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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

12-10-1987

December 10, 1987

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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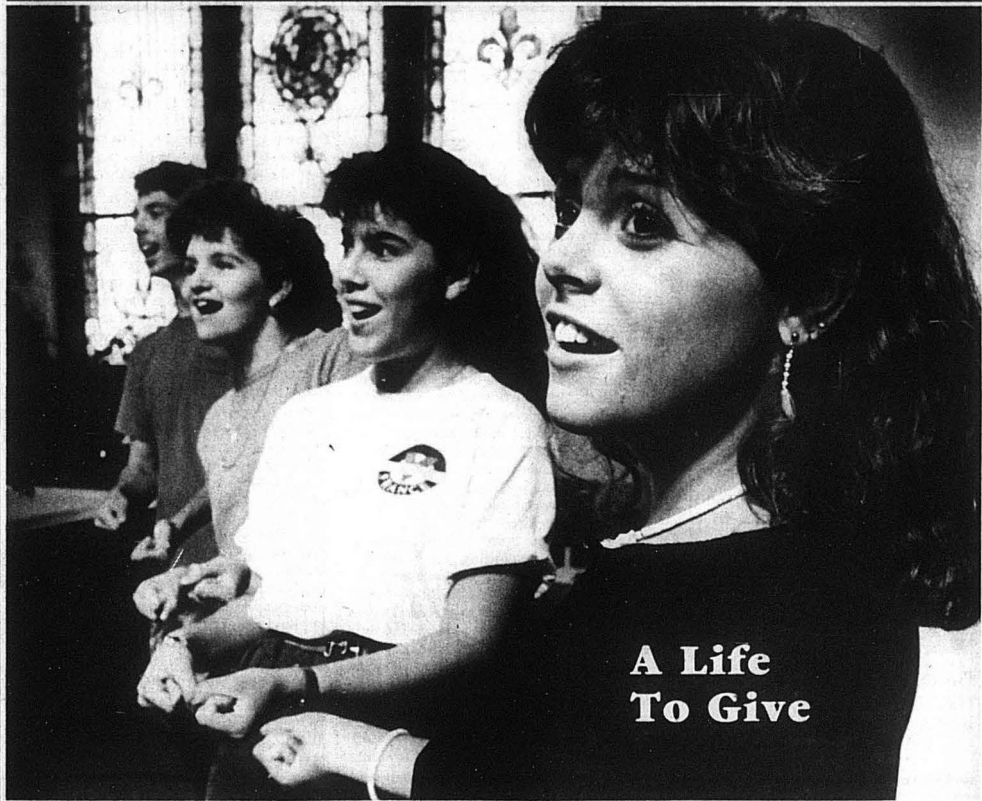
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'Alternative' Discussed

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Nashville, Tennessee

Arkansas Baptist

December 10, 1987



**A Life
To Give**

In This Issue

Cover Story



BSSB photo / Jim Veneman

'A Life To Give' 5

Collegiate enthusiasm and energy are tremendous resources for a church. Recognize your students on Student Day at Christmas, Dec. 27.

Editor's Page 3

Speak Up

You'll Be Glad To Know 4

Letters to the Editor 4

Today's Issues 5

Southern Accent 6

Food & Fellowship 6

Faith At Work

At Decision Time 7

Local & State

Arkansas All Over 8-9

'Coming of Age' 10

Week of Prayer Launch 10

Security and Dignity 11

'Think Tank' 11

Nation

Rogers Seeks Names 12

'One-of-a-Kind' 12

Alternative Discussed 13

Maston's Son Dies 13

Warren Named Editor 13

Lessons For Living 14

World

Focus On Prayer 15

Haiti Violence 16

Radio K'ekchi' 16

IT'S UPLIFTING

Trivocational!

FLINT, Mich. (BP)—Being bivocational was not enough for Richard Sample; he also took on a third job — and more.

Sample had been a Michigan pastor and schoolteacher for more than a decade when he helped establish the Center for Christian Studies in Flint in 1979. In his role as dean of the center, he has been responsible for scheduling, and in some cases teaching, a number of seminary extension courses each year. Last year students enrolled in eight courses, two of them taught by Sample. Pastors of 14 of 30 churches in the association have studied at the center.

Sample concedes being trivocational requires discipline: "I have to plan my time very well, but you really can do a lot of

things when you plan. I do not feel that I have neglected my family or my personal needs, even with all I have been involved with."

During the eight years Sample has been working with the center, he also has been moderator of the association for two years, completed a five-year term as a member of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and become a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board-approved chaplain with the U.S. Air Force auxiliary.

He also has worked with the Flint rescue mission and juvenile center. During five of those years, his wife, Dorothy, was national president of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

"I guess you could call me 'multivocational,'" Sample said. "There are an awful lot of jobs to be done in this area."

GOOD NEWS!

One Heresy for Another

Revelation 2:12-17

Satan's throne was in the city of Pergamos. It vied for recognition in Asia Minor with Ephesus and Smyrna. Pergamos was not as beautiful as Smyrna but it, too, had gained prominence as a center for emperor-worship. As early as 29 B.C. a temple was dedicated at Pergamum to the Emperor Augustus and Rome by the provincial synod.

The church had felt the weight of the oppressive hand of the emperor cult. Antipas, a faithful member, had been slain for his faith (v. 13). Standing firm in the face of death was commended, but good works do not offset doctrinal heresy. The Christians at Pergamos were willing to die for their faith, yet they were guilty of teaching the doctrine of Balaam. In Numbers 23-24, the teachings of Balaam seem to indicate a willingness to make material gain at the cost of spiritual loss. Human nature has changed little in the intervening years.

The church at Ephesus had been successful in withstanding the outward pressures of a group called Nicolaitans. The church at Pergamos had not done so well. The disintegration from the effects of this inward heresy of the congregation was spiritually destructive. The entire congregation was held responsible for the acts, though without a doubt all did not yield to the sins. Tolerance has a way of bringing identification with sin.

Christ always urges repentance for sinful acts and gives forgiveness if the sinner

will turn to him. The church must purge itself of these heretics.

Christ will not tolerate the continuance in sin by his church. To those who repent, he makes a twofold promise. The first part is more easily interpreted because of the familiar reference to the manna. This "hidden" sustenance is a spiritual food which the world does not know. Whether you choose the reference of the manna to mean the food provided during the wilderness wanderings or the manna placed in the ark as a memorial really changes the meaning little. The manna was always from God and was intended to sustain his children and make them able to survive their ordeal.

The second promise was a white stone with "a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (v. 17). Many interpretations as to the true meaning of this stone have been offered. The true interpretation remains a matter of conjecture.

Summers makes a preacher's application when he lists G. Campbell Morgan's four possible meanings: (1) a sign of freedom from crime, (2) or slavery, (3) or as a sign of victory for the winner of a race, (4) or a returning warrior. A simpler meaning may lie on the surface of the text: In Revelation, white symbolizes purity and, to the ones possessing the stone, the Holy Spirit bears witness that they are the children of God. Certainly it was a sacred promise to those receiving it and one intended to increase their efforts of loyalty to Christ.

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The Pastor's Role

J. EVERETT SNEED

A frequent complaint is, "My pastor never visits me. I just don't know what he does anyway." Upon inquiring about the health of the family, one learns that all are well and every member of the family is a Christian. Rather than complaining, the person should be happy that no event has transpired to require the presence of the pastor. Experience has shown that pastors are willing to visit families in times of crisis. Most pastors are eager to be of assistance when they are truly needed.

The statement, however, raises a larger question. Just what are the responsibilities of a pastor? Is he the church visitor? Or does he have a larger and more important spiritual responsibility?

The responsibility and activities of a pastor are determined by a number of factors. The most obvious of these are the number of members and the size of the church's paid staff. But every pastor has certain types of demands on his time. Among these are the preparation of sermons, visiting the lost, lending comfort to the truly ill, offering encouragement to those who have lost loved ones, and providing counsel for those who have serious problems. All of this takes time and may leave little opportunity for social calls.

The Bible sheds much light on the responsibility and activities of a pastor. Early in the life of the first church at Jerusalem, an argument arose over the care of the widows. Those of Greek origin maintained that the Jewish widows were receiving more than their share of the substance. The apostles said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables" (Acts 6:2b). The principle is clear: spiritual matters are to be first in the life of a pastor. Additional insight into the major responsibilities of a pastor can be found in the words which are used to identify the office in the New Testament. The pastor is referred to as "elder," which originally meant, "one who is older." Later it came to mean "one who is worthy of respect." The second term that is used to identify a minister of the gospel is "bishop," which means "overseer." He is to watch over the church and to give spiritual direction to the congregation. Finally, he is called "pastor," which means "shepherd." He is to minister to the weak and the helpless of the congregation.

Detailed qualifications for the minister



of the gospel are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and in Titus 1:6-9. These passages indicate that a pastor is to be of upright character and exemplary in reputation, possess qualities of leadership, and have the ability to teach.

In these passages, there is no indication that a pastor is to be a merry-maker or a church visitor. In Titus 1:8 Paul says that he is to be "a lover of hospitality." The Greek word used here literally means "a lover of strangers." In the ancient world, as today, people were on the move. Often it was difficult for a Christian to find a suitable place to stay. Ancient inns were notoriously expensive, dirty, and immoral. It was essential for the wayfaring Christian to find an open door in the Christian community. The pastor's home was to provide this assistance.

Most pastors carry a heavy load. They do not have time to make social calls upon the membership, as much as they might like to do so. Remember, every pastor needs to reserve some time to be alone with his own family.

Much of the heavy load can be removed from the pastor through the Deacon Family Ministry Plan. We believe that the New Testament indicates that deacons should be a part of the pastoral ministry or spiritual team. They should work under the direction of the pastor to assist the congregation in accomplishing its' spiritual objectives. In the Deacon Family Ministry Plan, deacons can make regular visits to the families which are assigned to them. These visits should be designed to assist individuals to know that the church cares for them and wants to assist them to grow spiritually.

Additionally, Sunday School teachers and class officers should assist in the church's visitation program. A simple phone call on Saturday evening will remind Sunday School members that the church cares for them and wants them to be present on the Lord's Day to study God's Word.

The Deacon Family Ministry Plan, Sunday School class visitation, and phone calls can assist in discovering when members have real needs. When real needs, either spiritual or physical, do exist, these should be called to the pastor or church staff's attention. Such approaches will enhance the effectiveness of the church and assist the pastor greatly.

Our pastors need our prayers and support. Above all, we should avoid making artificial or unnecessary demands on their time. When everyone accepts responsibility in the church, all the real needs of the congregation will be met.

Arkansas Baptist NEWSMAGAZINE

VOLUME 86

NUMBER 47

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DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know

Congratulations should be shared with five pastors and their churches. They were honored at a breakfast at the recent meeting of the state convention.



The church whose gifts to the Cooperative Program resulted in the highest per capita giving for its members was East Side Church, Fort Smith. Their Cooperative Program contributions amounted to \$92.62 per member (total membership). Dr. Trueman Moore is pastor.

The church giving the largest amount to the Cooperative Program was Immanuel Church, Little Rock. Dr. Brian Harbour is pastor.

For churches with under 300 members, the Richland Church gave the highest percent of their undesignated receipts to the Cooperative Program. They gave 30.35 percent of their receipts to the Cooperative Program. Rev. Tom Williams is pastor.

For churches with 300-1,000 members, First Church, Des Arc, gave the highest percent of their undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program. They gave 29.27 percent. Rev. Vern Wickliffe is pastor.

For churches with more than 1,000 members, First Church, Crossett, received recognition for the highest percent given. They have given 31.21 percent through the Cooperative Program. Rev. Al Sparkman is the pastor.

One half of all of our churches give less than 8 percent through the Cooperative Program. If it were not for churches like these who have a vision and commitment to world missions, many of our ministries could not be sustained. They are an inspiring example to all of us.

How did they come to this strong position? Three factors likely enabled it. They have had pastors with conviction about world missions. They have had good WMU leadership that encouraged them. They increased their amounts reasonably but regularly.

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

Did you know . . .

Muslim women, in their prison-like seclusion in many lands, are virtually inaccessible to a gospel witness.

How Long?

How long shall it be until our missionaries are able to witness to black people and have their pictures appear on our state papers here in America as they do in the foreign mission magazines?

For example, how sweet it was to notice in the *Arkansas Baptist*, Nov. 12, 1987, edition, one of our white missionaries witnessing to a black child "across the seas." Tell me, why can't we have pictures like this, here in America?

This reminds me how it was when I surrendered to the ministry in one of our southern states and wanted to preach for the "colored" in their churches and on the streets in our cities. I was told by one of the leading officials of the church that my ministry was to the whites only!

How long shall it be until we are free to speak to all races, here at home, as others can do across the seas?—Ottis E. Denney, Norton, Ohio.

Don't Condemn Baker, Commend Him

My care and concern for Arkansas Baptists calls me to voice my opinion. Arkansas Baptists have nurtured me through formative childhood and youth years, cared for me through the ministries of the Baptist Student Union at Arkansas Tech University, and supported and prayed for me as a missionary journeyman in Japan and as a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Although God called me to serve a church in Maryland, I am still concerned for Baptists in my home state, and I try to stay informed by conversations with my parents and through the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*.

Michael A. Gray's letter (ABN, Oct. 22, 1987) of commendation to Christian Life Commissioner Joe Atchison for his efforts to remove N. Larry Baker from his post at the Christian Life Commission should be an embarrassment to Arkansas Baptists. Arkansas Baptists should be ashamed that such an effort came from a representative of our great state.

One has only to open one's eyes and read the papers to see that Dr. Baker has moved the CLC to the "cutting edge" of Christianity in America. Since his appointment in March, Dr. Baker has visited with Baptists across the country to listen to their concerns. He has been "responsive."

Dr. Baker has guided the CLC to take strong stands against abortion, pornography, gambling, and racism. The conference on abortion in September, a

meeting with President Reagan on Nov. 10 to introduce legislation against pornography, testifying before Congress against the interstate advertising of gambling, and his 12-point plan for the CLC are all actions indicative of his responsiveness to the biblical views of Southern Baptists. If there is a commendation to be made, it should go to Dr. Baker for the fine work he has done.

Southern Baptists should be proud that a man with "intestinal fortitude" like Dr. Baker is leading the Christian Life Commission. Arkansas Baptists should be ashamed one of its own led the attempt to oust him. Now is the time to write Mr. Atchison and express your concern for his actions and support for Dr. Baker.—G. Allan Aunsbaugh, Huntington, Md.

Abortion Resolution Was 'Dark Spot'

As a new pastor in Arkansas, this year's state convention was my first. Let me take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in planning for a very meaningful time.

There was, however, one dark spot that continues to concern me. That was the vote on Resolution #12 on Abortion. The vote allowed the possibility of exceptions to our stand on abortion. This seemed inconsistent to the statement that we believe in the sanctity of human life.

The Bible teaches us to forgive and even to love our enemies (see Mt. 5:44; 6:15 and parallel passages). However, we are saying that it's acceptable to hate one who has raped you. And, since you do not want to be reminded of him, you can eliminate the problem, the problem being a totally innocent life.

The only way that real healing will take place is if forgiveness is found. Many will respond with the words, "But you never have been raped." They are right, but I also have never been on a cross, yet I have no trouble believing that Christ forgives. I also have no problem believing that he will help us forgive those who do us wrong, for he is sufficient to meet all our needs.

If we are going to teach love and forgiveness then let us not allow murder as an acceptable alternative!—Ron Bradley, Quitman, Ark.

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

'A Life To Give'

by **George Sims**
ABSC Student Department

Many churches will welcome college and university students home for the holidays with a celebration of Student Day at Christmas.

This annual event, suggested for Sunday, Dec. 27, 1987, gives churches opportunity to hear from students who have involuntarily themselves in the challenging and fast-paced collegiate life.

This year's theme, "A Life to Give," will allow students to share decisions they may be considering as they respond to newly found knowledge and a broadened vision of God's world. Students might share about their experiences of outreach to the campus through their involvement in Baptist Student Union.

Consider the following suggestions as you prepare for your church's celebration of Student Day at Christmas:

—Contact your church's students before the end of the semester and invite their participation.

—Prepare a calendar of special events your church will sponsor for them during the holidays.

—Plan special activities through the Sun-

day School and Church Training programs.

—Bring families of students together for a mutual time of sharing and fellowship.

—Make students aware of your continuing concern for their lives while they pursue their education.

—Order special bulletin covers for use on Sunday, Dec. 27, from Materials Services Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Our college and university students are a tremendous resource for outreach to the world. Part of each church's stewardship would include its influence on these young lives.

For more information on how your congregation can minister to the needs of college students, contact your nearest BSU director. For additional information and suggested worship formats for Student Day at Christmas, contact the Student Department, Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 376-4791.

Give your students this opportunity to share themselves with their church. Ask your church members to commit themselves to prayerful support of college and university students as they seek God's plan for their lives.

Classifieds

For Sale—1978 All American Blue Bird Bus, 3208 Catapillar Engine, 40 passenger, reclining seats, air conditioning, one owner, 161,000 miles, good condition, new radial tires. Price \$22,500. First Baptist Church, Little Rock. Call 227-0010. 12/10

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 85 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 unsuitable subject matter. Classified ads will be inserted on a space-available basis. No endorsement by the ABN is implied.

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Today's Issues

Encourage .05

BOB PARKER

For one to be legally intoxicated in Arkansas, his blood alcohol content must be at least .10 percent. There must be a blood-alcohol proportion of at least one drop of alcohol for every one thousand drops of blood in his body at the time of being tested.

In some states and countries, a person is declared legally drunk with half that blood-alcohol content, or .05 percent. Studies have shown that .025 percent, or one drop of alcohol per four thousand drops of blood, is sufficient to slow a driver's reaction time.

Would one be less sad if a loved one or friend were killed by a driver whose



blood alcohol content was only .025 percent instead of .10 percent or .20 percent? Of course not!

Our state should join others in lowering the blood alcohol content requirement to .05 percent. Which is worse? Sending money to scrupulous TV evangelists or paying exorbitant accident and health insurance premiums simply because pushers of

alcoholic beverages are permitted to promote their products as being much less dangerous than they are?

The Word of God encourages faithful and responsible stewardship. This of course would include human lives and property. Please let your elected local, state, and national officials know of your feelings as to what would be the more reasonable blood alcohol content for legal intoxication. Strongly encourage .05 percent as the minimum blood alcohol content to be declared legally drunk in Arkansas.

Bob Parker is director of the ABSC Christian Life Council.



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RODNEY REEVES

Southern Accent



With All Your Mind

Jesus was a genius. He loved God the Father not only with all his heart, all of his soul, but also with all his mind. Jesus was compassionate, sacrificial, and intellectual. His brilliance shines brighter in no other place than when he confounded the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes (Mt. 22). While the Pharisees tried to trap him and the Sadducees wanted to embarrass him, the scribes put him to the test. This confrontation recorded by Matthew pitted legal expert against self-made theologian.

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" (Mt. 22:37). When Matthew heard the lawyer's question, he immediately recognized that the scribe was "testing him" (v. 35). Yet, at first glance, this seems to be such an easy question. How could such a simple inquiry lead to entrapment? Any first-century Jewish boy could recognize this pedagogism. And, at first glance, Jesus appears to give the appropriate catechetical response: Shema. But this was a test on a higher level.

Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 13:3b. Earlier, the Pharisees had been pushing Jesus for a sign (Mt. 16:1). "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder. . ." (Dt. 13:1). Here the scribes were testing him to see if God were testing them. "You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you. . ." (Dt. 13:3a). Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul," and then he added (because they were lacking) "with all your mind" (Mt. 22:37). Religious lawyers were ignorant men.

Today, God would not have ignorant children. Love him with all your mind.

Rodney Reeves is assistant professor of religion at Southern Baptist College.



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Food & Fellowship

Counting the Birds

VIRGINIA KIRK & JANE PURTLE



"For only a penny you can buy two sparrows, yet not one sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's consent" (Mt. 20:29).

Each of us have different ways of appreciating and loving God's creation. Some of us love dogs or cats or horses. Some cultivate yards and gardens. Others collect rocks, shells, or dried flowers. Many of us watch birds in the field or feed them around our homes.

Every year, the National Audubon Society sponsors a Christmas bird count. Interested people, especially those who have trained themselves in identification of birds, fan out across the country in organized groups. On a Saturday, armed with binoculars, scopes, and field guides, these groups canvass every part of the United States, counting the number of birds and identifying the many species. It is a yearly census of our avian neighbors.

Jesus said that not a sparrow falls to the earth but our Heavenly Father knows of that event. God's knowledge and love of all his creatures are greater and broader than ours, yet we share with him a deep and abiding concern for all creation. Ecological study has pointed up the wisdom of God's concern for all aspects of the world. Every part of creation is important to every other part.

In the winter, many people, urban and rural, feed birds. When the weather is snowy, cold, and icy, the birds need our help. Bird seed and water are the daily necessities of life for them. A bird bath will bring you and the birds many hours of enjoyment. The favorite seed of many birds is sunflower seed. I buy it in a 50-pound bag at a feed store.

At your winter bird feeder, you will see old friends like cardinals, jays, chickadees, and titmice, as well as winter residents such as goldfinches, purple finches, juncos, evening grosbeaks, and various sparrows. If you want to be an especially thoughtful host or hostess to your bird friends, prepare this special treat for them. If you have suet or fat cut off of meat, it also will be enjoyed by the birds.

Magic mix for birds

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 cup bacon grease | 1 cup cornmeal |
| or other leftover fat | dash of salt |
| 3 tablespoons peanut butter | 3-4 cups wild bird seed |
| (more or less as desired) | or sunflower seed |
| a dab of jelly or syrup | |

Cook all ingredients except seed until thickened. Add some water if needed. Allow to cool. Add seed and put in mesh bag or wire cage or spread some on a dead branch. On a cold day, the fat is especially welcome.

Virginia Kirk, professor emerita at Arkansas College, is a member of Batesville First Church. Jane Purtle teaches at Lon Morris College in Jacksonville, Texas. They have enjoyed cooking together for several years.

URGENT NEED

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CRISES?

Wanda Stephens, M.D.
Christian Psychiatrist
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At Decision Time

Confident Counselors Mean Better Commitments

by Terri Lackey
Baptist Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)—A sermon has ended, the invitation hymn begins, and people with varied types of special needs walk to the church altar in search of healing, help, and answers.

At the front of the church stands the pastor who spends a few seconds counseling each one. Due to the press of time, he directs those who have come to the altar to church members who fill out name-information cards and render a compassionate smile or pat on the back.

The next few minutes could mean spiritual life or death for those who have made religious decisions, said Leonard Sanderson, a Pineville, La., evangelist and author of a course to train church members to be spiritual counselors.

"Often people who come forward really don't know why except that they are hurting," said the author of "Decision-Time: Commitment Counseling," a 13-week Lay Institute for Equipping course prepared by the Church Training department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. "This is the reason we spend 13 weeks of study creating the best-trained counselors we have ever had in (Southern Baptist) history."

"Instead of spending two to three minutes with someone, a counselor can spend 20 to 30 minutes helping them understand their decision and then advising them to talk to the pastor."

Sanderson believes "that all of us need more help" learning counseling techniques. And taking this Lay Institute for Equipping course—which was available to churches in October—provides church members with simple biblical strategy for immediate decision counseling, he said.

Sanderson said he fears one reason churches are losing 50 percent of their members—30 percent, non-resident; 20 percent, inactive—is because many people do not understand the religious decisions they have made.

"It (loss of church members) says something is basically wrong with the whole decision-making experience," Sanderson said.

Churches could combat membership loss by training members to lead the person who has just walked down the aisle toward a better understanding of his or her commitment, he said. The result would be "growing, maturing Christians and more faithful church members."

The DecisionTime course does not stop at merely producing effective counselors, Sanderson said. It prepares witnesses for all areas of the Christian life, including

home and hospital visitation, camps, retreats and revivals.

"Christians who have completed the course no longer need to fear biblical questions," he said. "DecisionTime will take the average person who doesn't feel he has the gift of gab and turn him into a Christian who is comfortable sitting down and talking with people about Christianity."

"A person who has biblical training has a freedom—he is not scared of questions or afraid he won't know what to do. Just

ABN photo / Willie Gill



Trained counselors, better decisions

think about what this will mean to Sunday School and Church Training when church members have confidence in counseling."


Sanderson said making counselors out of church members could become a great relief to pastors: "The pastors have done a good job (of counseling), but it's impossible for one person to do it all. And this course fits so nicely into the emphasis on laity."

As an interim pastor, Roy Edgemon, director of the Church Training department, said many times he has needed the talents of trained counselors.

"This course will multiply a pastor's ministry manifold," Edgemon said. "It will assure him in knowing those people are being dealt with by trained counselors."

"This will allow the invitation to flow better," and, in turn, reduce the bottleneck effect that can occur when the pastor tries to deal with each person who comes forward, Edgemon said.

Meanwhile, Sanderson said, the understanding and support of pastors will be the key to the use of the DecisionTime course. "The pastor must study it" and find out what the real benefits are. Once pastors see the potential, they will get excited and lead their church to do it," he said.



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James H. Smith, president
Brotherhood Commission, SBC

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A SMILE OR TWO

At the age of 15, Ed Wynn decided to leave home and join a theater company. His father was appalled.

"A son of mine on the stage?" he yelled. "What if the neighbors find out?"

"I will change my name," the comic-to-be volunteered.

"Change your name?" the elder Wynn yelled. "What if you're a success? How will the neighbors know it's my son?"

LOCAL & STATE

Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

People

William P. Oakley began serving Dec. 1 as pastor of Gosnell Church at Blytheville, going there from Walnut Ridge, where he had served on the staff of Southern Baptist College as director of development and vice-president. Oakley and his wife, Patty, are parents of five adult children, Libby George of Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Dianna Clement of Fort Worth, Texas, Joe Oakley of Arlington, Texas, Paul Oakley of Minneapolis, Minn., and Michelle Wilkinson of Memphis, Tenn.

Bradley A. Rogge will begin serving Dec. 16 as pastor of Forest Tower Church at Hensley, going there from Brookwood Church in Little Rock. Rogge will graduate in May from Ouachita Baptist University with a degree in pastoral ministries. He and his wife, Marilyn, have two children, Stephanie, five, and Steven, three.

Lynn Marrow has acknowledged a call to an evangelistic music ministry. He may be reached at Gosnell Church in Blytheville, where he serves as minister of music.

Brian Harbour, pastor of Little Rock Immanuel Church, in November delivered the Staley Lectures at Mississippi College, was Bible study leader for the Mississippi Baptist Convention, and was keynote speaker



Oakley



Rogge

for the Fall Festival of Marriage at Tan-tara Resort.

Clarence Elbert Shell Sr. of Benton died Nov. 28 at age 81, following a lengthy illness. He was a member of Highland Heights Church in Benton. Survivors include his wife, Ethel Lovel Shell; two sons, Clarence Shell, director of evangelism for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and Stanley Lovel, both of Benton; two daughters, Martha Lovell of Benton, and Fay Braughton of Richmond, Va.; a sister; 10 grandchildren; and 21 great-grandchildren.

D. Jack and Martha Nicholas, and H.E. Williams, all of Walnut Ridge, have returned from a mission tour to South Africa. Nicholas, president of Southern Baptist College, preached at the Melinda Church in an area youth rally that resulted in one profession of faith with the baptismal ser-

vice in the Indian Ocean. Martha, librarian at Southern Baptist College, helped with the seminary library while at Brackenhurst International Baptist Conference Center in Nairobi. Williams, president emeritus of the college, and Nicholas were speakers at the annual meeting of the Kenya Baptist Convention.

Steve Plunkett began serving Dec. 6 as pastor of Sunset Lane Church in Little Rock, coming there from First Church, Branch. A graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Plunkett is married to the former Brenda Couch. They have two children, Christopher, and Jessica.

Leonard Williams is serving as pastor of Arbanna Church at Mountain View.

Briefly

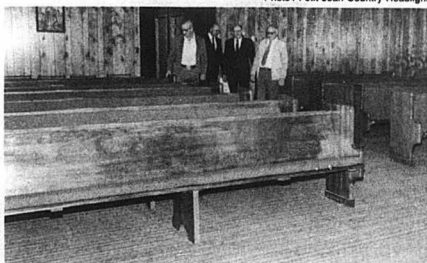
Ward Calvary Church observed its 10th anniversary of service Nov. 22 with activities which included a morning worship service, a noon meal, a musical program, and an afternoon worship service. Guest speakers included Mark Kelly, managing editor of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, Gene Davis, a former pastor, and Bob Hall. Others on program were Matt Buffalo, Homer Scruggs, Carolyn

ABSC photo / Floyd Tidsworth Jr.



Roberson Memorial Mission, Carlisle, dedicated its new building Oct. 25. Volunteers from the mission, from the sponsoring church, Carlisle Immanuel, and from Crystal Hill Church, Little Rock, and Baring Cross Church, North Little Rock, helped with construction. Former pastor Danny Loretz and Floyd Tidsworth Jr., ABSC director of church extension, spoke at the service. James Johnson is pastor.

Photo / Petit Jean Country Headlight



The Sweet Home Mission near Perryville dedicated a 28x60 foot building Nov. 15. The new facility houses three classrooms, two restrooms, and an auditorium. The mission is sponsored by Houston First Church in the Conway-Perry Association. Jack Ramsey, field consultant for the ABSC Missions Department, preached the dedication message. Ray Brownholtz is mission pastor. Refus Caldwell is director of missions.

Nicholson, and Bob Douglass. John Sammons is pastor.

McRae First Church celebrated its 75th anniversary Nov. 22 with special recognitions and a message by former pastor Charles Trammel.

Rolling Hills Church in Fayetteville launched its Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions observance Nov. 29 with Julia Ketter, executive director of Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union, as speaker. The service included a parade of flags, representing some of the countries served by Southern Baptist foreign missionaries.

Pleasant Grove Church near McCrory observed Edith Wright Day Nov. 29, in recognition of both her 87th birthday and more than 51 years of service to the church. J.T. Summers, a former pastor, was speaker.

Indianhead Lake Church at Sherwood led North Pulaski Association in the percentage of church members earning study course awards, according to Pastor Jack Kwok.

Eastern Heights Chapel in Van Buren, a mission of Van Buren First Church, recently dedicated a 10,000 square foot building. The service was led by Pastor William Powell. Guests included Floyd Tidsworth, Arkansas Baptist State Convention director of church extension, and Mike Taylor of Clear Creek Association.

Perryville First Church ordained Dusty Day to the preaching ministry Nov. 8. He serves as pastor of Stony Point Church.

Newark Church recently completed construction of three classrooms.

Ruddell Hill Church at Batesville men recently painted the exterior of the Cushman Church.

Floral Church is renovating its auditorium.

Caudle Avenue Church in Springdale has provided chairs for use in mobile home park ministries of Immanuel and Northeast Churches, Fayetteville.

Hebron Church in Little Rock recently sold its Barrow Road property and relocated to the property formerly occupied by Shady Grove Church, effective Dec. 6.

Bebe First Church has successfully completed a 13-week Together We Build program through which \$280,343 was subscribed by members either through cash gifts or three year commitments. The program was directed by Dwayne Fischer of Little Rock, an SBC Stewardship Commission consultant. Jim Wooten, a layman, was the program director. Ron Mayes is pastor.

Correction

A photograph on page eight of the Dec. 3 *Arkansas Baptist* should have identified Wallace Edgar as pastor of Trinity Church, Texarkana.

Headed to Brazil

Six Arkansans are among 145 students and campus ministers involved in a USA-Brazil global missions project in January 1988.

Representing Arkansas will be John Angel of Yellville, University of Central Arkansas; Martha Conway of Jonesboro, Arkansas State University; John Self of Little Rock, Southern Baptist College; Janae Shatley of Paragould, Arkansas State University; Lisa Welch of Sheridan, University of Arkansas; and Thomas Wright of Blytheville, Arkansas State University.

The students will leave for Brazil Dec. 29 after a two-day orientation session in Miami, Fla. They will return Jan. 13.

During the project, 30 teams composed of five Southern Baptist students and five Brazilian students will work together at sites

throughout Brazil. They will conduct Backyard Bible Clubs, Vacation Bible Schools, revivals, and People Searches, in addition to personal evangelism efforts.

The project is a pilot for future involvement of students in volunteer foreign missions. It is designed to expose Southern Baptist students to foreign mission work and help Brazilian Baptists see what can be done through student work and volunteer student mission projects.

Clinic Opened

The Bartholomew Baptist Migrant Mission Center at Hermitage now is providing dental services as part of its ministry.

The clinic, which operates with equipment donated by Dr. Stacey Toole of Warren, treated its first patients Sept. 27. Dr. Mark Pickett and his wife Cindy, members of Camden First Church, saw eight patients.

The clinic will be open on Sunday afternoons. Dentists interested in volunteering their services may contact Ariel Hernandez, center director, at 463-8480 or 226-2298.

Christmas Dinner

Christmas dinner and an opportunity to call home free of charge is in the works for anyone who has no other plans for Christmas Day.

U.S. Associates, a Little Rock investment banking firm, is sponsoring the holiday dinner, which will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Christmas Day in their offices on the 10th floor of the Lafayette Hotel Building, Sixth and Louisiana Streets in Little Rock.

Churches and groups are asked to call with estimates of the number of guests they might bring. For more information, contact Rick Lewis or Jerry Cook at 372-2663.

Rover Church Seeks History

Rover Church is seeking information concerning the history of their congregation for a 1988 centennial celebration. All of the church's historical records have been lost or vandalized. If you have any information, contact John Silvey, pastor, Rover Baptist Church, Rover AR 72860.



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SENIOR ADULTS

'Coming of Age'

Aging has come of age.

That was the message Horace Kerr of the Baptist Sunday School Board brought to senior adults and their leaders during an unusual week of area senior adult rallies Nov. 9-13.

The rallies, held one each day in Springdale, Mountain Home, Jonesboro, North Little Rock, and Hot Springs, were the largest senior adult project ever attempted in Arkansas, according to Bob Holley, ABSC Church Training director.

The meetings drew 1,055 participants from 121 Arkansas Baptist churches for a full day of fellowship, worship, entertainment, inspiration, and information. Kerr led a special two-hour training conference for senior adult leaders which involved 147 persons.

The rallies were unusual in that steering committees in each area played important roles in planning the events, Holley said. Each steering committee was responsible for local publicity, arrangements, and some program planning. Music, testimonies, and special features were provided by local personalities.

Kerr told participants that the aging population of the United States is causing significant adaptations in the country's youth-oriented culture. He noted that the economic and social challenges presented by an aging populace will continue to bring about greater demands for changes to accommodate the needs of older persons.

Communities, governments, and churches have made notable responses in recent years to the needs of older persons, Kerr added. The advent of senior citizen centers, nutrition and counseling programs, in addition to programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, evidence this responsiveness, he said.

Southern Baptists have responded to older adults by providing a magazine—*Mature Living*—directed toward their needs, offering conferences and training resources, sponsoring Senior Adult Chautauqs at Glorieta and Ridgecrest, and developing lesson material appropriate to senior adult needs and interests.

Holley said he would like churches to see senior adults not only as challenging opportunities for ministry but also as "a

resource of time, energy, and gifts to be tapped."

The challenge before churches today is to "provide a caring fellowship that reaches out to senior adults and helps provide them the abundant life that Jesus said he came to bring them," Kerr said.

Churches interested in beginning senior adult ministries should start by electing a task force to study local needs and interests, Holley said. The resource for launching a senior adult ministry is entitled, *How To Minister To Senior Adults In Your Church*.

Launching A Week of Prayer

ABN photo / Millie Gill



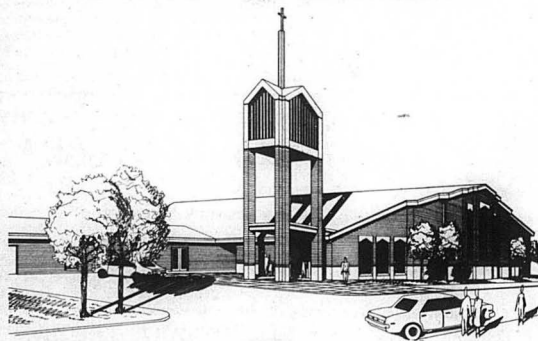
Immanuel Church, Little Rock, launched its Foreign Mission Week of Prayer observance Nov. 29-30 when Marjorie McCullough, president of the SBC Woman's Missionary Union, spoke at the Sunday evening worship service and at two Baptist Women's meetings Monday.

Little Rock churches participating in the Monday meetings included Calvary, Rosedale, West Side, and First. North Little Rock churches included Park Hill and Central. Other Baptist Women were from Indian Springs Church, Bryant, and First Church, Sheridan.

McCullough (above, second from right), who also spoke at Crystal Hill Church in Little Rock at the Nov. 29 morning worship service, called for a commitment to intercessory prayer for missions, sharing answered prayers in her service as a missionary in Nigeria, Ghana, and Brazil.

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Security and Dignity

First Church, Warren, Sets Milestone; 10,000th to Adopt Expanded Annuity Plan

by Thomas E. Miller Jr.
SBC Annuity Board

First Church, Warren, has been recognized as the 10,000th church to adopt the expanded Church Annuity Plan for its pastor and staff.

The expanded Church Annuity Plan will become operational Jan. 1, 1988. It marks the culmination of seven years of planning and promotion that began with a national Church Pension Study Committee in 1981.

Reached in Warren on Nov. 23, Pastor W. Everett Martin expressed delight with his congregation's milestone. "The church adopted the expanded plan enthusiastically and without opposition."

The Warren church, which has about 1,100 members, will have no difficulty funding its share of staff retirement contributions. On Nov. 22, the church oversubscribed its 1988 budget by almost \$11,000. Strong in missions support, the congregation will give 17 percent of its \$315,000 budget through the Cooperative Program and another 5 percent to the Bartholomew Association. The church's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal for 1987 is \$13,200.

Retirement funding is part of the church's responsibility," said John Lipton, chairman of the church's budget and finance committee. "Our ministers are as much in need as anyone else, and a retirement program is a basic essential for every person. I can't understand how any church could fail to provide a retirement plan."

"Of course, I'm business oriented," said Lipton, an oil distributor and developer in Warren, "and a church is not strictly a business, but it ought to be operated within good, sound business principles. There's not any way to do it but the Lord's way, and that's the right way, and that includes taking care of the staff."

The Warren congregation could have found excuses for not increasing its budget.

The unemployment rate in the area is among the highest in the state.

"All isn't rosy," said Lipton, who has served nine terms in the Arkansas General Assembly and is a former chairman of the Legislative Audit Committee, "but our people met the challenge and, for the first time in memory, oversubscribed our budget."

James A. Walker, annuity representative in Arkansas, met with the First Church staff in 1986 to interpret the expanded Church Annuity Plan. Information was supplied to the budget and finance committee, which recommended adoption by the church. After the church approved the plan, the Cooperative Agreement was sent to the state convention office, which certified the eligibility of First Church staff members and sent the documentation to the Annuity Board headquarters in Dallas.

Because the church signed the Cooperative Agreement, each ministerial staff member is eligible to receive a state convention-funded protection package and up to \$17.50 each month in state convention contributions to the member's retirement income account. The protection includes a survivor life insurance benefit of up to \$45,000 and a limited disability supplement.

Walker commented, "The expanded plan is helping us get a lot of new members in the retirement plan. October was Arkansas' biggest month in history for new applications."

In Dallas, the Annuity Board's member services director confirmed Walker's statement. Said Richard Farr, "We are recording the largest growth in new-member accounts in many years."

Annuity Board marketing personnel had been carefully monitoring computer data for the historic number, which was recorded at mid-morning on Nov. 20. Gene P. Daniel, senior vice-president and director of marketing, noted that the completed

process for the Arkansas church meant an early attainment of the Annuity Board's major marketing goal for 1987.

"We had hoped to reach 10,000 adoptions by year end," said Daniel. "Now we are working for 12,000."

Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan said, "We expect the holiday season and the first three months of next year to be the most intensive work time in the history of the Annuity Board. We are experiencing a deluge of paper work, and it is beautiful, because it means old-age security and dignity for thousands and thousands of Southern Baptist church staff members."

'Think Tank'

Four Arkansas pastors recently participated in a "think tank" on evangelism sponsored by the personal evangelism department of the SBC Home Mission Board. The 70 churches represented in the event led the Southern Baptist Convention in baptisms last year, averaging 180 baptisms each.

The pastors—who brainstormed ways to help Southern Baptist churches duplicate their success—were Wallace Edgar, pastor of Texarkana Trinity Church; Ron Herrod, Fort Smith First Church; Ronnie Mays, Beebe First Church; and Paul Sanders, Geyer Springs First Church, Little Rock.

Southern Baptist churches baptized an average of 7.69 converts each during 1986.

Cass Chaplain Now Full-Time

Ron Clark, part-time chaplain at the Cass Job Corps Center, assumed full-time responsibilities Dec. 1, thanks to a salary supplement provided by the churches of Clear Creek Association.

The churches rallied together to provide \$700 a month to supplement the income jointly provided by the SBC Home Mission Board and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. The additional income relieved Clark of the necessity to pursue his other employment as a salesman.

In a letter sent to Clear Creek churches in September, Director of Missions George Domerese called the Jobs Corps chaplaincy "direct missions at our door" and noted the outstanding evangelistic results Clark has experienced at Cass. In September, the *Arkansas Baptist* reported Clark had witnessed more than 150 professions of faith during his first year at the center.

One congregation in another association also is helping with the salary supplement, according to Domerese. The Cass position is the first full-time Job Corps chaplaincy in the nation.

MK Birthday Prayer Calendar: December

Missionary Kids Attending College in Arkansas

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|--|
| 19 | Joel Matheny (Ecuador) | University of Arkansas, Box 2531
Fayetteville, AR 72701 |
| 27 | David Hardister (Jordan) | OBU, Box 3870
Arkadelphia, AR 71923 |
| 29 | Molly Mitchell (Tanzania) | OBU, Box 3251
Arkadelphia, AR 71923 |

Rogers Seeks Names

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)—Adrian Rogers, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, is seeking recommendations of people to be nominated for key SBC committees.

In an open letter to Southern Baptists, Rogers wrote, "The important task of choosing the nominees for the 1988 Committee on Committees, Resolutions Committee, Credentials Committee and Tellers Committee is under way."

As convention president, Rogers will appoint the key committees that will serve during the 1988 annual meeting, June 13-15, in San Antonio. He appoints the Committee on Committees and Resolutions Committee "in conference" with the two vice presidents, the Credentials Committee "in consultation" with the vice presidents and the Tellers Committee "in consultation" with the SBC registration secretary.

The Committee on Committees names the Committee on Nominations, and any other committee not otherwise provided for; the Resolutions Committee processes and reports all resolutions submitted at the annual meeting; the Credentials Commit-

tee oversees registration; and the Tellers Committee is responsible for the tabulation of votes taken at the convention.

Rogers added in his open letter: "I am committed to choosing the very best Southern Baptists for these positions. This will be accomplished most effectively with your prayerful support and personal recommendations under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

"We welcome recommendations from every corner of Southern Baptist work."

Rogers told Baptist Press: "I do not want to appoint anybody with an axe to grind. I want the people we appoint to be good representative Southern Baptists.

"I hope to appoint people who are firm in the faith and whose spirit and attitude is reflective of the spirit and the letter of the Peace Committee's report."

The president asked that all recommendations be sent to him personally at Bellevue Baptist Church, P.O. Box 40837, Memphis, TN 38174-0837. The envelope should be marked "SBC Committee Nominations."

Rogers asked that all nominations be sent to him on or before Feb. 1, 1988. Under the

SBC Constitution, the president must announce his appointments at least 45 days before the annual meeting.

Rogers asked that specific information be provided along with the recommendations. If the following information is not included, he said, a lot of staff time is required to obtain the information.

Recommendations should include the full name of the nominee, including correct spelling, the mailing address, including ZIP code, and the home and business telephone numbers, including area code.

The recommendations also should include whether the nominee is a pastor or a layperson. If the person is other than a pastor, but is involved in church/denominational work, the title and place of employment should be included. For laypeople, the business or occupation and place of employment should be included.

In addition, the recommendations should include the nominee's church affiliation, the church mailing address, total church membership, amount the church gave to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget during the 1987-88 associational year, and the percentage of the church budget the Cooperative Program gifts represented.

The nominations should include the number of baptisms in the church in the 1987-88 associational year, whether the nominee plans to attend the SBC in San Antonio and the state convention in which the nominee lives.

People submitting information should include their own name, title, mailing address and home and business phone numbers.

'One-of-a-Kind'

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)—An endowed fund to help combat world hunger has been established by the Missouri Baptist Christian Life Commission in cooperation with the Missouri Baptist Foundation.

The project, to be known as "The Joy Fund," is believed to be the first of its kind in the Southern Baptist Convention. It has been endowed initially with \$2,200. Ninety percent of the income will be channeled through Southern Baptist world hunger funds to provide hunger relief in the United States and around the world. The remaining 10 percent will be returned to the fund to ensure its continued growth.

Robert Parham, Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission associate director with responsibility for hunger concerns, noted: "I know of no other situation similar to this in Southern Baptist life. It sounds like a model program which promises to provide hunger funds for years to come."

The endowed fund was proposed by William Hartley, a member of First Baptist Church in Lake St. Louis. An avid supporter of world hunger relief, Hartley has

written skits and spoken in numerous churches about world hunger needs.

Hartley emphasized if each Missouri Baptist gave just one dime a day to world hunger relief, the total would be more than \$20 million annually. "There isn't any Southern Baptist who would let anybody die for a dime," he insisted. "It's just too good to be true."

When listeners suggested Hartley establish a foundation for world hunger to which people could contribute, he contacted Bart Tichenor, the Missouri Baptist Convention's moral concerns consultant. They began working with members of the Christian Life Commission and Missouri Baptist Foundation to bring the dream to reality.

Tichenor emphasized the new fund "will in no way take the place of or compete with world hunger offerings" but will serve to supplement them.

Noting hunger relief giving often is linked to the amount of national media attention given to hunger needs, Parham added, "When you create a trust like this, it maintains a steady flow of income which is not affected by the ebb and flow of public attention."

Jobs Exchange

Employment needed—Mature material/production control manager needs employment in the Searcy or Little Rock area. 14 years experience. Business management degree. Wife and three children. Sammy Rutherford, 268-4267 or 268-5845. 12/10

Position sought—Mature family man with experience in people management seeks position. Degree, varied work experience. Honest and dependable. P.O. Box 5495, North Little Rock, AR 72119. 12/10

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 News-magazine, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. Placement of a notice in the Jobs Exchange does not constitute an endorsement by the ABN.

'Alternative' Discussed

by Kathleen McClain
Religion Editor, Charlotte Observer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)—Reacting to recent turmoil at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, the "moderate" Southern Baptist Alliance has voted to study the feasibility of starting a new Baptist seminary in the Southeast.

A task force will study the possibility of using professors now at Southeastern as the core faculty for the new seminary or divinity school, said Alliance President Henry Crouch.

The new institution would be based on the Alliance's founding principles, including inclusiveness for women and minorities and cooperation with other Christian faiths, according to the Alliance's executive committee vote, Crouch reported.

"This could expand theological education for Baptists beyond anything we've ever done before," he said. "I think the money and leadership are there."

Crouch said he already had spoken with Thomas Hearn, president of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C., about creating a divinity school on that campus. He also reported discussions with officials at Mercer University in Macon, Ga.; Stetson University in DeLand, Fla.; and the University of Richmond in Virginia.

The vacant campus of Tift College in Forsyth, Ga., was mentioned as a temporary home for a "seminary in exile" should faculty and students agree to move from Southeastern to a new location.

The Alliance task force is headed by Mahan Siler, pastor of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C. The task force is to study the possibilities, with a report scheduled for the Jan. 11 meeting of the Alliance board.

The action followed weeks of conversation about establishing an alternative to Southeastern, which came under control of "conservative" trustees in October.

The Alliance executive committee voted to pay up to \$5,000 in legal fees and other expenses for Southeastern's faculty chapter of the American Association of University Professors. The chapter was organized this fall around the issue of academic freedom.

The Southern Baptist Convention provides about two-thirds of Southeastern's operating budget, making it possible for the seminary to give its students free tuition. Baptist students pay a matriculation fee of \$350 per semester. Other funds come from endowment.

Deciding how to raise money for tuition and programs at a new seminary is one of the priorities facing the Alliance task force. Executive committee members estimated the cost per student at \$10,000 to \$15,000, and projected an enrollment of 200 to 300 students.

Southeastern has about 1,000 students and a \$46 million operating budget, with 33 faculty and about 100 support personnel.

The Alliance executive committee also accepted the resignation of First Vice President Susan Lockwood Wright, pastor of Cornell Baptist Church in Chicago. A search committee for a full-time executive director was named, to report in January.

The executive committee authorized the publication of a book on the seven principles enunciated in the Alliance's covenant, to be edited by Alan Neely of Southeastern Seminary.

It allocated \$1,000 to the Southern Baptist Women in Ministry organization to help with expenses, and the Alliance is studying the possibility of funding a part-time editor for *Folio*, the Women in Ministry publication. The editor also would be a liaison between Women in Ministry and the Alliance. The executive committee voted to investigate the need for an endorsing agency for chaplains in the event Southern Baptist women are excluded and creedal statements imposed on candidates. Currently, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board endorses chaplains on behalf of the convention.

Tentative plans for the Alliance's convocation March 21-23 at Mercer University in Macon, Ga., were presented under the theme, "Mission with Integrity."

T.B. Maston's Son Dies in Fort Worth

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Thomas McDonald Maston, son of T.B. and Essie Maston, died Nov. 10 in Fort Worth of cancer at age 61.

T.B. Maston, professor emeritus of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, is best known as a pioneer in Christian ethics and race relations.

"Tom Mc" was born with cerebral palsy. He required assistance in every function. The Mastons dressed him, fed him, cleaned him, put him to bed and got him out of bed every day of his life. Although Tom Mc could not talk, he was able to communicate through two simple symbols meaning yes and no.

Essie Maston has devoted her life to caring for Tom Mc. T.B. Maston has often said his wife had the ability to succeed in almost any profession she chose. She deliberately gave up a teaching career to care for her invalid son.

Tom Mc is survived by his parents and a younger brother, Eugene, who lives in New York.

Warren Named 'Home Life' Editor

NASHVILLE (BP)—Charlie Warren, associate editor of the *Baptist and Reflector*, newsjournal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, has been named editor of *Home Life* magazine.

Warren, 40, will assume his new duties in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's family ministry department Jan. 1, 1988.

Warren has been associate editor of the *Baptist and Reflector* for eight years. He previously was associate editor of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's World Mission Journal.

He also was senior editor of press relations for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and he has been a staff writer in the public relations department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

He was a missionary journeyman in Africa for two years and was assigned as publication coordinator for the Baptist Publishing House in Lusaka, Zambia.

Warren is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee. He holds a master of religious education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Home Life has been published by the Sunday School Board for 40 years and has a monthly circulation of more than 725,000.

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Convention Uniform

Discovering Obedience

by Bill Bowen, First Church, Mena

Basic passage: Matthew 1:17-25

Focal passage: Matthew 1:18-25

Central truth: We must obey God even when we do not understand the circumstances.

Matthew opens his Gospel by focusing on the lineage of Joseph. As the announcement of the birth of Jesus comes, Matthew focuses on the response of Joseph to the announcement. Contained in Joseph's response is a lesson of obedience for us.

Verses 18 tells us that Joseph and Mary were betrothed to each other. In order to understand the magnitude of the obedience of Joseph, we must understand the meaning of the betrothal. Many relate the betrothal period to our modern engagement period. However, it was much different than our modern equivalent.

The betrothal was a binding legal contract drawn up between two families stating that their children would be married. If, during the 12 month betrothal period, a person violated the marriage vow, then the couple would have to go through a legal divorce, even though there had been no physical relationships between the couple. The betrothal period was a time to prove the fidelity of the couple.

When Mary announced to Joseph that she was with child by the Holy Spirit, Joseph was shocked. According to the law of Deuteronomy 22, if a woman was found with child during the betrothal period, she was to be put to death.

Joseph was a righteous man. However, he knew of no way to protect the reputation of Mary. No one had ever heard of a virgin conception. No one would believe them. Putting her away secretly would mean that Joseph would write a private bill of divorce. With several witnesses present, Joseph would write a letter saying they were divorced. There would be no reason listed. No one would ever know the reason.

Because Joseph was a righteous man, he was obedient to God. God spoke through the angel and commanded him to take Mary as his wife. Even though he did not understand all the reasons, Joseph obeyed.

The result of Joseph's obedience was the birth of the Savior. Without Joseph's obedience, the story of Christmas would be totally different. We also are called to be obedient to God in our lives.

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

Life and Work

Fellowship of Contentment

by Curtis L. Mathis, First Church, Harrison

Basic passage: Philippians 3:20-21; 4:4-9,12-13

Focal passage: Philippians 4:4-7,13

Central truth: The Christian's secret of triumphant contentment is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian's true citizenship is in heaven (Ph. 3:20). Only when God's people accept this reality will they be able to experience joy and peace in a world that is not a friend to God's grace. We must not settle down in this present world, forgetting our heavenly calling. Like Abraham we "look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (He. 11:10).

True joy is produced in the believer by the Lord through the Holy Spirit's ministry (Ga. 5:22). Faith in a sovereign God enables the Christian to be at peace even when life tumbles in (Ph. 4:7).

Is it a sin to worry? Jesus taught it to be so (Mt. 6:25-34). To be anxious is to be self-centered, thinking that God needs our assistance to manage the affairs of life. The child of God will be active in carrying out God's will, but he will not be anxious. Through the varied ministries of prayer, the Christian acknowledges his complete dependence upon God and his responsibility to live a life of joy and peace, knowing that God eternally cares for him (1 P. 5:7; Ph. 4:7).

Regardless of life's circumstances, the Christian should be content without complaining (Ph. 3:12). He is a bondservant of Jesus Christ, not life's circumstances.

The Apostle Paul faced the possibility of defeat with his thorn in the flesh. We are left in the dark about what that thorn was, therefore, all of us can identify with Paul. God's message of assurance for Paul is ours also, for we all have our thorns. In faith, we discover that God's grace is sufficient (2 Co. 12:9).

How does the believer experience triumphant contentment? He is faced with a spiritual warfare on three battle fronts; the world, the flesh, and the devil. He does it the same way Paul faced his many difficult circumstances. The answer is for all who are trusting in the sufficiency of God's marvelous and available grace, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Ph. 4:13).

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Bible Book

The Testing Of Faith

by Don Miller, First Church, Trumann

Basic passage: Genesis 22

Focal passage: Genesis 22:1-3, 9-13,15-18

Central truth: When something is genuine, it will stand testing. One's faith is no exception to this principle.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (Ja. 1:13). How can one harmonize this verse in James and today's Scripture focus where "God did tempt Abraham?"

A key to understanding the passage in James is his use of the word "evil." James is making the point that God does not tempt us for evil. Genesis is saying that God does test one to establish the genuineness of and to develop faith and character. God's testing is always for the purpose of strengthening. Satan's temptation is always destructive. Faith and character grow and are proven as they are placed in conditions which "test" them. Key differences between temptation and testing are the attitude of the initiator and the response of the recipient.

This story is a testimony of Abraham's faith not only during this event, but also of his faithfulness in his home relationship. Isaac was a young teen at this time. Abraham was 100 years older than Isaac. Isaac must have been cooperating with Abraham as he was bound and placed upon the altar. Where had Isaac learned to trust both his father and God? It must have been by observing the faith of his father lived out in the home.

Human sacrifice was a common practice in Abraham's day. God had not yet revealed the sacrificial laws through Moses. God instructs Abraham to offer Isaac. The Scriptures provide us with only the barest elements of the event. One wonders what went on in Abraham's mind. Somehow Abraham managed to obey. He had learned through a lifetime of experiences to trust God. As he readied himself to offer Isaac, an angel spoke. Isaac was spared, and again the promise of blessing and a host of heirs was reaffirmed.

True faith is not lived in a vacuum or in a hothouse, but in the world, where others can witness one's faithfulness before God and learn to imitate that trust. The home is to be the seedbed for the faith of the children. How does your home compare?

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Focus On Prayer

by Susan Todd

Woman's Missionary Union, SBC

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Evidence of answered prayer and a call for continued prayer support were the highlights of the Foreign Missions Teleconference broadcast live Nov. 21 from Nashville.

Bill O'Brien, executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and host for the teleconference, said during the broadcast, "Our emphasis on prayer during the teleconference is not ac-

cidental." He encouraged Southern Baptists' intercessory prayer for foreign missions to "not be accidental either."

"Praying Southern Baptists are essential to the success of our missionary outreach, as any missionary will attest," O'Brien said. Missionaries did attest to the importance of prayer in their work. Viewers from across the country were able to see, hear and experience firsthand the role of prayer in the lives of several foreign missionaries.

Five missionary couples joined O'Brien

in the studio to discuss the importance of prayer in their work. Rick and Laura Lane, missionaries to Granada, Spain, and Jill Branyon, missionary to Nyeri, Kenya, joined the teleconference by phone from their respective countries.

Among the prayer requests which surfaced during the teleconference were:

— Strength. "Sometimes when the days of discouragement come, I just don't know if I can get up and give again," said Robin Eberhardt, missionary to Grenada, West Indies. "Prayer uplifts me and gives me a special measure of strength to go on. We know Southern Baptists are praying."

James McKinley, missionary to Bangladesh, said, "I look at my feeble self, especially physically, and see that God can multiply strength" through prayer.

— Unity. Rick Lane cited the need for unity among Christians and identified prayer as a key factor. "We feel a unity with those who are praying in the United States."

He also asked that Southern Baptists join him in prayer for unity among one another. "We have been concerned about the division of Southern Baptists," Lane said. He cited its possible effect on missions as a cause for concern.

— Economy. One caller questioned R. Keith Parks, president of the Foreign Mission Board, about how recent dollar value plunges have affected mission endeavors.

"The weakening of the dollar overseas is the worst thing that can happen to our missions work," Parks said. The solution? "We will just need to give more dollars."

This year's Lottie Moon Offering goal has been lowered from \$81 million to \$75 million because of recent unreached goals.

— Safety. James and Linda Rice, missionaries to Uganda, have worked in an area of political unrest. Rice told how his thoughts about safety have changed during the past years: "We don't claim that nothing can happen to us. 'Safe' may mean 'safe in the arms of Jesus.' It depends on your definition of safety."

Branyon related by phone an incident of the previous day. She was in a car accident on Nov. 20 and said it was severe enough that she should have been killed.

"I know it (safety) was because of prayer. I would like to say to Southern Baptists, 'Pray.' They can do nothing more important. God can use their power and their resources."

— Loneliness. Several missionaries told of battles with aloneness and loneliness. Ruth Dyson, who with her husband, Bert, was the first Southern Baptist missionary couple to Sierra Leone, told of entering the country for the first time.

"Even though we were alone, we did not feel lonely. Prayers helped us feel a surge" of power. "We felt we could almost reach out and touch the prayers," she said.

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Haiti Violence Cause For Prayer

by Eric Miller
 SBC Foreign Mission Board

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (BP)—Southern Baptist missionary Mark Rutledge feels relatively safe amid the violence in Haiti but asks for prayer for fellow missionaries who are new to Haiti.

The first election in Haiti in 30 years was scheduled Nov. 29 but was called off because of widespread violence shortly after polls opened. At least 15 people were shot or hacked to death at one polling station by killers opposing the election, and 12 other deaths were reported.

"I personally did not go to church yesterday (Nov. 29) on the recommendation from most of the people I know here who said it wouldn't be too safe," Rutledge said. Some polling stations were located at churches, and "the worst place you could have been was at the polls and out on the street," he explained.

Rutledge said he hadn't heard of any Haitian Baptists being attacked or injured during violence. The executive committee of the Haitian Baptist Convention met two days before the election, he reported. The committee met in northern Haiti, where less violence has occurred.

Rutledge and his wife, Peggy, are from Murfreesboro, Tenn., and Glendale, Calif., respectively. They have heard gunfire on many nights and even grenades being set off. They stay away from the downtown area of Port-au-Prince, where much of the violence occurs.

"Pray for this country and for the people here as they go through this problem, that somehow God can use this to change this country," Rutledge said. He also asked for prayer for new missionaries Virgil and Patsy Suttles of Elberton, Ga., in their adjustment to the Haiti situation. The Suttles arrived in Haiti Nov. 1. They and the Rutledges are the only Southern Baptist missionaries there.

The Rutledges arrived in Haiti in March, but both had worked in the country previously. They have had time to adjust to the latest violence, which started in June as anti-government groups instigated strikes calling for a three-man governing council to step down from office. Strikers also called for a general election to choose a new council.

Missionaries are still fairly safe in Haiti, Rutledge insisted: "Although we've had shooting at night, and that's unnerving, it's not aimed at us." There's no antagonism toward us as Americans or foreigners or as Christians. Because of that, I don't see how it would be unsafe to stay here."

The Americans who have been wound-

ed were reporters who "were right in the middle" of the polling places and were wounded by people who did not want the election, he said.

For the missionaries, "it's been a matter of trying to stay at home and stay out of the violence," he said. "They're not attacking individual homes. It's aimed toward specific people."

Until the election, Rutledge had been going to language school two hours daily and to his office to handle administrative work related to well-drilling projects and an agriculture school. After the violence passes, he said, he will resume normal activities.

Radio Station Dedicated

LAS CASAS, Guatemala (BP)—Guatemalan Baptists and missionaries dedicated a new shortwave radio station Nov. 20 to broadcast the gospel to more than 100,000 K'ekchi' Indians in northern Guatemala and southern Belize.

Radio K'ekchi' is in the remote town of Las Casas. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board provided funds for equipment and construction of the station's studio. K'ekchi' Baptist Association will pay operating costs and provide staff for the station.

The K'ekchi' people have been responsive to the gospel, missionaries report, and more than 100 churches of K'ekchi' Baptist Association are thriving. K'ekchi' Baptists have dedicated themselves to baptizing 100,000 K'ekchi' people by the end of this century.

Beyond the station's K'ekchi' programming, said Southern Baptist missionary Mike Owen, "We hope some of the night hours are going to be filled with Spanish." With a 5,000-watt power base, the projected Spanish-language programming could reach as many as 1 million people in the region, according to missionaries.

The station already has faced several obstacles because of equipment importation problems, licensing delays and deadlines and finances. But Guatemalan Baptists hope it will begin broadcasting soon.

"So far, so good, as long as Baptists keep praying," Owen said. "We're walking in faith," and cooperating with the government. "We look forward to going on the air shortly after the first of the year."

Southern Baptist representative David Daniell, a mass media specialist who works in Mexico City, moved to Las Casas recently for a one-year assignment to help Guatemalan Baptists develop Radio K'ekchi'.