to begin their first term of service. Their address is: Mission Baptiste, BP 580, Ouagadougou, Upper Volta. The former Kay Goodwin, she and her husband both consider Bella Vista their hometown. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1982.

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis A. Derby, missionaries to Mauritius, have completed language study in France and arrived on the field to begin their first term of service. Their address is: c/o Norman Wood, P.O. Box 66, Curepipe, Mauritius. He is a native of California. The former Susanne Dacus, she was born in Jonesboro. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1982.

First Baptist Church, Smackover, will observe their 60th anniversary Sunday, March 25 All former staff and members are invited to attend



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Study committee recommends not seating Canadians

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Convention Canada Study Committee will recommend the SBC Constitution not be amended to allow seating of messengers from Canadian Southern Baptist churches.

The select 21-member committee appointed to study amending the SBC Constitution to add Canada to the territory of the denomination, unanimously adopted a recommendation that the constitution not be changed, but that the SBC "render all possible assistance to Canadian Southern Baptist churches to achieve their agreed upon objective, including the development of a Canadian Southern Baptist entity."

The two page report, negotiated following four day-long meetings of the entire committee and three regional subcommittee meetings, will be recommended to messengers at the 1984 annual meeting of the 14.1 million member denomination June 12-14 in Kansas City, Mo.

In its report, the committee acknowledges its "primary assignment. . . was to consider whether the constitution. . . should be amended to include the words 'and Canada.'"

However, the committee said it "became aware that this assignment could only be approached by considering the total implications of the decisions, including existing relationships between Canadian churches and state conventions to which they relate."

After "receiving counsel" from representatives of Canadian Southern Baptist churches, the Northwest Baptist Convention—which includes some 60 churches in Canada among its membership—SBC leaders and Baptists in Canada not related to the SBC, the committee report says the "essential question it believed it had to answer was: 'How can Southern Baptists best achieve our mutual goal of helping reach Canada for Christ?'"

The committee solution is to recommend the constitution not be amended, but "an aggressive, evangelistic strategy utilizing increased Southern Baptist leadership and

resources' be developed.

The recommendation includes creation of a Southern Baptist Convention Canada Planning Group to consist of executives and representatives from the Home Mission Board, the Foreign Mission Board, Sunday School Board, Radio and Television Commission as well as representatives of other agencies.

The planning group will be responsible for "correlating the work of the agencies of the SBC with churches in Canada in responding to requests. . ." In addition, it would work with Canadian leadership to assist with development of a strategy for missions and evangelism.

The final recommendation is that there be "encouragement of increasing involvement between churches, associations and state conventions in the United States and churches in Canada.

Unity in Christ conference theme

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)—Beginning a Baptist meeting with "Onward Christian Soldiers" isn't so unusual, but hearing it sung in seven different languages at the same time is a new twist.

The song underscored a Unity in Christ theme at the second National Brotherhood

Ethnic Training Conference Feb. 2-4 at the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis. Ethnic leaders heard presentations about Brotherhood language work and received training in Baptist Men and Royal Ambassador work during the week-end meeting.

Wallace Buckner, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's Multi-ethnic Ministries Department, emphasized the Unity in Christ theme. "No longer do we have a melting pot of cultures in America," he said. "We have a unity in Christ."

Buckner added that men are the key figures in ethnic church, family and community structures. Reaching ethnic America depends on reaching the men in ethnic communities, he said.

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New lesson writer begins

Dennis Dodson, pastor of First Church, Monticello, begins this week writing lessons for the International series in "Lessons for living".

A Paragould native, Dodson is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served as pastor of churches in Little Rock, Scott, Crossett, Leachville and Star City, as well as in Michigan and Kentucky.

Dodson is a former moderator of the Bartholomew Association and an ABCS Executive Board member. He presently chairs the ABCS Nominating Committee.

He is married to the former Margaret Seaton of Little Rock, an elementary school teacher. They have three children.



Dodson

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'Disfellowship' motion fails in Chicago Association

by Glenn Hewitt

CHICAGO (BP)—A motion to disfellowship Cornell Church from the Chicago Metropolitan Association was defeated in a called meeting of the association Feb. 13 by a vote of 210-113. The motion was a result of Cornell's action last summer to call Susan Lockwood Wright as pastor.

More than 400 persons attended the meeting; fewer than 200 attended the annual associational meeting this fall.

Supporters of the motion argued that the issue is biblical authority. John Jordan, pastor of First Church, Midlothian, brought the motion because he felt the Cornell church had deviated from "clear" New Testament teachings concerning the role of women.

By calling a woman pastor, he maintained, Cornell itself has broken fellowship with other churches in the association.

Larry Phillips, pastor of First Church, Olympia Fields, prepared a written statement which declared "the issue is purely and clearly whether we really believe the Bible is the plenary, verbal, inerrant, inspired word of God." God's revelation, he declared, does not allow women to serve the function of elder, bishop or pastor.

Other messengers disagreed as to the issue at stake. Everett Anthony, director of missions for the Chicago association, spoke against the motion. Anthony argued Baptists were united around missions, but disagreed on points of theology. Theological differences, he said, could be a bar to fellowship. "It may not be wise to exercise that option," he added.

A statement prepared by the Cornell church explaining its position on the biblical issue was available at the meeting. Wright shared her testimony with the messengers, noting she has been a Southern Baptist all her life, has been active in Southern Baptist organizations and has been educated in Southern Baptist institutions. She said she had received a call from God and had an urgent desire to obey that call.

Other opponents of the motion to disfellowship mentioned Cornell's involvement in the association and mission support for more than 30 years.

Some noted biblical arguments also had been used to support slavery and to deny rights to black congregations. Still others urged the decision be left to God.

Barney Rivers, lay leader in the association for many years, read several verses from 1 Timothy 3 and asked, "Should we exclude every church whose pastor is pretentious or unloving, or greedy for gain or not hospitable? Why, we'd be doing this all the time."

Following the vote, associational moderator Ron Houston, pastor of Northside Church, Chicago, called on all present to be conciliatory. He urged Baptists to continue the issue of women in ministry, but suggested missions should be the top priority.

Jordan and Phillips said they would not initiate further action to discipline Cornell church. Neither man could predict whether churches would leave the association over the issue.

Wright expressed relief after the vote. "We want to stay in the association," she said. "I'm hopeful, but I'm just not sure what will happen."

Hewitt is a student at the University of Chicago Divinity School and a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Leavell calls for return to New Testament teachings

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Calling for a return to "New Testament teachings," Landrum Leavell said many problems faced by Southern Baptists today are the result of straying from the teachings of the Bible.

Speaking in Nashville at a conference on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department, Leavell, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, addressed such topics as baptism of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, ordination and charismatic Christians.

Leavell said only in recent years have Southern Baptists begun to learn more about the Holy Spirit. "We have sat idly by and let other denominations get a monopoly on the Holy Spirit and watched them distort the meaning of charismatic," he claimed. "We have allowed these 'charismatics' to intimidate us in regard to the Holy Spirit. You don't have to speak in tongues to be filled with the Spirit."

Emphasizing "if you are a child of God you are a charismatic Christian," Leavell said

most Southern Baptists do not understand being baptized in the Holy Spirit is automatic conversion.

"At conversion the Holy Spirit becomes a permanent resident in your life. He said he would never leave and that is an absolute," said Leavell. "Those folks out there dabbling in sin are the ones who are worried about losing their salvation."

Leavell explained although the baptism of the Holy Spirit is automatic, "how much we are filled with the Holy Spirit depends on our willingness to daily empty ourselves of sin and allow the filling of the Spirit.

"The command of the New Testament is to be filled with the Holy Spirit—but we are not going to be filled against our will."

According to Leavell, all Christians are given at least one spiritual gift and are responsible for using that gift. "God gives gifts for the purpose of serving him and for the uplifting of the Kingdom."

He said Christians do not have a clear distinction between "the gift" and "gifts" of the Holy Spirit. "The gift is the gift of salva-

tion through Jesus Christ and it comes only by man's invitation. Spiritual gifts are by God's invitation. You can't get spiritual gifts until you've accepted the gift of salvation," Leavell explained.

Leavell also believes Southern Baptists are abusing the New Testament concept of ordination. "You don't have to be ordained to effectively administer your spiritual gifts," he stressed. "You can't go beyond the teachings of the New Testament which state one provision for ordination is the husband of one wife."

In keeping with his view of New Testament teachings, Leavell said he cannot condone the ordination of women.

Recommending Southern Baptists take a closer look at the concept of ordination, he cautioned pastors against ordaining persons "for a tax break. Ordination sets apart those called for special service. Not everyone has to be ordained to serve God.

"You can jeopardize the work of the Southern Baptist Convention by ordaining the wrong kind of people," he added.

Home Mission Board names 40 to mission positions

ATLANTA (BP)—In its February meeting, the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board approved eight new missionaries, nine missionary associates, 21 recipients of church pastoral aid, a national consultant and an addition to the Atlanta staff.

Peter Chen, assistant director in world religions for the interfaith witness depart-

ment, will become national consultant on Asian faiths, located in San Francisco.

Born in Shanghai, China, Chen has been pastor of Chinese churches in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Louisville pastor Rudee B. Boan was elected to a new position as associate director of the planning and services research department.

Among those named as missionaries were J. Paul and Ann Lewis of Phoenix, Ariz. The Lewises will move to Wyoming where he will be director of associational missions for southeast Wyoming. He has been pastor of churches in Arkansas, Arizona, Nevada and California, and is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., and Golden Gate seminary.

International

Jesus begins his ministry

by Dennis M. Dodson, pastor, First Church, Monticello

Basic passage: Mark 1

Focal passage: Mark 1:14-28

Central truth: The gospel Mark penned at the beginning of his manuscript (1:1) and Jesus preached at the beginning of his ministry (1:14), we are to take everywhere and tell to everyone (16:15)

We note some fundamental factors for our worldwide witness:

Preparation—Jesus began preaching the gospel and calling for men to turn from their sin to God and trust in the Son of God for their salvation when, by divine preparation, the time was right and ready for the emergence of the kingdom of God (Gal. 4:4). Since God worked and waited in preparation for the ministry of Jesus, we should realize the value of preparation.

Preaching—By preaching the gospel and the kingdom's arrival and availability to all men in him, Jesus called for men to repent and believe the gospel. These are our mission and method (Mk. 16:15, I Cor. 1:18,21).

Laborers—Jesus needed laborers for his ministry. The first four he called out to follow him and fish for men had made a commitment of life already (Jn. 1:35:42). Now called to labor with him, without delay, they dropped their nets and went with Jesus. We, too, are called and commissioned to labor with him. Also, we are to see the need for additional laborers and ask God to call them out (Luke 10:1,2).

Authority—Jesus amazed people with his authority. His commission to the church is based upon authority that is resident in him by nature of his being (Mt. 28:18-20). The power (ability) of the church is the power of the gospel and the preaching of it as indicated in Romans 1:16 and I Corinthians 1:18,21. Both "authority" and "ability" are spoken of by Jesus to his disciples concerning their worldwide witness immediately before his ascension (Acts 1:7,8).

The news of Jesus' ministry spread throughout Galilee. When Jesus works and men witness, the "good news" travels, and we have a Bold Mission Thrust.

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Life and Work

Praying with boldness

by Gene Crawley, First Church, Newport

Basic passage: Mark 11:12-12:12

Focal passage: Mark 11:22-25, 27-33

Central truth: Bold praying is righteous, submissive and confident praying.

1. Bold praying is righteous praying (v.25)
 One cannot go boldly to the throne of grace to address his Father and have aught in his heart against his brother. An unforgiving heart will be unforgiven (Matt. 6:15). This sin will stand between us and our prayers to God.

2. Bold praying is submissive praying (v.22)

"Have faith in God." Another way to say this is to trust God. Believe that he wants what is best for you. As a matter of fact, he stands more ready to answer our prayers than we are even to ask of him. He does not want to trick us. One has heard it said, "Watch out what you ask for, you might get it." God is no tyrant who is trying to mess our lives up, but a loving Father who wants to give us benefits. Sometimes we may "pray amiss", James says, but thank God he knows what's best. He is trustworthy.

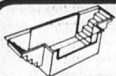
3. Bold praying is confident praying
 We pray confidently because Christ's authority stands behind his great promise concerning prayer.

(a) Christ's promise (v.24)
 What a promise! Pray-believing-and they are yours. Not only little things, but miraculous things. Maybe we just expect too little.

(b) Christ's authority (v.27-33)
 Answer to prayer could only be promised by God, and Jesus is God. Therefore, we can pray boldly and expectantly, knowing the power and authority of God backs the promise of fulfillment.

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Bible Book

God's mercy at life's midpoint

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

Basic passage: II Kings 20:1-21

Central passage: God's mercy is available for all of life's crises.

The sickness that brought Hezekiah to the brink of death came suddenly at the midpoint of his career, provoking a major spiritual crisis. A young man of noble birth, great power, and impressive string of successes suddenly stands before the reality of his own finitude. The work of the prophet brought Hezekiah to an experience not unlike that described in our time as a mid-life crisis. To suddenly realize that life has an end as well as a beginning calls for a complete reassessment of values and priorities.

Two truths about facing life at its midpoint seem evident here. First, Hezekiah brought to this crisis a valuable asset: that of good positive feelings about how his life had been spent to this point. His prayer in verse 10 should be understood not as an expression of pride but of one of healthy self-affirmation before God.

Second, there is a great truth for us today from God's intervention in answer to Hezekiah's prayer. It is the truth that God meets us at life's midpoint or any other moment of crisis when we are willing to open ourselves to his divine grace and seek a new outpouring of his renewing mercy. Along with the added years life often needs new meaning and purpose. The great truth here is that the God who created life can renew it with continuity, meaning and purpose.

The account of Hezekiah's encounter with the visitors from Babylon reveals a flaw in his character. How could such an intelligent ruler become so naive, displaying to a potential enemy all his treasures? When the pressures of illness and the Assyrian siege were removed, Hezekiah succumbed to pride and a boastful spirit. His desire to impress others became a trap to him. Living under God's grace does not insulate us from human weakness and failure.

The resulting prophecy of impending captivity is received by Hezekiah as a "good" word from the prophet (v.19). This can only be understood in the ultimate sense that "all things work together for good to those who love God" (Rom. 8:28). It reflects the king's indomitable spirit, his capacity to see even calamity and destruction through eyes of faith.

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Executive Committee affirms BJCPA, Dunn

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A request to totally withdraw funding from the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has been rejected by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee during its February meeting.

The Executive Committee voted without opposition to "decline to withdraw the financial support of the Southern Baptist Convention to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, as requested by the Alabama Baptist State Convention."

The matter came to the Executive Committee after the Alabama convention, during its annual meeting Nov. 15, passed a resolution to "respectfully ask the Southern Baptist Convention to withdraw totally" support from the Washington-based BJCPA.

Following a hearing on the matter, the ad-

currently a candidate for the Republican nomination for U.S. Senator, criticized Dunn for his membership on the advisory board of PAW, primarily complaining about Lear's involvement with the organization.

Smith, who defeated Buchanan for his U.S. House seat in 1980, before being defeated in his first reelection campaign, was elected to the SBC Public Affairs Committee in 1983. The Public Affairs Committee serves as the channel through which the SBC funds the work of the BJCPA. By virtue of his membership on the PAC, Smith is a trustee of the Joint Committee.

Alabama observers saw Smith's participation in the debate as calling for the defunding of the committee he serves as a trustee.

While the PAW connection was discussed during the meeting of the subcommittee,

"The Executive Committee voted without opposition to 'decline to withdraw the financial support of the Southern Baptist Convention to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, as requested by the Alabama Baptist State Convention.'"

ministrative and convention arrangements subcommittee of the Executive Committee recommended to the entire committee the request to defund be defunded.

The action also noted defunding "would be in conflict with previous actions of the SBC."

The defunding effort erupted during the annual meeting of the Alabama convention when messengers adopted "a resolution criticizing the BJCPA and its executive director, James M. Dunn, for participation in People for the American Way, a first amendment rights coalition founded in 1980.

The resolution charged PAW "founders and supporters espouse philosophies which are contrary to Biblical principles of decency and morality. . . ." One of the founders of PAW is television producer Norman Lear. Others include the late Ruth Carter Stapleton, Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame University and John Buchanan, a Southern Baptist and former congressman from Birmingham, Ala.

The debate in Alabama put two members of the Executive Committee on different sides of the issue and saw a member of the SBC Public Affairs Committee—which relates to the BJCPA—apparently urge defunding of the organization of which he is a board member.

Jimmy Jackson, pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala., urged passage of the resolution, commenting in the floor debate: "This is not the first bad decision by this individual (Dunn)." Dotson Nelson, pastor emeritus of Mountainbrook Baptist Church in Birmingham, referred to the effort as politically motivated and called it "guilt by association. I wonder how Jesus would have acted?"

Also at the state meeting, Albert Lee Smith,

the action drew little discussion when it came to the floor of the Executive Committee.

After the Executive Committee meeting, committee member Robert Goode, pastor of Florida State Baptist Church in Greensboro, N.C., requested information from the subcommittee on "why they came to the decision" to decline defunding.

Frank Ingraham, a Nashville, Tenn., attorney, said the subcommittee had heard from both Dunn and Earl Potts, interim executive secretary in Alabama, as well as from others in "establishing some facts which were very helpful" in coming to the decision.

"The facts are no Cooperative Program money has ever been expended for the People for the American Way," Ingraham said. "Second, (Dunn) . . . is no longer serving on the advisory board of People for the American Way, nor is there any membership in PAW.

"Third, we recognize there is a difference between the Joint Committee cooperating with a number of organizations and participating in making policy in an organization."

Ingraham also noted the SBC "sets the participation in the Cooperative Program, and not the Executive Committee."

Another member, William H. Ricketts, pastor of Prince Avenue Baptist Church, Watkinsville, Ga., told the committee Dunn declined to serve another term on the PAW board because of his sensitivities to the concerns of Southern Baptists.

The action will be forwarded to the executive board of the Alabama convention, according to Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the Executive Committee.

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