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December 5, 1991

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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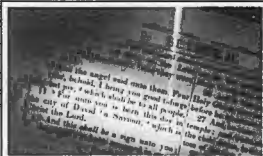
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At a glance

6 How Christians Celebrate Christmas

"I may not be the Grinch who stole Christmas but sometimes my family would think I am his first cousin," Rex Horne, pastor of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, writes. Horne explores the holiday's history and meaning to contemporary Christians, and also gives suggestions on doing "a better job of keeping Christ in Christmas."

20 New Year's Eve prayer launch

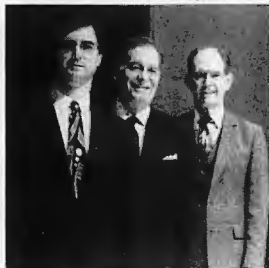
Southern Baptist Convention leaders are challenging churches to take a proactive role in the national spiritual awakening movement by participating in the Watchmen National Prayer Alert, to be launched on New Year's Eve.

23 Ban on 'teen' alcohol ads sought

U.S. Surgeon General Antonia Novello has called for the elimination of "irresponsible ads" appealing to youth but asked the alcohol industry to pull them voluntarily.

Cover story

ABN photo / Millie Gill



'Hope for the Home' 8

Messengers to the 1991 Arkansas Baptist State Convention, held Nov. 19-20 at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock, elected (left to right) Greg Kirksey, pastor of Benton First Church, first vice-president; William "Buddy" Sutton, attorney and member of Little Rock Immanuel Church, president; and David Tate, minister of music and education at Batesville First Church, second vice-president.

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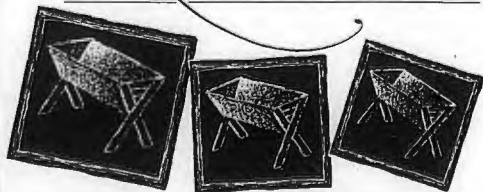
Sermon availability

Those desiring a tape of Mike Huckabee's message and Rex Holt's sermon at the 1991 Arkansas Baptist State Convention should send \$5 to Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, 5615 Geyer Springs Road, Little Rock, AR 72209. Huckabee's text is available through the ABN by sending a 52 cent stamped, self-addressed envelope. Holt's message is not available in text form.

Next issue: Dec. 19

A GIFT WITH ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE

LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING



NATIONAL GOAL: \$84 MILLION
Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions
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Unusual inspiration

J. EVERETT SNEED

The 1991 Arkansas Baptist State Convention was superb. Many believe it was the best convention they have ever attended. It was characterized by great music, good preaching, and a spirit of harmony. One unusual feature of this convention was the fact that many of the reports were inspirational.

Arkansas Baptists are indebted to outgoing president Mike Huckabee. Much of the harmony that our convention enjoyed was a direct result of the work done by him and the good humor he displayed during his presiding. He also is to be commended for an unusually fine presidential address. It also is noteworthy that vice presidents, Dan Grant and H.E. Williams, presided over sessions of the convention with distinction.

Huckabee's presidential message entitled "Seven Warning Signals for Arkansas Baptists" was both timely and appropriate. In his message, he dealt with many of the current problems that plague our churches. Such things as majoring on insignificant activities while we allow the important things for which the church was instituted to go unattended. During Huckabee's message, he received applause three times. At the conclusion of this outstanding address, he received a standing ovation from the messengers in attendance.

Arkansas Baptists also departed from tradition by electing a layman to serve as the president of the convention. W.H. "Buddy" Sutton is the first layman to be elected in more than 60 years. Sutton, a Little Rock attorney, is a Sunday School teacher and a deacon at Immanuel Church of Little Rock. He also is known for heading up the Billy Graham Crusade and more recently for serving as the director of CALL (Citizens Against Legalized Lottery). Sutton, an outstanding layman, will provide Arkansas Baptists with outstanding presidential leadership. He also will be ably assisted by First Vice-President Greg Kirksey, pastor of First Church in Benton, and Second Vice President David M. Tate, minister of music for First Church of Batesville. Arkansas Baptists can take pride in this leadership team.

A high point of the convention was Ouachita Baptist University's report. OBU President Ben M. Elrod introduced Beth Ann Rankin who told of her witnessing experience with Alia Dzhelembaeva, a young



woman from the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan. Alia, who comes from a Moslem background, listened with great interest to the witnessing of her roommate. After leaving Ouachita she accepted Christ. During the past summer Alia served as a translator for individuals who went to Russia for a folk festival. One of those for whom she translated was so impressed with her that he arranged a scholarship for her to Belmont College, Nashville, Tenn.

After Beth Ann had completed this dramatic testimony, Dr. Elrod asked, "If Alia were here today what would you tell her, Beth Ann?" As Beth Ann began to answer, Alia appeared on the platform. The two girls embraced as the tears flowed down their cheeks. Everyone in the auditorium was deeply moved by this unusual report.

The theme "Strengthening Families" was ably interpreted by messages, Bible studies, and music. Messages were delivered by Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention; and Rex Holt, pastor of Central Church, Jonesboro. The Bible studies were presented by Tim LaHaye, president of Family Life Seminars, Washington, D.C.

Those desiring the message by Mike Huckabee should send a 52 cent self-addressed envelope to the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. The printed message will be returned without additional cost to those writing. Those desiring recorded messages of both Huckabee and Holt should send \$5 to Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, 5615 Geyer Springs Road, Little Rock, AR 72209. Holt's message is not available in manuscript form.

The nine Executive Board recommendations passed without opposition. Perhaps the most important of these was the passage of a \$14.6 million budget which assures the funding of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention causes, as well as sending 41.75 percent to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Other recommendations included the Priority Goals and Projects for 1992, the termination of an advisory committee for the Ministry of Crisis Support, recommendations for a Family Ministry Task Force, a recommendation for Arkansas Baptists to form a partnership with Iowa

Southern Baptists, and a recommendation that the plan of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* for dealing with its deficit in 1990 be accepted.

A new unified budget formula was adopted. The most significant change in the formula is that the percentage of increase to the SBC Cooperative Program be tied to the undesignated gifts of churches as reported in the previous year's annual uniform letters. Since the percentage of increase from churches has not increased over a several year period, unless churches begin to give higher percentages of their undesignated gifts to the Cooperative Program, there will be no increases to SBC causes after 1992, when the new budget formula begins to function.

Geyer Springs First Church, Little Rock, is to be commended for the excellence with which it hosted this year's convention. The staff and members of the church provided in a magnificent way.

The music for this year's convention was excellent. Messengers enjoyed more music than usual because of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the ABSC music department. Tuesday night's program gave a history of the department and vignettes of music from each of the five decades. It was truly heart warming and stirring.

The spirit of unity in this year's convention should assist Arkansas Baptists in moving forward in service for the Lord during the coming year. If through the convention and other efforts this year we can strengthen families in Arkansas, we will truly have succeeded. Our success, as always, depends on our working together and allowing the Holy Spirit to be our guide in every area of life.

Notice

The *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* board and staff have worked ardently to hold down subscription costs. The two largest publications in Arkansas have experienced more than 50 percent increases in their subscription rates. Due to the outstanding work of the *Newsmagazine's* board of trustees and Operation Manager Darrell Bartlett we will have only a 10.4 percent increase in 1992 over the 1991 rates. If postage had not increased without notification there would have been little or no increase. The increase will be only five cents per subscriber per month.

DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know

"I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name for evermore" (Psalms 86:12).

This is my response, the day after our annual Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Attendance was great! Attitude and spirit were great! Reports were inspiring! Speakers were prepared and effective! Business was conducted with harmony and in a timely way. Joy, excitement, trust and appreciation seemed to flow freely between the members of our large Baptist family. This was true in the formal meetings, as well as in the informal fellowship we enjoyed.

While most of us would likely have some areas of conviction not shared by everyone else in our Baptist family, it appears our brothers and sisters are succeeding in putting the welfare of the whole above their personal concerns, and therefore, providing for an atmosphere in which the spirit of God moves. I was glad to hear people say they were going home with real excitement about what we are doing together as Arkansas Baptists and with real pride over being an Arkansas Baptist.

Now to the challenge ahead. Let me urge you to begin immediately to make specific plans for "Hope For The Home" conferences in your church. Materials were sent to every church earlier that gives ideas, resources, suggestions, illustrations and options for how you could have a "Hope For The Home" conference.

Pastors, above all, strengthen your own life and ministry by strengthening your home through participating in a "Ministers/Mate Marriage Enrichment Retreat." There is little hope that a pastor can help to strengthen the homes of the church family if he doesn't have the concern and commitment to strengthen his own home. I can't think of a better way for a pastor to get his church interested in strengthening families than by his own example. There will be six retreats available during January 1992, for strengthening families. Shouldn't you make plans now to attend one of these?

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



Arkansas Baptist

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 Millie Gill Executive Assistant to the Editor
 Darrell Bartlett Operations Manager
 Colleen Backus Production Manager
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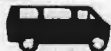
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LOCAL & STATE

Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

People

Matt and Dana Sheets have joined the staff of Brookland Church, Jonesboro, as music director and pianist.

Michael Trammell has resigned as pastor of Highland Drive Church in Jonesboro to serve as pastor of Mount Airy Church in Mount Airy, Md.

Donald Strait has resigned as pastor of Bethabara Church, Lake City, to serve as pastor of First Church in Tuckerman.

Jerry Baker is serving as pastor of First Church in Hoxie.

Earl Humble has completed his service as interim pastor of First Church of Hoxie.

Jim Dickerson is serving as pastor of Calvary Church in Walnut Ridge.

Zan Pierce is serving as pastor of Macedonia Church, Warren.

Ben Seamans has resigned as pastor of music and youth at First Church in Mena to move to Oklahoma City, effective Dec. 16.

Doug White is serving as pastor of First Church, Beirne.

Danny Roberts has resigned as pastor of Shiloh Church, Arkadelphia, to move to Crossett.

Raymond Dave Mitchell has resigned as pastor of Wheien Springs Church.

Thomas McLelland is serving as interim music director of First Church, Prescott.

Keith Michaels has joined the staff of Center Hill First Church of Paragould as minister of music. He is a student at Williams Baptist College.

Mary Beth Hughes has joined the staff of Calvary Church in North Little Rock as part-time minister of youth.

Keith Thomas recently was ordained to the ministry at Toltec Church, Scott. He is serving as pastor of South Bend Church, Okolona.

John Shaw of Piggott is serving as pastor of Nimmons First Church.

Norman Neely has been called to serve as pastor of First Church in DeWitt. He has been serving as pastor of Long Street Church in Shreveport, La.

Zan Pierce has resigned as pastor of Sardis Church, Montrose.

Don Pope began serving Nov. 24 as pastor of Millwood Church, Ashdown, moving there from Midland, Texas. He and his wife, Judy, are the parents of two daughters.

Charles Holcomb began serving Nov. 3 as pastor of Hurricane Lake Church, Benton.

Phelan Boone is serving as pastor of Garland Church.

Jim Martin was ordained to the gospel ministry Oct. 20 at Woodland Church, Clarksville.

Ben M. Elrod, president of Ouachita Baptist University, has been named Arkansas coordinator for the National Summit of Independent Higher Education at the Hyatt Regency in Washington, D.C. Feb. 5-6, 1992.

John Finn has resigned as associate pastor of Life Line Church in Little Rock to serve as pastor of First Church in Parkin.

Dwain Miller began serving Nov. 24 as pastor of First Church in Hampton, coming there from First Church of Douglass, Texas.

Lynwood Henderson has completed his service as interim pastor of First Church in Hampton.

Briefly

Central Church in Pine Bluff held a Harvest Time revival Nov. 3-6 that resulted in 55 professions of faith and baptisms and 30 rededications. William Blackburn was evangelist and Mark Little was music evangelist. Gary Akers is pastor.

Olivet Church in Little Rock ordained Kent Harris, Ozier Moore, and Scott King to the deacon ministry Nov. 24.

Immanuel Church in Little Rock sixth annual edition of the Glory of Christmas will be presented Sunday Dec. 8 at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. under the direction of Lynn Madden, associate pastor of music and media. The presentation will feature the 180 member sanctuary choir and Immanuel orchestra. Other ensembles participating will be the Young Musicians choir, Chancel

Bells, Immanuel Ringers, ladies ensemble, Immanuelaires Men's Quartet, Praise Vocal Ensemble and dramatic cast. The theme for the 1991 edition is "Christmas Is Calling You Home!"

West Side Church at Greers Ferry has voted to do direct mission work with the Christian Baptist Fellowship Church, Mays Landing, New Jersey as a result of a need shared at a World Missions Conference. The church also has voted to build a multi-purpose building with work to begin in March 1992. The building will contain Sunday School classrooms, a fellowship hall, and a recreation area.

Camden First Church ordained Bobby Bass and Dan Ives to the deacon ministry Nov. 17.

East End Church, located at Arch Street and East End Road in Little Rock, will present the outdoor drama "Old Fashioned Arkansas Country Christmas" Dec. 19-21. The Dec. 19 performance will be at 7 p.m. with performances on Dec. 20 and 21 to be at both 7 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Huntsville First Church recently ordained Elmer Moore and Grady Whiteley to the deacon ministry.

University Church in Fayetteville recently ordained Gene Calvert, Marvin Harlan, David McKinney, and Joe Young to the gospel ministry.

Hampton First Church recently celebrated payment of its indebtedness with a noteburning service. The church also has been refurbished at a cost of approximately \$10,000. Ordained to the deacon ministry were Ricky Biggers, Loren Strickland, Donn Poole, Dennis Thomason, Steve Gwin, and Tom Humphries.

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How Christians Celebrate Christmas

by Rex M. Horne Jr.
Pastor, Little Rock Immanuel Church

Game Boys, Barbies, Nintendo, busy nights, heavy traffic, and heartburn... it must be Christmas! My family gets a chuckle from the fact that I am writing this article. I may not be the Grinch who stole Christmas but sometimes my family would think I am his first cousin. I am willing to admit that I go through a "spell" sometime during the Christmas season of complaining about the gross commercialization and exploitation of Christmas. Jesus was born in a cave, his first bed a feed trough, and we live in a time of fads, changing fashions, and feeding frenzies and call it Christmas.

The title, "How Christians Celebrate Christmas," may be somewhat misleading. Perhaps a brief look back in history will give us some perspective of the celebration of Christmas. According to the *World Book Encyclopedia*, the first mention of Christmas occurred in 336 A.D. in an early Roman calendar. This celebration was probably influenced by pagan festivals held at that time. The ancient Romans held year end celebrations to honor Saturn, their harvest god; and Mithras, the god of light. As part of these celebrations, the people prepared special foods, decorated their homes with greenery, and joined in singing and gift giving. These customs gradually became part of the Christmas celebration. Throughout the years the celebration has been debated. During the Reformation, many Christians would not celebrate Christmas. During the 1660s because of these feelings, Christmas was outlawed in England and in parts of the English colonies in America. There is debate in some circles and churches whether Christmas should be celebrated at all. There was a law prohibiting the celebration of Christmas in effect in the colonies until 1681. The legal establishment of December 25 as a legal holiday took place in territories and states between 1836 and 1890. Soon people began to exchange Christmas gifts and started to follow the other old customs again.

A decision about the celebration of Christmas must be made. It may be made by an individual or family. I have come to view the Christmas season in a different way. You can't get away from the fact that our land celebrates Christmas in a grand manner. In the church, Christmas is rivaled only by Easter. The name Christmas guarantees that we know the reason for the celebration. It is a celebration of the Savior's birth. I am proud as a Christian that the world must take note of the birth

of my Savior and Lord even if the day for many is one of excess and void of meaningful worship. It need not be that way for Christians.

I understand the concern of sincere Christians who question the wisdom of celebrating Christmas. After all, we don't know the date of Jesus' birth, the origins of many of our customs, and therefore we might unwittingly be a part of a celebration that would not honor Christ at all. As in most celebrations there are pagan influences as well as Christian. Some of our most beloved hymns were sung to the tune of secular melodies. Yet, the words, meaning, and devotion of life have made even the tune sacred. I choose not to let the world, Satan, or pagan origins steal Christmas from me. It is not vitally important that we do away with all our traditions and customs (think how that would affect your church if "our way of doing things" was suddenly removed).

I do believe most of us can and should do a better job of keeping Christ in Christmas. When our oldest daughter, Ashley, was a small child one of her first words was learned around Christmas. The word was "mine" and applied to anything brought into the house. Adults, as well as children, are guilty of using "mine" too often a Christmas. We make our plans, buy our gifts, and travel in snow, sleet or sun by car, plane or sled.

I would like to suggest to you the three "R's" of Christmas. The first is remember. We must remember the reason for the celebration of Christmas. We do not know the date but we know the reality of the person whose birth we celebrate on December 25.

FW. Boreham in his book, *My Christmas Book*, wrote, "At this season of the year, we all indulge in a riot of recollection and reminiscence. We sing the old songs; we play the old games; we tell the old stories; and we surround ourselves—in fact or in fancy—with the old familiar faces. We conjure up thoughts of old-time feasts and old-time frolics. In a word, we do all that is humanly possible to make the dead past

live again."

We all have Christmas remembrances. I remember going to Big Mama and Big Papa's house in rural North Louisiana. Mom had six sisters and one brother. When we would get together in the house it was wall to wall people. I remember so well that my grandparents felt that they must give us all something. It may have been socks or a handkerchief but they gave all their many grandchildren something. They never had much material goods but always shared what they had. Those Christmas are in the past. They are gone. A number of those faces I see in my memory are now gone and await me in heaven. Yet a part of those celebrations brings joy today and hope for tomorrow.

BSSB photo / Jim Veneman



Before any presents could be opened, we took time (actually we were made to sit still) to read about the birth of Christ from Luke 2. The socks and handkerchiefs didn't last too long but the reading of the God's Word is fresh in my mind today.

The second "R" stands for rejoice. In the gospel of Luke we read that after the

The Arkansas Baptist's

CHURCH SERVICES DIRECTORY

angel's announcement of Christ's birth, the angel was joined by a multitude of the heavenly host who praised God. The shepherds joined in the glorifying and praising of God. Now it is our turn!

Who is not moved by the expressions on the faces of children when Christmas is at hand? Whose heart is not touched when we worship through the music and messages presented by choirs and pastors at this time of year? Surely Christmas melts the heart of a Christian and causes our heart to express the words of long ago, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The third "R" is recapture. We can recapture the meaning and message of Christmas for today. I would suggest to you that we can relate the real meaning of Christmas to others by being more selfless. My parents always made Christmas special for my brother and me. Every year my parents did without in order to give us something more than we needed and certainly more than we deserved. God did for us something that we could never do for ourselves.

As Southern Baptists we can make a generous gift to the Lottie Moon Foreign Missions Offering. We will be doing something to bring the true message of Christmas to the world. Locally there are opportunities to help people who will not have a merry Christmas unless someone steps in to reveal Christmas to them in an understandable way.

The popular, *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens held out against greed and selfishness while promoting benevolence and brotherhood. The key statement of the carol may well be the one uttered by Scrooge after his visitors, "I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year."

I will celebrate a Christian Christmas. The giving, travelling and eating will still occupy a part of the season. More than that I will remember the Savior, rejoice in my salvation and recapture the meaning in service to others. Merry Christmas!

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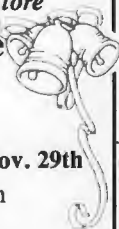
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Hope for the Home: Strengthening Families

Messengers to the 1991 Convention elect layman, get surprise inspiration

by Colleen Backus
Arkansas Baptist

Inspiration can come when least expected, messengers to the 1991 Arkansas Baptist State Convention found out Tuesday, Nov. 19, when they convened at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock. One of the uncontested highlights came at a point in the proceedings few would have expected—an agency report. Ouachita Baptist University President Ben Elrod turned his time over to OBU junior Beth Ann Rankin, who spoke with vivacious enthusiasm about her experiences in acquainting her Soviet roommate with Christ last year. Her testimony and subsequent emotional surprise reunion with her Soviet friend provided messengers with a moving reminder of the touch of God's hand upon the convention.

Messengers also experienced a musical celebration commemorating the 50th anniversary of the ABSC Church Music Department, and listened attentively as speakers explored the theme, "Hope for the Home—Every Arkansas Baptist Church Strengthening Families."

One of the most remarkable events, however, was the election of a layman Little Rock attorney William "Buddy" Sutton as president, the first time in more than 60 years such a selection had occurred.

Tuesday morning

The 138th session of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention opened with comments by ABSC Music Department Director Lester McCullough, who introduced LeRoy McClard, retired from Church Music Department, Baptist Sunday School Board, in Nashville, Tenn. He led the congregation in energetic renditions of "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," "He is Lord," and a chorus of "Worthy of Worship."

Messengers continued to come into the auditorium as Betty Merrell, director, age-involvement section, SBC Woman's Missionary Union, Birmingham, Ala., presented her first prayer emphasis. She began as if in prayer, "Good morning Lord," and talked about the need for a constant state of preparedness. She presented images left from a life with Christ, as exemplified by her own mother, who



Betty Merrell delivered the convention prayer emphases.

harvested the fruit she planted during her lifetime not with material possessions, but with a profound effect on the lives of others. She then led the congregation in sentence prayers, commemorated a missionary birthday, and closed with Philippians 1:3, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you."

ABSC President Mike Huckabee then introduced Tim LaHaye, president, Family Life Seminars, Washington, D.C., who

brought the first of the convention Bible studies on the theme "Hope for the Home."

"I have believed for a long time that we Christians have the best family life in the world, because the Bible is the best manual on human behavior ever devised," LaHaye asserted, pointing out the lengthy passage on family living in Ephesians 5. The context of the passage, LaHaye said, "is happy family living; spirit filled living... which is the will of the Lord." He cautioned, "What you really are is what you are at home."

The evidence of spirit-filled living can be seen in three areas, LaHaye commented: a song in your heart, a thanksgiving attitude, and a submissive spirit.

He then contrasted the fruit of the spirit to the sins of the flesh, concluding that the greatest need we have as Christians today is to be filled with the Spirit. A quick formula to achieve that, he said, is self-examination, confession of all known sin, yielding yourself to God, asking to be filled, and believing you are filled.

President Huckabee called ABSC Sunday School Department Director Freddie Pike to the platform. Pike noted that nearly \$200,000 for the Arkansas Baptist Assembly at Siloam Springs still needs to be raised in order to receive the Maybee Foundation matching grant. He presented Huckabee with a walnut gavel made by Eugene Ryan, in honor of Huckabee's efforts on behalf of the assembly. Using the new gavel, President Huckabee declared the 138th session officially convened.

Paul Sanders, pastor of the host church, welcomed the messengers with a word of encouragement from Galatians 5, that this

Where to find it . . .

- SBC President Chapman's Address 9
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be a spirit-led, spirit-filled convention.

Huckabee then thanked the parliamentarians and convention committees for their efforts on behalf of the convention.

Credentials Committee Chairman Sid Carswell, pastor of Crystal Hills Church, announced that at 9:10 a.m., 925 messengers had been registered.

Order of Business Chairman C.A. Johnson, director of missions, Greene County Baptist Association, Paragould, moved that the order of business be adopted. Tellers Committee Chairman Ken Goad, pastor of Central Church, Mineral Springs, then gave balloting instructions.

Resolutions Committee Chairman Larry Pillow, pastor of Conway Second Church, announced that messengers should bring proposed resolutions to the committee meeting room before noon.

Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairperson Betty Harp, layperson, Park Hill Church, North Little Rock, notified the messengers that the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws had been updated and restated to be voted on later in the convention, and also noted the second vote on replacing *Kerfoot's Parliamentary Law with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* would also be taken.

President Huckabee then gave announcements, and presented fraternal greetings from other state conventions.

LeRoy McClard took the platform and led the congregation in singing, "How Firm a Foundation," and a chorus of "Stand Up for Jesus."

In absence of SBC President Morris Chapman, Huckabee called for change in order and went to Guatemala Report.

ABSC Brotherhood director Glendon Grober, who heads the Guatemala-Arkansas Partnership, said that the partnership logo, GAP, has come to stand for many things: goals and projects, giving and praying, going and preaching, grace and peace, and glorifying and praising the Father. He then presented an informative and moving video of volunteers participating in the Guatemala partnership.

Chapman's address

President Huckabee then introduced Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman, pastor of Wichita Falls Church, Texas.

"It is true," Chapman admitted with great force, "that God has burdened my heart for spiritual awakening in America."

Chapman related his experiences on a recent tour of the Soviet Union where he assisted in Bibles distribution. Even though there is a great spiritual hunger, Chapman said, as atheists, they have no idea of the truth and the Muslims, Mormons, and even Moonies are moving into Moscow.

ABSC photo / Millie Gill



SBC President Morris Chapman

In oppressed countries such as Romania, people packed in the aisles during church services, many of them standing ramrod straight for two hours to hear the gospel and sing praises. He reflected on how different it was in the U.S. "God help us to have revival in this world; but if we do not have revival in America, it will not happen in the world," Morris contended, "We need a spiritual awakening!"

"We have not had revival in 130 years, since the Welsh revival," he stated. After thousands were saved in Wales in three months, the spiritual flame crossed the seas and spread like prairie fire across America, Chapman said. The man God raised up in that revival was Evan Roberts, whose prayer to be used had been simplified to, "Lord, bend me."

"We need pastors and laypeople on their faces before God," Chapman challenged, "If you are saved, you have the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit of God? Giving control to God, and having none of self. . . ."

"God wants preeminence," Chapman said, citing Colossians 1:18. "People will never be filled with the Holy Spirit and revival come to the United States until we are a broken people. God uses broken things! God wants to do a mighty, powerful work in our lives. We need prophets today like the prophets of old," he stated.

Speaking on the necessity of prayer for such an effort, he said that God wants to be with us and will empower us. "We need mountain-moving prayer and faith in our

generation," he said. Chapman stated that the state of gladness, steadfastness of doctrine in Acts 2 is imperative to our endeavors. "We should not turn over praising the Lord to others who do not have the strong doctrinal base as Southern Baptists," he contended; heavy applause followed his obviously heart-felt statement.

"If you'll take John 3:16 and your testimony God will empower your witness. . . ." he said. "What we do for Jesus we must do today," Chapman concluded, praying that "People would be saturated with the very Spirit of God."

LeRoy McClard rose again to the platform, leading the congregation in singing, "There's Something About That Name," and a chorus of "My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less."

ABSC Vice-President Dan Grant introduced special music by the adult choir of Benton First Church, with 16-year-old soloist Jamie Gilbert, from Texarkana Beech Street First Church. After several inspirational and gospel numbers, Grant again came to the platform to introduce Mike Huckabee, who came to give the President's Message.

President's Message

Speaking on the "Seven Warning Signals for Arkansas Baptists," Huckabee began his address by citing a personal example of his wife's spinal cancer early in their marriage. He formulated his sermon along the line of the American Cancer Society's "Seven Warning Signals."

The first warning signal was Insignificance. "We endanger the cause of Christ when we trivialize our faith into ministerial minutia," Huckabee asserted. "It's an unhealthy sign when church people are more interested in how we spend \$25 of church money than in where an eleven year old spends eternity," he said.

Many pastors become bowed not under the pressure of spiritual battles, Huckabee commented, but under battle over the color of choir robes, Wednesday night menus and air conditioning.

The second warning signal was Informationalism. "The average pastor is bombarded today with an information overflow through the mail, personal phone calls, etc., relative to a plethora of program offerings for his church," Huckabee said. "The avalanche of suggestions coming from the outside add immeasurably to a level of guilt for not doing enough."

The third warning signal was Isolationism. Huckabee warned, "There is a dangerous tendency of evangelicals in general and Baptists in particular to complain about the spiraling decline of the values of our nation and the integrity of those who lead it, but who at the same

ABN photo/Mike Oll



ABSC Director Don Moore presented Mike Huckabee with a plaque commemorating his presidency of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

time feel that Christians 'shouldn't get involved'. . . We cannot change the world if we refuse to participate in the institutions of society that dictate its direction."

"We need to be less concerned about offending those who despise our values and realize that if we fail to stand for what's right, we're going to offend God!" Huckabee continued. In speaking further to social issues, he commented, "Christians have a message to America that would save many a person much misery. . . if we want to stop the spread of AIDS and deal with the teen pregnancy problem, we must play by the rules of our Creator—one man with one woman for life in a monogamous marital relationship." Messengers responded with resounding applause.

The fourth warning signal is injustice. "Some things that we do are based on generations of tradition more so than on the infallible truth of God's Word," he said. "We have been Baptist so long that it sometimes if difficult to be biblical!" The result of such behavior often is mistreating the very people the church employs, Huckabee commented.

The fifth warning signal is idolatry. "We've become a Christianity that is more idolatrous than ideal. We pursue fitness instead of faith; happiness instead of holiness; wealth instead of worship; position instead of principle," he noted. Huckabee commented that the result of this following of an unwritten, unspoken code is a "performance-centered" version of Christianity.

The sixth, and single greatest warning signal, Huckabee said, is institutionalism. "There is something patently amiss when

we forget who serves whom. A true Baptist believes that the local church is the highest level of ecclesiastical authority."

The seventh, and final, warning signal was intolerance. "We need to be more tolerant of people who are a bit different, but we need to be intolerant of the godless and gutless way some people are being treated," he stated. In cautioning messengers to treat each other with kindness, Huckabee said, "Let's be mature enough to recognize that our most important fight is not with each other. . . (it is) a battle to salvage our culture and our very civilization from a world view that thinks man is good and God is dead."

In conclusion, the outgoing president said, "I leave you with the admonition of the apostle Paul as recorded in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14: 'Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love.'"

Messengers honored Huckabee with a standing ovation, not only for a powerful address, but in appreciation of a gracious presidency. Rick Ballentine, pastor of Fair Park Church, Russellville, dismissed the gathering with a benediction.

Tuesday afternoon

After the lunch break, messengers returned to the sounds of the MasterSingers Brass, lead by director Glenn Ennes, playing a "Heavenly" medley.

Following the uplifting music, Betty Merrill came to the platform to deliver her afternoon prayer emphasis. Once again, she began as if in prayer, "Good afternoon, Lord." She pointed out the role of the

church as the very hub of faith at work in the world. Joined by the voices of the messengers, she alliterated God's world plan: the cost, covenant, commandments, commission, community, communion, caring, core, and the coming.

President Huckabee recognized guest Charles Baker, senior vice-president of the Baptist Memorial Health Care System in Memphis, Tenn. He also asked former ABSC presidents to come to the platform. They were: Wilbur Herring, Don Moore, Lawson Hatfield, Johnny Jackson, Bernes Selph, Don Hook, John Finn, and Dillard Miller.

Huckabee thanked the two vice-presidents who have served with him for both of his terms as president: First Vice-President Daniel R. Grant and Second Vice-President H.E. Williams. Retired home missionaries, denominational employees, and retired ministers also were recognized. ABSC Executive Director Don Moore called more than 30 church staff new to Arkansas to the platform for introductions.

Russell Fox, furloughing missionary from Honduras, presented the SBC Foreign Mission Board report. In humble fashion, he explained that giving reports is one of the most difficult things he has to do, since he is not a preacher, but a builder and camp manager. He pointed out that Southern Baptists are a missions-minded people; it is the glue that binds us together. But, he emphasized, success breeds a tendency to grow inward. He enumerated both accomplishments and needs on the mission field and concluded with one very important aspect of mission work, "Go if you are called."

Vice-President Dan Grant then recognized current and retired foreign missionaries.

Inspirational highpoint

When Ouachita Baptist University President Ben Elrod came to the platform to deliver his annual report, he began by saying that OBU was strong and getting stronger, but he felt like a vignette from Ouachita's campus life would give messengers a better idea of the university's mission. He introduced Beth Ann Rankin, a vivacious red-haired junior music major, who also is OBU's homecoming queen. Last year, she roomed with Alla Dzhiembava, a student from Kazakhstan, a Soviet republic. The first time the two met, Rankin said, was at the airport, where Alla was obviously taken aback by Rankin's fiery hair. The young women got to know each other through the normal course of dorm life, with Beth Ann always looking for opportunities to witness. One evening, on the spur of the moment, and in spite of language problems in trying to communicate spiritual terms, Rankin was able

to share her faith clearly. After talking for hours, Alia said, "I can understand you as if you were speaking my own language. . . I think I came to America to know God." Reynolds later learned that after returning to her native country, Alia made a profession of faith, and as a result of translating for a temporary missionary, was studying at Belmont College in Tennessee.

ABN photo / Millie Gill



An emotional reunion was one of the convention's highlights.

Elrod noted that as of that week, OBU will have more Soviet students than any other college or university in the U.S. Turning for a final word, Elrod surprised Beth Ann by bringing Alia to the platform for a surprise, emotional reunion. Messengers were moved to tears as Alia came to the podium with greetings from the Soviet Union and said simply, "You are my friends. . . God bless you."

During the time allotted for miscellaneous business, Bill Donovan, HMB director of institutional and business chaplaincy division, presented ABSC Executive Director Don Moore with a plaque commemorating Arkansas' contributions to the chaplaincy ministry, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the SBC Chaplaincy Commission.

Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman Betty Harp presented the motion mentioned earlier to change to *Robert's Rules of Order*, which passed unanimously.

Jack Bledsoe, messenger from Fordyce First Church and Foreign Mission Board trustee, moved that Dec. 31 be set aside as

a Day of Prayer for the former states of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the year of 1992 be set aside for the same. The motion passed.

James Sawyer, messenger from Little Rock Second Church, and former Foreign Mission Board trustee, asked for affirmation of the reinstatement of the funding for Ruschlikon Seminary in Switzerland. President Huckabee ruled the motion out of order, as it should have been a resolution. Bledsoe spoke again as a point of information, insisting that the matter was under study and would be considered in the December meeting of the Foreign Mission Board.

LeRoy McClard then led the congregation in singing "Redeemed."

Arkansas Baptist Foundation Director Harry Trulove said his agency was strengthening families and family fate by distributing \$700,000 each month to undergird Baptist work at home and abroad. Currently, \$30 million is under management, Trulove reported. The most exciting part of the report came when Trulove announced that the Oklahoma Baptist Foundation would be expanding its church loan program into Arkansas in conjunction with the Arkansas Baptist Foundation. Bob Ross, president of the Oklahoma organization, was on the platform to familiarize messengers with Oklahoma's program, which in the last 37 years had made 1,060 building loans to churches.

During that time, \$3 million has been distributed to Baptist causes, and only three churches had ever defaulted on loans, making it a "win-win" situation, according to Ross.

Nominating Committee Chairman Johnny Ross, retired pastor from Warren, presented the slate of nominations to the messengers for approval (see page 19). It passed with the stipulation that one of the nominees had since moved out of state and would have to be replaced.

ABSC Executive Board President James McDaniel, pastor of Brinkley First Church, came to the platform and asked messengers to refer to the 1991 Book of Reports in order to vote on the recommendations.

The following nine items passed with little or no discussion: Recommendation

No. 1, the 1992 Budget, totalling \$14,624,000; Recommendation No. 2, 1992 Priority Projects, Goals and Projects; Recommendation No. 3, the discontinuation of the Ministry of Crisis Support Committee; Recommendation No. 4, Family Ministry Task Force; Recommendation No. 5, Task Force on Church Conflict and Forced Termination; Recommendation No. 6, A Partnership for Kingdom Growth between Arkansas Baptist State Convention and Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship; Recommendation No. 7, National Soul-Winning Encounter; Recommendation No. 8, the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* plan for dealing with deficit; and Recommendation No. 9, Unified Budget Formula for Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine Study Committee Chairman Eddie McCord also brought a report on the progress of the Executive Board committee which is studying the feasibility of placing the ABN back under the Executive Board. McCord reported that they were conducting an historical review, and finding out what persons needed to be interviewed, and named the members of the committee.

Messengers rose under the direction of LeRoy McClard, singing "Jesus is Lord of All," which McClard authored.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Dilday came to give a report on behalf of all six Southern Baptist seminaries. "In these critical and sometimes tense times, the seminaries are continuing their task," Dilday said. He reported that there were 10,000 students currently studying on the six campuses. The average age is 32, coming to seminary in mid-career rather than right out of college, according to Dilday. The SBC Executive Board was becoming more aware

ABN photo / Millie Gill



Eddie McCord of Batesville (left) will serve as vice-president and Jim McDaniel of Brinkley (right) will serve as president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board in 1991-92. They were elected in a meeting held Nov. 19 at Geyer Springs First Church, Little Rock.

STATE CONVENTION

ABN photo / Millie Gill



Tim LaHaye presented four Bible studies.

of the merit of outside accreditation, he said, which has no bearing on doctrinal soundness.

ABSC Executive Director Don Moore, beginning his tenth year, came to the platform to give his report. "I am tremendously thrilled at what God is doing in this state," Moore said. "We honor him and worship him because of that. None of these reports would be possible without the (ABSC) staff, who are winners." He graciously acknowledged the role of ABSC executive board staff and board members.

Receipts of undesignated monies received for 1989-90 were at a high of 11.8 percent, according to Moore, and next year 40 percent will be going to the SBC level. "We are reaching our state budget; in times where other states are posting a one to 10 percent deficit, we are posting a four percent increase. . . In the last seven years, we have started 133 congregations and only lost 35. The Arkansas convention recently received an award from the Home Mission Board for having the highest number of church starts in relation to church membership," Moore stated.

In addition to an emphasis on the smaller church, Arkansas has a new record of church starts including 32 other language and black churches, Moore commented. The Baptist Building staff has been in churches 801 times, outside of regularly scheduled events, he said. Moore thanked the messengers for the success of the Simultaneous World Revivals and outlined the success of the Siloam Springs building program. "I really believe our best days are

ahead," Moore said.

He called for the achievements in several areas: the completion of the Siloam Springs renovation campaign, the beginning of the Iowa partnership, the conclusion of the Guatemala partnership, and the continuation of the emphasis on marriage, family and the home within churches.

The Young Musician's Choir from Little Rock First Church, under the direction of Kathy Bettis, inspired with numbers including "O Worship the King," "Jesus Loves Me, Jesus Loves Me," and "I'm Your Miracle, Lord."

Tim LaHaye began his afternoon Bible study with reference to Ephesians 4; the foundation of the home. He pointed out the practicality of the spirit-filled life; that a home filled with love, joy and peace is simply much more pleasant than one filled with strife.

"A battle is going on for control of the family," LaHaye said, "Many people have adopted the philosophy of the outside world and it simply doesn't work." He cited necessary actions to avoid quenching the Spirit of God: communicate that which is necessary for edification and do not grieve the Holy Spirit.

He cited many characteristics of anger and fear, especially when oppositely embued in marriage partnership, as the source of constant strife. He noted the high cost of anger, and the causes of fear and worry. The cure, he said, was to face anger and fear as sin. "Confess every angry or fearful thought or deed as sin immediately: ask God to take away your anger or fear, ask God to fill you with his Holy Spirit, forgive the person who causes your anger or fear,

and formally thank God for his provision in every situation," he concluded.

Gary Fulton, pastor of West View Church in Paragould, gave the benediction. Messengers dismissed for dinner break amid a heavy rainstorm.

Tuesday evening

Somewhat damp messengers continued to trickle in as the Handbell Choir from Little Rock First Church began an inspirational medley with "How Great Thou Art," to open the evening session.

LeRoy McClard led messenger in singing spiritual selections: "In the Presence of the Lord," "This Joy that I Have," and "Peace Like a River."

Vice-President H.E. Williams, also president emeritus of Williams Baptist College, introduced the Williams choir under the director of Bob McGee. Starting with a lively selection "He is Life," the choir continued with the worshipful "Thanks be to You," then a patriotic anthem, "The American Creed," and concluded with "Holy is He."

Betty Merrell started her evening prayer emphasis with a musical video, and continued in the same manner as earlier by addressing the Lord in prayer. She pointed out the images of faith and failure in our land as seen through God's eyes. She concluded with 10 prayer requests.

Christian Civic Foundation head Larry Page then presented his first report as director of that organization. He noted the services the foundation provides, from lobbying the legislature to providing informational packets. He enumerated issues cur-

ABN photo / Millie Gill



The Williams Baptist College choir brought special music.



Cooperative Program Awards—(left to right) Tim Reddin, pastor of Barcelona Road Church, Hot Springs Village; Tom Logue, interim pastor of First Church, Almyra; David Napier, associate pastor of administration, Immanuel Church, Little Rock; Jack Ramsey, representing Cassville Church; Marshall Boggs, pastor of Woodland Heights Church, Harrison; and David Newberry, pastor of First Church in Crossett. (See this page for further information.)

rently being dealt with: a legal petition to prohibit University of Arkansas Medical Sciences from performing abortions except in the case of life of the mother, opposition to an alcohol beverages club at a state park, an unsuccessful opposition to credit card liquor sales, opposition to school-based clinics and condom distribution, soliciting warning labels on alcoholic beverages, and pursuing several aspects of possible lottery legislation. There is no greater threat today, he said, than the warfare being waged on the family. In these and other matters, he continued, we should be "obligated and privileged to serve as God's moral agents."

President Mike Huckabee came to the platform to recognize denominational guests. Katsy McAlister, chairperson of the World Hunger Committee, made a fervent appeal for world hunger, presented Huckabee with a rice bag. Fred Thanco, director of marketing for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn., presented Huckabee with the latest volume of the *New American Commentary* and a newly published book, *Tough-Minded Parenting*. Huckabee also recognized Eddie Harrison, pastor of Dollarway Church in Pine Bluff, who is second vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Williams Baptist College President Jimmy Millikin gave his first report as head of that institution. He said his goals had to do

with perception, people, programs and projects. In perception, Millikin said he hoped that WBC was perceived as a Bible college, but more; and as a preacher college, but also a full-fledged Christian liberal arts institution. His people goal had to do with both students and faculty; enrollment continues to go up, and the faculty, he said, is committed and qualified, but are overworked and underpaid. In relation to programs, the college now offers four baccalaureate degrees. There are a few capital improvement projects, Millikin said, but many more will be needed in the years to come. The primary purpose of the school, he concluded, was to glorify God.

ABSC Executive Director Jimmie Sheffield presented the Cooperative Program awards. The church with the highest total CP gifts for 1989-90 was Little Rock Immanuel Church, with Associate Pastor David Napier accepting. First in per capita giving was Barcelona Road Church, Hot Springs Village, with Pastor Tim Reddin accepting. First in percentage by size are: membership of 50 or less, Cassville Church in Deer, with Jack Ramsey accepting for his home church; 50-300 members, Woodland Heights Church in Harrison, Pastor Marshall Boggs accepting; 300-1,000 members, Almyra First Church, Tom Logue, interim pastor, accepting; more than 1,000 First Crossett, Pastor David Newberry accepting.

LeRoy McClard again came to the platform to lead the congregational in singing

a series of 'grace' hymns: "Wonderful Grace of Jesus," "Grace Greater than Our Sin," and "Amazing Grace."

Wyndell Jones, executive director, Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship, spoke to messengers about the new partnership that Arkansas and Iowa are entering. In 1954, Iowa had its first Southern Baptist churches, and became a fellowship in 1974. Currently, the state is served by only four directors of missions. A traditionally Lutheran and Catholic state, Iowa has 99 counties, 53 of which have no Southern Baptist work. By the year 2000, Jones hopes to achieve a goal of 200 Baptist churches; the Arkansas partnership will help to achieve that goal.

The Bold Mission Prayer Thrust emphasis, given by Pete Petty, associate director, ABSC Missions Department, also took an unusual form. After explaining that Bold Mission Prayer Thrust is a network of prayer that seeks to release God's power, Petty turned his report over to the evidence on an answered prayer; the hispanic pastor in northwest Arkansas who has started work this summer. Elias Pantoja, ABSC Language Missions director introduced and translated for Manuel Villegas, language pastor for Benton County, who has served since June 1. Villegas thanked the Arkansas Baptist State Convention for its support, and spoke of the obstacles and challenges of beginning the work at zero. He noted that the Jehovah's Witnesses have been working really hard, and that he had been working hard to counteract those effects. There are 100 people enrolled in Bible study at three missions, with an average attendance of 80; eight had been won to Christ. Under the graceful interpretation of Elias Pantoja, Villegas communicated the urgency of his mission, but his strength of spirit needed no translation.



Elias Pantoja and Manuel Villegas

STATE CONVENTION

ABN photo / Mike Gill



"Whispering Hope" was performed as a selection from the 1940s during the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the ABCS Music Department.

Celebrating 50 years of music

The evening was then highlighted with a dramatic musical performance celebrating the 50th anniversary of the ABCS Church Music Department. Lester McCullough, current director, coordinated the presentation, entitled "We Are Called."

The presentation, which highlighted music from each of the decades since the department's inception in 1941, was narrated by Ervin Keathley, retired ABCS Music Department director, and Jean Pilcher, director of Arkansas Singing Women. "In the Old Testament," the narration began, certain men were set apart as musicians with cymbals, lyres and harps for the ministry at the house of God... All of them trained and skilled in music for the Lord. In that tradition, the narration continued, we are called to be a chosen people, to keep the Father's Word, and offer praise.

The Arkansas Music Department, the first of its kind, was greatly aided by the publishing of the *Broadman Hymnal*, the year before in 1940. It quickly became the most widely used and loved "songbook" of the decade. A musical group then presented three favorites of that era, "Peace Be Still," "Hallelujah for the Cross," and "Whispering Hope."

The 50s saw the advent of full-time ministers of music, the first youth music camp and the adoption of Music Secretary LeRoy McClard's Standard of Excellence—a goal and guide to help churches in their musical growth. Choirs were beginning to appear in robes; as did the performance choir as they presented the now classic

"My Eternal King."

The 60s brought to church music a "relevance" that was in keeping with the changing times, as folk music influenced musicals such as "Good News," "Natural High," "Tell It Like It Is," and "Celebrate Life." A lively selection of songs from those musicals was climaxed by the sound of handbells from the back of the auditorium, heralding the decade of the 70s.

Handbell ringing saw renewed emphasis in the 70s, and PraiSing '75 premiered the new *Baptist Hymnal* in Nashville, Tenn. The talented ringers of Little Rock First Church marked the decade with a performance of "Blessed Assurance."

The 80s saw praise songs and choruses, as well as songs made popular by Christian artists, make their way into Sunday worship services. This most recent decade was highlighted by a presentation that included "Holy Ground," "Majesty," "We Will Glorify," and "I Love You, Lord." The messengers joined in with the musicians to sing "How Majestic Is Your Name."

The 90s heralded the introduction of the newest *Baptist Hymnal*, also christened by a Praising in Nashville, Tenn. The evening's celebration climaxed with the combined choirs of the Arkansas Master Singers and Singing Women performing a new anthem penned by native Arkansan Buryl Red to commemorate the 50th Anniversary, "To God, All Praise and Glory." The messengers came to their feet in a standing ovation in appreciation of the incredible musical celebration.

Tim LaHaye came to the platform to deliver his evening Bible study, on the

enemies of the family. Based on Colossians 2:6-8, LaHaye warned, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit... Families are failing apart by design." According to LaHaye, God founded three institutions: family, church, and government. LaHaye feels that these institutions are being compromised by secular humanism. "You can have as many children as you want to love and serve Jesus Christ today, but you must spend more time parenting," LaHaye said.

Parents must insulate their children, first by surrounding them by love, he asserted. Then parents must control their children's peer group, teach moral principles and the work ethic. Parents must further provide their children with a Christian youth group, parental instruction, parental example, personal salvation, and loving discipline.

Benediction for the evening session was given by Paul Williams, pastor, Greater Grace Baptist Church, Little Rock.

Wednesday morning

A meager early morning attendance belied later heavy registration figures as the morning session started. LeRoy McClard immersed messengers present in the spirit of the convention as he led them in singing "We Will Glorify," and "Lord, Be Glorified."

Betty Merrell began her last prayer emphasis by reading from Dr. Suss' book, *Oh the places you will go*, using it as an allegory for the windows of opportunity for foreign missions. She noted the worldwide need for intercessions, focusing on the changing needs of the Foreign Mission Board. She concluded, as she had in each session, with Philippians 1:3, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you."

More messengers began filing in as Tim LaHaye delivered his final Bible study. He started out by asserting that we, as Christians, have a responsibility not only to win souls but participate in the body politic. "If the wrong people run the country, they run it right into the ground," LaHaye said.

Further, LaHaye said, "I believe God the Holy Spirit is preparing us for the second coming of Jesus Christ."

LaHaye then enumerated 12 reasons for believing that this generation could see the return of Christ: 1) more fulfilled signs than any previous generation; 2) Israel, the nation of destiny, is gathered back into its land; 3) the Middle East is the focus of world attention; 4) potential nuclear holocaust; 5) world-wide gospel preaching; 6) the new world order; 7) mark of the beast type technology (UPC symbols); 8) Revelation type plaques; 9) un-



LeRoy McClard, former ABCS Music Secretary, led the congregational singing.

preceded earthquakes and disasters, 10) potential collapse of Russia; 11) that two supernatural witnesses will be seen for three days, enabled by modern technology; and 12) "It's later than it's ever been before."

Just after 9 a.m., President Mike Huckabee announced the messenger count was 1,311, slightly more than last year. He then opened the floor for nominations for President of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

John Finn, messenger from Life Line Church, Little Rock, nominated William "Buddy" Sutton, Christian layman and attorney, noting his accomplishments in heading the 1989 Billy Graham Crusade and Citizens Against Legalized Lottery (CALL).

Kerry Powell, a messenger from McGhee First Church, nominated David Miller, director of mission for Little Red River Association, citing his many evangelical accomplishments.

Tellers Committee Chairman Ken Goad gave balloting instructions.

Jobny Biggs, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries, came to the platform to give his agencies report. In support of theme, Biggs introduced twin brothers Kyle and Lloyd Micheal, with caseworker Randy Luter, currently in the first grade at the Monticello Children's Home, who were "poster kids" for the agency's Thanksgiving offering. Biggs pointed out that it is not easy being a child in America today. Families face crisis without help; families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. Child

abuse and abortion are escalating. The number of children and youth needing substitute care is exploding, Biggs said. In meeting that need, the agency has provided 97 years of uninterrupted ministry. The Children's Home has been given a "rebirth" with the completion of long overdue capital improvements; 87 children received care at Monticello. Satellite offices have become a beacon of light, the Ranch program is expanding, with 80 percent the boys housed there accepting. On Sept. 12 of this year, the Promise House was dedicated as a Christian alternative to abortion, and adoption services also will be provided.

President Mike Huckabee announced that the results of the presidential election were not ready, and therefore the election of officers could not proceed.

J. Everett Sneed, editor of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, voiced three concerns in his agency's report. The first was personal concern, as he was making his last report as editor after 20 years of service, and will be retiring next year. The second concern was professional; the need for news is imperative. The *Newsmagazine* seeks to provide Arkansas Baptists with information, interpretation, and inspiration, Sneed noted. The third concern was for prayer: in his remaining 11 months, he requested prayer for himself, the staff; and the search committee as they seek a new editor. He also noted that just the day before, postage had increased another \$800 per issue, a cost that would reluctantly have to be passed on to subscribers at a rate of five cents per subscription.

Nelson Wilhelm, chairman of ABN board

also spoke, asking churches to consider sending the *Newsmagazine* to all resident families. He reiterated the problem of chronic postal increases, and thanked the staff.

President Mike Huckabee announced the results of the presidential election. Out of 824 ballots, 3 were invalid; 485 votes had been collected for Sutton, and 339 ballots for Miller. William "Buddy" Sutton was elected the first layman president in more than 60 years.

Huckabee began accepting nominations for first vice-president. Bernes Selph, messenger from Benton First Church, nominated his pastor, Greg Kirksey. In the absence of any other nominations, Don Hook, messenger from Woodson Church, moved that the nominations cease and Kirksey be elected by acclamation. The motion passed and Greg Kirksey was elected first vice-president.

The floor was then opened for nominations for second vice-president. Richard Wade, messenger from Monticello Second Church, nominated fellow musician David M. Tate, minister of music and education at Batesville First Church.

Gene Ellis, messenger from Grand Avenue Church, Hot Springs, nominated Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Hot Springs Lakeside Church, citing the church's rapid growth during the six years Rogers had been pastor.

Ken Goad again gave balloting instructions.

Russell D. Harrington, head of Baptist Medical System in Little Rock, gave a report noting although it is no longer operated by the convention, that ties have remained strong. He presented a video reviewing the system's services.

Mike Huckabee then announced results of election of second vice-president. With 676 votes cast, 2 ruled invalid, 368 ballots had been collected for Tate, and 308 for Rogers, making David Tate the second vice-president.

The youth choir from Jonesboro Central Church performed several selections, one of which, "Tender Jesus, Lamb of God," was signed by an interpreter for the deaf.

Convention sermon

Rex Holt, pastor of Jonesboro Central Church and former missionary to Togo, West Africa, then delivered the convention sermon based on Colossians 3:16-22; 4:1. Recounting a personal experience, he related that after he and his wife had committed their lives to Africa, the long-awaited call from the adoption agency came informing them that a little girl was available. Since they had no children, it was with great sadness they turned the agency

STATE CONVENTION

ABN photo / Mike Gill



Rex Holt

down, but they were assured that God had told them no; he wanted them to go to Africa as they were.

After arriving in West Africa in December 1976, they discovered that polygamy was a major problem. If a couple did not have children within two years of their marriage, the husband took another wife. The Holts, married for more than 10 years, lived out a message stronger than any verbal one.

"Like Hosea, our world needs to see a blueprint for Christian marriage," Holt said. "We are avoiding the blueprint, which is a clear plan that works, he continued."

"The only safe sex is sacred sex; anything else is suicidal sex.... For the sake of morality, don't distribute those licenses for immorality in public schools," Holt asserted, to heavy applause from the messengers.

Holt then spoke on the components of a Christian blueprint for marriage. If we submit ourselves radically to the Lordship of Christ, as outlined in Ephesians 5:18 and Colossians 3:16, we will have the solution for our own families and marriage, and will permeate our churches.

Based on Ephesians 5:21, Holt stated that couples need to submit to one another. "God is a God of order, the order is as Christ submitted to God," he stated. The wife's submission is based in this, otherwise there is chaos and confusion, which leads to divorce, Holt said. Lives become frustrated when they don't know their role, he continued. "Man has an inner need to be a leader," Holt said.

He admonished women to "meet that need in your husband." Praise him to his face, admire him behind his back, laugh at his jokes, and show keen interest for his work, Holt said. "There is a magnetic quality to a positive spirit," he commented.

The husband, on the other hand, needs to love his wife as Christ loved the church, he said. "Don't be harsh," he beseeched the men in the audience. He outlined ways to make a wife feel cherished: touched her affectionately, speak affirmingly, and listen attentively—a wife's feelings and intuition often pick up on what a man misses. She needs to be in first place, and needs your praise.

Holt related back to his African experience, noting that recently they had returned with their son and two daughters, which allowed God to use the family context to bring glory and honor. "Let's go back and meet family needs," Holt said, "God will transform the natural state into the supernatural state for his glory."

After a standing ovation for Holt, LeRoy McClard came to lead messengers in the final hymn, "Would You Bless Our Homes and Families."

ABSC Executive Director Don Moore presented outgoing President Huckabee with a plaque in honor of his active service. Huckabee accepted the honor to a standing ovation.

At time for miscellaneous business, Huckabee announced that the convention would now operate on *Robert's Rules of Order*. He also stated that he had met with parties on both sides concerned with Ruschlikon's funding, and that Trustee Jack Bledsoe's view did differ from a new release from FMB. Because it does not directly involve Arkansas Baptists, the chair recommended that those who have strong feelings contact trustees or the Foreign Mission Board. Other resolutions could be made after scheduled resolutions, Huckabee said.

Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman Betty Harp explained the changes in the Amended and Resated Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Messengers approved the articles by show of ballot; approval will also have to be given at next year's convention.

Amos Greer, messenger from Pleasant Valley Church made a motion to print Rex Holt's convention sermon in the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. Editor J. Everett Sneed made a substitute motion to make it and Mike Huckabee's presidential available, and run ads promoting them, since space in the ABN is very limited. The substitute motion passed.

Raymond Reed, messenger from Grady First Church, moved that the convention annual be dedicated to the memory of

James H. Dean, having long served Arkansas Baptists, who died Oct. 14, 1991, at age of 94. The motion passed.

Resolutions Committee Chairman Larry Pillow took the floor; he and members of his committee presented the following 16 resolutions, all of which passed with little or no discussion.

Resolution No. 1, in appreciation of the dedicated leadership of the 1991 convention officers Mike Huckabee, Daniel Grant and H.E. Williams.

Resolution No. 2, in opposition to the increasing practice of our churches who call and ordain women to be their pastor, as the "qualifications for this office must be finally determined by scripture and not our contemporary society."

Resolution No. 3, in affirmation of the Cooperative Program as "the most effective method God has given Southern Baptists to support missionary, education and benevolent causes," and encourage fellow Southern Baptist churches to continue its support.

Resolution No. 4, affirmation of the authority of Scripture, with Southern Baptists being asked to participate in a convention wide emphasis entitled "National convocation on the Bible" in 1992. The messengers reaffirmed the biblical doctrine of the "inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, and final authority of the 66 books of the Bible as originally given by God."

ABN photo / Mike Gill



Elected as 1992 ABSC convention officers were Greg Kirksey, Benton, first vice-president; Buddy Suttin, Little Rock, president; and David Tate, Batesville, second vice-president.

Resolution No. 5, expressing the deep appreciation to the members of the Armed Forces who served during Operation Desert Storm. After some discussion, names of individual pastors who served as chaplains during the conflict were added to the resolution.

Resolution No. 6, affirming the traditional family as the basic institution designed by God for mankind's social and spiritual development. The family is under "unprecedented attack by various groups and institutions with agendas bent on destroying the traditional, biblical parameters of the family. . . . the attacks are designed to redefine the family as any two or more people who care for each other and live together. . . . such a definition would permit any and all deviant, unnatural associations, such as cohabitation of homosexual couples. . . (therefore) we are undauntedly dedicated to protecting and preserving the traditional family."

Resolution No. 7, against active euthanasia, upholding the sanctity of human life in all its various stages; citing that with the presence of the suicide how-to book *Final Exit* on the *New York Times* best-seller list that the "right to die" movement is not so subtly being transformed into a "right to kill" modality.

Resolution No. 8, in opposition to school based clinics, citing that "the distribution of contraceptives and the sexuality training without moral standards is tantamount to the school's and government's approval of illicit sexual activity by adolescents."

Resolution No. 9, affirming the sanctity of human life, citing that "approximately 1.6 million pre-born babies are killed each year in America. . . . we pray for and support the overturning of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision."

Resolution No. 10, in opposition to gambling, as "violative of God's plan for man in the areas of the work ethic, not coveting another's possession and respect

for the less fortunate. . . . that we will communicate to our state legislators our opposition to any state operated lottery, if the voters approve the proposal to remove the constitutional ban on the lottery."

Resolution No. 11, to condemn the use and abuse of alcoholic beverages and other drugs, illegal and improperly used, as "chemical dependency is antithetical to God's will for people to live soberly, responsibly and prudently."

Resolution No. 12, against pornography, "to promote wholesomeness and responsible depiction of human sexuality in the broadcast and print media to halt the ever-increasing limit of what is acceptable and suitable for family entertainment."

Resolution No. 13, in support of world hunger efforts, and in recognition that the Southern Baptist World Hunger Offering reserves are depleted, that Arkansas Baptist churches "are urged to take an annual World Hunger Day Offering, and to assess their communities for needs and opportunities for ministries to relieve local poverty related hunger."

Resolution No. 14, in opposition to the United States government approval of the export of tobacco and alcohol products to Taiwan and other East Asian countries, requesting the SBC Christian Life Commission office in Washington D.C. to "encourage legislation making it illegal to use tax money to promote the export of tobacco and liquor and to urge the President of the United States to state that no nation will face repercussions for not importing tobacco and liquor."

Resolution No. 15, opposing hotel/motel in-room pornography, that Arkansas Baptists will not advertise or patronize establishments that offer the same.

Resolution No. 16, in recognition of the

Arkansas Baptist State Convention Mission Department, in celebrating 50 years of service.

At the conclusion of the printed resolutions, James Sawyer, messenger from Little Rock Second Church, brought a resolution in support of the funding of Ruschlikon Seminary in Switzerland, as an affirmation of the commitment of Southern Baptists to evangelism.

Paul Sanders, messenger from Geyer Springs First Church and former Foreign Mission Board trustee, spoke against the motion, saying that it would be a mistake to pass the resolution, because "there was more than makes the press."

David Johnson, messenger from Mountain Home First Church, spoke for the motion, referring to the earlier testimony from Ouachita Baptist University concerning a Soviet student.

Jack Bledsoe, messenger from Fordyce First Church and current Foreign Mission Board trustee, insisted that the board had not defunded the seminary; citing a FMB news release as containing misinformation; and that the final decision, pending legal opinion, would be made at the December board meeting (see clarification, this page).

Larry Pillow, messenger from Conway Second Church, moved previous question, calling for a vote on Sawyer's original motion. The previous question motion passed. Huckabee, citing equal speakers on each side of the resolution, called for the vote. The resolution failed in mixed voting by show of ballot.

Outgoing President Huckabee then presented the new officers to the messengers, and incoming President Buddy Sutton closed the 138th session of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention with prayer.

Positions Available

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Salary, benefits, and paid vacation.

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Arkansas Baptist
Children's Homes and
Family Ministries

501-376-4791,
ext. 5119

Ruschlikon clarification

As taken from the Foreign Mission Board minutes:

John Simms, chairman of the administrative committee and a retired attorney from Salem, Va., presented a number of recommendations to the Foreign Mission Board which convened Oct. 7-9. The motion was made during the business session Wednesday, Oct. 9.

The original motion presented by Simms said, "That the Foreign Mission Board budget totaling \$183,655,000, including \$173,812,244 operating, \$8,842,756 for capital and \$1,000,000 for Special Contingency be adopted for 1992, except the \$365,000 for Switzerland to be used for Ruschlikon Seminary, and that legal ramifications be

researched and this item be considered in December."

Following the motion by Simms, a substitute motion was offered by Morris Mills, board member from Tennessee, as follows, "That the \$365,000 originally earmarked for Switzerland or Ruschlikon be returned to the budget for distribution to theological education in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Also that a copy of the 1978 and 1983 agreement with Ruschlikon be distributed to the trustees and that a legal opinion of these agreements be given to the trustees at the December meeting."

The substitute motion passed 35 to 28. Eventually the entire budget was adopted with only two opposing votes.

1992 Auxiliary, Newsmagazine officers elected

ABN photo / Millie Gill



Arkansas Pastors' Conference convened Nov. 18 at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock, electing as 1991-92 Officers (left to right) Doug Grubbs of Clarendon First Church, secretary; Mark Brooks of Elmdale Church, Springdale, president; and Gary Akers of Central Church, Pine Bluff, vice-president. Speakers included Mack Evans, Ronnie Rogers, Harold D. Danley, James Draper, Mark Brooks, Junior Hill, Larry Plummer, David Oliver, Paul Sanders, Walter K. Ayers, Tony Preston, Ron Herrod, and Morris Chapman. Delton Beall presided over the meeting.

ABN photo / Millie Gill



Arkansas Baptist Ministers' Wives convened Nov. 18 at Geyer Springs First Church for their annual meeting, using the theme "Turn Your Heart Toward Home" as a part of the ABSC emphases on Strengthening Families. Marcie Hatfield of North Little Rock presided over the meeting for which Rosemary Wade, a pastor's wife, of Arlington, Texas, was speaker. Elected as 1991-92 officers were (left to right) Bobbi DeBusk of Pine Bluff, president; Vicki Wycliffe of Des Arc, vice-president; and Sharon Phillips of Camden, secretary.

ABN photo / Millie Gill



Arkansas Religious Education Association held its annual meeting Nov. 18 at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock with Gary Chapman, director of adult education and family counseling for Calvary Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., as speaker. John Dresbach of Jonesboro presided over the meeting and convened the business session at which the 1991-92 officers were elected. Serving will be (left to right) Bobby Dusek of First Church, Benton, president, and Pat Katton, ABSC Sunday School Department preschool consultant, secretary. Not present were Bruce Raley of Walnut Street Church, Jonesboro, first vice-president, and Michael Johnson of First Church, Pine Bluff, second vice-president.

ABN photo / Millie Gill



The Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine Board of Trustees met Nov. 19 at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock, electing as officers (left to right) Nelson Wilhelm of Fort Smith, president; Harold Gateley of Fayetteville, secretary; and Bert Thomas of Searcy, vice-president.

1992 Convention date change

The 1992 Convention date has been changed from Nov. 17-18, 1992, to Nov. 10-11, 1992. The convention will be held at the Pine Bluff Convention Center.

ABSC Board and Committee Members Elected

Executive Board

Terms to expire in 1994

Arkansas Valley	James McDaniel, Brinkley
Benton	Ben Rowell, Rogers
Big Creek	Ray Taffar, Viola
Calvary	G.A. Dover, Bald Knob
Carey	Don Phillips, Camden
Central	David Pierce, Benton
Central	Dick Finley, Hot Springs
Concord	Clyde Vire, Paris
Conway-Perry	Refus Caldwell, Perryville
Harmony	Charles R. Bonner, Pine Bluff
Harmony	Bob Harper, Pine Bluff
Independence	Charles Osborne, Cord
Liberty	Tommy Kimball, El Dorado
Little Red River	Alfred Kay Mansell, Heber Springs
Mississippi	William P. Oakley, Blytheville
Mount Zion	Dennis Coop, Jonesboro
Mount Zion	Stan Ballard, Jonesboro
North Arkansas	Don Rose, Jasper
North Pulaski	Stephen Hatfield, North Little Rock
Pulaski	Rex M. Horne, Little Rock
Pulaski	Bill Hilburn, Hensley
Red River	Tom Caihoun, Arkadelphia
Red River	Betty Daily, Arkadelphia
Rocky Bayou	Manuel Macks, Melbourne
Southwest Arkansas	Roland "Lanny" Loe, Texarkana

Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries

Terms to expire in 1994

Harry Black, Roland
Robert Hettings, Dardanelle
Tommy Hargrove, Warren
George R. Wadley, Searcy
Bob Shepherd, El Dorado
Larry Price, Fort Smith

Arkansas Baptist Foundation

Terms to expire in 1994

Daniel R. Grant, Arkadelphia
Allen Thrasher, Booneville
Allen Smith, Little Rock
James Lanier, Russellville
Barry Crow, Pine Bluff

Arkansas Baptist

Historical Commission

Terms to expire 1994

District 2—Hilton Lane, Fairfield Bay
District 3—Kenneth Starup, Walnut Ridge
District 8—John McClanahan, Pine Bluff

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Terms to expire in 1994

District 5—Greg Kirksey, Benton
District 7—Rick Hyde, Murfreesboro
District 3—Curt Hodges, Jonesboro

Terms to expire in 1992

District 8—Lucile C. Hagins, Fordyce

Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc.

Terms to expire 1994

Bob Harrison, Jonesboro
James B. Sharp, Brinkley
Aubrey Worell, Pine Bluff

Tri-County	Ken Proctor, Wynne
Trinity	Captain Lovell, Harrisburg
Washington-Madison	Ronnie W. Floyd, Springdale
White River	Danny H. Ponder, Mountain Home
District 2	Alice King, Mountain Home
District 3	Eleanor Sykes, Jonesboro
District 4	Joy Miller, Russellville

Terms to expire 1992

Benton	Gregg Greenway, Siloam Springs
Benton	Dennis Cottrell, Siloam Springs
Black River	Tim Hight, Newport
Central	Jerry Mixon, Hot Springs
Delta	Bob Fisher, Portland
Mt. Zion	John Matthews, Jonesboro
Tri-County	Ronnie Lace, Forrest City

Term to expire in 1993

Ashley	Gene Thomas, Crossett
Centennial	Raymond McMaster, DeWitt
Greene	Gary Fulton, Paragould
Mississippi	Mike Henderson, Leachville
Pulaski	Don Jones, Bryant
Southwest Arkansas	Stan Parris, Hope
District 5	Mary Schroeder, Little Rock

Baptist Student Union

Terms to expire in 1994

District 1—Terry Eaton, Decatur
District 3—Bill Oakley, Jonesboro
District 4—David McLemore, Russellville
District 6—Gary Ellis, Lonoke
District 8—Pat Baugh, Monticello
Member at Large—Jamie Jones, Fayetteville

Christian Civic Foundation

Terms to expire in 1994

James, Swedenburg, Benton
Marilyn Simmons, Little Rock
Ron Mayes, Beebe
Mark Tolbert, Wynne
Michael Trammell, Jonesboro

Ouachita Baptist University

Terms to expire in 1994

Mike Carroll, Fort Smith
Diane Williamson, El Dorado
Wesley Kluck, Arkadelphia
John Ward, North Little Rock
Jeral Hampton, Booneville
Mike Huchabee, Texarkana
Bill Atkinson, Pine Bluff
Richard Lusby, Jonesboro

Williams Baptist College

Terms to expire in 1994

Donnie Joe Holden, Springdale
Harold Senter, Keiser
L. B. Atchison, Harrison
C. B. Thompson, North Little Rock
George Schroeder, Little Rock
Donald Timms, Jonesboro
John Taylor, Fort Smith
Frank Waggener, West Memphis

Terms to expire in 1992

Larry Ballard, North Little Rock

Constitution/Bylaws Committee

Terms to expire in 1994

John Holston, North Little Rock
Phil Smith, Pochontas

World Hunger Committee

Terms to expire in 1994

Mrs. Adella James, Clarksville
Laura Rhea, Little Rock

1992 Convention Program Committee

Term to expire in 1994

Don A. Nall, Batesville

1996 Convention

Date: November 19-20, 1996

Place: Geyer Springs First, Little Rock

1992 Convention

The Convention Nominating Committee recommends that the 1992 Convention dates be moved from November 17-18, 1992 to November 10-11, 1992. The Convention will be held at the Pine Bluff Convention Center.

1993 Convention

The Convention Nominating Committee recommends that the 1993 convention dates be moved from November 16-17, 1992 to November 9-10, 1993. The Convention will be held at Park Hill Baptist Church, North Little Rock.

1992 Convention Preacher

Preacher: Jim McDaniel, First Church, Brinkley
Alternate: Jack Bledsoe, DOM, Carey Association

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

New Year's Eve prayer launch

by Terri lackey
Baptist Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention leaders are challenging churches to take a proactive role in the national spiritual awakening movement and commit to pray one hour a week during 1992 for its occurrence.

In a September address to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, SBC President Morris Chapman issued a call for Southern Baptist churches to become more involved in the country's spirituality. What emerged from that call is the Watchmen National Prayer Alert.

The prayer alert is an organized effort headed by the Sunday School Board and Alabama pastor Larry Thompson to enlist churches for a continuous cycle of prayer from January to December 1992.

Chapman appointed Thompson, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., to become director of the Watchmen National Prayer Alert. Thompson developed a smaller-scale continuous prayer chain among members of First Baptist Church of Merritt Island, Fla., where he was pastor prior to moving to Alabama.

Chapman then contacted Sunday School Board President James T. Draper Jr. who agreed to administer and fund the Watchmen National Prayer Alert through the board's discipleship training department.

"The Sunday School Board is committed to use all its resources and energies for this prayer ministry," Draper said.

"Think of millions of Southern Baptists praying together for God to remove the obstacles he sees which hinder revival and ministry among his people. Contemplate the impact of continuous and concentrated prayer for God to restore that which is broken in our midst," Draper continued.

"Consider millions bombarding heaven with earnest prayers for God to renew our strength and commitment to taking the healing power of the gospel to a lost and hurting world. Imagine the revolutionary response of God to our prayers for him to empower us to resist the devil and demolish his strongholds," said Draper.

Avery Willis, SSB administrator for the Watchmen National Prayer Alert and manager of the adult section in the board's discipleship training department, said the project earlier had been named Watchman on the Wall National Prayer Alert, but the name was changed to better communicate its meaning.

"We don't want churches to sign up for this because they think it's a neat thing," he said. "We want churches that have

sought God's will and are responding to his call to participate in a national effort to pray for spiritual awakening."

Willis said he hopes churches who volunteer to participate in the prayer ministry will launch their year of prayer on New Year's Eve 1991 "with a watch night service which culminates with one hour of prayer to usher in the new year."

Several organizers of the Watchmen National Prayer Alert recalled New Year's Eve watch night services when they were children, Willis said.

"Church members got together on New Year's Eve and spent the evening participating in special activities, receiving spiritual challenges and praying for the new year," Willis said. "We are asking churches to take that one step further and pray one hour into the new year for spiritual awakening across the nation."

Churches wishing to volunteer to become a part of the National Prayer Alert should register with the discipleship training department. While the alert officially will begin at midnight on Jan. 1, Willis said churches may register to participate at other times during the year.

When churches register, "we will then assign them to a one-hour time period for them to pray each week," Willis said. "Whatever assignment they get, they should enlist people to pray during that time."

Churches "transfer the watch" through phone calls made by appointed contact persons, Willis said. Prayer alert organizers will coordinate continuous prayer for 24 hours a day, Willis said.

Thompson said transferring the watch will work to unite Southern Baptist churches.

"As Southern Baptists, our denomination is so large that we can lose sight of what our sister churches are doing," Thompson said. "By transferring the watch we will encourage unity."

A monthly newsletter to participating churches from the Sunday School Board and a toll-free number at the Home Mission Board's office for prayer and spiritual awakening will alert churches about specific prayer needs, Willis said.

Churches interested in becoming participants of the prayer ministry should write: Watchmen National Prayer Alert, MSN 151, 127 Ninth Ave. N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, or call: Mary Betts, Watchmen National Prayer Alert coordinator, (615) 251-5037. Churches can send their registration or prayer concerns by fax to (615) 251-5058.

Tupitza new editor of Capital Baptist

WASHINGTON(BP)—The executive board of the D.C. Baptist Convention approved Victor Tupitza on Oct. 21 as editor of the convention's newsjournal, the *Capital Baptist*.

Tupitza recently retired from the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington. One of his major assignments with the BJC was editing *Report from the Capitol*, a magazine published 10 times a year.

Tupitza will begin his staff position with the DCBC Jan. 1. He succeeds James A. Langley, who has edited the *Capital Baptist* since the summer of 1973, along with his responsibilities as executive director of the convention.

Prior to joining the BJC staff in July of 1979, Tupitza was director of communications for the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

Classifieds

Available—Hospitalization plan pays outpatient and prescription benefits. Coverage is available for most pre-existing conditions. Coverage also available for Medicare supplemental insurance. Phone Mr. Stewart at 501-664-0511 between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.—Reserve National Insurance Company (closed Wednesdays). 1275

Seeking—Youth/music director. Send resume to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 567, Paris, AR 72855. Phone 963-3260. 1275

Seeking—Youth minister for large St. Louis area church. Minimum 3 years experience. College education required. Send resume to First Baptist Church, Harvester, 4075 Hwy. 94 South, St. Charles, MO 63304. Attn. Jim Wheeler, Pastor. 1275

Needed—Pickles Gap Baptist Church, Conway, Arkansas is searching for Music/Youth Director. If interested send resume to Personnel Committee, Pickles Gap Baptist Church, 2 Pickles Gap Road, Conway, AR 72032. 1275

Classified ads must be submitted in writing to the ABN office no less than 10 days prior to the date of publication desired. A check or money order in the proper amount, figured at 90 cents per word, must be included. Multiple insertions of the same ad must be paid for in advance. The ABN reserves the right to reject any ad because of unavailable subject matter. Classified ads will be inserted on a space-available basis. No endorsement by the ABN is implied.

Convention Uniform

David's lament

by Carroll Evans, First Church, Hughes

Basic passage: 2 Samuel 1:19-27

Focal passage: 2 Samuel 1:19, 25, 27

Central truth: Saul, for all of his faults and for all the evil he directed against David, was forgiven by David and praised in death.

In this almost perfect poem, David's poetic genius is revealed. Haunting verses of great literary beauty serve as a vehicle to express his overwhelming grief, allowing us to see the sensitive, caring side of David's nature.

The poem, a true dirge or lament over fallen heroes, reminds us of Saul and Jonathan's bravery and courage, and of the deep affection that David and Jonathan shared for one another. David's loss of Jonathan was very personal. They had entered into a covenant of brotherhood (1 Sa. 18:3-4; 20:42; 23:18) which united their spirits in a bond of love.

The characterization of Saul as "mighty" is not flattery or insincerity on the part of David, but a reminder that a person may have grievous faults and yet still excel in certain virtues. Every person is a combination of strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, virtues and vices. Many of this world's truly great men and women have had some glaring faults. Saul was such a man, and David's admiration was genuine.

There is a further lesson to learn from David's lament. You never get so mighty that you can't fall. It is so sad that Saul began with such promise and with so much in the way of personal ability and divine blessing, and ended his career forsaken by God, defeated by his enemies and impaled upon his own sword.

There are two examples here, one bad and one good. We must avoid the disobedience and rebellion of Saul, and follow the loving, forgiveness of David who was truly a man after God's own heart. He was never more God-like than when he was forbearing and forgiving. Saul's stubbornness and pride were his downfall. He either thought that he was too high and mighty to be ruled by God, or else that doing the will of God was relatively unimportant and God would overlook his disobedience. In either case he was wrong. It cost him his peace of mind, his kingship, and ultimately his life.

This lesson treatment is based on the International Bible Lessons for Christian Teaching, Uniform Series. Copyright International Council of Education. Used by permission.

Life and Work

Choosing the blessing

by Bob Berry, First Church, Benton

Basic passage: Deuteronomy 30:11-12, 14-20

Focal passage: Deuteronomy 30:14-20

Central truth: The plan of salvation never changes.

For centuries preachers and teachers have used the children of Israel as examples of weak-willed people. God performed so many unbelievable miracles for them, yet they constantly lost sight of him and gave in to every temptation that came along. How could they have made such poor choices?

In reality these Hebrews were no different than any other people. When confronted by God with a challenge to be faithful and obedient, most people respond eagerly at first but quickly lose their momentum. Making the right choices and following up on them are two different things.

Salvation seems such an obvious choice. Why would anyone not be saved? An obedient relationship with God is obviously the right choice. Why would a Christian stray? The answer is found in a clear understanding of what salvation really is. Salvation is choosing to be obedient to God. Salvation is free, but it costs you your life (Mt. 16:24-25).

The Hebrews had a choice to make: obedience or disobedience (Dt. 30:15-18). God had made his will plain. Would they follow him? Would they choose life or death? How could they demonstrate their obedience? What tangible proof could they give to show they were righteous?

The Hebrews could show they were people of faith by loving God, obeying God, and holding fast to God (Dt. 30:20). That is a good outline of the plan of salvation. Love God because he loved you and gave his Son for you. Obey God by accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, and by doing God's will from then on. Hold fast to God in faith when temptations, doubts, and hardships arise.

History shows that Israel chose to serve other gods. They lost their love of God, as people still do today (Re. 2:4). They did not obey God, but instead devised a religion of their own making. And they did not endure and persevere in trials and temptations. The result? They were destroyed. Please don't make the same mistake. Make the choice. Choose life. Choose God.

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Bible Book

Spiritual gifts and worship

by Zane Chesser, First Church, Malvern

Basic passage: 1 Corinthians 14:1-5, 26-35, 39-40

Focal passage: 1 Corinthians 14:1-5, 26-35, 39-40

Central truth: Exercising spiritual gifts should always benefit the church.

Paul's instructions concerning spiritual gifts reach a climax in 1 Corinthians 14. Previously he had affirmed the diversity of gifts among church members, but he had called for unity as the members exercised their gifts. Paul also stressed how the many different gifts were to function for the one common goal—the welfare of the church.

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul wrote of the supreme gift of love which if left out of one's life rendered the gifts useless. Now he deals with the gift of "tongues."

The spiritual gift of speaking in tongues or glossolalia was a phenomenon present in the Corinthian Church. The term "glossolalia" comes from the two Greek words *glossa*, or "tongue," and *lalein*, "to speak." Most likely this refers to a gift of ecstatic utterance and was greatly prized by the Corinthians. While Paul recognizes this as a valid spiritual gift, he clearly magnified prophecy as more significant in the church (1 Co. 14:1-4).

Prophecy should be understood not so much "foretelling" as "forth telling" a message from God. This would benefit the whole church (1 Co. 14:4). However, speaking in a tongue only benefited the individual unless the utterance was interpreted (1 Co. 14:4-5).

The apostle shares practical instructions about public worship that uphold vital principles for the present day (1 Co. 14:21-35). Christians should be willing to exercise their particular gifts while respecting others in the expression of their gifts.

Paul's instructions to women to keep silent in worship must be understood within the social background of his day. Women speaking out in public was not acceptable for many of the Jewish people. Surely Paul was guarding the reputation of the women and that of the church in that early day of Christianity (1 Co. 14:34-35).

Paul's final challenge in this passage is for the Corinthians to seek prophecy rather than tongues but not to despise tongues. The chapter ends with a reminder that worship should be conducted in a proper and orderly manner (1 Co. 14:39-40).

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Lesson
Date:
Dec. 22

LESSONS FOR LIVING

Convention Uniform

A duet of joy

by Carroll Evans, First Church, Hughes

Basic passage: 1 Samuel 2:1-5; Luke 1:46-55

Focal passage: 1 Samuel 2:1-2; Luke 1:46-48

Central truth: The fact that God can and does break through to do the unbelievable in our lives fills our hearts with joy.

This lesson combines the songs of two mothers, Hannah, the barren wife, and Mary, the betrothed virgin. It has long been noticed that Mary's song is patterned after Hannah's. This is not surprising since Mary was a Jewish maiden steeped in Old Testament lore.

The circumstances of both mothers was unusual to say the least. Hannah receives news from God that she is to have a son she thought she might never have. She promptly gives him to the service of God. Mary receives news from God that she will bear a son who in a real sense will never be hers because he is God's Son and belongs to the whole world. Both then compose a song of joy to express the emotions in their hearts.

Both songs in this joyful duet follow a similar order and state similar ideas. They begin with a statement of the mothers' joy (1 Sa. 2:1; Lk. 1:46-48). Then there follows praise for God's greatness and holiness (1 Sa. 2:2; Lk. 1:49). Next, pride and arrogance are rebuked (1 Sa. 2:3; Lk. 1:50-51). Then they speak of a reversal of fortune for the downtrodden and the oppressed (1 Sa. 2:4-5; Lk. 1:52-53). Only in the closing verses is there a dissimilarity and yet, even here there is a common trust in God who keeps his word and helps his people.

Hannah's little boy, Samuel, grew up to become Israel's greatest judge, the man who anointed David king of Israel. Mary's little boy was born both son of David and Son of God. Jesus reminded his disciples that with God all things are possible (Mt. 19:26). Hannah's and Mary's joyful songs remind us that the unbelievable can still happen. The days of the oppressors are numbered. God can break through into our world and into our lives at any time to carry out his wonderful will.

God is still doing the "impossible" in our lives. He continues to break through to do the unbelievable, usually in response to our faith and our prayers.

Life and Work

Fully God, fully man

by Bob Berry, First Church, Benton

Basic passage: Matthew 1:1, 18-25

Focal passage: Matthew 1:1, 18-25

Central truth: Jesus' virgin birth is essential to Christianity.

The first verses of the New Testament are astounding. In a very matter-of-fact fashion, Matthew introduces his readers to the most phenomenal event in history: a virgin gives birth to the Son of God! An event has occurred which alters all of history.

The story of Jesus' birth is not just intellectual trivia. The humanity of Jesus, the divinity of Jesus, and his sinless perfection are founded on the facts of his birth. If not for the virgin birth, Jesus could not be truly God nor could he truly be man. The marvelous mystery of the plan for the redemption of mankind and the establishment of God's kingdom are dependent on the union of God and man. Only the virgin birth could achieve that union.

The Bible provides strong evidence confirming the virgin birth. Isaiah prophesied it specifically (Mt. 1:21-22). Joseph's reactions when confronted with the pregnancy of his betrothed indicate both her purity and his integrity (Mt. 1:19). Mary herself was not aware she had conceived until after the fact (Lk. 1:26-37). The pregnancy was unique and divine. Her child was the Son of God from conception.

God is full of surprises, yet he always remains totally true to his Word. He often does great things without fanfare. The birth of Christ is no exception. Few realized that a virgin gave birth to a baby fully God and fully man, a baby who changed the world. God loved mankind enough to come to earth (Mt. 1:23). God loved mankind enough to provide payment for man's sin (Mt. 1:21). "And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." The promises in Scripture were beginning to unfold, but they were fulfilled in a way no one expected.

The virgin birth of Jesus is astounding history and astounding theology. The first verse in the New Testament summarizes the child born quietly on Christmas day (Mt. 1:1). Jesus is the Christ, the spiritual ruler. Jesus is the Son of David, the king. Jesus is the Son of Abraham, the fulfillment of all God's promises. "How silently, how silently, the wondrous Gift is given..."

Bible Book

God with us

by Zane Chesser, First Church, Malvern

Basic passage: Matthew 1:22-23; 2:1-12

Focal passage: Matthew 1:22-23; 2:1-12

Central truth: The virgin birth affirms both the deity and humanity of Christ.

Rather than relating the details of Jesus' birth, Matthew selects certain significant features to verify that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah of Old Testament Scripture. He cites Isaiah's words that foretold of a virgin giving birth to a son and his name would be Immanuel, meaning "God with us" (Mt. 1:22-23). From this passage and the account in Luke the doctrine of the virgin birth is established. This doctrine affirms that God became a man.

One of the first heresies to surface in the early church was docetism. This was a teaching that Jesus only "seemed" to be human. Being "born of a woman" (Ga. 4:4), he came into this world like any other man. He came into this world in sure enough flesh! John wrote that the spirit of antichrist does not confess that Jesus came in the flesh (1 Jn. 4:23). The incarnation means not that he was half-God and half-man, but all God and all man.

After giving the place and approximate time of Jesus' birth, Matthew tells of an unusual event which occurred near that time. Wisdom came from "the east" to pay homage to the new born King of the Jews (Mt. 2:1-2). These men were skilled in astrology and followed a star which they believed heralded the birth of this new king. Coming from another land signaled that this new ruler's kingdom would extend beyond Judea.

In the drama of the wisemen's venture to worship the baby Jesus, other actors enter the scene who are either indifferent or hostile to the royal birth (Mt. 2:3-8). Herod, King of Judea, wanted to destroy the baby whom he thought to be a threat to his throne. The religious leaders seemed to be, at best, indifferent to the situation. Such responses to the Christ have continued through the centuries.

The gifts which the wisemen presented the Christ Child are seen by many to have foretold the roles he would fulfill as Messiah (Mt. 2:11).

Gold spoke of his kingship. Frankincense was symbolic of his priesthood, and myrrh was one who would suffer and die. Whatever the implications, gifts to a superior was an Oriental custom.

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U.S. SURGEON GENERAL

Ban on 'teen' alcohol ads sought

by Tom Strode
SBC Christian Life Commission

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Bush administration has not pressured Surgeon General Antonia Novello to soften her campaign against youth-oriented alcohol advertising, she said after a recent congressional hearing.

In a news conference Nov. 4, Novello called for the elimination of "irresponsible ads" appealing to youth but asked the alcohol industry to pull them voluntarily. Fourteen executives from the alcohol industry had agreed to meet with her Dec. 11, Novello said. Her request for voluntary compliance by the industry was insufficient, some opponents of the ads said. They also criticized the White House.

The administration has not interfered nor has it asked her only to request voluntary action, Novello said after a hearing Nov. 15.

"It's the way that I do business," she said, "one step at a time. . . . I cannot block (the alcohol executives) with negativism until I meet with them. . . ."

Her recent reports and recommendations on youth drinking have produced a "flood of calls and letters" from the ad-

ministration, Congress, the alcohol industry and parents in support of her efforts, Novello said.

"... the information that is out there has been so broad and so common sense that everyone is looking for me to be able to make a difference," she said.

In the hearing, Novello told the House of Representatives Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, "We are losing the war on underage drinking because we are allowing mixed messages to go on and on."

Although persons under 21 are being warned of the serious health risks in drinking alcohol, Novello said, such a message "directly conflicts with the enticing drum beat of ads that say, 'Drink me, and you will be cool. Drink me, and you will have glamorous, or drink me, and you will have fun!'"

One of the things she learned during a cross-country, "fact-finding mission" in September 1990 was "how pervasive underage drinking is and how it is truly the mainstream drug used that plagues our communities and our families," Novello said.

Her research showed high school seniors

reported they took their first drink at a party while seventh graders said they first drank alcohol at home, Novello said.

Three reports by the Department of Health and Human Services were released from June to November and showed, Novello told the committee:

— A minimum of 8 million teenagers drink alcohol every week and nearly half a million go on a weekly binge, which is five drinks in a row (The average binge-drinker is 16, white, male and in the 10th grade, she said.);

— Junior and senior high students drink 35 percent of all wine coolers sold annually in the country (31 million gallons) and 1.1 billion cans of beer;

— Two of three teenagers cannot discern alcoholic from non-alcoholic beverages because of their similarity on store shelves;

— More than 5.5 million teenagers do not know the minimum legal age for buying alcohol;

— The federal 21-year-old minimum drinking law generally is a myth because of loopholes and lax enforcement;

— Two-thirds of teenagers who drink can walk into a store and buy alcohol;

— Alcohol advertising, which has no effective regulations or standards, uses glamorous lifestyles, sex, sports figures and risky activities to appeal to youth.

Novello said she had not looked closely at bills in Congress requiring health and safety warning messages in all broadcast and print alcohol advertising. The idea they would address the problem of teenage drinking "pleases me tremendously."

One of her responses to the reports was to appoint a task force to present recommendations for better content labeling on alcoholic beverages, Novello said.

Annuity Board property and casualty carrier changes

DALLAS (BP)—The Annuity Board has changed carriers for its property and casualty insurance program from Aetna Life and Casualty to Preferred Risk Mutual Insurance Company of Des Moines, Iowa.

Joel Mathis, senior vice president of the insurance division, said the change is being made immediately in order to broaden the coverages offered and to simplify the application and underwriting process.

"The Aetna is a fine and stable company," said Mathis, "but Preferred Risk is a specialist in church protection."

"We opened this program with Aetna in 1989, but due to a complicated process, have been limited to 23 states," said Mathis. "Today, we can instantly offer the Preferred Risk program in every state."

The plan will be promoted through the Annuity Board's property and casualty department.

"Our goals remain the same," said Mathis, "to provide stability of coverage and stability of price. We believe we can achieve both with Preferred Risk."

"Our contract with Preferred Risk opens the plan to churches in every state,

and to associations, state conventions and selected agencies and institutions," said Mathis.

A contract also has been negotiated with Marsh and McLennan, of New York City and Dallas, as local recording agent, to custom build policies for large colleges, universities and hospitals.

Existing policies with Aetna will not be automatically converted to Preferred Risk. As its renewal date approaches, a church will be offered the opportunity to stay with the Annuity Board's property and casualty program and convert to the new carrier, or to renew with Aetna and sever the relationship with the Annuity Board.

"Of course," said Doug Day, vice president for property and casualty, "we hope all our churches will join us in the new program."


Any inquiry about coverage with Preferred Risk would receive a direct agent contact within 48 hours, Day said.

A dedicated toll-free telephone service for Southern Baptist churches has been established in Des Moines. The number is 1-800-321-5754.

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China moves to stop 'illegal' religious work

by Michael Chute

SBC Foreign Mission Board

HONG KONG (BP)—The chief of China's secret police has ordered security officials nationwide to crack down on "illegal" religious activities in the country, according to an official Chinese news report.

Police should "effectively prevent and wage a struggle against nationalist splittists and criminals who carry out sabotage in the name of religion," Public Security Minister Tao Sijn reportedly told a police conference.

Tao's remarks underscore China's latest effort to stem the "invasion" and development of religious forces from outside the country. Premier Li Peng leveled that charge in a Nov. 8 meeting.

"With regard to reactionary religious forces and secret society forces from outside our borders, we must resolutely fight them once they are discovered," Communist Party politburo member Qiao Shi told top security officials, according to an article in the *Legal Daily*. "We must absolutely not allow their existence or development."

Chinese and foreign business and religious leaders also have reported recent signs of a crackdown on religion in China. Large-scale arrests of house church leaders reportedly have been carried out since late summer in Jiangsu, Anhui, Guangdong and Zhejiang provinces, including the cities of Guangzhou, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Public Security officials deported Australian businessman Noel Steensen Oct. 27 for holding Bible meetings in his Shanghai home with local Chinese. Steensen, a Jehovah's Witness, claimed interrogators told him other foreigners would be expelled in a crackdown on unofficial church activities.

Steensen said authorities also told him Chinese attending "house churches" must go to government-approved churches, such as those aligned with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, which represents Protestants. However, some Chinese sources report instances where police also have clamped down on some Three-Self churches. Most Jehovah's Witnesses in Shanghai were questioned and police arrested at least five Chinese Jehovah's Witnesses, Steensen charged.

Efforts to reach Chinese Christian officials in the Three-Self movement for comment were unsuccessful Nov. 14.

The crackdown on "illegal" religious activities is further evidence of China's general tightening of controls following the

collapse of Soviet communism. It parallels government concern over ethnic unrest in border areas. Besides "illegal" Christian house churches, the police crackdown also targets Buddhist and Islamic religious centers in Tibet and among Muslims in Xinjiang province, which authorities claim are fronts for separatist movements.

"Following the collapse of the Soviet Communist Party, strict ideological control has become China's long-term policy," said Jonathan Chao, director of the Hong Kong-based Chinese Church Research Center. "Religions, in particular those brought in from the West, have inevitably been reaffirmed as a means of 'peaceful evolution' through which neo-imperialists try to turn China capitalist."

Immediately following the failed Soviet coup, jittery Chinese leaders made the fight against "peaceful evolution toward capitalism" the nation's top priority. In the ensuing three months a massive information campaign has called for "more class struggle" to intensify Marxist education, and commanded leaders of work units to warn their employees not to meet with foreigners without permission.

A Beijing university official reportedly insisted his staff report colleagues' contacts with foreigners.

"We do hear rumors of investigations into religious activities by foreigners, but generally those are aimed at persons who organize secret Bible studies or illegally import religious materials into China," said Charlie Wilson, educational resources coordinator for Cooperative Services International, a Southern Baptist aid organization. "Southern Baptist teachers in China don't do those things which are illegal."

"Possible restrictions on foreigners is a concern. Our policy for teachers is to abide by rules and regulations and operate within guidelines set down by our host units. Our Chinese friends and cooperative units know we are Christian and we respect Chinese laws. We also respect and support the Chinese church. Our religious activities are confined to responding to individual questions in personal conversations and regular church attendance in recognized churches. This comes under the normal religious activities protected by the Chinese constitution."

None of the 46 Southern Baptist teachers working in Chinese schools and universities has reported a change in personal relationships with Chinese students or teaching colleagues, according to officials with the aid organization.