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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

11-25-1976

November 25, 1976

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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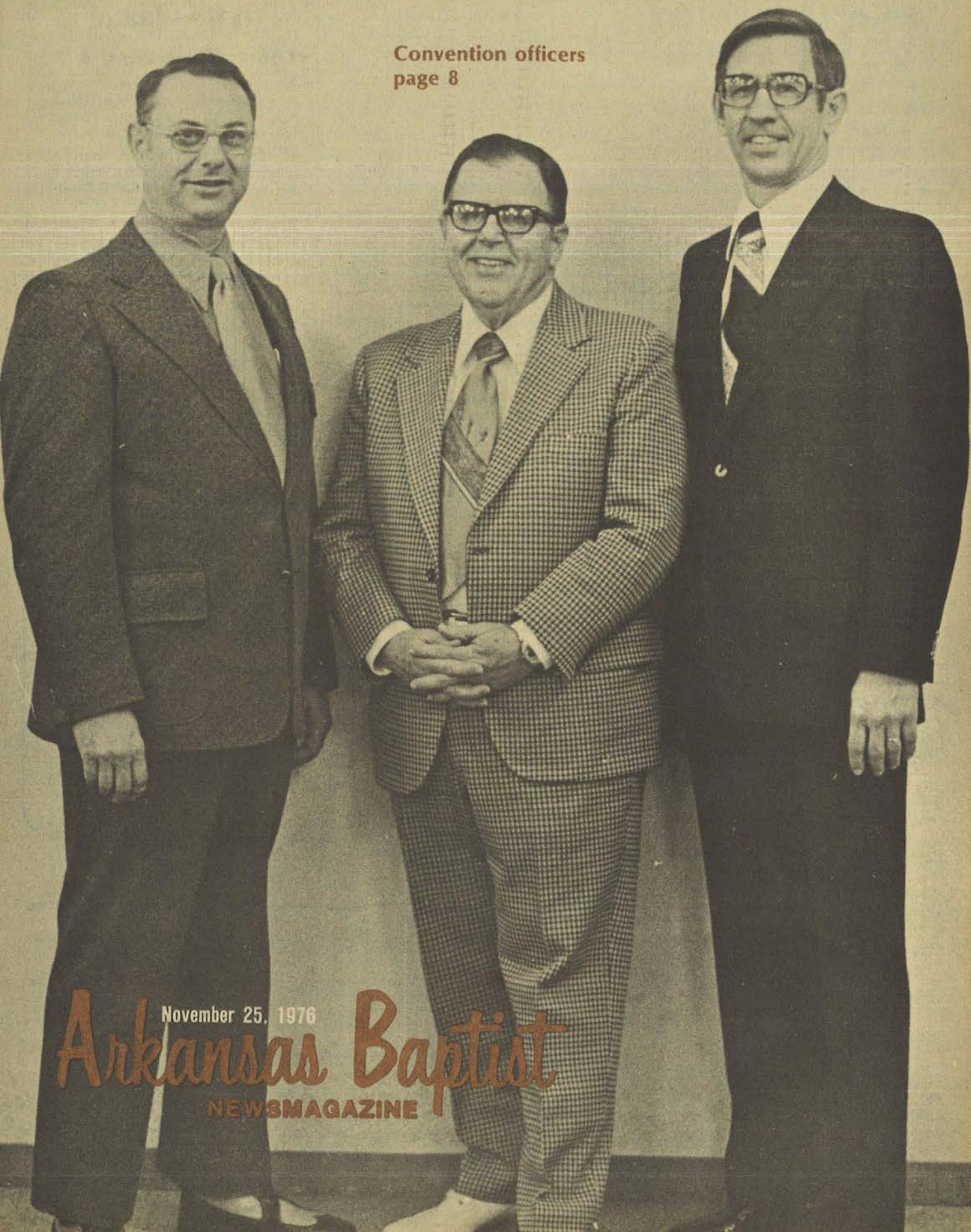
Recommended Citation

Arkansas Baptist State Convention, "November 25, 1976" (1976). *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, 1975-1979*. 169.

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Convention officers
page 8



November 25, 1976
Arkansas Baptist
NEWSMAGAZINE



I must say it

Charles H. Ashcraft / Executive Secretary

How spiritual are you, really?

Inasmuch as there are no computers around which can print out your exact degree of spirituality, perhaps a "yes or no" quiz with some deep, Bible oriented questions will help us explore our actual nearness to God. Give yourself two points for every yes and let's see how well we do.

1. Enjoying your church life more? 2. Interest in lost people growing? 3. More effective in your prayer life? 4. Increasing delight in God's word? 5. Less disturbed by misfortunes? 6. Seeking more time for meditation? 7. Becoming less concerned with just "things"? 8. More patient with less advantaged people? 9. Reaction to criticism improving? 10. More inner joy in living for Christ? 11. More disciplined? 12. More compatible with your family? 13. Developing a better sense of humor? 14. Taking people more for what they are worth? 15. Making decisions more quickly and conclusively? 16. Living more for others? 17. Any grudges left? 18. Do you "count your days" left to serve? 19. Do friends taken earlier in death cross your mind frequently? 20. Victories more frequent in your personal life? 21. Is Christ more real to you? 22. Can you recall the day of your conversion? 23. Seeking forgiveness for smaller infractions? 24. Have you made your will, remembering a worthy cause? 25. Do you feel God shares inner secrets with you? 26. Approaching any radiance in your life? 27. Do you pray for the lost during the invitation? 28. Less judgmental? 29. Less tolerant of mediocrity? 30. Can Christ save anyone? 31. Reaction to losses more Christ-like? 32. Are you aware of the dark areas of your life? 33. Any plans to brighten these areas? 34. Can you love the unlovely? 35. Do you stand up for what you know to be right? 36. Showing more strength in adapting to embarrassment? 37. Uncomfortable when bad language is used? 38. Any noticeable growth in grace and knowledge? 39. Do you know your neighbors? 40. Did you vote on Nov. 2? 41. Can you rightly pronounce the proper noun "Negro"? 42. Do you think question 41 is related to spirituality, maturity, and nearness to God? 43. Are you prepared to live with majority vote decisions? 44. Any sense of mission in your life? 45. Do you like yourself? 46. Do you think these questions are theologically oriented? 47. Do you think God is a winner? 48. Is death a promotion for the Christian? 49. Can you thank God for your problems? 50. Has this study helped you any indetermining the spiritual level of your life?

The spiritual level of any life varies from day to day, so our attention must be always given to it. The formula whereby one may increase his nearness to God appears in James 4:8, "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you." His steps in our direction are in cadence with our steps in his direction, so it is time to start. Thanks for the little classroom session with you.

I must say it!

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

VOLUME 75

NUMBER 47

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Post office box 552, 525 West Capitol Avenue, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203. Published weekly except at July 4 and December 25. Second Class postage paid at Little Rock, Arkansas.

Letters to the editor expressing opinions are invited. Letters should be typed double-space and must be signed.

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

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

Original poetry cannot be considered for publication.

Individual subscriptions \$3 per year. Every Resident Family plan 18 cents per month or \$2.16 per year per church family. Club plan (10 or more paid annually in advance) \$2.76 per year. Subscriptions to foreign address \$5 per year. Extra copies 10 cents each.

Advertising rates on request

Opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the writer. Member of Southern Baptist Press Association.

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Messengers to the state convention took action to decide which churches are "regular Baptist churches", decided not to build a proposed building, and set up a committee to study the powers of the Executive Board. These and other business actions are covered in an article about the annual meeting.

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Also meeting in connection with the sessions of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention were other groups, including the Pastors' Conference, the Religious Education Association, and Church Staff Wives. Stories and photos tell about their meetings.

Russian Baptists 13

Two Baptists from Russia visited in Arkansas last week and brought greetings to the state convention and spoke to the Pastors' conference meeting.

Plains decides 24

With attention focused on Plains Baptist Church because Jimmy Carter is a member there, Baptists have praised the church members for voting to open worship to people of all races and to consider all persons for membership.

Convention: unity in diversity

The editor's page

J. Everett Sneed



Arkansas Baptists had an excellent convention this year although differing opinions were expressed on some matters. We believe that the messengers found unity in diversity.

The convention was truly great for many reasons. First, the program was of the finest quality. The Program Committee of the convention, as well as that of the Pastors' Conference, sought to meet the real needs of our churches and pastors.

The convention had as its theme "The Church Ministering." Every one of the basic aspects of the functions and ministries of a church were covered by able speakers.

The inspiration provided by the speakers will be of great help to those who attended. Particularly noteworthy were the messages delivered by Ron Dunn, Grady Cothen, Jack Stanton and Jim Henry which will be reported in our issue of Dec. 2.

Second, the convention was great because Baptists had an opportunity to conduct their business in a democratic fashion. One of the historic principles of Baptists is to abide by the decisions of the majority. We believe that the Executive Board, the building committee, administration and staff willingly accept the decisions of the messengers.

T. K. Rucker, in speaking in favor of the proposed parking-office building, which was voted down by the messengers, stated the case well as he said, "God's hand has been upon Arkansas Baptists in a special way in recent years. We must let nothing divert us from this main thrust of the kingdom's advance. The tactic of the militarist on the battle field is to divide and destroy. The devil's tactic is the same. Each of us must vote his own conviction today. My chief concern is that after

the majority has spoken we will be mature enough as Christians to support the decision with our money and cooperation."

Our convention was great because of the relaxed and jovial way President Wilbur Herring presided. Great credit must go to Dr. Herring, not only for the capable way he handled the business of our convention, but also for a great and challenging presidential address.

We also must pay tribute to our Executive Secretary, Charles H. Ashcraft, for his stirring and challenging message. Dr. Ashcraft said, "I feel that each convention becomes bigger and better because of our emphasis on missions and evangelism." He told the messengers, "Southern Baptists are number one, which demands that we stay at the head of the column." (Next week's ABN will carry Dr. Ashcraft's message.)

Porter Routh, Executive Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, told the convention something of its accomplishments in stewardship. He said, "The churches of Arkansas gave World Missions \$1,700,000 last year, representing an 11 percent increase over the previous year." He commended Arkansas for having a definite plan or formula by which we increase our gifts to world missions. He, also, pointed out that Arkansas had had a 35 percent increase in baptisms this year over 10 years ago. "This," he said, "is twice as much as the average for the Southern Baptist Convention."

Finally, this convention was great because we have great people in our churches. We believe that as we work together the Lord will provide us with blessings too numerous to count during the coming year.

Guest editorial

Variation of Psalm 23

There was once a man who was in the shadow of debt through a sudden emergency which occurred in his life. He cast himself upon God, trusting that he would care for him.

The Twenty-third Psalm became his comfort day by day as he repeated the words, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." In due course he produced this remarkable variation:

"The Lord is my banker; I shall not fail. He maketh me to lie down in gold mines; He giveth me the combination of his tills. He restoreth my credit: he showeth me how to avoid bankruptcy for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk in the very shadow of debt, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy silver and thy gold they rescue me. Thou preparest a way for me in the presence of my creditors: thou fillest my barrels with oil; my measure runneth over. Surely goodness and

mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will do business in the name of the Lord."

However much we give, we can never give away the promises of God; they are always there! We never lose the presence of the Lord; he is always with us, and when he is with us we are in the majority. The more we trust him and value his presence, the more easily we shall give freely of what he has entrusted to us.

"Freely ye have received, freely give" — you cannot lose, you can only gain glory from him, blessing for others and a sure eternal reward.

The Spirit never lies dormant and idle within the soul: he always makes his presence known by the fruit he causes to be borne in heart, character, and life. — J. C. Ryle in the "Australian Baptist"



One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant / President, OBU

What does the Carter victory mean?

Trying to tell what a Presidential election means is probably even more hazardous than trying to predict the winner. No one really can say for sure whether the election of Jimmy Carter as President will produce more prosperity or less, more inflation or less, more unemployment or less, or more integrity in the White House or less. Fifty-one percent of the voters apparently thought one way on those issues and 49 percent thought the other way.

A few things seem clear after the election and some other things will continue to depend mainly on how well we follow up our voting with effective daily action as citizens. Few Southerners can avoid being pleased, whether they voted for Carter or not, that it is now possible for a candidate with a genuine Southern drawl to be elected President of the United States. It is even more encouraging to discover that it is possible to elect a President who is not ashamed to tell the world that he is a born-again Christian and a Southern Baptist. It was astounding that so many professional journalists seemed to be struggling with a whole new language when the old old

expressions of evangelical Christianity suddenly found their way into the questions and answers of Presidential campaigning. My hope and prayer is that Jimmy Carter's term in the White House will make us all proud that he is a Southern Baptist.

Our very sharp Russian Intourist guide in the Soviet Union last summer asked several of us in the tour group what effect it would have on U.S. relations with the Soviet Union if Jimmy Carter should be elected President. After we had discussed many weighty issues such as armament controls, trade agreements, detente, and cultural exchange programs, she brought up a subject that seemed to overshadow all others. She said, "President Nixon and President Ford gave the Soviet Union Pepsi-Cola. Maybe Jimmy Carter will give us peanut butter!"

Personally, I happen to be a peanut butter lover. I find it easy to believe that an international peanut butter exchange program might very well tear down the iron curtain and put an end to the Cold War. It certainly makes more sense than exchanging atomic bombs.

'Messiah' performance set at Immanuel

Immanuel Church, 10th & Bishop, Little Rock, will be the scene of the 46th annual performance of Handel's oratorio, "The Messiah," by the Arkansas Choral Society on Sunday, Dec. 5, at 3 p.m.

Gene Brooks, chairman of the Department of Music, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, will conduct the performance with Len D. Bobo, director of music at Lakewood United Methodist Church, North Little Rock, as accompanist.

Featured soloists for the performance will be Mrs. Marjorie Halbert, Little Rock, soprano; Mrs. Marjo Carroll, Hot Springs, soprano; Eugene Windsor, assistant professor of music at UALR, bass; Arthur Arney, instructor of voice at UALR, tenor; Mrs. Sheila M. Kearney, contralto, North Ridge, Calif.

The annual performance of Handel's famous oratorio has traditionally opened the Christmas season in Arkansas on the first Sunday of each December.

Tickets for the performance may be purchased from society members or at the door. Proceeds are used to defray the cost of the performance.



Woman's viewpoint

Iris O'Neal Bowen

Thoughts of Thanksgiving

Looking back each year at this time, we remember the stories of the Pilgrims and the sacrifices they made to come to a place where each one could worship according to his own conscience. We know of the long, hard, hungry winter they endured. We have read how they planted crops and were aided by the Indians, who were willing to help the strangers in their own land.

Then when the harvest was gathered, the first thought of the Pilgrims, the first thing they wanted to do, was to show their thanks to God for his watchcare over them through their difficult times.

I am sure that as they spread the tables with the bounty of the land, there were many prayers of thanksgiving. I am sure

they sang the great old songs they had brought along in their memories from their homeland.

The children must have played little games that day, after the tables were cleared, and I expect there was a small dog or two to help take care of the leftovers.

Today, we have so much to be thankful for, we sometimes wonder what we can do or say to show God we are really grateful.

Our homes are so nice and well-tended, we would not allow space in our back yards for a Pilgrim's small log house.

We never have to suffer bitter cold



Dr. Brooks

Mrs. Kearney

such as the Pilgrims endured, for we can always turn up the thermostat.

Food and clothing, and the money to buy them with, are so abundant that we spend and throw away with little thought.

Perhaps if we want to show God we are truly grateful for his bountiful blessings, we might share them with those in need. We might give more of our income to help carry the story of God's love to those so in need of it.

We might pray for strength to become better witnesses to those about us.

Yes, we can offer thanks in so many ways!

Minister writes new 'Amazing Grace'; dedicates it to president-elect

by Erwin L. McDonald
ABN Editor Emeritus

A 90-year-old Little Rock minister, educator, poet has written a new version of President-elect Jimmy Carter's favorite hymn, "Amazing Grace", and is dedicating it to Carter.

Joseph Boone Hunter, a former Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) missionary to Japan, has had his hymn copyrighted and is making it available at no charge to churches wishing to use it as a feature of worship on "Inauguration Sunday," Jan. 16, the Sunday just ahead of the Presidential inauguration on Jan. 20.

Dr. Hunter wrote the new version ahead of the Presidential race and decided to dedicate it to Mr. Carter as he listened to the Carter interview by New York journalist Bill Moyers on national television. At that time candidate Carter told of his "born-again" religious experience and indicated that "Amazing Grace" was his favorite hymn.

"I was greatly impressed with Mr.

Carter's sincerity of purpose and his personal religious experience," said the veteran minister. "He impressed me as being the kind of leader our country desperately needs at this time."

Hunter sees the Carter election as "an answer to prayer." He commends the new President to the "continuing prayer support of people of all denominations."

The first two verses of the Hunter Hymn relate to the "new birth" of the Christian religion, which received wide publicity during the Presidential campaign as a result of the Carter emphasis:

"Amazing grace, His boundless love, surrounds and fills my soul; And since I hold Him in my heart My life has joys untold.

"I tried for years to live alone And keep His love away, But He my path did walk beside To shield my steps each day."

Although the third stanza was written

with all Christians in mind, Dr. Hunter sees it as particularly reflective of the life experiences of the President-elect:

"I know I've crossed o'er swollen streams and yawning chasms wide; Perhaps some sainted soul at prayer Though unseen was my guide."

The closing stanza highlights the Christian's commitment to God's purposes for his life:

"And now I would my witness bear, His love and grace make known; I've found my task along life's road; His cause shall be my own."

Churches may secure copies of the hymn at no charge by writing to Dr. Hunter at his residence, 68 Berkshire Drive, Little Rock, and enclosing 26 cents in stamps for cost of mailing.

He will provide one copy to a church with permission for it to be reproduced for church use. His copyright is to protect his rights as author against someone publishing the hymn without his permission.

Writing poetry and hymns has been a life-long hobby of Hunter, who was born at Allen, Tex., on Dec. 27, 1886. He has written a Christmas poem each year since 1929 and is presently composing a poem for the Bicentennial Christmas of 1976.

"I agree with the late Robert Frost that 'a poem has to begin with a lump in your throat,'" said the minister. "If you are going to write poetry, you have to begin with a deep emotional experience — a great joy, or, perhaps, a heavy burden."

For a long time, Dr. Hunter has felt the need for the old hymns to be reworded. Besides "Amazing Grace" he has written new versions of other hymns, including "Just As I Am" and "Rock of Ages." Some of his versions have been widely used.

He has also written a number of new hymns, including one entitled "Personal Peace," which he wrote after a conference with a man who had been on his way to commit murder, but who gave up his gun for Christian commitment.



Trying out the hymn with Dr. Hunter (right) are Second Church, Little Rock, minister of Music Roger Copeland (playing) and Pastor Dale Cowling. (Photo by Jan Houseworth, courtesy of "Arkansas Democrat")

Convention directs study of Board's authority;

Arkansas Baptists have rejected a proposal by their Executive Board to build a parking/office building, and have set up a study committee to check on the spending powers granted to the Board by the State Convention's Constitution and bylaws.

In a business session Tuesday, Nov. 17, messengers to the annual meeting, being held at Park Hill Church, North Little Rock, voted by a wide margin to reject the proposal for a \$3,650,000 addition to the office building in Little Rock which houses offices for employees of the Executive Board. The proposal was one of four presented by the Board for convention approval.

Roy F. Lewis, associate executive Secretary for the state convention, explained the plans for the building, using some visual aids. He said that one of the most frequently expressed objections to the proposal to build was that this would set a precedent by putting Baptists in the rental business.

Lewis told the messengers that the convention had voted in 1947 to acquire the building at 401 West Capitol in Little Rock for Baptist office space, and that they approved allowing rental of some of that building to other tenants. He said that space was rented from 1947-1953.

Lewis also maintained that some churches and some associations in the state were now getting income from the rental of property they own.

Five messengers came to the platform to speak against the proposal. One called the rental to defray part of the costs an unbiblical method of supporting God's work, and another said he had never seen the present parking lot full. A third speaker wanted money to be spent starting missions in the state.

Speakers for the proposal said that the office and parking space was in demand in downtown Little Rock, and that nothing in the Bible prevents Baptists from being smart business people. One speaker recalled that Baptists had turned down a proposal to buy a campsite some years ago and it turned out to be a bad decision. He chided Baptists for looking for little reasons why things could not be done, and urged them not to be short-sighted.

The vote on the building proposal was taken by secret ballot, and the results were given at the close of that afternoon session.

In a business session earlier that day Oscar Golden of Benton proposed that a committee be established to study the

state constitution and bylaws and that they bring a report to the 1977 convention. Golden said that the purpose of the committee will be "to make a study of the constitution and bylaws of our convention to determine the power that the Executive Board has to spend money and transact business that has not been authorized by the Convention at its annual meeting."

Three other recommendations were brought to the messengers Wednesday afternoon in the Executive Board's annual report. The first asked that changes be made in the annuity program with the Southern Baptist Annuity Board. The lowest return plan now available for Arkansas pastors and staffers would be closed to new members after Jan. 1, 1978, but present participants could remain in it or could transfer to another plan. The recommendation was adopted.

Ray Wells of Smackover presented a

proposed budget which is up 14.41 percent over 1976. Raymond Reed of Warren sought to amend the budget to "restore the total provisions in the budget" for the office of annuity representative. Reed said that his intention was to "continue the position of field representative as it is." The amendment failed on a voice vote, and the recommended budget was adopted.

Messengers also adopted a recommendation to allow the Baptist Student Union in Arkansas to launch a "Third Century Endowment Campaign," with a goal of \$1 million. Earnings from the endowment funds would be used for Baptist Student ministry.

In the opening session on Tuesday evening R. Wilbur Herring presided and Cary Heard, pastor of the host church, gave the welcome.

Special recognition was given to agency representatives and to past state presidents who were present for the



A late unofficial count of messengers showed that more than 2,000 were registered for the meeting and some had to sit in the aisles or stand at the opening session Tuesday night. (ABN photos)

rejects building proposed by Executive Board

opening session.

Michael Zhidkov, senior pastor of the Moscow Baptist Church and Alexei Bichkov, general secretary of the All Union Council of Evangelical Christians in the Soviet Union, brought brief greetings to the convention.

Herring introduced as convention committee chairmen J. C. Myers of North Little Rock, committee on order of business; Mason Craig of McGehee, credentials; Paul Dodd of West Helena, resolutions and Paul Wilhelm of Ozark, tellers.

After the messengers had voted to adopt the order of business as set up in

the printed program, Kenneth Threet of Mountain Home called for a point of order. He reminded President Herring that the body had not voted to enroll the messengers.

Dr. Herring apologized for the oversight but before the vote could be taken, W. L. Jenkins of Atkins moved that the convention seat only messengers from "regular Baptist churches which in doctrine and practice adhere to the principles and spirit of the Baptist Faith and Message as stated in the Constitution, Article III, Section 1." The motion was passed.

The question was raised by Jenkins as

to how the convention would determine whether messengers are representatives of such churches. The president entertained a motion as follows, which was then made by Jenkins:

"I move that the ABSC authorize and instruct the President of this convention along with the Credentials Committee appointed in this session to visit any and all churches who are not complying with Article III, Section 1 of the constitution of the convention and to assist the church or churches to full compliance with both statement and practice with this portion of the constitution and to report to the convention in 1977 those churches who have failed to so comply that they may not be seated."

After that motion received a second, J. T. Harvill objected to the portion of the motion involving the seating of messengers in the 1977 convention. President Herring asked the messengers making and seconding the motion if they would agree to strike that portion, and they agreed.

The messengers adopted the amended motion and voted to enroll the 1976 messengers. Kenneth Threet then moved that the convention vote to make actions taken before the enrollment valid.

Dr. Herring was re-elected president for his second term in the Wednesday morning meeting of the convention.¹

Elected to serve with Dr. Herring were Carl Overton, Director of Missions for Central Association, vice-president; and Homer Shirley of Crossett, second vice-president.

Another highlight of the Wednesday session was the presentation of a service award plaque to Dr. Thurman K. Rucker, retiring Annuity Secretary. This presentation was made by Harold Bailey of Dallas, vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention Annuity Board.

An amendment which had been distributed to the messengers on Tuesday evening was presented for a vote in this session by Don Hook, chairman of the constitution and bylaws committee, and was tabled. The amendment would have limited the president of the convention to one term and require his nomination from the floor of the convention.

The convention Credentials Committee brought their report to the messengers Thursday morning, and recommended that action on the seating of messengers from Faith Church, Tex-

The Music Men and the Singing Women, who are church staffers in music areas, joined forces to present special music to the opening session of the meeting.

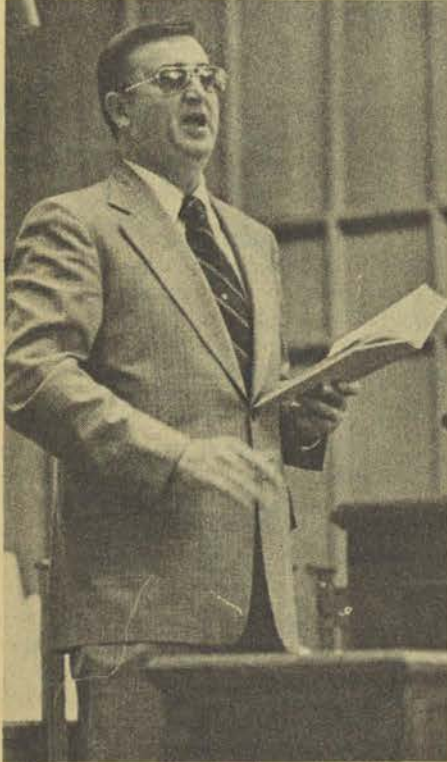


Andy Setliffe, president of the Convention's Executive Board (left), introduced those who brought the Board's recommendations, and Roy F. Lewis, associate executive secretary, explained the proposal to construct an office/parking building.

arkana, be delayed until the 1977 convention. Faith Church has been constituted since the last convention meeting.

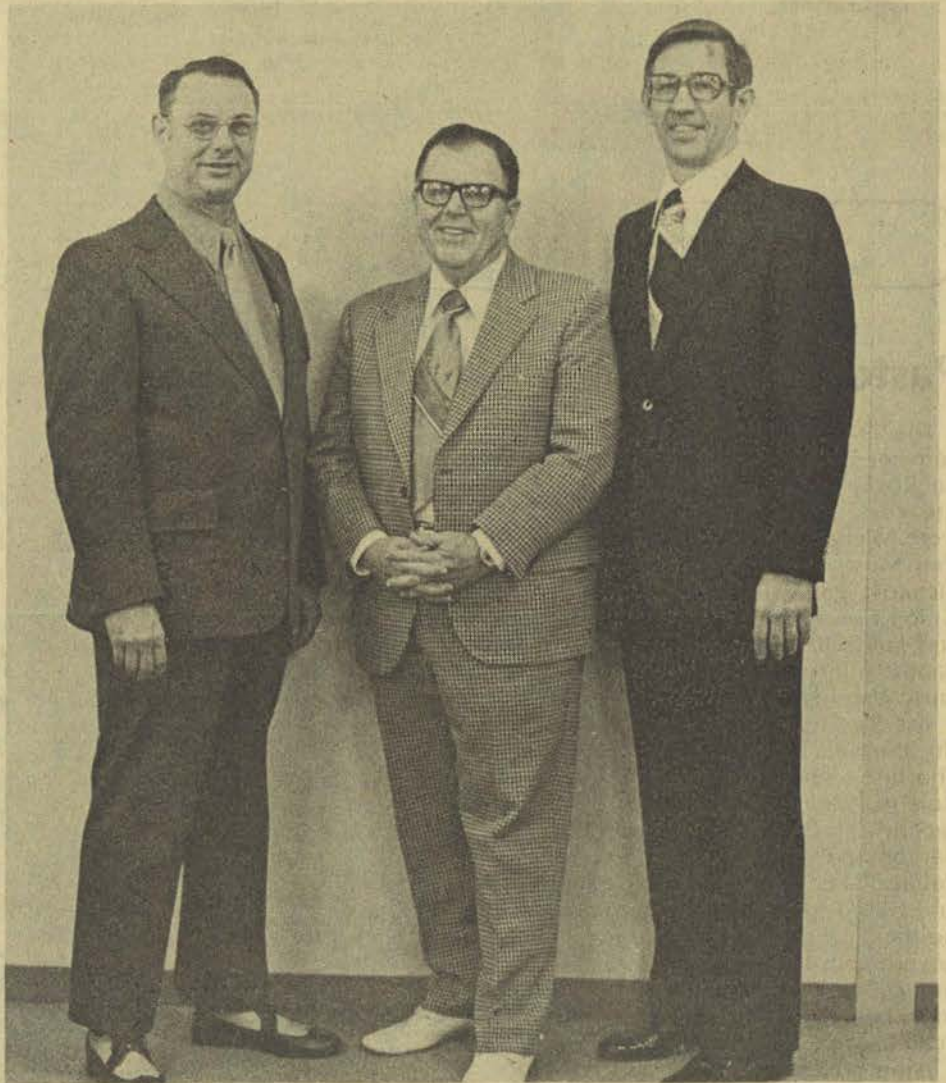
Also in the Thursday morning session, messengers heard a report from the Review Committee on Ministry. Chairman Paul Sanders of Little Rock recommended that the original study committee be directed to study for another year on stress in the ministry, and that the president of the convention make appointments to fill any vacancies.

Ervin Keathley, state music secretary, directed congregational music at the convention.



Porter Routh, executive secretary of the Executive Board of the SBC, was one of the agency representatives attending the Arkansas meeting.

T. K. Rucker (center), who is retiring as Annuity Board Representative for Arkansas, was presented a plaque in honor of his service at the meeting. Harold Bailey, Vice President of the SBC Annuity Board, presented the award. Mrs. Rucker accompanied Dr. Rucker.



On the cover — R. Wilbur Herring of Jonesboro (center) was re-elected president of the state convention at the meeting. This will be his second year in this office. Carl Overton, director of missions for Central Association (left), was elected first vice president, and Homer Shirley, pastor of First Church, Crossett, was named second vice president.

Conway Sawyers and J. A. Kuehn were among the more than 2,000 messengers (according to unofficial figures) who registered for the 1976 state convention meeting.



Auxiliary meetings to convention

Pastors' Conference features Arkansas speakers

The 1976 Pastors' Conference, which convened in Park Hill Church, North Little Rock, featured a host of Arkansas speakers. The out-of-state speakers were Michael Zhidkov, senior pastor of the Moscow Baptist Church, Alexei Bichkov, general secretary of the All Union Council of Evangelical Christians, and James E. Wood Jr., director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

The Pastors' Conference developed the theme "The Church Ministering." The first session dealt with "A Pastor's Role in Political Life." Bernes K. Selph, recently retired from First Church, Benton, spoke on "Biblical Prophets and Political Life." Dr. Selph said, "The Old and New Testaments are filled with the politics of the day. Although their government form was different, the attitudes they exhibited about political matters can give us great insight into the action we should take today."

James E. Wood Jr. spoke on "The Pastor and Public Affairs." Dr. Wood asked the question, "Why should the minister be involved in public affairs?" He said the church must be involved because of the very nature of the church. "It is the body of Christ upon

the earth and as such it must do everything possible to make the world conform to Christ."

Larry Baker, pastor, First Church, Fayetteville, spoke on "Early American Preachers and Political Life." Dr. Baker documented historically the involvement of colonial Baptist preachers in the political life of the community. He said, "The election day sermon was the second most important sermon preached by these men. They dealt with a wide

range of principles. The only thing they did not do was to tell the people for which candidate to vote."

Johnny Jackson, pastor, Forrest Highlands Church, Little Rock, spoke on "Present-Day Pastors and the Moral Issues." Jackson challenged the pastors to identify the problems that are in our society and then to declare these issues to their congregations. "No congregation," Jackson said, "ought to have any doubts where their pastor stands on



Sessions of the Pastors' Conference were held at Park Hill Church Monday evening through Tuesday noon, before the convention meeting.

any moral issue. This means that we will have to have bold declaration."

The second session of the Pastors' Conference dealt with "A Pastor's Role in His Personal and Family Life." John Wright, pastor, First Church, Little Rock, spoke on "A Pastor's Responsibility to His Family." Dr. Wright said, "The pastor's life is inseparably connected with the home. If there is no revival in the pastor's home, there will be no revival in the church. He ought to be able to say to his members, 'If you want to know how to treat your wife and children, look at my own home.'"

R. D. Harrington, pastor, Philadelphia, spoke on "A Pastor's Personal Life Before God." Harrington said that the pastor was to have a right relation with God by committing himself to God, through his prayer life, and through allowing the Holy Spirit to lead in every area of his life. Harrington concluded, "When we rely upon the Holy Spirit to guide us in every area of our life, it gives us a boldness that enables us to speak out for God."

Roy Hilton, recently retired pastor of Immanuel Church, El Dorado, spoke from John 21:15 on the subject "A Pastor's Responsibility to His Church."

He said, "The pastor must always be a student of the Word so that he can feed the flock that has been entrusted to him. It is a sin to call the sheep together and fail to feed them."

Lloyd Sparkman, a retired pastor living in Little Rock, spoke on "A Pastor's Role in Retirement." He said, "Retirement does not negate a man's call to preach. It does not alleviate his obligation to minister."

The final session of the Pastors' Conference had as its theme "A Pastor's Role in World Outreach." Kenneth Threet, pastor, First Church, Mountain Home, spoke on "A Pastor's Role in the Denomination." Dr. Threet identified three ways that a pastor may use his denomination and concluded, "We should pledge ourselves to support the causes of our denomination which will honor and glorify the work of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Bill Lewis, pastor, North Main Church, Jonesboro, spoke on "A Pastor's Role in Evangelism." Lewis said, "A pastor has not done his full job unless he is involved in evangelism." Lewis pointed out that the Great Commission instructs us to discipline, to teach, and to baptize.

He concluded by challenging the pastors to be involved in a constant program of growing Christians.

Dillard Miller, pastor, First Church, Mena, spoke on "A Pastor's Role in Keeping Fellowship." He pointed out that the word "fellowship" or "Koinonia" means "partnership." He said, "As partners we have mutual interest in the activities of God. We also have mutual resources that God can give to us. All of God's resources are at his ministers' disposal for their taking. All of my resources ought to be at his disposal."

The closing message of the conference was delivered by W. O. Vaught, pastor, Immanuel Church, Little Rock, who spoke on "A Pastor's Highest Responsibility." Dr. Vaught used as his text John 16:8, and emphasized that our responsibility is to preach the Word of God.

Dr. Vaught said the term 'when he comes,' might lead an individual to believe that the Holy Spirit had not come into the world. He was here, but previously he had been with men; now he is to be in men. This was the begin-



Among the speakers for the conference were (clockwise from below) Kenneth Threet of Mountain Home, W. O. Vaught Jr. of Little Rock, John Wright of Little Rock, Dillard Miller of Mena, and Lloyd Sparkman of Little Rock.

ning of the church age.

This year's Pastors' Conference was under the direction of President John Finn, director of missions for North Arkansas Association, Jimmy Taylor, pastor, First Church, Harding, and Harry Wigger, retired. The officers for next year are: Ferrell Morgan, pastor, Mount Olive Church, Crossett, president; Robert Tucker, director of missions, Tri-county Association, first vice president; Johnny Jackson, pastor, Forrest Highlands Church, Little Rock, second vice president.

Officers elected by the pastors were Johnny Jackson, second vice president, Ferrell Morgan, president; and Robert Tucker, first vice president.



briefly

Arkansas all over

people

Temple Church, Fort Smith, held a revival recently with Clarence Shell, Arkansas Baptist State Convention state evangelist, conducting the services. Music was in the charge of Red Johnson. There were eight professions of faith and four joined by letter. Elton Pennington is pastor.

Harris Chapel at Wynne held revival services Oct. 24-30 with Sid Byler, pastor of First Church, Marshall, serving as evangelist. Music was led by G. L. (Tack) Marcum. There were eight professions of faith. Tom Casey is pastor.

Rehobeth Church, Moorefield, will celebrate its 105th anniversary with a revival the week of Nov. 29-Dec. 5. The week's services will be concluded on Sunday when Charles H. Ashcraft, Executive Secretary of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, will be speaker. Lunch will be served at noon with the afternoon to feature special music and historical information on the church.

Open Door Church at Rogers observed "Harvest Day" on Nov. 7 with 501 in attendance for Sunday School. There were 40 additions to the church by baptism and 14 by letter. The church recently began a bus ministry, and has four buses now running on Sundays.

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Harrison Johns, who has been pastoring in Alamosa, Colo., is now at Conway where he is pastoring Pleasant Grove Church. Johns, who was Director of Missions for Independence Association in Arkansas 1957-62, is a graduate of Ouachita University and Southwestern Seminary. In addition to pastoring churches in Colorado he served on the Executive Board of the Colorado Convention several years and at the time he left there he was chairman of the program committee, a member of the administrative and executive committees and active in the local association. Johns was elected to serve as a member of the Committee on Boards at the Southern Baptist Convention in June of this year. Writing is another ministry in which Harrison is involved. He has written for numerous publications and has written a three-session unit on growing in worship for publication by the Church Training Department of the Sunday School Board in Young Adults in Training October-December, 1977. He and his wife, Barbara, who is a native of Harrisburg, are parents of two children.



Harrison Johns

Ordination services for **Kerry Pool** were held at the Brumley Church in Conway on Oct. 24. E. B. Lancaster, pastor, was in charge of the service. J. A. Kuehn, Director of Missions for

Faulkner Association, led the questioning and ordination prayer. Mrs. Wanda Stanton was in charge of special music with John Evans delivering the ordination sermon and charge. Others participating were Bill Evans and Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Shelby.

Steve Wilkes has been called as pastor of Black Oak Church in Marked Tree. Wilkes, a student at Mid-America Seminary in Memphis, is married to the former Carol Cameron of Gadsden, Ala.

H. Lee Lewis of Little Rock was in Jonesboro on Oct. 31 where he filled the pulpit at North Main Church. His son, Bill Lewis, is pastor of the church. There were 455 in attendance for the "Great Day in the Morning" services.

Harold W. Hodgson was ordained into the ministry by the Gillham Church on Oct. 24. Jerry Hill served as moderator with A. G. Escott leading the questioning. The charge was given by E. B. White, and Royce Litchfield delivered the ordination message. Hodgson has been called as pastor of First Church in Petty, Tex.

Bill Whitener has been called as pastor of First Church in Concord. A senior at Mid-America Seminary in Memphis, Whitener is married to the former Mildred C. Tull of Stillwell, Kans.

Ken Pegram has been called as pastor of Marion Church. Pegram, a former full-time evangelist, came to the Marion Church from Memphis where he was serving as staff evangelist at Speedway Terrace Church in Memphis. Pegram is married to the former Beverly June Taylor of Memphis and is a student at Mid-America Seminary.

Speaker tells education, music staffers about overcoming stress

Members of the Arkansas Baptist Religious Education Association heard Bob Dale offer some suggestions for overcoming stress as they encounter pressure points in their ministry. Dale, who is supervisor of the Career Guidance Section of the Sunday School Board's Church Administration Department, told the education and music staffers how he had overcome stress in his own life.

The group, which now has 68 members, met Nov. 16 at First Church, Little Rock, and elected Lew King of Eastside Church, Ft. Smith, as their president. He served last year as first vice president. Named first vice president and president-elect was Jess Sutton of Van Buren. Charles Mayo of Benton was elected second vice president and Freddie Pike of No. Little Rock was named secretary-treasurer.



R. E. Association officers for 1976-77 include (left) Freddie Pike, Jess Sutton, and Lew King.

Church Staff Wives hear of woman's sight 'miracle'

Mrs. Jerry Wilcox of Lakeshore Drive Church in Little Rock was elected president of Arkansas Church Staff Wives when the organization held its annual luncheon-meeting on Nov. 16.

The meeting was held at Park Hill Church, North Little Rock, in conjunction with the annual state convention.

Elected to serve with Mrs. Wilcox for the next year were Mrs. J. W. Adams of Beech Street Church, Texarkana, vice-president; Mrs. Jerre Hassell of First Church, Stuttgart, secretary. Mrs. Ron Ford of Central Church, North Little Rock, and Mrs. Amon Baker of Immanuel Church, Little Rock, were named co-chairmen of the social committee.

The slate of officers was presented by Mrs. Bobbie Sparkman. Others serving on the nominating committee were Mrs. Don Cooper and Mrs. Ford.

Mrs. Jerry Warmath, out-going president, introduced the officers and also gave a brief history on the organization which was formed in 1949.

Mrs. John Wright was in charge of the program introduction. Special music was presented by the Singing Women of Arkansas directed by Mrs. Robert Pilcher, after which Mrs. Acie Ford of Huttig gave a testimony on the miracle performed by God in her life. Mrs. Ford, who had been blind since the age of 19, said "that the Lord completely restored

her sight at 12:30 a.m. on Aug. 26, 1972, after her husband, who is pastor of First Church, Huttig, prayed that the Lord restore her sight if it was in his will."

She said that though they had prayed this same prayer for a number of years that when they both first knew that she could see that it was unbelievable. Mrs. Ford told what a great joy it was to see

her husband and daughter, Sharon, for the first time. She said that now each day she tries to live so that her life might touch others in a way the Lord would want her to.

A fellowship hour directed by Otho Hesterly of Pulaski Heights Church in Little Rock preceded the luncheon. Mrs. Willard Zeiser led the invocation.



New officers of Church Staff Wives are (left to right) Mrs. Jerre Hassell of Stuttgart, secretary; Mrs. J. W. Adams of Texarkana, vice-president; Mrs. Jerry Wilcox of Little Rock, president; and Mrs. Ron Ford of North Little Rock and Mrs. Amon Baker of Little Rock, social co-chairmen.

Soviet church-state relations improve, Russian Baptists say

by Erwin L. McDonald
ABN Editor Emeritus

Marked improvement in church-state relations in Soviet Russia was reported by two Russian Baptist leaders on a recent visit to Arkansas.

Michael Zhidkov, senior pastor of the Moscow Baptist Church and vice president of the Baptist World Alliance, and Rev. Alexei Bichkov, general secretary of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the U.S.S.R., said that Russians enjoy freedom of worship. But they made a distinction between freedom of worship and freedom of religion.

The Russian government places no controls or restrictions on services which religious groups conduct in their places of worship, but churches would not be permitted to become politically involved, they said.

"Ministers are permitted complete freedom in deciding content of their sermons," Pastor Zhidkov said. "We make no compromise in preaching that it is only through the power of God in Christ that persons are made into new creatures."

Although the churches place no

restrictions on Communists attending their services, they would not consider receiving any as church members without their professions of faith in Christ as Savior, Zhidkov said.

"We occasionally have Communists converted to Christianity," he said. "And while we do not require that such persons renounce Communism, there is no way for a Christian to continue to practice the teachings of Communism."

Members of the Communist party are not permitted to be affiliated with any religious faith, Bichkov said.

One of the most encouraging recent developments for Russian Christians was the lifting of the ban of the government against the printing or distribution of Bibles, the visitors said.

They cited the recent receipt of 3,000 Bibles and 30,000 hymnals from the United States, items which until now have gone into Russia only by smuggling.

Through arrangements with the United Bible Society and the Baptist World Alliance, 50,000 Bibles and 70,000 New Testaments were printed recently

in Russia, marking what is expected to be a new era, the ministers reported.

Asked for their reactions to the recent election of a fellow Baptist — Jimmy Carter — to the presidency of the United States, the ministers said they were hoping for continued good relations between their country and the United States, particularly in the area of munitions control.

Widespread study of English as an additional language among the Russian people was cited as evidence of good will among Russians toward Americans.

Asked about the status of Baptists in Russia, Secretary Bichkov said there are approximately 5,000 churches of the Baptist faith at this time, with memberships totaling about 500,000.

"We are enjoying slow but steady growth," he said, "including all age groups."

Church buildings are provided by the government, he said. Some Baptist congregations have been assigned stately temples formerly occupied (before the Communist Revolution) by the Orthodox Church. Some of these structures have sanctuaries with seating capacities ranging up to 5,000.

In instances where churches erect their buildings at their own expense, the buildings are deeded to the state, which in turn releases them to the churches, at no additional cost.

Asked how Russian Baptists differ from American Baptists, Zhidkov said that the Russian Baptists "are not as humble as you Americans — they take the front seats when they go to church."

Dr. Daniel Grant, president of Ouachita University, on whose invitation the Russian leaders came to the state, told of experiences he and Mrs. Grant had on a visit with the Russian Baptists in the U.S.S.R. last summer.

"One thing we learned," said Grant, smilingly, "was that if you want to get a seat in a Russian church you have to go an hour ahead of schedule. Russian Baptists attend the services of their churches on a regular basis, and the churches are always filled."

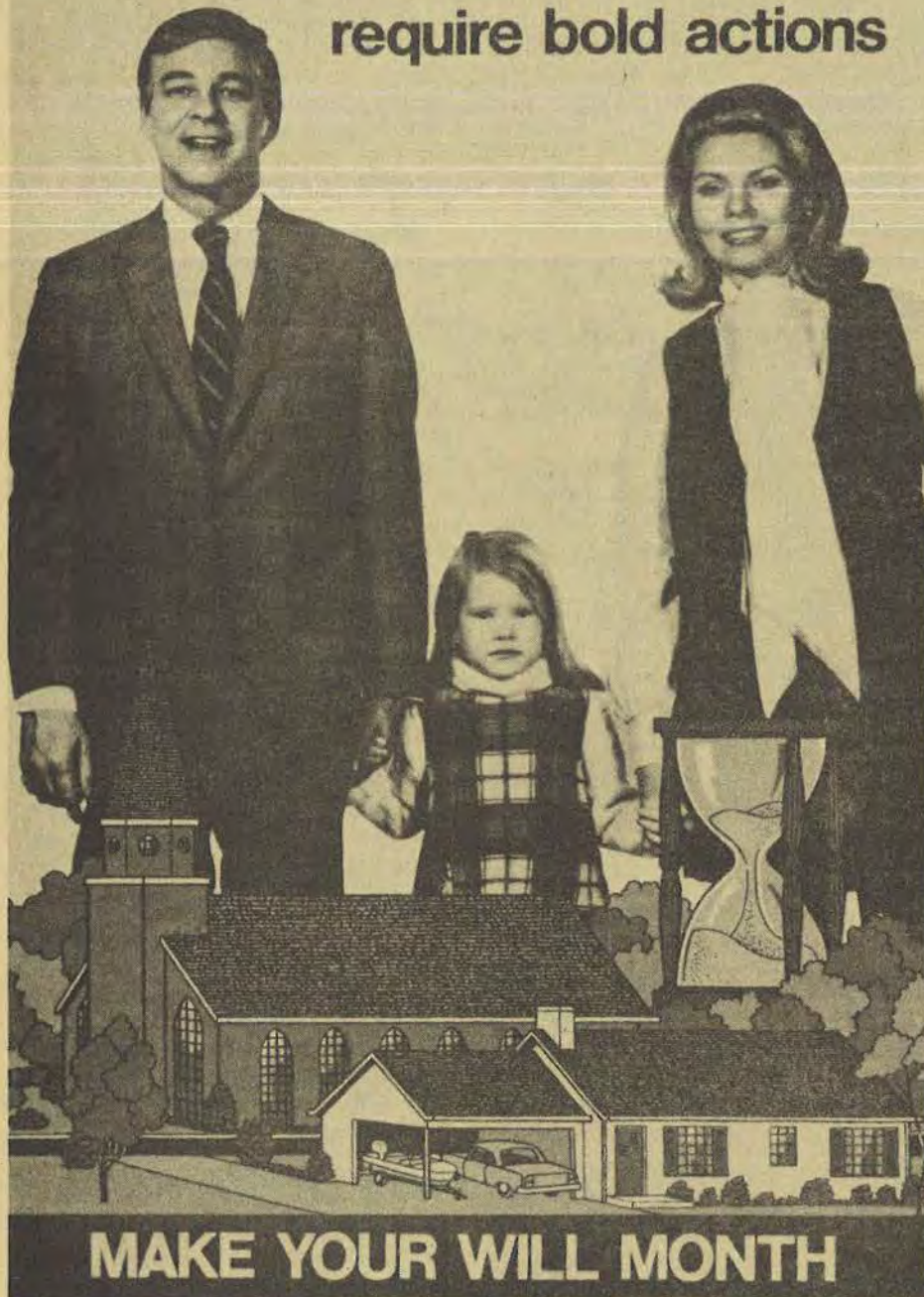
The visiting ministers were accompanied by Robert Denny, executive secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, who arranged for their three-week visit to the States. They spoke to the Arkansas Baptist Pastors Conference and to the student body of Ouachita University and brought official greetings to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention during its annual session.



Michael Zhidkov (left photo), senior pastor of the Moscow Baptist Church, and Alexei Bichkov, general secretary of the Baptist council in the Soviet Union, brought greetings to the Tuesday evening Convention session. (ABN photos)

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Having a will is a vital part of stewardship. It is a part of caring for one's family and it provides a way to make a charitable gift from one's estate.

Throughout the year, the Arkansas Baptist Foundation staff offers assistance to churches desiring such a program. Special emphasis is given in January of each year.

Very shortly, each pastor will receive a poster, a sample of a bulletin insert, and other related material. An order card will be provided for securing these materials in quantity. The accompanying picture illustrates the art work that will be used in the 1977 material. — Harry D. Trulove, Executive Director, Arkansas Baptist Foundation, Box 552, Little Rock, Ark. 72203



This is just one scene from a Royal Ambassador Father-Son Banquet held at Grand Avenue church in Ft. Smith.

According to John Matthews, Associational Royal Ambassador Leader, the night was filled with good food (just ask Shawn Bernard), hilarious entertainment and some great fellowship between boys and their dads.

During Royal Ambassador Week in November there were perhaps many activities of the same nature in churches and other associations.

If your church did not observe Royal Ambassador Week, why not plan some special event for the boys and dads, now. It is never too late for men and Royal Ambassadors to get together. — C. H. Seaton, Director

High Attendance Day hits 60 percent

NASHVILLE (BP) — Nearly 4.4 million persons, 60 percent of all Southern Baptists enrolled in Sunday School, were present Sunday, Oct. 31, on "High Attendance Day" across the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

While representing a larger than average attendance, the figure fell short of the five million goal for that day.

On an average Sunday, approximately 52 percent of the total enrollment attends Sunday School. The 4,393,036 present on High Attendance Sunday represents almost 600,000 more than usually attend.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas had the best increase this year, with a total of 656,108 present, compared to 610,747 last year on High Attendance Sunday.



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| Association | Date | Location | Time |
|-------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Arkansas Valley | Dec. 6 | West Helena | 7:30 p.m. |
| Ashley | Dec. 6 | Mt. Olive, Crossett | 7:00 p.m. |
| Bartholomew | Nov. 29 | Second, Monticello | 7:30 p.m. |
| Benton County | Dec. 6 | First, Siloam Springs | 7:30 p.m. |
| Big Creek | Dec. 13 | Mt. Zion | 7:30 p.m. |
| Black River | Nov. 22 | Diaz | 7:30 p.m. |
| Buckner | Dec. 6 | First, Mansfield | 7:30 p.m. |
| Caddo River | Dec. 6 | First, Oden | 7:00 p.m. |
| Calvary | Dec. 6 | Temple, Searcy | 7:00 p.m. |
| Carey | Dec. 6 | First, Fordyce | 7:15 p.m. |
| Caroline | Dec. 6 | First, Ward | 7:00 p.m. |
| Centennial | Nov. 29 | First, DeWitt | 7:30 p.m. |
| Central | Dec. 7 | Highland Heights, Benton | 7:00 p.m. |
| Clear Creek | Dec. 6 | Lamar and Oak Grove | 7:30 p.m. |
| Concord | Dec. 13 | Grand Avenue, Ft. Smith | 7:30 p.m. |
| Conway-Perry | Dec. 5 | Thornburg | 2:00 p.m. |
| Current-Gains | Nov. 29 | First, Corning | 7:30 p.m. |
| Dardanelle-Russellville | Dec. 6 | Fair Park, Russellville | 7:00 p.m. |
| Delta | Dec. 6 | Kelso | 7:30 p.m. |
| Faulkner | Dec. 6 | Pickles Gap, Conway | 7:00 p.m. |
| Greene County | Dec. 6 | East Side, Paragould | 7:00 p.m. |
| Harmony | Dec. 6 | Central, Pine Bluff | 7:30 p.m. |
| Independence | Dec. 6 | First, Batesville | 7:00 p.m. |
| Liberty | Dec. 6 | Maple Avenue, Smackover | 7:30 p.m. |
| Little Red River | Nov. 22 | Palestine | 7:30 p.m. |
| Little River | Dec. 6 | Kern Heights, DeQueen | 7:30 p.m. |
| Mississippi County | Dec. 6 | Trinity, Blytheville | 7:30 p.m. |
| Mt. Zion | Dec. 6 | North Main, Jonesboro | 7:00 p.m. |
| North Arkansas | Dec. 6 | First, Green Forest | 7:30 p.m. |
| North Pulaski | Dec. 6 | Baring Cross, North Little Rock | 7:00 p.m. |
| Ouachita | Nov. 29 | First, Mena | 7:00 p.m. |
| Pulaski | Dec. 6 | Olivet, Little Rock | 7:00 p.m. |
| Red River | Dec. 7 | Third Street, Arkadelphia | 7:00 p.m. |
| Rocky Bayou | Dec. 6 | Belview, Melbourne | 7:00 p.m. |
| Searcy | Dec. 10 | First, Leslie | 7:00 p.m. |
| Southwest Ark. | Nov. 22 | First, Stamps | 7:30 p.m. |
| Tri-County | Dec. 6 | First, West Memphis | 7:30 p.m. |
| Trinity | Dec. 6 | First, Trumann | 7:15 p.m. |
| Van Buren | Dec. 6 | Rupert | 7:00 p.m. |
| Washington-Madison | Dec. 6 | Elmdale, Springdale | 7:30 p.m. |
| White River | Dec. 6 | First, Yellville | 7:30 p.m. |

Tough questions about the Cooperative Program

(7th in a series of 10)

Question: What is wrong with a church directly supporting those mission causes of most concern to it, rather than pooling its gifts with other churches through the Cooperative Program?

Answer: There is nothing wrong with

any church giving direct support to any mission cause, provided in doing so the church does not cease to try to implement the Great Commission on a world wide basis. Most churches that try to send their mission gifts directly to a mission cause find that they are unable to

Child Care

Thanksgiving offering meets real needs

—Two children are from a broken home; neither parent wants them.

—Three young children were deserted by their mother eight years ago and left with an alcoholic father who doesn't want them.

—A 14-year-old girl is on drugs, skips school and runs away from home.

—Three teenage children now live with a neighbor because their step-father killed their mother, then himself.

These are real children with real problems. Who will reach out to help them?

Who will care enough to give them a chance?

These are only a few of the needs Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care workers come in contact with every day. Children like these need Christian love, understanding and professional care to help them experience mental, spiritual and emotional healing.

Perhaps we can best understand the needs of these children by seeing life through the eyes of a former resident of the Children's Home who expressed her feelings in poetry.

This child is scared and all alone.

Won't you show him how to get home?

*This child is not very smart,
So please give him a heart.*

*What would you do if you
Were this child all alone and blue?*

*This child wants to share
All his love with you. So please care.*

*This child just needs a chance in life.
He can't bear the pain. He can't handle the strife.*

*Won't you help him to understand?
Won't you please give him a hand?*

*This child is not happy in any way.
He needs your help just in one day.*

*If you give him just one day's help
You'll feel the hurt and pain he has felt.*

*Don't you see what is happening to him?
His life has nothing bright; it is always dim.*

*He just sits around and watches us
If he could only find someone he could trust.*

*If we would just give a little of our time
He would be in our hearts, yours and mine.*

Arkansas Baptists have a history of caring — caring enough to reach out and touch children in need. This year the need is greater and we must reach a little further to meet that need. The Thanksgiving Offering provides one of our greatest opportunities to reach out to these children. About one-third of our support comes directly from the churches, mostly through the Thanksgiving Offering. We hope that every church in Arkansas will have a part in our child care ministry this year through the Thanksgiving Offering. If every church would adopt and meet the goal of only \$1 per resident member the reach of Arkansas Baptists could be extended to meet many needs now unmet.

Please give special emphasis to this offering in your church this year. It may be just the help some child needs. — Johnny G. Biggs, Executive Director, Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services

support more than one or two or a very few causes and ministries. This results in the missionary vision of the church members becoming restricted and limited.

In direct giving there is always the potential danger that a particular cause may be more generously supported than some other causes that are lesser known or less appealing. By pooling our resources through the Cooperative Program, our elected leaders can prayerfully determine the most equitable use and distribution of the funds for all causes.

There are also some desirable ministries that simply are too large or complex for one church, or even a small group of churches, to support. Only as a large group of churches cooperate together can some of these ministries ever become effective. Those churches that only give directly to certain causes usually have no part whatsoever in many of the ministries effectively supported by Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

One major advantage of the Cooperative Program is that every church member, no matter what the size of his personal contribution, can feel that he is having a vital part in every phase of Southern Baptist mission work and denominational ministries. — Roy F. Lewis, Secretary of Stewardship-Cooperative Program



NEW COLORADO EDITOR: Larry R. Jerden, 32, associate editor of "World Mission Journal" published by the Brotherhood Commission, has been elected editor of the "Rocky Mountain Baptist" and public relations director of the Colorado Baptist General Convention. Jerden, former assistant editor of the "Baptist Standard" in Texas, succeeds O. L. Bayless who retires Feb. 28. (BP Photo)

Hymnal companion gives background information

NASHVILLE — Charlotte Elliott was not feeling well that night. An illness 13 years earlier had left her an invalid. Her brother, an Anglican minister, and the rest of her family were at a church bazaar. Charlotte stayed behind, tossing and turning in her bed. In the middle of the night, she awoke and began to write "for her own comfort the formulas of her faith."

The words she wrote that night, almost 150 years ago, now are known by millions around the world. Charlotte Elliott was the author of the hymn "Just As I Am."

In his book *Companion to Baptist Hymnal*, William J. Reynolds provides background information on the hymns that appear in *Baptist Hymnal*. *Companion to Baptist Hymnal*, which is published by Broadman Press, is for the layman and his family as well as the worship service leader. Reynolds, secretary of the church music department, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, served as general editor for *Baptist Hymnal* and is well known in the church music profession as a composer.

Part one of the book traces the history of Baptist hymnody in America. Reynolds discusses the different hymnals Baptists have used and the different influences on the hymns themselves. In part two, the hymns from *Baptist Hymnal* are listed in alphabetical order. The listing includes background information about the text and the tune of the hymn.

The third part contains an alphabetical listing of the composers and authors and a brief biographical sketch of each.

R. W. Stringfield, director of music publishing for the Lillenas Publishing Co., said the approach Reynolds took "is practical and the information is relevant, not dry scholarly discussions which seem meaningless to laymen."

James Rawlings Sydnor, Richmond, Va., outstanding church musician, Presbyterian Church, U.S., said, "It is a thorough and useful handbook for the new *Baptist Hymnal*. You have managed . . . to give enough useful information in a clear, interesting manner so that busy pastors and musicians can readily utilize it."

The book is available through Baptist and general bookstores.

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First Sunday School standard recognition

(First in a series)

If an early return is a good indicator, then the new standard of excellence for Arkansas Baptist Sunday Schools is a good thing.

First Church, Augusta, Lloyd Bowen Sunday School Director and Eugene Ray, pastor, represent the first church to attain recognition on the basis of the new evaluation instrument, the "Standard of Excellence for Arkansas churches".

Standard recognition is an earned achievement, not a "give away" recognition. Recognition is not the primary concern in the promotion of the new Standard. Achievement of a



Hatfield

higher than average level of performing Sunday School tasks is the basic purpose and motivation behind the new Standard.

Will a church do better Sunday School work using the new Standard as a guide? This is a fair question and should be seriously considered.

"If . . . then . . ." is a good way to help find answers. For example, in a family a child may want to go to the circus. At the same time a parent may want the child to perform the chore of raking the leaves in the yard. The parent says, "John, if you rake the leaves by noon Saturday, then you may go to the circus that afternoon." If it highly likely the leaves will be raked and the circus enjoyed by John. "If . . . then . . ." is a good formula. Let's apply it to a church and the new Standard. — Lawson Hatfield, state Sunday School director

English preacher will be Evangelism Conference Bible teacher

Francis W. Dixon will be the Bible teacher for the Celebration Evangelism Conference Jan. 24-25, 1977, at First Church, Little Rock. His messages will be of the devotional type designed to help church staff members in their spiritual lives. While he and his wife, Nancy, are on a three-month tour of the United States he will have 13 engagements in Arkansas, Oklahoma and Tennessee.



Dixon

Tommy Hinson, pastor of First Church, West Memphis, introduced me to this great preacher's ministry. I appreciate it very much. Dixon was minister of the Lansdowne Baptist Church, Bournemouth, England, for 29 years. His strength in the local church was a Bible teaching and evangelistic ministry that soon gained much wider notices. Through the extension ministries of the church, The Lansdowne Bible School and Postal Fellowship (with a world-wide postal membership of 36,000), The Lansdowne Words of Life Tape Recordings, and the

Lansdowne Magazine; the work of our Lord through the ministry of this man has genuinely become international in scope.

In addition to these channels of outreach from his church in Bournemouth, during his long pastorate Dixon visited and ministered in Australia, New Zealand, India, Canada, the United States, Jamaica, Bermuda, South Africa and Rhodesia for "Keswick" and Bible teaching conventions.

He has been a regular speaker at the English Keswick over the past 25 years. Just over a year ago Dixon relinquished the oversight of the Bournemouth congregation in order to be free for a traveling and preaching ministry.

He is currently preparing an extended series of paperbacks containing sermon studies; several of these already have been published.

The Conference will begin at 1:45 p.m. Monday, Jan. 24, and close Tuesday night, Jan. 25. The three conventions that have been in the Life and Liberty Campaign will celebrate this conference together.

A nursery will be provided for infant to four years of age. — Jesse S. Reed, Director of Evangelism

'Big Cat' Williams finds Christ's turf not artificial

by Dan Martin

GREEN BAY, Wisc. (BP) — At age 13, the world of Clarence Williams — now of Green Bay Packers football fame — fell apart.

Williams is black. He lived in South Texas and had to leave his home community to attend school in another town because there was no school for blacks where he lived.

He was, like most adolescent boys — gawky, gangly, awkward. As if he didn't have enough problems, his father died as the horrified teenager watched helplessly.

Williams' father had been a Baptist pastor of a church in Brazoria, Tex., near Houston.

"I grew up in church . . . I had always gone to church," said Williams. "They took me more than I wanted to, but they said go, I had to go."

Williams was one of nine children. "I always depended on my father for a livelihood . . . for everything. I knew my father and mother would take care of me."

But the youngster's sense of security was shaken with the death of his father.

"He was preaching at an associational meeting in Freeport. I was in the choir, right behind him. He had a heart attack and fell right in front of me. When he hit the floor, he was dead," Williams said.

"I never thought anything like that could happen . . . to somebody I was depending on. After he was buried, my mamma said, 'Son, if you ever have trusted God, you have to trust him now . . . If you ever have believed, you have to believe now.'"

But it was tough. "I didn't know what to think. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know who would take care of us. But mamma said we have to trust in the Lord."

Williams cherished a dream of going to college, of making something of himself.

"My mother didn't have enough money to do it, but what happened was that my high school coach saw I had potential. He was kind of like a father to me. He kept me from going wrong. He made me participate in three sports, football, basketball and track.

"He kept me busy . . . kept me intact."

In high school, Williams was 6-feet, 5-inches tall, but weighed only 205 pounds. He was tall and gangly. He made all-state in basketball, and also excelled in football.

"Then, by the help of the Lord, I received a college scholarship. All of this was his work, not mine. When my father 'passed' I would never have thought I could go to college on an athletic scholarship."

Williams went to Prairie View A&M, a small all-black school near Houston. He became a starter in football and in his senior year was elected team captain and selected to a small-college All-American list.

"I showed a little potential, I guess, and the pro teams started sending me questionnaires," he said. "I couldn't see myself as a pro . . . I saw those guys play on TV every Sunday and couldn't imagine me doing that . . ."

But he was drafted in 1968 by the Dallas Cowboys.

"They had been in the playoffs. They had defensive linemen like Willie Townes, Jethro Pugh and Bob Lilly. They didn't need somebody like me."

Williams made the taxi (reserve)

squad in 1969. He was traded in 1970 to the Green Bay Packers, in the National Football League, where he soon became a starter at defensive end.

"My career really started when my father 'passed.' I think I had to take on new life, had to believe in somebody beyond human beings. You can be as good as you want to be when you ask the Lord for help. I try now to depend on the Lord for everything," Williams said.

For almost seven years, he has been a member of Highland Crest Church, a Southern Baptist Convention-affiliated congregation in Green Bay. He says he first went to the church because it was close — and "friendly" — for him and his wife, Icy.

Williams works with Royal Ambassador boys, often helps with ushering duties and takes part in the lay ministry to prisoners in the nearby maximum security penitentiary.

His pastor, William Jenkins, calls Williams "above average in his Christian life



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and witness." Williams, himself, says he tries to present his Christian witness by "living a life. It is hard for me to go out and talk to somebody, but I try to set an example."

Recently, Williams played a part in helping Fred Carr, the all-pro linebacker for the Packers. On Williams' advice, Carr visited Jenkins and Emmanuel McCall, director of the Home Mission Board's Cooperative Work with National Baptists, who was in Green Bay for a weekend revival.

Carr, who admitted having personal problems, made a profession of faith. He was baptized into membership in the church.

Williams has grown from the gawky, gangly, awkward boy of 13 into a confident, assured man.

"People ask me what I'm going to do when I get out of pro ball. Well, I don't know. I have some things in mind, but I want to do whatever the Lord has in mind. He's been taking care of me this far. I've got confidence in him. I don't think he's going to let me down. He has something and he'll make a way."

Former missionary voices Hotline

RICHMOND (BP) — The voice of Southern Baptists' Foreign Missions Hotline for the first time, a woman and a former missionary.

Martha Belote, former missionary to China, Hawaii and Hong Kong helps to provide the latest news of Baptist work in more than 80 countries around the world, and also gives everyday thoughts and prayer requests of Southern Baptist missionaries on the field.

Mrs. Belote is deputation coordinator for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and is in charge of scheduling missionary speakers for conferences and camps. Her husband, James D. Belote, served as the board's secretary for East Asia from 1968 until his death in March 1975.

The Missions Hotline began its sixth consecutive year on Nov. 15 and will run through Dec. 15. The prerecorded message, which will be changed each Thursday, will be available for the price of a three-minute station-to-station call to Richmond, Va., to (804) 355-6581. If a crisis occurs between recordings, the current tape will be re-recorded to include updated information.

Information for the Missions Hotline comes from the board's eight area secretaries and other staff members; from field representatives stationed in each mission area; and from the missionaries themselves.



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Resignation, officer election, speech highlight meeting

MEMPHIS (BP) — The resignation of Georgia trustee Jimmy Carter, the election of William E. Hardy Jr., of Columbus, Miss., as the new board chairman, and a keynote address by a national women's leader highlighted the two-day meeting of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

U.S. President-elect Carter, who defeated Gerald Ford on Nov. 2, listed the continuing demand for his time outside of Georgia as his reason for stepping down as Georgia Baptist representative on the commission.

Hardy was chosen chairman of the agency for a one-year term without opposition, moving up from recording secretary. He succeeds P. A. Stevens of Louisville, Ky., who served two terms as chairman. Hardy is minister of education at First Church, Columbus, Miss.

Other new officers of the Brotherhood Commission include Everett Lemay, pastor of Park Avenue Church, Mt. Vernon, Ill., vice chairman; and Ernie Castro, a Wichita, Kan., education consultant, recording secretary. Executive director Glendon McCullough was re-elected treasurer.

Christians in the United States fail to respond to world needs "because our minds are bogged by information overload and because our hearts are suffering from carrying underload," the executive director of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) said.

Miss Carolyn Weatherford lamented a sense of apathy that she said seems to exist among some churches and the U.S. in general.

The WMU executive told the Brotherhood leaders she was excited, however, as she traveled across the nation and world and found church after church where the Baptist Men and Women are involved in missions.

She was especially excited, Miss Weatherford said, about the growth of Baptist churches among the Quiche Indians in Guatemala, which she visited recently.

Twenty Baptist congregations exist among the Quiche Indians, and since July, there have been 110 new believers to join the churches, she said.

The Quiche Baptist churches, with a total membership of two thousand members, have a goal of increasing membership to 100,000 in the next 10 years, she said.

"That means every believer will be responsible for winning 50 people to Christ in the next 10 years," she said.

"Can we say the same about churches

in (the U.S.) America or about our own church?" she asked.

In too many cases, she responded, Baptist churches in the U.S. have lost the excitement of the natural response to faith in Christ that the Quiche Indians demonstrate.

"No church," she observed, "can become more than the individual members want it to become."

Miss Weatherford expressed appreciation for a "new sense of cooperation" between the Brotherhood and WMU organizations nationally. She reported that the staff of the two agencies held a joint-planning meeting in September and that Brotherhood and WMU will have a joint leadership conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, July 9-15, 1977.

In introducing Miss Weatherford, Brotherhood Commission Executive Director Glendon McCullough praised the new look in creativity in WMU that Miss Weatherford has brought to the missions education agency since assuming the WMU executive directorship in 1974.

In another action, William Clemmons of Louisville was named Baptist Men's consultant in the program section of the agency, effective Nov. 15.

In a business session, the trustees approved a tentative budget of \$2.1 million for the 1977-78 fiscal year.

The funds will be used, in part, to train 10,000 Brotherhood leaders how to plan and conduct mission action projects, to confront college and high school seniors with missions career opportunities, to help enlist a minimum of 5,000 lay missions volunteers, and to present world missions at a national conference through "Missions Night Out" and prayer projects and through the SBC's Cooperative Program unified budget.

The agency is requesting \$600,000 in Cooperative Program funds, up \$125,000 from 1976-77. The remainder of the budget would come from sales of periodicals and merchandise.

Other action included the authorization of a survey to identify attitudes about Brotherhood work and suggestions for improving mission activities among Baptist men and boys. It would be conducted by the research services department of the SBC Sunday School Board, Nashville.

The trustees also approved 1977-78 agencies goals calling for increasing to 17,500 the number of churches with Brotherhood work, enlisting 1,450,000 persons in world mission conferences,

involving 3,000 churches in lay renewal activities, raising total circulation of mission periodicals to 300,000, and increasing the number of men and boys in Brotherhood work to 575,000.

The trustees asked the agency staff to work with other SBC agencies in searching for solutions to world hunger, to develop a coordinated education approach to the problem, and to consider a specific time on the Baptist denominational calendar for focusing on world hunger.



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COLLINS WORLD

Our ministry of reconciliation

Nov. 28, 1976

II Corinthians 5:18
Romans 1:16; 15:8-21

This is the last lesson in the series entitled, "The Life of the Reconciled." We have considered already "The Reconciled Life" and "Walking in Love." As we study "Our Ministry of Reconciliation," we will observe the motive for our min-



Morgan

istry, the magnetism for our ministry and the manner of our ministry. The title of this lesson comes from the memory verse (II Cor. 5:18). God has "... given to us the ministry of reconciliation."

The motive for our ministry (Rom. 15:8-12)

No wall has ever been erected as difficult to remove as that which had been erected between Jew and Gentile. If we can find motive to remove that barrier in the Christian faith, we have the motive for our ministry. Paul wrote the church at Rome to enlist their support in his ministry to people who lived farther west. He justified his mission to the Gentiles by his claim that he had been called to be an apostle to the Gentiles.

As we interpret what Paul said, we find that the prime motive for our ministry is Christ himself. Jesus came first to be a minister to the circumcision (the Jews), but his ministry also included the Gentiles. They too were to give glory to God. Jesus was God's Word of love to all unreconciled men. By reconciling men to himself, he reconciled men to each other. Jesus' ministry is our ministry. His concern must be our concern. Our love for Christ constrains us from evil and propels us into a ministry designed to bring all men to God. Through us God creates one new man out of two (Eph. 2:14, 15).

Our second motive is the Word of God. Psalms 69:9; 18:50; 117:1; Deuteronomy 32:43; and Isaiah 11:1, 10 provided Paul his text. The New Testament even more forcefully teaches us to be ministers of reconciliation (Matt. 28:19, 20; II Cor. 5:17-21).

Magnetism for our ministry (Rom. 15:13)

In this age television can bring into our homes super salespersons with unlimited funds and spellbinding means of communication. Mediocre ministries by bantam Baptists cannot compete with this media. But the hungry hearts of

men cry out for men of personal magnetism. Verse 13 of our study shares attributes which will provide the winsome appeal necessary to reconcile men.

First, there is the magnetism of joy. What an infectious quality! Pleasure depends on fickle outer circumstances. Joy flows from within the one who is aware of the living Lord who said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Second, there is the charm of peace. Peace is not the mild center of a hurricane but assurance in the midst of the storm. Two things keep man from knowing peace. One is inner tension which pulls him apart. When civil war rages within life, there is no peace. Another is worry about external things. The threat of atomic holocaust, economic limitation, death, etc. cause much concern in our age. Some people become so distraught they say, "Stop the world; I want to get off." Suicide ranks among the major killers. The answer to this dilemma is the assurance of the inner presence of Jesus who taught, "God is working in all things to bring about good in the lives of those who love him" (Rom. 8:28).

Third, there is the allurement of faith. Faith is not intellectual assent. It is commitment to something or someone greater than yourself. The faith mentioned here is commitment to Jesus who said, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." The reconciler lives by this type faith.

Fourth, there is the infectious attraction of hope. At no time in history have the avant-garde shapers of philosophy reached such levels of despair. More and more cynicism pervades the arts. With all their intelligence these men have no knowledge of God. No wonder they have no hope! Knowledge of God's grace gives birth to hope. On one occasion Paul said, "Would you like to know what is the hope of glory? Christ in you; that's the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

Fifth, there is the dynamism of power. Faith, hope, joy, and peace are noble ideals, but to become effective, ideals must become experiences. Power is the force which actualizes these qualities in the Christian. Paul said, "For I am not

ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). God provides the magnetism for winsome personality.

Faith, hope, joy, peace, and power are the qualities which enable us to compete with the super salespersons. These are the attributes for which all men hunger. When bantam Baptists become colossal Christians these qualities will draw people like a magnet to the one who possesses them. Then we become signposts pointing men to the source of our success. This is our ministry of reconciliation.

The manner of our ministry (Rom. 15:14-21)

In this section Paul became intensely personal, sharing attitudes about his ministry of reconciliation. In his example we see the manner of our ministry.

First, we must express our ministry in a polite manner (14, 15). Paul recognized the spiritual insight of the Romans. If you commend someone for the good they accomplish, they will more readily accept the condemnation you may express (Rev. 2, 3). If we are to lead people to reconciliation, we must avoid offending them when possible.

Second, we must express our ministry in a priestly manner. Paul spoke of offering up the Gentiles to God. This is a priestly function. Two things stand out in a priest's work. He represents God to man through precept and example. He represents man to God through interceding for him. We succeed in this role when we are servants of Christ, share that which he shares with us, and fully proclaim his gospel. Many lost people become acceptable to God and sanctified by him when we function as priests.

Third, we need a pioneer spirit (20, 21). Paul searched for people who had never heard the gospel. Most of us never go to lands where people have not heard. But many in our own areas have never really heard. Traditional words have made no impact. Many foundational words our predecessors used have become meaningless stereotypes. We must find new, meaningful ways upon which to build our ministry. We must love deeply and communicate well.

Our ministry of reconciliation is sharing in the compassion of Jesus Christ. There is no other way to live the Christian life. Let's do it.

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Belonging to each other

Nov. 28, 1976

Acts 4:32-37, Romans
12:9-16; 15:1-2, 5-7

Just a few years ago only those in prison had a number for a name. Now we are almost a nameless society. Credit cards, bank records, government files, all carry identifying numbers with this instruction, "In writing us please include your identification number."



Cheatham

This life style has been transferred to the neighborhood, the school, the job and even the church. The person next door, or across the street is unknown, but for a house number. The person in the pew beside us is known only by a smile. We are afraid or do not want to know about these faces for it might mean getting involved.

The New Testament Church grew quickly to over 3000 believers. This rapid growth did not destroy the individual touch with the life of its members. Their concern is a model for us to study and imitate.

Sharing (Acts 4:32-37)

It's easy to understand how so many Christians could have such a spirit of unity when you read, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost (4:31)." Though there were different ages, occupations, nationalities, etc., they acted as though they had known each other for years. Whatever their differences, they were set aside because of their oneness in Christ.

They shared a common God, a common Saviour, a common spiritual experience, and it is logical they should share what they had materially. Publicly they declared their willingness to share their material possessions so the needs of others could be met. As they did this, the church prospered in its reputation with others and received many blessings of grace from God.

These early Christians knew their sharing was the key to survival. They were a minority with few legal rights. Their allegiance to Christ has cost them dearly. The sacrificial sharing by fellow believers made their circumstance much easier to bear.

This was more than benevolence. It

was the giving of themselves in a way which expected no praise or reward in return. It was based upon a mutual trust and faith in each other. Those who shared knew that their possessions came from God and those who received looked upon their gifts as from God.

This spirit should cause us to self examine our church and Sunday School class and ask: "Do I really know the needs of the person who regularly sits next to me? Do they know me well enough to ask me to share their life? Am I willing to get involved to help them when they are in need?"

Loving (Rom. 12:9-16)

When the church gathers for worship and study it is more than the gathering of friends or church members. It is a reunion of God's family.

Verse 10 commands "we be kindly affectioned to each other." This means we are to love each other as we love the members of our immediate family. It's a love which may permit differences within the family, but will never allow outside forces to divide the family. Paul uses this term to describe the relationships which binds the children of the Heavenly Father by a tie stronger than blood.

When this emotion is expressed several wonderful things happen. Humility is expressed (vs. 10b) and there is more concern that other get any praise and reward that may be due. Many of our church problems arise over honors we think are ours that have gone to others. Instead we should be concerned with how well we are living up to our responsibilities.

This humility brings an enthusiasm to the Lord's work which will cause other members of the family to be like us (vs. 12). There will also be charity to meet the needs of others (vs. 13). Where love is only verbal it is mockery. There must be actions to prove the words.

There will be a compassion for those who hate you as well as for those who love you and allow you to help them in their times of need (vs. 15). Importance

never blinds us to hurts and the needs of others.

Love will permit a give and take attitude (vs. 16). In a family no one has his/her way all of the time and neither should this be expected in the family of God. Instead the will of God must be sought for the group.

Compassion (Rom. 15:1-2; 5-7)

Every family has strong members and weak ones. The weaker ones we often try and hide so no one is aware of the skeleton that hangs in the family closet.

The word compassion literally means to "suffer with." We are not only instructed to assist our weaker brother in Christ but to carry their failing and frailty as though they were our very own.

This implies two very important things. One that we are spiritually sound, and second we have the maturity to deal with the weakness of others in a loving, kind way. Our first impulse is to be Pharisaical in judgment and punishment. However, this only paves the way for revenge when we show our weakness.

Our help is not to be easy pity or sentimental disregarding of the issue, or even ignoring the faults in the hopes it will go away. It is to be the sharing of God's word to meet their needs.

Two rules must always be followed in pleasing or dealing with our neighbor. We must instruct in those ways which are correct in the sight of God. Also, we must direct and correct in ways which will insure spiritual growth.

It was never intended for us to please our neighbor at any cost. A compassion like that of Christ must be our theme. This attitude will create an atmosphere where the neighbor is accepted for what Christ can do for him not what someone would like to make of him.

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Attendance report

Nov. 14, 1976

| Church | Sunday School | Church Training | Church addns. | Church | Sunday School | Church Training | Church addns. |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Alexander, First | 55 | 48 | | Jacksonville | | | |
| Alpena, First | 19 | 10 | | Bayou Meto | 90 | 84 | |
| Bentonville, Central Avenue | 86 | 43 | | First | 283 | 76 | |
| Berryville | | | | Kingston | 27 | 30 | |
| First | 130 | 61 | | Lavaca, First | 266 | 117 | 1 |
| Freeman Heights | 146 | 69 | | Little Rock | | | |
| Rock Springs | 39 | 37 | | Crystal Hill | 51 | 46 | |
| Biscoe, First | 74 | 46 | | Life Line | 262 | 92 | |
| Booneville | | | | Woodlawn | | 44 | |
| First | 214 | | | Magnolia, Central | 568 | 214 | 4 |
| South Side | 75 | 50 | | Monticello, Second | 267 | 96 | 2 |
| Bryant, First Southern | 83 | 73 | 1 | Murfreesboro, First | 120 | 43 | |
| Cabot, First | 229 | 90 | 8 | Norfolk, First | 50 | 51 | |
| Camden | | | | North Little Rock, Levy | 77 | | 2 |
| Cullendale First | 532 | 158 | | Paragould | | | |
| First | 380 | 105 | | Calvary | 202 | 186 | |
| Cash, First | 105 | 46 | | East Side | 223 | 133 | |
| Charleston, First | 168 | | 2 | First | 337 | 89 | 1 |
| Conway, Second | 239 | 136 | 5 | Paris, First | 295 | 78 | |
| Crossett, Mt. Olive | 335 | 145 | | Pine Bluff | | | |
| Elkins, First | 66 | | | Centennial | 138 | 69 | |
| Forrest City, First | 475 | 50 | 4 | Central | 147 | 63 | |
| Ft. Smith | | | | East Side | 166 | 96 | 16 |
| Grand Avenue | 729 | 254 | 6 | First | 588 | 106 | |
| Mission | 9 | | | Lee Memorial | 186 | 72 | |
| Haven Heights | 209 | 147 | 5 | South Side | 456 | | 84 |
| Temple | 101 | 50 | 1 | Tucker | 16 | | |
| Trinity | 108 | 49 | | Sulphur Springs | 168 | 99 | |
| Fouke, First | 114 | 59 | | Watson Chapel | 390 | 103 | 2 |
| Gentry, First | 109 | 56 | 2 | Rogers, Immanuel | 446 | 91 | |
| Gillett, First | 52 | 16 | | Russellville | | | |
| Gillham | 54 | 37 | | First | 400 | 106 | 5 |
| Grandview | 75 | 72 | | Second | 130 | 69 | 2 |
| Green Forest, First | 127 | 52 | | Springdale | | | |
| Greenwood, First | 291 | 154 | | Berry Street | 64 | 21 | |
| Hampton, First | 142 | 77 | 1 | Caudle Avenue | 138 | 67 | 3 |
| Harrison, Woodland Heights | 75 | 57 | 1 | Elmdale | 268 | 111 | |
| Hope, Calvary | 149 | 79 | | First | 1105 | | 2 |
| Hot Springs | | | | Texarkana, Shiloh Memorial | 141 | 78 | |
| Lakeside | 96 | | | Vandervoort | 36 | 23 | |
| Memorial | 65 | 39 | | West Helena | 160 | 100 | |
| Park Place | 169 | 96 | | Wooster, First | 107 | 80 | |
| Hughes, First | 139 | 60 | | Wynne, Harris Chapel | 63 | 62 | |

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COLLINS  WORLD

Plains Church votes to end racial discrimination policy

by Robert LaFavre

PLAINS, Ga. (BP) — "There are no more closed doors at this church," said Hugh Carter, as he stood on the front steps of Plains Church following an almost three hour church conference.

Carter, deacon and church clerk, was announcing results of an agonizing decision of the church membership that both upheld the cherished Baptist tradition of congregational authority and ended racial discrimination.

Along with his announcement of the new open-door policy at the small south

glare of television spotlights and popping strobes, mixed with the clicks of cameras. They followed a confrontation which began two weeks before when a non-denominational black minister from Albany, about 45 miles from Plains, said he wanted to seek membership in the church.

When Clennon King, minister of Divine Mission in Albany, first showed up at the church, he found the doors barred and services cancelled by action of the deacons. The next Sunday services were held but King was locked out. He was outside the church again while it voted to reverse its closed door policy and said he would return on Sunday, Nov. 21, to renew his request for membership.

King's first encounter at the Plains church came two days before the presidential election in which Jimmy Carter, a member and currently an inactive deacon at the church, won his race against Gerald Ford.

While King had set up the situation with the release to the press of a letter of his intent, almost before the pastor of the church received it, he denied any political motives. He had refused a request by Edwards that he delay his appearance until after the election.

But because Edwards expressed strong opposition to a 1965 church resolution which barred "Negroes and other civil rights demonstrators" from services at the Plains church, the deacons unanimously voted to ask him to resign.

Edwards called for the full church to vote on the matter, pointing out that a Baptist church is under authority of the congregation, not its deacons. Those events set the stage for the dramatic action on Sunday, Nov. 14.

Hugh Carter, speaking on behalf of the church at its request, said, "We worked it out among ourselves."

Edwards, speaking from the same rainy and cold steps as Hugh Carter, noted: "Our church had a family problem. We settled it in a family manner. I'm grateful to the church and proud to be pastor of Plains Church. I believe that we will pull together and have an effective ministry for Jesus Christ."

When asked if he would stay on as pastor in light of the positive action of the church, Edwards said, "for the time being, yes."

Four distinct actions were taken in the almost three-hour church business meeting that was closed to all but church members. A motion to not consider a recommendation of the deacons

to fire the pastor was defeated. Many who later voted in favor of the pastor voted against the first motion so that a clear cut and well defined decision could be reached, a church member said.

A motion then to fire the pastor at once failed by a vote of 106-87. Then the "watchcare" committee was created by unanimous action and an open door policy established by a vote of 120-66.

The motion to open the doors to all people wishing to worship regardless of race was made by Jerome Ethredge, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board appointee to the French-speaking African nation of Togo. A member and former deacon chairman at the Plains church, he is in missionary orientation at nearby Pine Mountain.

James L. Sullivan of Nashville, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, joined many other Southern Baptist leaders across the U. S. in landing the church for its action. He called it "wonderful news" and said the doors of a church should be open to allow all persons to worship, regardless of race.

President-elect Jimmy Carter, who attended the church conference, expressed real joy at the action his church took. In his brief statements to newsmen and the crowd of tourists and curious onlookers outside the church, he expressed gratitude for the spirit in which the situation had been resolved and said, "I am proud of my church."

Although Carter modestly said he had been just another member of the church casting a vote against racial discrimination, insiders say he worked quietly and diligently behind the scenes to bring about reconciliation. But many others, including State Sen. Hugh Carter, made the same kind of effort, observers say.

Hugh Carter, one of the 12 deacons who originally voted to ask Bruce Edwards to resign, summed up the feeling of most of the church's membership when he said, "We all acted too hastily. I know that I am sorry that I had voted to dismiss the pastor myself. I have apologized to the pastor and the church."

The congregation has acted, its voice has been heard, and history made in a small south Georgia town, dragged into the global arena.

As Hugh Carter noted, "The church has the final vote, not the deacons, not a committee, but the church."

Robert LaFavre is associate editor of the "Christian Index," Georgia's state Baptist newspaper.

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Georgia church, he reported the congregation action to retain the services of its pastor, Bruce E. Edwards, despite a vote by its deacons to ask for his resignation.

Hugh Carter, a Georgia state senator, church chorister and cousin to President-elect Jimmy Carter, told also of another action of the church establishing a "watchcare" committee. The committee, which will be elected by the church, will "investigate persons who apply for membership at Plains Church and make recommendations to the church as to whether or not to accept that person," he said. He noted that race will not be a factor in the recommendation.

He made these revelations amid the