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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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12-17-1987

**December 17, 1987**

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Laying Groundwork

# Arkansas Baptist

December 17, 1987



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Nashville, Tennessee

**Celebrate Life!**

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*Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is a time to celebrate our children and dedicate ourselves to a world where all children are welcomed.*

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## IT'S UPLIFTING

### Enrollment Climbs

LISBON, Portugal—Thirty-nine students are taking fall classes at the Portuguese Baptist Theological Seminary in Lisbon. It is believed to be the highest enrollment in the seminary's 18-year history. Seminary graduates now number 52.

### Crate Church

MOMBASA, Kenya—A congregation that began by meeting inside a shipping container has become a church. The 128 members organized Shanzu Baptist Church into an official body while meeting under a tree July 12. Shanzu's meeting site is much more comfortable than its previous

one; Southern Baptist missionary Ralph Bethea from Memphis, Tenn., once recorded the temperature in the shipping container at 137 degrees.

### The Future of Music

PORTO, Portugal—"We're building for the future of music in Portuguese churches," says Southern Baptist missionary Martha Hampsher, one of 10 teachers in music schools organized by the Portuguese Baptist Convention. Forty-five students are receiving music instruction in two churches in Porto and 76 in three churches in Lisbon. Classes were started four years ago because of a lack of music education in Portuguese schools.

## GOOD NEWS!

### Watching for the Morning Star

Revelation 2:18-29

Thyatira's prosperity resulted from the large number of corporate guilds—potters, tanners, weavers, robe makers, and dyers—in the city. Though the city was small, its size did not reflect its importance as a trading point in Asia Minor. One of the chief Roman highways in Asia Minor connected it with Pergamos 40 miles to the northwest.

Persecution seems to have bypassed this tiny town and the struggling church located there, probably because the church was so small in size and influence.

Under these conditions Thyatira faced an internal problem of moral corruption, a much greater problem than persecution. The truth may still be that it is more difficult to live for Christ than to die for him.

Little will be gained by trying to identify Jezebel in this passage of Revelation. Whether she was a specific person or an allegorical reference to the wife of Ahab will not change the truth.

Moral compromise may be a greater danger to the churches of Jesus Christ than heathen idols. The church at Thyatira is commended for her good works, charity, service, faith and patience. The living, growing congregation with many things in her favor was still faced with condemnation. This congregation may have been like many churches today.

Some Christians in Thyatira were involved in a "new morality" and sexual conduct that was not as it should have been. The question of eating food sacrificed to idols

further indicates that the problem was moral sin, not doctrinal error.

This passage seems to indicate that though immorality was in the congregation it was not rampant. The moral crisis was that the church was tolerating the moral sin. Perhaps some were saying, "We have to be careful about discipline, or we will be sitting in judgment on our brother," Billy Graham said. "They either had a poor conscience or little courage."

Certainly we should understand the problem of moral compromise. We are in danger of moral compromise, and the warning of Christ to the church of Thyatira is the same for us: Repent, or suffer the consequences. Here lies the source of powerless churches and Christians. He promises to those who overcome that his guidance will be as the "morning star."

When the Venus probes were in orbit around the planet, a news announcer said, "If you want to see Venus, it is the bright morning star and can best be seen before daylight. The next morning I was up well before daylight. The blackness of the early morning was staggering. I glanced up to see a bright ball of light in the eastern sky; it seemed to be a beacon of light in the blackness around me. It was the morning star, and no one could have missed its guiding light in the morning darkness."

This is the picture here for the faithful. Christ will give his guidance and leadership in the dark hour of trials or trouble. There is always a morning star if the Christian will but wait for its brilliance.

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## Letters to the Editor

**Saddened**

I am greatly saddened by the fact that the 120-church Shelby Baptist Association in Memphis, Tenn., has withdrawn fellowship from Prescott Memorial Baptist Church for calling a woman as a pastor. However, I am not surprised!

This association is after all, a part of the SBC, formed in 1845 largely over the question of slavery. Like all oppressors who interpret the gospel in their own right, the majority of Southern Baptist preachers contended then that God willed Africans to be slaves; they cited such biblical texts as Noah's curse upon Ham, and the apostle Paul's injunction "slaves be obedient to your master." This is the same convention, whose majority—during the fifties and early sixties—tried to find biblical bases to justify segregation.

The former sanction of many churches of the SBC on the issues of slavery, and racial segregation testifies that part of the SBC has heeded more the authority of the world than to the authority of God. But just as the Holy Spirit has moved against the evils of slavery and segregation in the SBC, he will move against the evils of sexism.

One has to conclude that more often than not the majority viewpoint of the religious has proven wrong. After all, the victim Jesus Christ of Nazareth was crucified by the majority of religious authorities.—**Randall Harvey Jr., Louisville, Ky.**

**Resolutions**

I would like to ask my fellow Arkansas Baptists to consider deleting from the yearly convention program the "Resolutions."

I know we have always done it, but that isn't reason enough to continue. Of late, it has become only an act of throwing "bones" of contention onto the floor for time-consuming semantic debate.

Wouldn't it be nicer to give a plaque to the host church to hang somewhere instead of "resolving to thank . . ." which really doesn't say very much.

And who isn't against some things? I'm against AIDS, abortion, child abuse, mate abuse, pet abuse, drug abuse, environment abuse, pornography and gambling. Instead, I would enjoy an inspirational, biblical sermon on the year's most current social problem. Then we could say, "Amen" and resolve in our hearts to go out and rescue those perishing.—**Nelson Wilhelm, Waldron**

**Some Preachers**

It seems that some preachers will never learn! Some pastors work so hard teaching, witnessing, praying, etc., but seem to win no one to the Lord. So they get discouraged and leave. Some evangelist comes to hold a revival. They see "what needs to be done, etc." And "do it!" But "no additions!" Then, here comes another pastor, or another evangelist! Man-o-man! What a "harvest of souls!" Yes, a few stupid members of the church, as well as a few stupid preachers, because of their ignorance of the Scriptures, may say: "Boy! We have a good preacher now!" Or, "Man! Now, we have an evangelist!"

Now, a lot of preachers know what I'm talking about, but, being timid, as so many are, just fail to explain to the people the meaning of 1 Corinthians 3:4-9, about God being the one who adds to his church—not the preacher! So, keep on preaching, every one, in his own way and time. You are not a failure! God is still "on his throne." "rainning the show!"—**Ottis Denney, Norton, Ohio**

**Disturbed**

As a messenger to the Arkansas State Convention this past week I was greatly disturbed by Resolution 12: Abortion.

Paragraph 4: "Be it therefore resolved by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, meeting in Fort Smith, November 17-18, 1987, that we clearly state our opposition to abortions, except in the cases of rape, incest, and to save the life of the mother."

The resolution says it is acceptable to kill a baby if it is conceived by the act of rape or incest. My Bible teaches me that God is the giver of life. For us as a convention to say it is permissible to kill when we have our rights abused is wrong.

Since this issue to such an emotional one, we as women must decide how we will respond before the need to respond is present. As a state convention we are encouraging a woman or girl who has been violated, and who is under emotional stress, to kill a baby. A woman that has endured the trauma of rape or incest should not have to endure the trauma of bearing the guilt associated with taking a human life. I pray God's protection on my life and my two girls, but with God's strength, if the need ever arises, I pray I will do the godly thing by allowing that precious baby to live and not the easy thing that is encouraged by our state convention.

It is wrong to "fix" a sin by another sin!

Colossians 3:25: "For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and there is no partiality."—**Pam Yoakum, Springdale**

**Protect and Preserve**

I again feel a need to reply to a letter in the newsmagazine.

In response to the letter by Bro. Watts printed in the Nov. 26 issue I want to say that my understanding of inerrancy differs from his in several particulars. One of these is regarding the attributing of inspiration to scribes, copyists, and translators. No one I know claims these people were inspired—they did not write Scripture—but God certainly was able to protect and preserve his Word intact and correct. Mr. Watts plainly tells us he believes there is error in Scripture. If we cannot depend on God's Word regarding number either of armies or demoniae healed, who is to say we can trust it in regard to theology and salvation?

Regarding the examples cited by Mr. Watts let me say that of the first an acceptable explanation is given in Davidson's *Sacred Hermeneutics*. It is based upon the inclusion or exclusion of the standing army. It should also be noted that in the Hebrew mode of thinking whatever occurred in the world, under the over-riding providence of God—whatever he allowed to occur—should be attributed to him. In not preventing the census, then, because of anger against Israel, he is considered its agent in 2 Samuel 24 although certainly it was Satan who moved David to take the census. Regarding the report of two demoniae healed in Matthew 8, as opposed to only one being mentioned by Luke, it seems obvious that Luke mentions only the most prominent one, if we approach Scripture believing it to be true rather than searching for error.

Admittedly there are portions of Scripture not totally understood as yet, however I prefer an entire Bible of truth not an unsure faith anchored on a Bible where men pick and choose what they will or will not believe!—**Gerald Hill, Nashville, Ark.**

**Still Persecuted**

Yes, persecution of Soviet Christians goes on under Gorbachev. For example, few Baptists have been released, while at least 10 have been arrested during the past year. This trend, if continued, means more persecution, not less. (National Center for Public Policy Research, Washington, D.C.)

Yet, U.S. Senator Bumpers is disappointed that Gorbachev will not be allowed to address Congress.

And, U.S. Senator Pryor wants Arkansas school children to write and invite the Kremlin's slave leader to visit Arkansas. Why?

Meanwhile, gulag grows in the U.S.S.R. and glasnost snows the U.S.A.—Mrs. W.C. Carpenter, Magnolia

## Truly Rich

I would like to comment on the letter in the Nov. 26 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist* about being rich. I was raised by a very "well-to-do" family for all of my life. Having money was very nice of course. I was a "rich" girl.

But then, when I turned 30 years old, in fact on my birthday, I had a near death experience. An aneurysm ruptured in my brain and I was comatose for 15 days. The doctors said I was a good as dead, but God Almighty saved me and I lived. Soon after that, I was invited to a Baptist church by a friend. I went and when the invitation was given, I responded. Different things happened, too numerous to mention, and my family lost their money. I have found

since then, and it has been four years, that I was never really rich before I found the Lord. But now I have him and I am truly a millionaire!—Jani Rickards, Mount Ida

## Not New

The problems Mr. Watts mentions are not new—in fact, there have been many others which have long since been cleared up. I remember my father talking about how unbelieving writers had formerly ridiculed the Bible because it described the Hitites, when there were (at that time) no parallel records of their existence. Now, for many years, we have known much about them from other ancient sources.

Sometimes, it has seemed that the more puzzling the problem, the more clear and simple the solution, once it is discovered.

Anyway, we are not called to preach doubt—the devil has plenty of agents doing that. Let us preach faith, and one important article of faith is that God, who inspired the Holy Scriptures, could also see that they were transmitted to us in the form in which he intended us to have them. God is true, and his Word is true, though man's wisdom is always changing. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Ro. 3:4).—Clay Hale, El Dorado

DON MOORE

## You'll Be Glad To Know



**We will respond!** So many have asked questions about extending our Brazil Partnership, AMAR. When the Brazilian preacher pled with us at the State Convention to "not drop them now," my heart surged with emotion to continue the partnership. The missionaries in Brazil had voted to ask us to continue. The Foreign Mission Board extended the invitation. For many reasons, which space will not permit me to discuss, we can't continue the formal partnership.

**We will respond!** Over 500 people from more than 150 churches in our state have buried a part of themselves in Brazil. We can't stop caring, praying, giving or going just because the time set out in the partnership is ended. How then will we respond? How will it be different from our previous experiences?

**We will respond!** To make sure that all lines of communication are clear and to insure the good relationships we have enjoyed between missionaries, Brazilian leaders, and the Foreign Mission Board, the following process will be followed:

(1) Requests for teams to come and assist in any way must originate with the field. We are in no position to impose our ministries on them.

(2) The Foreign Mission Board will forward these requests on to Glendon Grober, director of the Brotherhood Department, who will try to locate the appropriate teams to fill the requests.

(3) We will not be able to handle all of the arrangements, orientation, and other details as we have tried to do under the partnership. Finances and personnel are not available to continue that.

**Direct requests from churches in Brazil** to our churches or pastors will be handled as the local leadership and church sees fit. We have become a part of some dynamic work there. Projects and ministries begun you may want to continue. You are encouraged to do that. However, we must be mindful that our missionary force is limited, and they can not drop everything they are doing every time we go down there to help with interpretation. Do be considerate of the missionaries if you do projects on your own.

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

## Woman's Viewpoint

### Feelings You Can Trust

NORMA KIRKPATRICK

If you wait until you feel like it, there are a lot of things that will never get done. In that sense, we're waiting for feelings to motivate us into action.

I'm not sure that's what feelings are for. Perhaps God gave them to us to remind us of our unique humanity. Feelings can be a wonderful experience of stirring deep within our heart that makes us long to share what we feel.

That's what happens to me during this season. Christmas is my favorite time of year. Not so much for what I see and hear, but for what I feel.

I feel the peace of the Christ child. The world was and is in turmoil around him, yet he em-



bodies tranquility.

I feel the awe of the shepherds. Though I am lowly in station, the good news of his birth was shared with me.

I feel the joy of the angels. I too can deliver the message, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people!"

I feel the innocence of the manger animals. Unknowing, yet knowing that a wondrous thing has happened.

I feel the gentleness of Joseph. It is through the gentle acceptance of God's plan that we fulfill his purpose.

I feel the reverence of Mary. God has identified with the flesh, and through the flesh has made himself known in Christ.

I feel the generosity of the magi. What a privilege to give when so much has been given.

I feel the hope of the world. We cannot live without hope, and it has been found in Christ.

I pray that you are "feeling well!" this Christmas season.

**Norma Kirkpatrick** is the wife of Jerry Kirkpatrick, pastor of First Church, Heber Springs. She is the mother of three grown children.

DANIEL R. GRANT

## One Layman's Opinion



### Full of Light

High in the front wall of Ouachita's new Riley-Hickingbotham Library sits a beautiful stained glass window which show an open Bible with a flame above it, encircled by the Ouachita "O" in purple and gold, for school colors.

The sun's rays do a surprising thing as they strike the beveled glass in the open Bible and the flame and the purple and gold circles. As the sun rises in the east, it casts a beautiful reflection through the stained glass window onto the wall, the books, the furnishings, and the people in the library.

What a remarkable picture of Christian education with God's Light shining through God's Book onto the thousands of human books of all kinds! The sun has provided a regular reminder of Ouachita's firm commitment to keeping his Light and his Book at the very heart of education.

Ouachita English professor and poet Johnny Wink composed a poem entitled "An Invitation" that beautifully describes this nice bonus in our new library, and he read it to a luncheon audience immediately following the dedication of the new library. The following excerpt from Dr. Wink's poem gives eloquent insight into the role of books in our world, and the transforming miracle that takes place when the Light of Lights illuminates these books:

The books are full of light, are full of anger, And joy and cleverness and wit and wisdom.

The books are life in life's great triumph Of expression. The books are what we are, Have been, and may become. The books are hope and fear.

O, Jesus, through whose etched and sundered flesh We come to light and are revealed and nurtured,

Pray let us now accept your invitation Into the light that falls from Light Itself, That falls to us through stained glass windows

And frolics, suffers with us on the floors Of our enlightened beings, that falls Into the books that educate us And lead us out into a world of wonders.

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University.

## Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

### Celebrate Life!

by Robert Parham  
SBC Christian Life Commission

Hannah longed for a child. At times she was so full of sadness that she "wept and would not eat" (1 S. 1:7). At other times she was deeply distressed" and "wept bitterly" (1:10). But year after year, Hannah remained barren.

One day while she sat "on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple," Eli, the priest, accused her of being drunk. Hannah replied that she was not drunk, but "pouring out" her soul before the Lord (1:15) and speaking out of her "great anxiety and vexation" (1:16). When Eli learned of her prayer, he told her to "go in peace" with confidence that God would grant her petition.

Hannah left her sadness behind. She conceived, bore a son, named him Samuel and dedicated him to the Lord.

When Hannah could not conceive, she had made a commitment to God: "I'll give him to the Lord all the days of his life" (1:11). After she gave birth, she kept her word: "I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord" (1:28).

Hannah anticipated her pregnancy and the birth of Samuel. She celebrated God's gift (2:10). She even dedicated him before he was conceived and kept her word after his birth.

Hannah's story is a model for how we ought to anticipate, to celebrate, and to dedicate our own children. Yet the regrettable truth is that our culture often does not eagerly anticipate the birth of children. Sometimes pregnancy is viewed as a stumbling block to our careers. Sometimes pregnancy is perceived as a threat to our economic

security. Sometimes pregnancy is seen as an embarrassment. The result in such situations is often abortion.

Abortion is the ending of human life. It is a grave act with tragic spiritual, emotional, physical, and social consequences. It calls upon us to speak out against abortion on demand and to encourage alternatives to abortion.

It also beckons us to be compassionate agents of God's grace in nurturing human life and in taking God's grace to those caught in the tragedy of abortion.

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, set on the Southern Baptist Convention calendar for Jan. 17, 1988, is a time for each of us to celebrate the children we have and to dedicate ourselves to creating a society where all children are welcomed.



Dr. J. Robert White,  
Pastor

## CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

From The

### First Baptist Church

Paducah, Kentucky

See it on



### "Christmas Shines On Lower Town"

December 22, \*2:00 a.m. and \*7:30 p.m.

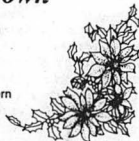
December 23, \*7:00 a.m. and \*12:00 Noon

### "Home For Christmas"

December 30, \*9:00 p.m.

\*All Times Eastern

WORSHIP WEEKLY WITH US ON ACTS,  
WEDNESDAY EVENINGS, 9:00 P.M. (EST)



# Laying Groundwork

## Two Arkansas Volunteers Prepare for 1989

by Sherri Brown  
SBC Home Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—Boyd and Bonnie Margason, Mission Service Corps volunteers, are in Las Vegas, Nev., to begin preparations for the evangelistic and church-starting emphasis prior to the 1989 annual Southern Baptist Convention meeting.

The Margasons, natives of Mountain Home, Ark., are the first volunteers to be assigned to this Nevada project. Their primary assignment is to prepare work for the staff of 12 churches in Las Vegas.

"They will do property analysis, demographic surveys and begin Bible studies in the communities identified by the Southern Nevada Baptist Association," said David Bunch, director of church extension for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Last spring the Margasons, both retired, put their home up for sale and set off in their motor home for the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis. There they decided to volunteer for mission service.

"We realized we needed to go somewhere God needed us," Mrs. Margason

explained. They prayed asking God to send them wherever he wanted them to go. The next morning Bunch asked them to consider the two-year assignment in Nevada.

The Margasons had done short-term volunteer mission work in northern Nevada years before. "We saw the area and felt a real burden. At every place we serve, we leave a little bit of ourselves, so Nevada seemed a good choice to return to," Mrs. Margason said.

The Margasons' assignment is part of a project to start 25 new churches in Nevada by the 1989 Las Vegas Southern Baptist Convention.

The project is a response to an action taken at the 1983 Southern Baptist Convention in Pittsburgh, where messengers voted to recommend "a strong evangelistic emphasis in connection with the (1989 Las Vegas) annual meeting."

The Home Mission Board, in cooperation with the Nevada Baptist Convention, was assigned the task of "an emphasis on missions and evangelism."

"These church starts are part of our attempt to carry out that action. The Home Mission Board is working through their

state cooperative agreement with Nevada to set the direction of Bold Mission Thrust for the last decade of the century," said Bobby Sunderland, the board's director of direct evangelism and coordinator of the Las Vegas project.

Plans for starting the churches include placing two volunteer missionary couples in Nevada by January.

The Home Mission Board and the Nevada Baptist Convention are looking for "partnership" and "assisting" churches for each new mission congregation.

A partnership church will make a three- to five-year commitment to aid the church in providing pastoral salaries and purchasing properties. Assisting churches will provide smaller amounts of monetary support, Bunch said.

Both partnership and assisting churches also will provide short-term mission groups as survey workers and construction teams, as well as providing any other short-term work needed.

"Our goal is to have support for each new church by March 1, 1989, when we plan to have all the pastors on the field," Bunch said.

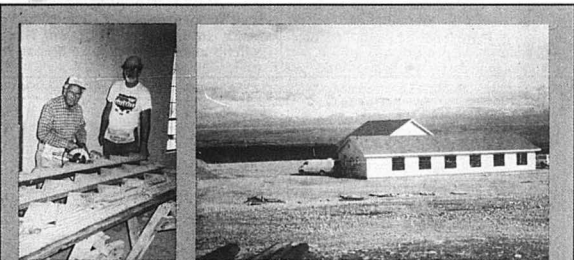
The pastors will be assigned in several areas. The Home Mission Board will choose and appoint seven church planter apprentices, seven church planters, seven mission pastors—funded by partnership churches—and four language pastors.

The four language churches have not yet been pinpointed, but a Filipino and an American Hispanic church should be included, reported Oscar Romo, the board's language missions director.

Plans also include one volunteer missionary couple assigned to each new church to serve as part of the leadership core group.

The first meeting at each church will be a revival service June 4, 1989, initiating a full week of revival meetings to be held at each church the week prior to the Southern Baptist Convention annual session.

Nevada Baptist Convention Missions Director Don Mulkey will coordinate recruitment of the partnership and assisting churches.



## Preparing for a Harvest

A mission team from First Church, El Dorado, spent 15 days assisting the Berean Church of Pioche, Nev., during the month of November. Working in two one-week shifts, the team finished out the congregation's new building, which was occupied and dedicated around Thanksgiving. Also involved in the project were Boyd and Bonnie Margason of Mountain Home First Church, who are serving as Mission Service Corps volunteers in Nevada. The Margasons, who recruited El Dorado First to help with the project, are the first of several volunteer teams which will be helping new churches get started in preparation for an evangelistic emphasis which will accompany the 1989 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Las Vegas. Pictured above left are Boyd Margason and El Dorado church member Hank Williams. Above right, the new building stands against a backdrop of snow-capped peaks.

### Psychology For Christian Life

4

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# LOCAL & STATE

## Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

### People

**Henry G. West** will retire as director of missions for the 42 churches in Mississippi County Association, effective Feb. 29, 1988, following nine years of service. Under his leadership, the association dedicated debt-free in 1983 its 65 acre camp near Paragould, has sponsored a Korean fellowship, assisted with the Arkansas-Indiana linkup, and doubled the associational budget. West also, in his 47 years of ministry, has pastored churches in Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and Arkansas. He has served on the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board, on the Committee of 100, as president of the Arkansas Directors of Missions Association, as director and secretary of the Baptist Hospital Foundation, and as vice-president of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* Board of Directors. He and his wife, Vi, have three children and two grandchildren. They will retire in Henning, Tenn., where they have built a retirement home on their 25-acre farm.

**Bill Hilburn** will be honored Jan. 3 by Ward First Church in recognition of 10 years of service as pastor. Under his leadership, the church has experienced growth in both membership and church programs, and has begun a building program. Hilburn received his diploma of theology from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Mary, will be honored during the morning worship service at which Don Moore, ABSC Executive Director, will be speaker. A special service of tribute is planned for 2 p.m., with a reception to follow from 3-5 p.m.

**Don Butler** began serving Nov. 15 as minister of music, youth, and activities at First Church, Waldron. He and his wife, Dianne, and their daughter, Cynthia, moved there from Prescott where he served on the staff of First Church.

**J. Frank Jones** is serving as interim pastor of First Church, Marked Tree. He is a student at Mid-America Seminary.

**Caldwell Tucker Bennett** of Batesville died Dec. 1 at age 69. He was a member and deacon of Batesville First Church and was a former prosecuting attorney for Independence County. His survivors are his wife, Polly Gay Bennett; three daughters, Nancy Caldwell Hillard of Little Rock,



West



Hilburn

Marion Gay King of Mountain Home, and Mary Rebecca Singleton of Marion; and six grandchildren.

**Mary Elizabeth Taylor** died Dec. 2. She was the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Al Ray Taylor of Hamburg, where her father serves on the staff of First Church. Other survivors are her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kitchman of Monticello and Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Taylor of Wilmar.

**Bert Miller** will join the staff of Springdale First Church as administrator of facilities, effective Jan. 1. He and his wife, Wanda, will move there from Palacios, Texas, where they were members of First Church. He has served as president and active managing partner of Sealand Products there.

### Briefly

**Ozark First Church** recently set a record in its giving to the Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Thanksgiving Offering. A banquet to which members brought a love offering resulted in the church's 1987 gifts to the offering totaling more than \$1,100.

**Monticello First Church** recently had as a guest William Conner, who has spent 20 years serving as pastor of a Baptist church on St. Kitts, West Indies. The church launched its Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions emphasis with Johnny and Barbara Burnett, missionaries to Brazil, as speakers.

**Mountain Home First Church** launched its Foreign Mission Week of Prayer emphasis Dec. 6. John R. Cheyne, director of the Human Needs Department for the Foreign Mission Board, was speaker.

**Texarkana Trinity Church** held a testimonial service Nov. 18 that featured Joe Cervini, a local businessman and converted Catholic, as speaker. He and his wife, Martha, are members of Pleasant Grove Church, where he serves as a deacon.

### Golden Time

Rev. and Mrs. Paul E. Wilhelm of Ozark will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary Jan. 2 with a reception in the conference room of the Clear Creek Association offices hosted by their children, Rev. and Mrs. Nelson Wilhelm of Waldron; Mr. and Mrs. David L. Wilhelm of Jackson, Ala. The Wilhelms were married near Lamar Dec. 31, 1937, in home of the bride, the former Mattie Helen Brown. Wilhelm has pastored churches and conducted revivals in Arkansas, Kansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Texas. He retired March 1, 1981, as director of missions for Clear Creek Association following 21 years of service.



The Wilhelms

# Michigan Connection

by J. Everett Sneed  
Editor, Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

For the past 5 years, Archview Church, Little Rock, has assisted in the development of a church in Kalkaska, Mich. The initial contact came through former Arkansas Carroll Fowler. Fowler was pastor of the Horseshoe Bend Church for a number years. He has served in Michigan as a church planter and coordinator of church planting and is currently the director of missions for the Northland Association.

Approximately 20 individuals from Archview have made each of the five trips. In 1983 the primary emphasis was placed on a survey, although one or more Backyard Bible Clubs and puppet shows have been conducted each year. Three of the last four years revivals have been held in conjunction with other activities. Fowler identified approximately 35 good prospects as a result of the 1983 survey.

Archview Pastor James Walker observed, "Our emphasis has been in the economically oppressed section of Kalkaska. It is easy to fill a bus with children. It appears that most of the churches in the area don't care about these children."

Walker observed that the people of the area have been surprisingly open to the ministry of Archview. They have been exceedingly helpful in providing facilities. Currently the small congregation in Kalkaska is meeting in a recreational building at the Kalkaska Campground. One of the great needs for the small congrega-

tion is permanent facility. A fund has been started by some of the members of Archview to purchase the needed facilities. The first two years Archview paid rent for this recreational facility.

The Kalkaska Church is holding services on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening. They also conduct Sunday School. The attendance has fluctuated but is currently averaging approximately 15.

Walker is encouraged with the coming of Thomas Kagarise who is now full-time pastor on the field. He and his wife Wilma have three daughters and were reared in Michigan. He is a recent graduate of Mid-America Seminary, Memphis, Tenn. Most of his support comes from the Home Mission Board. Some additional support comes from the Michigan Baptist State Convention and from individuals. Kagarise's wife works at a local hospital.

Because of limited finances, the couple lives in the country. But when pastor Kagarise brings his wife to work he is spending his time becoming acquainted with business leaders, school leaders, and political leaders of the town, as well as visiting prospects. Walker said, "I believe that with this type of aggressive visitation the church will grow."

Walker emphasizes that mission projects such as this benefit the congregation that is providing the workers. Walker also noted that during this mission involvement he had opportunity for counseling his own

young people that he would not have otherwise. It also provided growth opportunity in that the young people actually conducted the Bible clubs and taught the Bible stories. He said, "They will never be the same as a result of this mission involvement. I feel that some of our young people will be involved in mission activities for the rest of their lives."

Walker said that a mainstay in the project had been Mr. and Mrs. John Farmer. Farmer is a retired school teacher from the Pulaski School System. Mrs. Farmer is nearing retirement. The Farmer's have been involved in the project for the last four years. The last three years they have gone ahead of the other members from Archview and spent a month or more in the area. Walker said, "The Farmers' are excellent Bible teachers. Mr. Farmer teaches the adults while Mrs. Farmer has taught the children. The Farmer's commitment has encouraged our church in this effort." Walker feels that the efforts they have set forth will result in a permanent congregation for the Lord."

## Hunger Resources

Bread for the World, an interdenominational Christian organization which works to combat world hunger, has four new resources available.

A new book, *Christian Faith and Public Policy: No Grounds for Divorce*, written by Bread for the World Executive Director Arthur Simon, argues that Christian people cannot separate their religious faith from public policy without abandoning hungry people to misery and death. Simon contends that Christians can make a major impact on the world hunger problem by expressing their views to decision makers.

Other resources include a new musical based on Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus, a four-page fact sheet on world hunger, and a video tape on how churches can be involved in local feeding ministries, hunger-related worship services, and educational activities.

For more information, contact Bread for the World, 802 Rhode Island Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20018.

## Tournament Held

Nine teams from five churches participated in a volleyball tournament to benefit the Arkansas Baptist Children's Home at Monticello.

Monticello First Church placed first in the competition, and Cullendale First Church, Camden, placed second. More than \$250 was raised for the Children's Home.

## Mission Arkansas Rally

February 5, 1988 7:00 p.m.

Park Hill Baptist Church  
201 East C, North Little Rock



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Thomas Halsell



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## A SMILE OR TWO

## Letters to Santa:

Dear Santa: I only want one thing. Dynamite. Nothing exciting ever happens around here.—*Albert*

Dear Santa: My mother said if I don't brush my teeth three times a day, you won't come to see me. Are you a dentist?—*Lloyd*

Dear Santa Claus: for Christmas I would like a real doctor's bag. I want to try some operations on my friends.—*Milton*

Dear Santa: I haven't made up my mind. I haven't seen all the commercials yet.—*Linda*

Dear Santa: My best friend Susan and I would like a bicycle built for two. Please leave the front half at my house.—*Beatrice*

Dear Santa: Please send me a dog. One that's full of dog. The one I got last Christmas was full of sawdust.—*Junior*

Dear Sandy Klaus: I wanna put in a new order quick. I just found all the things I ask for under the spare room bed.—*Sonny*

Dear Santa: Don't forget the batteries this time.—*Mickey*

Santa: My folks ar getting the toys, you just bring the batteries.—*Matt*

\*\*\*\*\*

For Christmas I got one of those high-tech cameras that talks to you. I hate it. Every time I take a picture, it laughs

My wife's parents don't like me. On Christmas Day my wife said, "Who wants to carve the turkey?" And my father-in-law said, "You carve him, you married him."

## Slow Work, But Needful

Hispanics are plentiful in the Little Rock area. Starting a Baptist church for them is another matter.

Robert Rodriguez has been working for four months now on just that—starting a new work to reach the estimated 12,000 to 15,000 Hispanics living in and around Little Rock.

But the challenge here is very different from any he has ever faced before. The 25-year veteran home missionary came to Little Rock from the Rio Grande Valley, where he was principal of Valley Baptist Academy in Harlingen, Texas.

In the valley, there was no doubt about the need for a language missions outreach to Hispanics, Rodriguez says. But Little Rock is a different matter. For all their numbers, central Arkansas' Hispanic population is very difficult to locate.

"There is no barrio in Little Rock, no concentration of Hispanics," Rodriguez observes. "The most I have ever found on one street was two or three families, and I found them by accident. Hispanics here are scattered out across the city and integrated into the society."

But Little Rock's Hispanics are not only dispersed; they also are diverse. They come from all over Latin America, and that means their cultural heritages vary widely. About the only thing they all have in

common is their language.

"That's the one thing we have going for us, the language," Rodriguez says. "Many of these people are lonely and isolated. Their families are a long way off. They want fellowship with people who speak the language, and they'll come to a church service where Spanish is spoken, even though they're not Christians. They just want to be with someone who speaks the language."

Rodriguez originally had hoped to start home Bible studies, but found them difficult to launch, so he has shifted his focus to a weekly worship service. His small group meets every Sunday morning in the educational building of Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, the mission effort's sponsor.

And Rodriguez works hard at discovering prospects. One of the most helpful tools he has found are the cards he distributes to members at Geyer Springs, asking them to identify their Hispanic acquaintances. The 70 or so cards he has collected from them have in turn led to other contacts. So he is investing a lot of time in "networking," making contacts and getting to know people.

It's slow work, to be sure, but the need is there, and the potential is great. And Robert Rodriguez is a patient man.

## Committees Elected

The Executive Board of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention met for its annual organizational meeting Dec. 8 at the Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock.

Executive Board members elected the following committees on the recommendation of their nominating committee.

Operating Committee, John Matthews, chairman. (1988) George O'Neil, Dist. 1; Jerry Kirkpatrick, Dist. 2; Bill Hargis, Dist. 8. (1989) Betty Moore, Dist. 7; Gary Fulton, Dist. 3; Shelby Bittle, Dist. 6. (1990) John Matthews, Dist. 4; James Gattis, Dist. 5.

Program Committee, Mark Coppenger, chairman. (1988) Charles Atkinson, Ronnie Bracken, Russell Burbank, Horace Gray, Billy Hammonds, Peggy Jeffries, Carl Kluck, Captain Lovell, Ferrell Morgan, Ron Raines, Bill Riddle, Paul Seal, Joe Thompson, Noble Wiles. (1989) Mark Brooks, Mark Coppenger, A. Hilton Lane, Curtis Mathis, Eddie McCord, William Piercy, Ken Price, Tim Reddin, Beth Reynolds, Dorothy Ritter, Tom Smith, Sonny Simpson, Delbert Stone, Dale Thompson. (1990) Eugene Anderson, Jerry Cooper, James R. Debusk, Dennis Dodson, Don Hubbard, Greg Kirksey, Lee Lawson, Jerry Muse, Glen Power, Troy

Prince, Eugene Ray, Lynn Robertson, Brad Sheffield, Kyle Sumpter, James Weedman, Billy White.

Finance Committee, Emil Williams, chairman. (1988) Sid Carswell, Rick Erwin, Nelson Eubank, Randel Everett, Melvadeen Friday, Bill Gunter, Alice King, Joe Bill Meador, Ray Meador, Bryan Moery, Ray Tafar, Emil Williams, Jerry Wilson. (1989) Ledell Bailey, Marquita Butcher, Joel Faircloth, Alfred Gallant, Klois Hargis, Billy Kimbrough, David McLemore, Keith Robbins, Ed Simpson, Al Sparkman, Allen Thrasher, Barbara Tommey, John Wikman, C.S. Williams. (1990) Sardis Bever, John Edwards, Jim Files, James Gardner, Bill Hilburn, Ted Houston, Harrison Johns, Jack Kwok, Ken Lilly, Roy McLeod, David Moore, Bratton Rhoades, Billie Sharp, Pauline Tucker, Bobby Walker, Dan Webb, J.D. Webb.

Nominating Committee, Jerry Wilson, chairman. (1988) Ray Meador, Jerry Wilson. (1989) Eddie McCord, David McLemore. (1990) Billy White.

Christian Life Council, Randel Everett, chairman. (1988) Randel Everett, Peggy Jeffries, Sid Carswell. (1989) Ed Simpson, Al Sparkman. (1990) J.D. Webb, Eugene Ray.

## 'Moderates' Meet At DFW Airport

DALLAS (BP)—More than 40 "moderate" leaders from a dozen states met at Dallas-Fort Worth Airport Nov. 30 - Dec. 1 to review events in the Southern Baptist Convention over the past several weeks and to look "for ways to retrieve our national convention from the hands of the fundamentalists and return it to the mainstream Baptist people."

Norman Cavender, layman from Claxton, Ga., distributed a prepared statement and answered questions from the media following the two-day meeting, which was closed to the public.

Contrary to what others might think, Cavender said, the meeting was not to discuss plans to elect a president at the SBC annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, next June, although the presidential election was mentioned briefly and is "the bottom line," in the struggle. He added Arizona pastor Richard Jackson is a likely nominee.

The Dallas-Fort Worth meeting was called by Winfred Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, to discuss "the wrongs being inflicted upon the SBC, including the wrongs of dishonesty, secrecy and private agendas aimed at giving one faction total control of our convention and its agencies, boards and institutions," the statement said.

The statement said items discussed included the results of the recent state conventions, "which demonstrated that mainstream Baptist people back home have rejected political fundamentalism."

## Editors Express Enthusiasm

NASHVILLE (BP)—The first meeting of consulting editors for a new multi-volume Bible commentary to be published by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board was marked by cooperation and eagerness to move the project forward.

Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas, called the group "harmonious and creative."

"I've always been enthusiastic about the project," Patterson said. "If our editors' group does its work properly, this commentary will have a profound influence and impact on the denomination for years to come."

Discussion in the two-day meeting Nov. 23-24 was wide-ranging. The group looked at format, potential writers, publication dates and audiences who might benefit or be interested in using such a commentary. One of the format suggestions from the

consulting editors was that the commentary have about 40 volumes, to allow adequate space for writers and to be able to include the biblical text. The consulting editors also recommended the volumes be 5-1/2 by 8-inch hardback books that can be as long as 400 pages, depending on the space needed to deal with a particular book or books of the Bible. Broadman officials approved these recommendations.

Another meeting of the consulting editors is scheduled Jan. 22-23 in Dallas.

## Funding Study Begins

NASHVILLE (BP)—A seven-member subcommittee of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee began a study of convention funding of public affairs during a two-day meeting in early December.

The subcommittee, according to Chairman Scott Humphrey of Alexandria, Va., has a "very narrow assignment: To study the details of the funding of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Southern Baptist Convention Public Affairs Committee."

Since the September meeting of the SBC Executive Committee, when the study to clarify the funding dilemma was ordered, the PAC met again. In October, the PAC voted 8-4 to recommend that the SBC "dissolve its institutional and financial ties" with the BJCPA and requested \$485,200 "to fund and staff" the PAC "as an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention... beginning Oct. 1, 1988..."

Humphrey said the study subcommittee's responsibility is "to clarify the funding process in light of the action taken by the convention." During its early December meeting, the study group concentrated on the action of the annual meeting rather than focusing on the subsequent events.

Humphrey said a key point in the report of the fact-finding subcommittee — which was adopted at the 1987 annual meeting — is the wording of a paragraph in which the Executive Committee recommended "that the Southern Baptist Convention continue to relate to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs through the Public Affairs Committee... and that this relationship be in keeping with the bylaws of the Southern Baptist Convention and the program statement of the PAC as adopted by the SBC."

The Virginia layman said the key words being studied by the funding subcommittee are "continue" to relate to the BJCPA, but "through" the PAC.

Also a member of the committee is Thomas A. Hinson, pastor of First Baptist Church, West Memphis, Ark.

## Jobs Exchange

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Notices of employment sought or available will be posted for three consecutive weeks without charge for members of Arkansas Baptist churches. Church staff positions will not be included. Send name, address, telephone number, and statement of qualifications, experience, and type of employment sought or available to "Jobs Exchange," Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. Placement of a notice in the Jobs Exchange does not constitute an endorsement by the ABN.



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FEWEST BAPTISMS IN NINE YEARS

## Decline Predicted

by Joe Westbury  
SBC Home Mission Board

HONOLULU (BP)—Southern Baptist baptisms for 1987 could plummet to their lowest level in nearly a decade if projections by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board are on target.

The year-end forecast, announced during the annual conference for Southern Baptist state evangelism directors, predicts baptisms will drop 5 percent, to 344,000 conversions to faith in Christ. That figure is the lowest since 336,000 baptisms were registered in 1978.

The projections were based on information supplied by the directors and will result in a net loss of 19,000 baptisms from the 363,124 reported in 1986, said Clay Price, HMB program research director.

That was the year Southern Baptists conducted national simultaneous revivals and reversed baptisms from a four-year decline. Conversions for 1986 were up 4 percent, or nearly 13,000, from the 351,071 reported the previous year.

The data is a more optimistic projection than that expected to be released by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, which bases its report on partial analysis of actual reports from local churches, Price said. Based on information from the denomination's 37,000 churches, the Sunday School Board is predicting the drop to be as high as 6 percent.

If projections are on target, 1987 will be

the denomination's second lowest year for baptisms since 1950. That was the year Southern Baptists broke the 350,000 barrier by reporting 376,000 baptisms, Price noted.

Baptisms consistently remained above 350,000 for the next 26 years, until 1977 when the denomination reported a decline to 345,000 conversions. The 1980s have been a generally declining decade for baptisms, he said.

"When looking at baptisms by age-groups, one of the most promising challenges for Southern Baptists will be

adults in the 30-to-59 age group. They now account for 20 percent of all baptisms, but will gain 14 million members between 1980 and 1990," Price said.

"Half of all Southern Baptist baptisms tend to occur for persons between the ages of 12 to 29—a portion of our population now in decline. That's not to say that's the reason for this year's drop, but it should be a warning to a denomination that has a tendency to baptize its children," he noted.

Reaction was varied to the projection, but most directors credited the 1986 Good News America simultaneous revivals as the greatest reason last year's baptisms had reversed the denomination's four-year decline.

## Just Another Shipwreck?

HONOLULU (BP)—Southern Baptists badly need soul-winning pastors and churches, the president of the SBC Home Mission Board said after a report that SBC baptisms for 1987 will drop 5 percent, to their lowest level in nearly a decade.

"There is no greater need in the Southern Baptist Convention than for soul-winning pastors," Larry Lewis said. "We need to pray that God will raise up a group of witnessing pastors, deacons and laity. But it has to start with the pastor. . . it has to start with the leaders. Everything rises and falls on leadership, those individuals who will be models and will equip their

laity to be soul-winners."

"We will not get excited about church starting until we realize that the way we incarnate Jesus in our day is by establishing Bible-teaching, soul-winning churches. My goal is not 50,000 churches. We don't need more churches doing nothing," he added. "When we see churches becoming the body of Jesus—ministering, witnessing, sharing—just as if he were there, then America will be brought to God."

"Will we be another shipwreck in the history of denominations that forgot their mission, discarded their priorities, caught up in all kinds of speculative concerns?"

## Evangelism Officers

HONOLULU (BP)—Don Ledbetter, evangelism director for the Nevada Baptist Convention, was elected president of the Southern Baptist Fellowship of State Evangelism Directors during the groups' annual meeting in Honolulu.

Other officers are Jack Parrott, director of evangelism for New York Baptists, vice president, and Dan Agee, evangelism director for Virginia Baptists, secretary-treasurer.

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# Avoiding the Issue

## *The U.S. Supreme Court Sidesteps a Decision on New Jersey's 'Moment of Silence'*

by Stan Hastey

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (BP)—Sidestepping a decision concerning the merits of its most celebrated church-state case of the current term, the U.S. Supreme Court instead has ruled that former leaders of the New Jersey legislature had no legal right to appeal lower-court rulings that struck down the state's "moment of silence" law.

That law, enacted in 1982 over the veto of New Jersey Gov. Thomas H. Kean, required a one-minute period of silence "for quiet and private contemplation or introspection" in the state's public school classrooms at the beginning of each school day. More than 20 states have similar statutes on the books.

Following enactment of the New Jersey law, the state attorney general announced he would not defend it should it be challenged in court. When several students, their parents and a teacher filed suit challenging the law's constitutionality on church-state grounds within a month of its passage, Alan J. Karcher, speaker of the General Assembly, and Carmen A. Orechio, president of the state Senate, intervened as defendants in their official

capacities.

Both a federal district court and the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia struck down the law for violating the First Amendment ban on an official establishment of religion. The district panel held the law failed all three parts of a Supreme Court test requiring that such statutes have a secular purpose, have the primary effect of neither advancing nor inhibiting religion and not result in excessive entanglement between church and state.

The 3rd Circuit, on a 2-1 vote, upheld the portion of the lower decision striking down the law for failing to have a secular purpose.

Karcher and Orechio, who appealed the decision of the district court to the 3rd Circuit, meanwhile lost their posts as leaders of the New Jersey legislature.

When they next appealed the 3rd Circuit's decision to the Supreme Court, the justices agreed to consider whether they still were entitled under federal court rules to press the case.

By deciding unanimously the pair had no legal standing to appeal, the high court let stand the lower rulings. The court's decision was handed down Dec. 1.

Writing for the other seven members, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor held that because Karcher and Orechio no longer hold their leadership posts, "they lack authority to pursue this appeal on behalf of the legislature."

She stated further: "Karcher and Orechio intervened in this lawsuit in their official capacities as presiding officers on behalf of the New Jersey legislature. They do not appeal the judgment in those capacities. Indeed, they could not, for they no longer hold those offices. The authority to pursue the lawsuit on behalf of the legislature belongs to those who succeeded (them) in office."

O'Connor and the other justices said nothing about the constitutional issues in the case.

Two years ago, in a case from Alabama, the high court struck down a law requiring a moment of silence to be used specifically for meditation or prayer.

The question of whether more neutrally-worded laws like New Jersey's violate the First Amendment must await another day in court.

## Doctrine Study Conference

NASHVILLE—A national conference on the Doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believers, the 1988 Southern Baptist doctrine study theme, is set for Feb. 22-24 in Birmingham, Ala.

Walter Shurden, author of the 1988 doctrine study book and chairman of the department of Christianity at Mercer University, Macon, Ga., will teach the book during the three-day seminar at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church.

No registration fee will be required. For more information and a list of motels, contact the Church Training Department, Sunday School Board, 127 Ninth Ave., North, Nashville, TN 37234.

## Small Church Sunday School

NEW ORLEANS—A "Sunday School in the Small Church" class will be offered at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Jan. 12-22.

The purpose of the class will be to teach ministers in small churches how to use Sunday School to help their churches grow numerically, financially, and evangelistically.

For more information, contact the Office of the Registrar, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 3939 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70126.



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## Convention Uniform

### *The Joy of Discovery*

by Bill Bowen, First Church, Mena

Basic passage: Matthew 2:1-12

Focal passage: Matthew 2:3,7-12

Central truth: Joy comes to those who discover Jesus as the Savior.

Matthew presents a sharp contrast between the attitudes of Herod and the Wise Men. Found in their attitudes is a portrait of how men picture Jesus at this Christmas season.

The Herod mentioned by Matthew is Herod the Great who was known for his cruelty and jealousy. Herod had killed his mother and sons because of a fear that they would steal his throne. He would do anything to protect his throne.

When the Wise Men asked for the one who had been born the King of the Jews (Mt. 2:2), Herod's jealous mind thought there was a king being born who would take over the throne he had zealously guarded.

In contrast to Herod's attitude, the Wise Men discovered the Savior announced by God. Our information about the Wise Men is shrouded in time. However, it is believed they were men who came from Persia. They are referred to as magi. Magi were well-studied men who had become knowledgeable in science and math. It is believed that these magi studied in the field of astronomy.

It is believed their information about the mysterious star came from Daniel. While he was in captivity Daniel shared the prophetic information about the Messiah. It was passed down through generations to these magi. When they saw the star, they recognized it as the celestial appearance predicted by the prophets.

Because of their seeking to discover the truth, God guided them with the star to the place where Jesus was. It is thought by some that the star was a special one-time occurrence God prepared to announce the birth of Jesus.

Verses 10-12 contrast the joy of discovering Jesus as the announced Savior to the sorrow of rejecting him. Verse 10 tells us that the magi were filled with joy and worshipped Jesus. However, verse 12 tells us that Herod did not receive the news of the Messiah. God had warned the magi to withhold the news of Jesus' birth from him. Thus, Herod missed the joy of discovering the greatest Christmas gift God has ever given man—Jesus.

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## Life and Work

### *Pattern For Humility*

by Curtis L. Mathis, First Church, Harrison

Basic passage: Luke 2:7-11; Philippians 2:5-11

Focal passage: Philippians 2:5-11

Central truth: In Jesus Christ, the believer discovers the perfect and supreme example of being of one mind as a humble servant.

Every great doctrine in the Bible is also a call to duty. Whatever we believe about the person and work of Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord should have a practical expression in our life style. Paul uses one of the greatest passages on Christology in the Bible (Ph. 2:5-11) to illustrate how practically the Christmas message (Lk. 2:10-11) should be demonstrated in the life of God's children.

To the unbelieving world, the Bible presents Jesus as the Savior of men (1 P. 2:24) not as an example to be followed. Yet for the believer, he becomes our model. In Philippians 2:5-11, Jesus is presented as the epitome of humility which should be the characteristic of all who have committed their life to him.

In a three-fold condescension, we discover this beautiful lesson in humility. In Philippians 2:6, he willingly veiled the inner essence of his divine glory, which he always and will always possess. He laid aside the glory of his eternal presence with the Father and took upon himself the form of a "bondslave" (Ph. 2:7).

The Son of God became a real man without losing one vestige of his deity (Jn. 1:14). In Philippians 2:8, the apex of humility is stated in that the God-Man obeyed the Father's will (Jn. 4:34) and the author of life was obedient unto death, even the death of a cruel Roman cross. This was the ultimate act of love garmented in the robe of humility (1 Jn. 4:9,10).

Christ's self humbling was followed by his exaltation (Ph. 2:9-11). Therefore, those who will not give honor to Christ are completely out of harmony with God. Those who do not confess him as Lord and Savior now, resulting in eternal life, will have to do so in a future day, but it will be too late for personal salvation.

Jesus came into the world to do his Father's will (Jn. 6:38). How can we refuse to follow his example of servanthood? He was willing to humble himself even unto death.

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## Bible Book

### *The Incarnation*

by Don Miller, First Church, Trumans

Basic passage: Matthew 1-2

Focal passage: Matthew 1:18-2:2,9-11

Central truth: God involves ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary events.

Most of us have grown up hearing the story of Jesus' birth from earliest childhood. Because of this, there is danger that we will fail to pause and be struck with awe at this event. Immanuel—God with us. How is it possible that he who created and for whose pleasure all things are and were created (Re. 4:11) entered into creation as a tiny infant? He who is infinitely greater and vaster than all creation became a part of his creation. Our minds cannot begin to understand nor sort out the paradoxes this miracle involves. By faith we believe and accept this account, for it transcends our reasoning ability.

This babe of Bethlehem is the same one "which is, and which was, and which is to come" (Re. 1:8). The conception and birth of Jesus marks the initiation of his incarnation, not the beginning of his existence. He is the eternal Lord.

Brief mention must be given to Mary and Joseph, the two mortal beings to whom God entrusted his Son. Mary, very likely a teen, must have demonstrated a quality of life and an availability that endeared her to God's heart. Joseph, with his apparent quick and unquestioning obedience and faith, is also a worthy subject of emulation. One longs for a fuller account of these into whose hands God entrusted so much.

Chapter 2 tells us of the magi who came from afar to worship and present precious gifts to the child "born king of the Jews." They too give us a wonderful example of how to approach our Lord. They came at his beckoning—the star. They came humbly; they fell down before him. They came reverently with love; they worshipped him. They came surrendering, bearing gifts.

During this season, take time to reflect on this well-known story. Pause and consider its wonder. Marvel at its meaning. Really take the time to look upon the Lord. Gaze upon this babe and realize who he is and what his incarnation means. Those in this passage responded with availability, obedience, trust, humility, love, worship, and surrender. How will you respond to the Lord?

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AT EASE IN ZION

# Bombay's Lessons

by Marty Croll

SBC Foreign Mission Board

TOPEKA, Kan. (BP)—A year and a half later, Jan Davies is still discovering what she learned on a week-long volunteer missions trip she and her husband took to India.

At first, she didn't want to go. It gave her chest pains just to think about the trip. But when she prayed, a small voice in her mind said, "Janice, there is something there I want to teach you that you can't learn here."

For 10 days the Southern Baptist volunteer stared into dirty and destitute faces in Bombay. "It turned my whole life around," says Mrs. Davies, a soft-spoken mother of two who grew up on a farm in the settlement of Soldier, Kan. "The things I thought were important seem so unimportant now. The things I didn't see as important, they became extremely important."

She describes her experience much like other Southern Baptist volunteers who have participated in short-term partnership mission projects with Baptists overseas and have come home with a new perspective that ultimately had an impact on everything around them.

"I've always been the type of person that has never really wanted a lot of company in my home," she says. "It's like, 'My things are my things, and I don't want to share them.'"

But the children in Bombay made an impact on Mrs. Davies, a schoolteacher. Back home she responded by taking in 11 foster children in a nine-month period through an emergency-care program. Many of the children were abused and neglected. She and her husband also have housed three foreign exchange students since the India trip.

Mrs. Davies suddenly saw hell-bound people all around Topeka. Many were relatives. She began telling them the truth about spiritual things. "If I don't tell them, the blood is on my hands when they die," she says. "I am going to have to confront God with that, you know."

"It's such an honor and a privilege now. It's not a chore. And it's not an option anymore."

Thinking back, she knows she learned the value of salvation as she was forced to

consider just what she could do for the masses of people around her in India. "When you see such poverty as we saw, your first instinct is to give the people something, a material thing," she says. But instead, it occurred to her she was giving them her most precious possession simply by telling them about Jesus. "They required no more," she says.

"The thing God brought across to me the most was his love for those people — people who were dirty and had nothing, who lived in little hovels and had rats running



The Davies at home in Topeka.

all over... and had open sewers. God saw such worth in them. He died for them, and he impressed on me I could love them because of how much they meant to him."

Life had been comfortable for Mrs. Davies before her husband, Dave, got excited about foreign missions. She had grown up reading the Bible and considered herself knowledgeable about religion. She thought her Bible knowledge made up for other ways she felt inferior to her husband, who became a Christian at 19.

But in 1984 he flew to Brazil on a volunteer mission trip and left her at home. Davies didn't like strange food and just the thought of flying made him extremely uncomfortable. He had never led anyone to faith in Jesus, and he'd never preached. Bound for Brazil, the plane climbed, but his spirits dropped as he considered his inadequacies. Then, after two weeks of doing all the things he was scared to do, he came home changed.

He was stunned as he compared the living conditions in Brazil to the house he had moved his family into five months earlier. He told his wife they would sell their home

and move into something smaller if they were unable to find a way to use it for God's purpose.

The next year he went on another mission trip, to Zambia in southern Africa. During that trip Mrs. Davies found someone to care for her two young children for a time and gave herself to extensive Bible reading and soul-searching prayer. She was beginning to feel something was missing in her life.

She saw things in the book of Jeremiah that started her thinking about her unfaithfulness to God. She also began to see things about her marriage. At first she had thought her husband's new missions zeal was "just another tangent." But she began

to understand that her attachment to "houses, clothes, new what-nots—things, just things" was blocking her understanding of God's plan for them.

"My quiet time was the pits," she said. "I didn't know how to pray. It was five minutes of read this thing and, 'Oh, dear God, forgive me,' then let's go."

But at one point, as she sat cross-legged in the middle of her living room floor, she saw a mental picture of herself as a starving little girl wearing tattered clothes with knotted and matted hair. "God said to me, 'Janice, this is how you are spiritually. You're starving. You're fat materially, but you're starving spiritually.'"

Her mind scanned the things around her. She saw nice furniture, a nice home. "He showed me how I was a (spiritual) adulteress, how I ran after all kinds of things but not him." She repented, and a new sensation emerged. "I felt like a locust, you know, when they come out of the shell and they fly away, and they're free. They're free, but they leave this old locust shell behind. That's exactly how I felt."

At his shop, Davies once talked with customers about the weather. Now he shows them a photograph of his trip to Zambia and tells about God. On one occasion Mrs. Davies led an employee into the back office, where the woman prayed to receive Christ.

This fall she started teaching at Lafayette School, in an area Topekan know as neglected and hardened. She has taught nine years but never to children from such a background. She was afraid when she took the job. But many times as she has been driving and thinking about Lafayette, a voice from within has said, "Jan, this is your Bombay."

(BP) photo / Stanley Leary



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## WORLD

# Latin Budgets Double

by Eric Miller  
SBC Foreign Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Church budgets in parts of Latin America are doubling, thanks to a stewardship campaign that uses some Southern Baptist money and manpower.

The campaign, known as Total Stewardship Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, is designed to lead Latin American Baptists toward an aggressive program of evangelism and missions.

Southern Baptists "can look forward to increased effort, manpower and teamwork with Latin America in winning the world to Christ," said Southern Baptist missionary Ben Bedford, treasurer of the campaign's coordinating committee.

A major goal of the campaign is to get Christians committed to giving time, money and talents to spread the gospel, Bedford explained. It also could lead to greater self-support among Latin American churches.

Campaign coordinators want Baptists to pray "specifically for this campaign at noon each day," Bedford said.

Already a Baptist church in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, has doubled its budget for 1988. Joao Falcao, pastor of the church and vice president of the coordinating committee, has written literature for the campaign, including a book, *The Theology of Christian Stewardship*.

The five-year campaign began in 1985 with the preparation of literature for training leaders, said Jose Missena of Paraguay, committee president. Missena is the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's Latin American consultant for evangelism and church growth.

Workshops have been conducted during 1987 to train leaders. Each new leader is being challenged to train 10 others in 1988, "sort of in the principle of MasterLife," Bedford said. As many as 7,000 leaders will be trained in Latin America in 1988.

During the five-day workshops, individuals are taught financial planning so tithing will not be cumbersome. This applies to family budget planning, which extends into the church, local Baptist association and national convention.

Another new focus in Latin American churches is on stewardship training for children, to get them started early in tithing.

A second book used for training is *The Challenge of Stewardship and Missions*, by Aldo Broda, an Argentine who is general coordinator for the Latin American campaign. Other literature includes tracts and a series of five Sunday school lessons, with variations for young and older adults,

adolescents and children.

Written in Spanish and Portuguese by Latin Americans, the material is being translated into English and French. Southern Baptists funded the printing of materials. They also are helping provide initial workshop training.

The result of the emphasis on stewardship so far has been a 100 percent budget increase in some churches in Argentina, Barbados and Brazil, said Missena, who travels throughout Latin America. He reported Baptists in those countries and others got so excited about applying their new stewardship training that they did not wait for 1989, the application year.

Despite the doubling of some church budgets, Bedford noted several were only half the size they needed.

"Some churches haven't been able to pay their pastors," he said. "They need literature. They need buildings. They need to increase their cooperative program and they need to undergird their institutions. Our stewardship development has not kept pace in many cases with our evangelistic development."

## Missionaries Will Stay

by Marty Croll  
SBC Foreign Mission Board

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)—Nine Christian missionaries have been allowed to stay in Kenya despite previous deportation orders, and newspapers there have published nothing more about an alleged coup plot said to involve the missionaries.

The alleged plot was said to link missionaries of various denominations with a white supremacy group related to the Ku Klux Klan and dedicated to overthrowing several African governments.

The seven deportations Nov. 13 were triggered by a memo the Kenyan government claimed to have recovered and used to avert an overthrow. Kenyan newspaper reports about the memo set off a hunt for their "evil foreigners" claiming to do God's work. Nine more missionaries subsequently were ordered to leave.

About a week after the story surfaced, the country's largest English-language newspaper, the *Daily Nation*, reported the last nine missionaries told to leave would instead be allowed to stay, said James Hampton, a Southern Baptist missionary administrator in Nairobi. The newspaper stated it had wrongly implicated a North Carolina church and its pastor by accepting the memo's authenticity.

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