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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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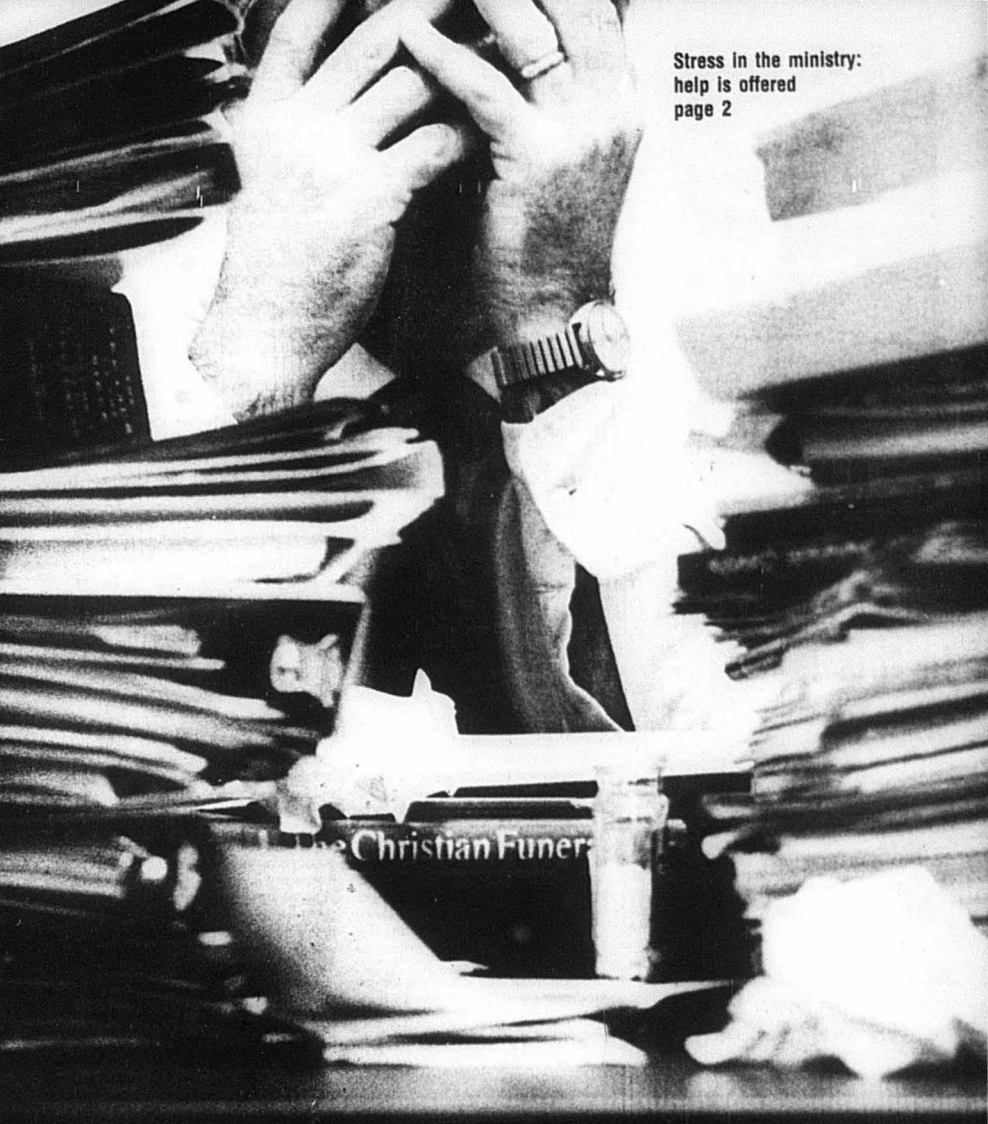
November 3, 1983

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Stress in the ministry:
help is offered
page 2

November 3, 1983

Arkansas Baptist
NEWSMAGAZINE

On the cover



ABH photo/Betty J. Kennedy

Stress, said to be one of the most prevalent problems among those who serve churches as a vocation, will be addressed by Arkansas Baptists' Ministry of Crisis Support through a conference to be held Nov. 21 and 22 at Little Rock's First Church. The Stress in the Ministry Conference is for all church staff members and spouses.

In this issue

8 leaders in change

Population shift to the rural South is inevitable and Baptist churches—and their pastors—ought to be involved in the process of shaping the changes in the community a symposium has been told.

12 foreign missions bound

Five Arkansans were among 31 persons named missionaries by the SBC Foreign Mission Board recently.

Bailey Smith to speak

Bailey Smith, Oklahoma pastor who is immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, will replace Jerry Vines as speaker at the Arkansas Baptist Pastors' Conference Nov. 7 and 8.

Kansas City SBC housing assigned

KANSAS CITY (BP)—Some 6,000 requests for 4,000 rooms were processed as housing assignments were made for the 1984 Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City.

Tim A. Hedquist, convention manager for the SBC Executive Committee, said approximately 6,000 letters postmarked Oct. 1—about three large boxes full—were received by the Kansas City Housing Bureau, requesting rooms at the June annual meeting.

Under guidelines adopted at the 1983 annual meeting in Pittsburgh, 4,000 rooms are reserved for the convention through the housing bureau in the city in which the convention will meet. The rules specify 3,000 of the rooms must be within two miles of the convention center. Block room reservations were eliminated this year.

Hedquist said the assignment of individual rooms in mid-October is the same procedure which has been followed in the past, with the exception that more rooms are available for individual messengers.

"The housing bureau hired some ladies who opened all of the letters postmarked Oct. 1 and stacked them by first choices of hotels. These people do not know one Southern Baptist, so the process was absolutely impartial," Hedquist said.

After opening and stacking the requests, the application forms were checked to make sure all information was included, and then available rooms were filled by hotels, he said. He added about one of five requests

for space at the headquarters hotel—the Muehlbach Radisson—and one of four for the Holiday Inn City Center received a room at those facilities.

Hedquist said about 75 letters were received with postmarks earlier than Oct. 1 and were regarded as having been mailed on Oct. 3. No letters postmarked later than Oct. 1 were opened.

"All of the letters are still in Kansas City," he said. "The housing bureau is doing a final check to get a correct list. When they complete that, they will ship the letters not opened back to the Executive Committee, and we will send out letters telling the senders where they can get rooms."

He said there are about 13,000 hotel rooms in Kansas City, so persons who wish to attend the 1984 convention should have no difficulty in obtaining rooms.

"If a reservation form has not been sent in, please don't," he said. "There is no waiting list, and we cannot reasonably expect cancellations. If someone did not get in, they should write directly to a hotel requesting reservations or to us for a list of hotels in the area."

Persons who received rooms should receive notification by late December or early January, he said. Persons who submitted applications but did not receive rooms will receive notification, including a list of available hotels, around the first of December, he said.

Medical insurance rates to increase

DALLAS (BP)—Southern Baptist ministers and church employees are facing an increase in medical premiums next year, according to officials of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board.

Effective Jan. 1, 1984, participants in the Church Insurance Program will experience a 12 percent aggregate increase in medical premiums. According to Insurance Services director John Dudley, the increase will range from 11 percent to 14 percent among the three geographical regions to six percent for those eligible for Medicare.

Dudley said the increase was due to the continued medical inflation rate and the

escalation in use of medical care. He noted last year's medical claims rose to nearly \$18 million, a 21 percent increase over the previous year.

"One of the ways the Annuity Board was able to avoid a 31.5 percent rate hike recommended by the insurance carrier was by adjusting the participants' initial out-of-pocket expense from \$100 to \$200," said Dudley.

Dudley noted that with the adoption of new actuarial tables the disability plan rates will decrease for women while those of the male participants will not be changed. Life insurance premiums will not be affected, Dudley said.

New Sunday Schools topped 1,000 last year

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—New Sunday Schools begun in the 1982-83 church year ending Sept. 30 topped 1,000 for the sixth consecutive year, with a total of 1,089 reported to the Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday school department.

The total represents an increase of 62 over the 1981-82 tally of 1,027. Since 1977, 7,301 new Sunday schools have been reported. The largest number, 1,273, was reported in 1978-79.

Texas led all states last year with a total of 262 new Sunday schools, exceeding the state goal of 200. Florida was second with 128 reported, surpassing its goal of 100. California was third with 100; Ohio, fourth, 60, and Arizona, fifth, 38.

Seven other conventions or fellowships reached or exceeded their state goals: Kansas-Nebraska, 24; Louisiana, 20; Michigan, 22; Nevada, 20; New England, 20; New Mexico, 10; and North Carolina, 24.

What not to expect of your pastor

The editor's page

J. Everett Sneed



This is the second editorial on the relationship between pastors and members of the church. In the first, emphasis was placed on what laypeople should expect from the pastor. This week's emphasis is on unrealistic expectations toward pastors.

The mental image that laypeople have of the ideal pastor varies greatly. Some imagine him tall, dark and handsome with a booming baritone voice. Others would prefer him to be "Mr. Popularity." Still others would place emphasis on spiritual qualifications.

The opinions on how a pastor should lead and serve the congregation also differ greatly. Many are pleased with those set forth in the scripture and wish to protect their pastor from unrealistic expectations. Some, however, would make unrealistic demands.

We believe that, in general, today's churches are more considerate than those of the past. To the extent that this is true, it probably occurs because congregations are better informed on the biblical concept of a pastor and understand his primary function to be that of a spiritual leader.

A pastor should not be expected to live at the poverty level and dress like a king. Unfortunately, a few churches still feel that a pastor should make every dollar they pay him do the work of three or four. Although many pastors are excellent money managers, it is unrealistic to expect the pastor to stretch his money further than the most frugal person in the congregation.

A few churches still approach the employing of a pastor with the question, "What is the least salary that we can get a pastor to accept?" In small or medium congregations the question should be "What is the largest compensation we can afford to provide for a pastor?"

In some instances, selfishness holds down pastors' salaries. It is wrong for a church member to compare his salary with that of his pastor. Often, the pastor has expenses that members do not have. Never should travel expense, insurance, or retirement be considered salary.

A pastor should not be expected to allow his wife to work as a full-time, unpaid assistant. Some churches expect the pastor's wife to play the piano, teach a Sunday School class, lead a missionary organization, keep the nursery, be the church hostess and be ready at all times for drop-in visitors. Unless a pastor's wife voluntarily accepts a given responsibility, she should not be expected to perform it. If a congregation would pay another person

for a given task, the pastor's wife should be paid to perform it.

A pastor's wife should only be expected to do the kind of things that other active church members are doing. This means that the time during the week is her own. She can work at secular employment, go to school or do anything that a Christian might do to provide personal fulfillment.

A pastor should not be expected to visit everyone who has a cold. The pastors we know want to be with church members when they are really needed. But it is unfair to feel that a pastor should visit when minor illnesses occur. A pastor must balance his visitation against other needs of the congregation, such as preparation of sermons and visitation of the lost. When serious illness occurs, a pastor should be notified. It is impossible for him to minister when he doesn't know there is a need.

A pastor should not be expected to be the church custodian. We don't know any pastor who feels that he is too good to sweep the floors, turn on the heat, turn out the lights, and do all the other things that are required to properly maintain the Lord's house. But it is a poor investment of skills, time and energy for a pastor to do these jobs.

There is only so much work that any person can do. When a pastor's energy is expended, he must rest. His spiritual ministries are more important than the custodial duties. In a church where the budget is too small to employ a custodian, volunteers should take care of these responsibilities.

A pastor should not be expected to be available 24-hours a day. A pastor needs his rest as badly as anyone else. It is imperative that he spend some time with his family and in recreational activities. A pastor should be called at home only when a true emergency exists.

A pastor should not be expected to be problem-free. The pastor and his family are human and therefore subject to human stresses. Sometimes a congregation may need to minister to the pastor or his family. Though most pastors are highly dedicated, this is no promise of perfection. When a pastor or his family makes a mistake, the principle of "doing unto others as you would have them do unto you" should be applied.

A pastor's task is difficult. One of the greatest helps that church members can provide is to pray for their pastor. Prayer assists a pastor to be more effective, and it helps a member to be more of what God desires him to be.

Arkansas Baptist

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

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An unwise proposal

The proposal not to make salaries of state convention employees known except by specific request is not a wise proposal. Each of us who are pastors have our salary mentioned once each month during the business meeting of our churches. This is called accountability, and it is part of our basic democratic belief as Baptists. This same idea should carry through to every part of our great convention; if not, we are in trouble.

It would seem much more appropriate that our leadership would not be found following some other agency in this matter, but rather be found inquiring of that agency exactly why they have departed from principles which are democratic and equitable.

It seems I remember a quote from one of our great former leaders to the effect that to keep all of our people informed is the wisest course. Certainly common sense would so dictate.

Thank you for allowing me to express my conviction concerning this proposal. To not do so would be to deny the prompting of my own conscience.—James R. Davis, Manila

Unanswered questions

I feel some questions need to be addressed before Nov. 8th so that messengers may wisely vote the convention's business.

1. For Southern to offer the four year degree, what capital expenditures for library and other facilities will be needed to meet North Central accreditation requirements and at what cost?

2. What will be the cost to bring a two-year school's library to a four-year library?

3. Southern in 1982 had only \$161,643.92 in endowment funds. To keep a sound financial and academic footing, all development officers stress the necessity of a large endowment fund. This is not large. Will we be bombarded in the local associations, churches, and as individuals with requests that will divert Cooperative Program dollars from Bold Mission Thrust?

4. What long range plans of the Executive Board-Secretary will the requested expenditures jeopardize?

5. Because we shrink our available convention money three-fourths percent annually as we increase our direct mission support, can we afford other expenses?

6. Southern made assurances in her request to become part of the convention not to seek four year status. Will we next be asked to grant university (the "in" thing) or graduate programs?

7. Southern indicates only eight courses will be initially added and one professor. That teaching load will not allow quality teaching! With 60-plus advanced hours required in various study areas, who will teach them and at what cost dollar-wise and at what level of competency?

8. What ratio of professors holding advanced degrees to meet accrediting requirements will Southern have?

9. In future years (Oct. 6, page 13, *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, requests escalate from \$50,000, to \$107,125, by 1989. This is probably the tip of the iceberg, if experience teaches us anything.

This is not exhaustive, but I feel these should be answered at the convention before the vote. God will not bless decisions made in self imposed ignorance.

Let Southern remain a two-year school, but the best two year school in the country. With declining numbers of high school graduates, we do not need two four-year schools competing with each other. I do not see Southern's being a four-year school a necessity for Bold Mission Thrust; I do see it as a liability.—Carl R. Hogue, Quitman

Wasting God's time

The conference on the millennial question held in Nashville for Sunday School Board personnel was an exercise in futility. The theme of the Bible and of Revelation is not millennialism but Christ and redemption, and this must not be lost sight of. It is unfortunate that the controversial millennial question is being considered for publication in the Sunday School literature. Instead of rightly dividing the word of God, this will do nothing but wrongly divide the people of God.

When God's people begin to preach millennialism, dispensationalism, futurism, or anything other than Christ crucified, they are wasting God's time, the people's time and their own time. None of these "isms" were preached by Christ and the Apostles, rather, they preached repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The great evangelist and soul-winners of the past, Spurgeon, Whitefield, Moody, Edwards, Billy Sunday, etc. did not preach on "mysteries", times and seasons which "the Father hath put in his own power", but they preached that men should repent and turn to God.

Please brethren, let us not assume to know

anything among men but Christ and him crucified. This is the message that God has sent us to preach.—Walter H. Watts, Fort Smith, Ark.

Complete answers needed

I am having real difficulty accepting the action of our Executive Board in relation to Southern Baptist College.

There are some valid questions that need to be addressed and answered before action is taken by our convention in Pine Bluff. I believe Arkansas Baptists deserve open and complete answers before making a decision on what is probably one of the most important issues we have faced in this century.

Why did our Executive Board allow a recommendation regarding a four-year program at Southern to come before the convention last year with no figures as to the cost of beginning and maintaining such a program?

Why, after pious and repeated statements that the vote of the convention would be interpreted as God's will, did the Southern leadership change their minds and proceed to act in violation of the vote of the convention? Public statements of faith so soon forsaken give just cause for alarm.

Why will not the Executive Board seek answers to the five crucial questions raised on Sept. 8 by the board member from Fayetteville relating to the uncounted expenditures of a four-year program? (*Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, Sept. 15, page 8)

Why should we not accept the prognosis made by the state of Arkansas concerning potential students and private colleges of the years ahead?

Why shouldn't we examine what effect the attempt to have another four-year college will have upon our state convention programs, particularly BSU ministries, Ouachita and missions? Already, Southern receives more Cooperative Program money per student than Ouachita.

Why are we being asked to decide without answers to honest questions which have or should be posed?—Name Withheld

Soup line holds lesson for Hot Springs congregation

It may not sound like much of a bargain—feeding 300 people Sunday lunch for \$1,933.96. And the members of Hot Springs First Church who went through the soup line in the church dining hall Oct. 16 were not the real recipients of the deal. The beneficiaries were the starving people around the world who would be helped by funds sent through SBC world hunger relief channels.

The dramatic way of portraying substance conditions faced daily by much of the world was the church's observance of World Hunger Day. The soup and bread meal came after the morning service. There the people had a chance to give at

least the normal cost of their family's Sunday meal. (The challenge goal was the cost of family meals for an entire week.)

Pastor Doug Dickens had punctuated his sermon with a rousing count of the death toll from starvation around the world, mounting as he spoke.

If the offering was any indication, the congregation was impressed. The goal was \$1,000 and the total was just short of double that.

And, every penny of the offering went to world hunger, since the church bought the food and volunteers prepared it.

You'll be glad to know...

by Don Moore



One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant

...The Lord, Jesus Christ, is scheduled to be in attendance at the annual Arkansas Baptist State Convention. At least, the last word we had from him, this was his plan. It seems that the only thing that could hinder the full blessing of his being there is if we gathered in some



Moore

"name" other than his. He promised "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Should we come in our own name, in the interest of our will, our glory, or our cause, his presence will be diminished immeasurably.

His appearances on the program are as numerous as the saints who may appear on the program, and as numerous as the messengers who constitute the vessels in whom he dwells. If one and all really agreed to it, desired it, and asked for it, he would be in charge of the agenda and the actions. Wouldn't that be a different experience.

Actually, he is not coming to be our guest. The Lord Jesus is sovereign over all. The world, the church, the convention, the saints all belong to him. We have the privilege of being his guests. He will no doubt see every motive and hear every word. Oh, I hope he will not be disappointed by anyone's disregard of his presence or anyone's disrespect of his other children.

I'm so glad he is going to be there. That takes a lot of pressure off of all of us. Since it is all his business, he will be able to look after it without any of us feeling we are going to have to be the Lord's "deliverer." We do not have to bear the burden of making things happen. He will see to that.

If we really believe he is the head of the body, the church, then our only concern will be that we be under his orders as members of the body. If we will, when we leave, we will have a quiet assurance his will was done and he was pleased and glorified.

How carefully he revealed that all he said, all he did, and all he concluded was the result of his Father's direction. Why shouldn't we agree that, since he is there, it will not be necessary for us to speak or act without his counsel and approval.

To him be glory in the church throughout all generations, world without end. We should make his presence preeminent.

Don Moore is Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Remembering the turning of collars

Certain phrases in everyday conversations have a way of separating the old-timers from the younger generation. A group of people was split right down the middle recently by a reference to "turning collars" on men's dress shirts.

It had been many years since I had thought of that fine money-stretching art of turning collars worn threadbare along the edge, but it called to mind an instantaneous picture of my mother working over the sewing machine to achieve the economic miracles. It prolonged the life of many a shirt that otherwise would have been condemned to the "rag drawer," and made the problems of the economic depression of the 1930s just a little less severe.

It all came up in the context of a discussion of the Protestant work ethic, and of the possibility that the people of other nations may well be outworking us Americans these days. One was telling of a Vietnamese lawyer of considerable distinction who, on coming to America and Arkansas, could not practice law. Undaunted, he swallowed his pride and picked up his father's old vocation of tailoring, and now has a successful business altering men's clothing in Little Rock.

Another mentioned the slogan in the popular television commercial, "We make money the old-fashioned way. We earn it!" Still another questioned whether all who

apply for unemployment compensation in America — so many of them younger people — are really willing to pay the price of honest, disciplined, hard labor.

I made the serious mistake in judgment of asking my sweet and faithful wife the question, "Whatever came of turning collars and darning socks?" I not only received a lecture on the newer fabrics and technology of shirt-making that causes them to wear out at other places first, but also a reminder that, because of the development of stretch stocks, I am no longer wearing holes in the toes and heels of my socks. When she further reminded me of the number of evenings she had hosted Ouachita guests in our home recently, it became clear she suspected I was accusing her of having abandoned the Protestant work ethic.

Let the record show that there is not a lazy bone in my wife's body. She works an 80-hour week in the cause of Christian education at Ouachita. Even so, I think American society will suffer until all of us find appropriate replacements for such time-honored character builders as turning collars, darning socks, or for such daily chores as milking the cows and mending fences.

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia.

Arkansas musicians tour China with Centurymen

Three ministers of music from Arkansas left Oct. 24 to tour the People's Republic of China with the Centurymen choral group and perform on Chinese radio and television.

James Burleson, Geyer Springs Church, Little Rock; Charles Butler, Southside Church, Lead Hill; and John Dresbach, First Church, Osceola, are the Arkansans making the tour.

The 17-day trip is a cultural exchange tour arranged by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, which sponsors the Centurymen. Group members provided their own finances for the trip, either through church assistance or personal resources.

The group is a male chorus of 100 regular members, most ministers of music in Southern Baptist churches. They have recorded nine albums. Their music is featured on "Sounds of the Centurymen," a weekly 30-minute radio program produced by the Radio and Television Commission and heard on 200 stations nationwide.

The 57-member touring group visited Shanghai first, singing at the Shanghai Music Conservatory Oct. 28. They will perform at the Central Conservatory in Beijing (Peking) Nov. 4 and Radio Beijing Music Hall Nov. 5 in a friendly exchange with musicians from the China Conservatory of Music. The Nov. 5 concert will be broadcast by radio and television in Beijing.

A television crew from NBC and the Radio and Television Commission will record the entire tour. The trip will be featured in a one-hour special on NBC.

On the return trip, the Centurymen will stop in Hong Kong to sing at an evangelistic rally Nov. 7 and give a full concert Nov. 8 at Tsuen Wan Town Hall.

For their Chinese tour, the Centurymen will sing classical choral music and American folk music. Buryl Red, music director for the group, has composed a special musical piece combining Western choral style with traditional Chinese instrumental accompaniment.

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

W. L. Probasco

resigned as pastor of Conway First Church Nov. 1 to enter into a new ministry of conference preaching and teaching. Probasco, who has held various committee positions in local and state denominational affairs, is currently the first vice-president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. The congregation voted to continue financial support to Dr. Probasco for a period of up to 12 months and conferred upon him the honorary title of minister-at-large.

Clay Thomas Terry

of Siloam Springs is among 45 students to receive honor student scholarships for the 1983-84 academic year at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Terry is the son of Dr. and Mrs. John Terry of Siloam Springs.

Doug Larey

is serving as pastor of the Haley Lake Church at Fouke.

Rob Wright

is serving as minister of music at South Highland Church in Little Rock. A native of England, he is a senior music and education major at the University of Central Arkansas at Conway.

Russell E. Armour

retired pastor of the Horatio Church, which he served for more than 35 years, died in September. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy L. Armour.

Aubrey M. Neal

recently was called as pastor of the Monroe Church. A native of Marianna, he is a graduate of Union University in Jackson,



Probasco



Terry

Tenn., and the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Neal, a retired Naval chaplain, has pastored churches in Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana. He is married to the former Jane Powell of Wabash.

LaMar Herndon III

is serving as pastor of the Woodson Church in Little Rock. He was a member of the Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock.

Craig Hobson

has joined the staff of Hot Springs Memorial Church as music and youth director. He was a member of the Otter Creek Church in Little Rock.

John Baker

is serving as pastor of the Pleasant Hill Church at Rogers.

Sherman Southerland

is serving as pastor of the Trinity Church at Rogers.

Carolyn Staley

is serving as interim music director at Little

Rock Second Church, where she is a member.

Mike Hart

is serving as interim youth director at Little Rock Second Church. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University.

Murphy Dean DuVall

died in Little Rock Oct. 12 at age 50. Miss DuVall was a member of the Little Rock Olivet Church where she at one time served as secretary. Survivors are her mother, Mrs. Dannie DuVall and a sister, Mrs. Joe Matthews, both of Sheridan.

Jim Freeman

began serving Sept. 21 as pastor of the Greenwood First Church.

Bryan Webb

began serving Sept. 18 as pastor of the Oden Church.

Marvin Black

is serving as pastor of the Caddo Gap Church.

Jimmy Karam

was chapel speaker Oct. 28 at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. A Little Rock businessman, he is a member of the Immanuel Church.

Phillip W. Smith

has resigned as pastor of the Lake City First Church to become pastor of the First Church of Marion, La.

W. O. Vaught

of Little Rock is serving as interim pastor of the Jonesboro Central Church.

briefly

Benton First Church

dedicated a Rodgers Westminster 890 pipe organ Oct. 30. Al Washburn, professor of organ at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, presented a concert.

Sylverino Church

at Texarkana has organized a Brotherhood as an expansion of the its missions education program.

Immanuel and Westside Churches

in Warren held a combined worship service Oct. 2 to commemorate the 22nd anniversary of the Westside Church, organized as a mission by the Immanuel Church. Those on program were Frank Worley, pastor of the Immanuel Church; Larry Miles, pastor of the Westside Church; Don Williams, director of missions for Carey Association, Bill Rowell, Lehman Webb, director of church extension

for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and Raymond Reed, director of missions for Bartholomew Association.

Fort Smith East Side Church

observed its 30th anniversary Oct. 23.

Baring Cross Church

in North Little Rock observed its 80th anniversary Oct. 30 with all-day activities that included an old-fashioned potluck dinner on the grounds.

Greene County Association

in its 58th annual meeting at the East Side Church in Paragould Oct. 18 elected Jim Fowler as moderator for 1983-84. Other officers elected included Bill Dowdy, first vice-moderator; Frank Stewart, second vice-moderator; Gerald Freligh, treasurer and Mrs. Gerald Freligh, clerk.

Nall's Memorial Church

in Little Rock was in revival Oct. 9-14. Neal Prock, pastor of the Haven Heights Church in Fort Smith, was evangelist. Mickey Reynolds of Central Church in Conway directed the music. Pastor Paul Parker reported 15 professions of faith and six recommitments.

buildings

Little Rock Second Church

dedicated its newly expanded lodge at Lake Nixon Oct. 21-23. The weekend of dedication events included a staff reunion; a camper reunion and a dedication / open house. The new construction includes a 750 square foot conference room, a remodeled dining room, and men and women's bathrooms.

Central Church, Jonesboro honors pastor of 20 years

by Millie Gill

R. Wilbur Herring retired Oct. 16 after 20 years of service as pastor of Central Church in Jonesboro. He and his wife, Mary Elizabeth, were praised for their contributions to the church, the city of Jonesboro and the state of Arkansas.

During Dr. Herring's 20-year tenure, the Jonesboro church ordained 15 men to the ministry, commissioned two members as missionaries to Africa, established a seminary extension study center and launched a family ministry program.

Don Moore, Executive Secretary of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, praised the Herrings for their commitment to proclaiming the salvation message of Christ. He lauded Dr. Herring as a masterbuilder of churches, of men, of relationships and of fellowships.

Herring's contributions also were recognized by Allen Nixon, civic leader, Jack Nicholas, president of Southern Baptist College, Harold Ray, director of missions for Mount Zion Association, and Wes Kent, associate in the Evangelism Department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and a former member of Dr. Herring's staff.

Herring has served as president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, as chairman of the Life and Liberty (Bicentennial) Rally for Baptists of Arkansas, and as a member of the state convention Executive Board.



R. Wilbur Herring (seated front row left) listens intently as the choir performs "Trust and Repent", a musical selection composed in his honor by church pianist David Jackson.



Dr. and Mrs. Herring greet church members and Jonesboro citizens at a reception in their honor. The church presented the couple with a house and a gift of money.

The addition of members through professions of faith and letters at the end of the Sunday service provided a fitting climax for Herring's 20-year tenure with the Jonesboro church. He said "I give God the glory for

the accomplishments here. I have only been a servant willing to follow his leadership."

Millie Gill is a staff reporter and photographer for the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

Professor voices concerns at White House meeting

by Mark Brock

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Donoso Escobar, a Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor, recently joined evangelical Hispanic leaders at the White House to suggest answers for troubled Central America.

For President Reagan, it was an attempt to rally Hispanic support around his foreign policy. For Escobar, it was an opportunity to affirm his calling as a Christian social worker and teacher.

Escobar, a former Little Rock minister to Hispanics who directed immigration and refugee resettlement for the Home Mission Board from 1980 to 1983, was named assistant professor of social work at Southern Seminary last April.

"I came to Southern with a sense of arrival," Escobar said. "This is what I have dreamed of for most of my life."

That dream was born in Costa Rica during Escobar's final year of seminary. There he was involved in an evangelism project in an inner city neighborhood.

"I found myself equipped with theology but lacking the skills to respond to the great social needs I encountered," Escobar reflected. So after a period of praying and searching, he decided to become a social worker and combine theology with social

work skills.

The decision led Escobar back to his native Nicaragua, where he founded a school in a poverty-stricken neighborhood in Managua. The school also doubled as a church where he served as pastor.

In 1968 Escobar came to the United States and the University of Arkansas to begin studies in social work. During his graduate studies, he ministered to Hispanics in Little Rock. It was there he began his work with the Home Mission Board during the 1979 influx of Cuban refugees.

"We live in an age of challenge," Escobar said. "God's ministers are being challenged to intervene in whatever arena they may find themselves. Those placed by God in leadership positions at a national level have a duty to influence public policy."

"While I was at the White House I asked myself over and over again, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Each time the answer echoed back, 'Yes, I am.'"

As a social worker and a minister, Escobar expressed two major concerns of Hispanic Americans while he was at the White House.

One concern was to oppose the support of future dictators in Central America. The other was to encourage the U.S. government

to meet the needs of displaced persons already fleeing the conflicts in that region.

The rationale for his stance relates to his commitment to Christian social work.

"Social work enables one to interpret human reality," Escobar said. "But one can't divorce human reality from God's reality. Anytime a Christian intervenes in history—whether individual, community or national history—he has to take into account God's plan for mankind."

Concern for God's plan and a commitment to reveal the social reality of humanity from a theological perspective led Escobar to teach at Southern Seminary.

"It has been my dream to prepare ministers capable of responding to mankind as a whole," he explained.

"Social work makes sense, and I am convinced that it is biblical," he added. "I want to help Southern Baptist ministers respond to the social as well as the spiritual needs of man. I think that is the best way to minister in Central America and around the world."

Mark Brock is a news writer and student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Rural pastors key to community leadership

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—In 1970, it was a blip on a graph. By 1980, statisticians were convinced of a trend.

In both census reports, rural counties, especially in southern states, were growing at a faster rate than urban counties as workers followed industry south and city people fought their way out of the river of population for the cheap land, safe neighborhoods, white schools and "psychic affluence" of the country life like salmon fighting upstream to spawn.

Roads already on the maps of Houston city planners will engulf towns now up to 40 miles from Houston by the year 2000—and the pattern is seen everywhere.

In such massive population undulation, land and houses in small towns become unattainable. Housing developments jerk pasture and cropland from production. Taxes rise to build new schools. Crime increases, as do alcohol and drug use. People lock their doors against neighbors they don't know.

All this change confronts the rural and small town church with the unrequested challenge of unlimited growth, of ministry opportunities they may only have dreamed about.

"The church has generally lost the leadership role in our day, but we have the potential to reclaim it," admits Ralph Halbrooks, director of the associational missions department for the Alabama Baptist Convention.

He says that too often, Southern Baptist churches are isolated to their own programs and are non-cooperative in the community. "We withdrew ourselves," he says. "We felt we could run our own show and let the rest of it go by the wayside. We didn't see the relationships."

David Ruesink, a rural life expert at Texas A&M University, College Station, says rural pastors are very involved and are essential to community development.

"We find in a number of communities the real sparkplug behind community improvement has been the church," says Ruesink, an active Presbyterian. "Development moves or doesn't move according to the way the pastor feels."

Steep Hollow Church in Bryan, Texas, where Frank Mathews is pastor, scratches at the urban fringe of Bryan/College Station. Within five to ten years, his church "will

have totally changed" since more than 3,000 homes are planned virtually within sight of the church.

Like all rural-urban pastors who are racing to the head of the stampede rather than eating dust, Mathews follows community development enough to know what is going on where and when, how much it costs and what kind of people it will bring. He knows where the roads are going before shovels turn the first dirt and what zoning moves the city council plans.

Mathews, who is studying the rural-urban transitional church for the doctor of ministries degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, says five or six churches in his 40-church association face the same kind of growth as Steep Hollow.

To lead Steep Hollow from "rural church" to "growing rural church," Mathews must show his people a church can grow and still maintain a caring, loving relationship.

"I firmly believe the church holds its own destiny," Mathews says. "They can grow or they can stay like they are and have other churches grow up around them because they wouldn't meet the challenge."

Calvin Beale, census analyst and statistician for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, lists four basic reasons for population move-

... the church holds its own destiny. They can grow or . . . stay like they are and have other churches grow up around them because they wouldn't meet the challenge."

ment to rural areas, which buffets churches like Steep Hollow.

Beale, speaking in Georgia at a national symposium sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, said: 1) People are not being displaced from rural industries and mining as they once were; 2) job alternatives in rural areas are growing; 3) more people are retiring to rural areas; and 4) more people are living where they want to live rather than where they can maximize their income.

Job seekers bring different ways of dress, accents, food, habits, songs, procedures, theology and outlook. And, in strange paradox, the more newcomers are attracted to the little rural church like the one they grew up with, the less the church remains

that very ideal.

Ruesink says it is those who joined most recently that leave first when the little country church becomes larger than they like.

Robert B. Greene, director of the Resource Center for Small Churches in Luling, Texas, says, "Oldtimers will be lost in terms of knowing and caring for everybody in the church and knowing where they sit. It takes a very, very skillful pastor to handle that kind of maneuver, to keep the oldtimers and minister to newcomers. We don't often find those kinds of skilled ministers."

That's because ministers are caught on the cultural ladder and when they acquire the necessary skills, they're off to a bigger church. "Our whole culture works against a man having a small rural church pastorate as a vocation," says Greene.

In a paradox that often leads to adjustment problems, the pastors most often called on to lead rural churches are themselves more and more products of the city.

Ruesink chairs a subcommittee for a Religion Life council to study models for continuing education for these ministers to help them overcome culture shock going in to the small town church.

Culture shock comes in several forms, including pace and the drastic economic swings of a community centered on one industry, such as agriculture or oil. When one of them goes down, the community itself changes cycle. Banks, grocery stores, hardware, implements and the church all experience a letdown.

Another shock can be the reluctance of a rural church, where nearly everyone is related, to accept a pastor and his family as their own. Getting to know the church members often is like a newlywed getting to know his in-laws.

The pastor's family may "suffer" with the inconvenience of limited shopping, entertainment and cultural events in a rural setting. Often it is a wife's resentment at serving a small rural church that forces the pastor to look elsewhere.

Leaders at the Georgia symposium said churches ought to be involved in the process of shaping the inevitable change caused by population shift to the rural South and should seek to mold community change in the image of Christ rather than following behind it.

Women deacons issue disrupts Capital Association meeting

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)—After more than an hour of debate, messengers to the annual meeting of the Capital Association voted not to seat messengers from Oklahoma City First Church, even though the church did not ask to be seated at the meeting.

The 209 to 101 vote to refuse seating to the non-existent messengers is part of a simmering controversy which has been going on for nearly a year. It boiled over when First Church changed its constitution to allow women to serve as deacons.

The church, of which Gene Garrison, immediate past second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, is pastor, subsequently elected and then ordained three women as deacons.

Prior to the annual meeting, efforts were made to keep the issue from arising at the annual meeting. Ernie Perkins, associational director of missions, told Baptist Press he thought if First Church did not send messengers, there would be no action.

Garrison said the church chose not to elect messengers in an effort to "avoid emotional conflict, debate and division."

Despite their efforts, however, the controversy surged onto the floor and after an hour of motions, amendments, substitute motions, moves to table, points of order, reversals of decisions of the chair and apparent confusion, the association voted to refuse seating to messengers who weren't there.

At one point, Robert Scales, a retired pastor, raised a point of order that since there were no messengers, the question was moot. "They have not sent any messengers, and we're voting not to seat somebody who is not here," he said.

Moderator Gerald Lunsford, pastor of First Church of Choctaw, ruled against Scales, noting First Church messengers could appear the second day of the two-day meeting or "could come in 15 minutes. . . I feel. . . we must deal with the situation at hand."

The situation was kicked off when the committee on order of business moved to seat duly-elected messengers. Immediately, two members of the five-member credentials committee introduced a report protesting seating First Church messengers, based on a letter from Sunnyslane Church of Del City.

The report, signed by retired pastor Frank O. Baugh, chairman, and J. Harold Thompson, pastor of Carter Park Church, said "while our sister church in her deviation from the faith and order position of Southern Baptists has caused a rift in the fellowship of the churches of CBA, we do not regard them as enemies but rather remember that they are our Christian brothers and sisters...."

The report added: "We feel just as strongly that each of our churches is an independent and autonomous body, and we in no way attempt to tell our deviating sister church 'what they may or may not do.' However,

we feel also just as strongly that as churches we are also interdependent, and it is for this reason that we recommend honoring of the protest letter...."

Don Rogers, pastor of Kelham Church, said the call for traditional doctrine is rhetoric because Southern Baptist churches have had women deacons for more than 100 years. The issue, he said, is "how we relate to each other as Southern Baptists. Our constitutional committee has studied this and reported to us that it is not the business of the association, and if we want to devote ourselves to evangelism and missions, then we had better stop poking into each other's business in local church matters."

Garrison reacted strongly. "I was stunned and deeply disappointed.... Furthermore, I believe every Baptist in the country should be embarrassed, ashamed and outraged, not only because of what happened, but because of the way it happened."

He noted that the church decided not to send messengers in an effort to "be peacemakers" and had been told that if no messengers were present, the question of seating them would be "totally irrelevant" and would be ruled out of order.

Garrison, who has been pastor of the 5,000 member church 10 years, said he was disappointed in the moderator (Lunsford) and in the director of missions (Perkins) and "further disappointed in the fact that an annual session of the Capital Association could have been controlled and manipulated by a handful of angry pastors who have apparently appointed themselves to compel and enforce conformity to their personal theological views."

He also noted the association "voted to completely disregard its own constitution, to violate its own accepted rules of parliamentary procedure and to unnecessarily turn a business meeting into a battleground."

California association expels churches

VALLEJO, Calif. (BP)—Messengers from three churches were refused seating at the annual meeting of the Redwood Empire Association as a disagreement over ordination of women in this northern California association came to a head.

Seven messengers from the Tiburon Boulevard Church in Tiburon, 10 from First Sonoma, and one from Redwood Church, Napa, were refused seating at the annual meeting on the recommendation of the association's credentials committee.

Bill Ryan, associational missionary, told the California Southern Baptist the vote was "about 84-54" not to seat the messengers of the three churches because they had ordained women and it "would cause fellowship problems" in the association.

According to Ryan the motion also contained wording which put the three churches in a special watchcare status for a one-

year probationary period at which time they would be "restored to the fellowship if they ceased their nonbiblical practice".

Tiburon Church—attended by many people from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley—has two ordained women deacons, including one serving as chairman of deacons. The Napa church lists an ordained husband and wife as associate pastors, and the Sonoma church ordained a husband and wife who have since gone to North Dakota as Home Mission Board church planters.

Ryan said that in May 1982 the association discussed the ordination of women deacons at the Tiburon church but decided at that semi-annual meeting it would not be a test for fellowship. However, the association went on record then as saying it did not believe in or promote the ordination of women.

When all laws and rules are flagrantly ignored and deliberately violated in order to accomplish a predetermined purpose, only one word is adequate to describe the action.

"That word is: anarchy," Garrison said. He called for leaders of CBA to "call a special session in the immediate future to address this serious distortion of principle, allowing the issue of local church autonomy to be the true focus point of discussion with the assurance that procedures of Christian fairness and openness will be applied."

Perkins told Baptist Press he did not agree with Garrison's assessment the meeting was "anarchy. I was there and I would not so interpret it. There were some discrepancies of parliamentary procedure, but I do not believe there were discrepancies from fair play."

He added the issue has been "governing for months. First Church had a conviction they felt they had to follow. I honor that conviction. But it should not have been a surprise to discover others in the association had convictions they had to follow, as well. For them to express surprise is a surprise to me...."

Perkins, who has been associational executive two years, said he tried "everything in my power" to keep a confrontation from occurring, and added, "I will acknowledge that I failed."

He added he believes the "annual meeting spoke this year on an issue that happened this year. I do not know what will happen next year. They (First Church) can continue to do the same thing they have been doing. If they send contributions, I will accept them. If they want to send workers to clinics, they are very welcome."

"Next year, if they want to send messengers, the messengers to that meeting can decide that issue."

"Next year, if they want to send messengers, the messengers to that meeting can decide that issue."

Your state convention at work

Sunday School

You can teach preschoolers!

Are you a teacher in your church's extended session for preschoolers? If not, you are missing a golden opportunity to make a contribution to the spiritual growth of preschoolers and their parents.



Ratton

In case you don't know, extended session is the time during morning and evening worship services when preschoolers have the opportunity to learn through using the

same activities that were used during Sunday School and Church Training.

If you will volunteer to teach one Sunday a month and are put in the same room each time, you will get to know the children, and they will feel secure with you as their teacher. This is important to preschoolers.

Remaining in the same room during Sunday School or Church Training and the extended session will also give the preschoolers a feeling of security. It will also be more comfortable for them and more conducive to learning. The equipment is designed for them and planned for their way of learning.

Preschool Sunday School and Church Training teachers should volunteer to teach on a regular basis during extended session. Parents of preschoolers should volunteer to teach in a room other than their child's room. Grandparents, single adults, deacons, and any adults who love children can be teachers.

A child's feelings about church in the years to come may be determined by the experiences he has at church while he is a preschooler. You can help him to have happy learning experiences! Volunteer today.

Watch for more articles on extended session. — Pat Ratton, preschool consultant

employed for Social Security taxes. The rate moves from 9.35 in 1983 to 14 percent in 1984. Bi-vocational pastors are subject to the self-employed rate on ministerial earnings.

A second change requires that all churches withhold Social Security taxes and pay the employer Social Security tax on all employees beginning Jan. 1, 1984.

Churches that do not have an Employer Identification Number need to request form SS-4 from the Internal Revenue Service. Completion of this form will provide additional information for churches. Circular E outlines step-by-step procedures for churches to comply with the law.

Churches may need to contact the IRS or a tax accountant for proper procedures. — James A. Walker, director

Christian Life Council

A Christmas message

The Christian Civic Foundation of Arkansas, John Finn, director, is circulating this petition throughout our state:



Parker

A Christmas Message to Alcoholics Beverage Interests:

"We, the citizens of the state of Arkansas, strongly object to alcoholic beverage interests of our state and nation pushing products containing ethyl alcohol, a dangerous mind-altering drug, on the children and youth of our state and nation. We are especially appalled by their unfair use of international, national, state and local athletic events in promoting via radio, television and printed page the sale and consumption of beer. Beer is a leading addictive agent contributing to child and teen alcoholism. We earnestly urge President Reagan, Governor Clinton, state and national business, religious, educational, medical and legislative leaders to use their influence in stopping alcoholic beverage interests from taking unfair advantage of our most priceless heritage, the children and youth of our state and nation."

If you and others you know don't get to sign one of these, clip the above worded petition and mail it to John Finn along with your signatures. Indicate the county in which you live, not your complete address. He will include these names with others turned into Governor Clinton's office two weeks before Christmas. The address of the Christian Civic Foundation is 1120 Marshall Street, Suite 410, Little Rock, AR 72202. — Bob Parker, director

Evangelism

Sunday School problem becomes the answer

The problems in our Sunday School do not defeat us. How we handle them determines our success or failure. Othal



Shell

Feather tells us about a Baptist Church where two teenage boys were being discussed in a meeting of the officers and teachers. The teacher of the two boys was surprised to learn that one was not a Christian. Even though he was aware that one was unsaved, this

teacher was discouraged because he was unable to maintain a spirit of reverence on Sunday morning. He related that his difficulty centered around one boy in the class who was full of fun and mischief.

Some of the workers present felt that the mischief-maker was the key person for reaching the unsaved boys. The teacher was shocked and replied, "Key, nothing, he's my greatest problem." It was suggested that the teacher talk with the troublemaker about the unsaved friends and remind him that he was the natural leader of the class.

The teacher followed the suggestions. The class member who had created problems was surprised to learn that his friends were unsaved. He came to the teacher's place of business and apologized for his conduct in previous class sessions. He then went to the unsaved friends, apologized and told them he was praying for their salvation. The next Sunday both of the boys made a profession of faith. The teacher said, "My problem boy was a better witness than his teacher." — Clarence Shell, director

Missions

Continuing theological education in state grows

Arkansas Baptists participated in a nation-wide program of ministry education last year through their involvement in Seminary Extension. The 11 Seminary Extension centers in Arkansas were among 399 operating in 38 states and several foreign countries.

In addition, 43 state residents were part of a near-record 2,123 individuals in all 50 states enrolled for correspondence study through the Seminary Extension Independent Study Institute. Another 46 persons took courses through the Little Rock

Stewardship Department Churches and Social Security

The effort to secure Social Security benefits brought many changes affecting self-employed persons and churches. These changes became law with congressional approval in 1983.

One change is the higher rate for ordain- ed ministers who are considered self-

Seminary Studies Program (formerly Seminary Satellite).

Each of these programs is a part of a systematic effort on the part of the six Southern Baptist seminaries to make theological education accessible to ministers and other church leaders who have been unable to attend a seminary. Seminary Extension courses are offered on the pre-college and college levels, while Seminary Studies courses involve graduate-level work. The programs are administered by the Seminary External Education Division, which operates from offices in Nashville, Tenn., under joint sponsorship of all the seminaries.

Many Seminary Extension centers are sponsored locally by Baptist associations. Seminary-trained local pastors teach one or more ministry-related courses per year to persons in their immediate area. Independent study makes the same courses available, but allows the student the flexibility of choosing the time and place for study. Seminary Studies students are subject to admission requirements similar to those used by the parent seminaries. They are taught by regular or adjunct seminary professors.

A total of 9,115 students were actively engaged in one of these programs last year. Participation has averaged more than 10,000 since 1977-78. — **Lehman Webb**, Seminary Extension consultant and local coordinator for the Seminary Studies program.

Family and Child Care The extra motivation

Extra! Extra! Extra! Often these words seem to reach out to compel our attention. It causes us to anticipate whatever is to follow.

In recent weeks I've been grasping for an "extra word" to use in promotion of our Thanksgiving Offering. I've felt a need to find a word that would communicate to you our concern about a full offering this year.

Why do I feel this urgency? Partly because of the increased requests for help that we have received from needy children and families; partly because of our concern that we will continue to be strong and ready to meet these needs in the name of Christ.

Part of the reason is because I know that this past year in our country 1 million children ran away from home; 6½ million children were harmed by family members (child abuse); 50,000 teen-agers were suicides, a 20 percent increase in last three years, and #1 killer of teen-agers; 3.3 million were problem drinkers (14-17 year age group); 15 percent of young people under 18 have serious emotional or mental problems.

These facts alert us that ministry is needed. I might come up with an extra word that would be catchy and that would have the sound of urgency. However, I believe that the best word that I could share with you is a word from the Author of Life himself who said: "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name, welcomes me."

Perhaps that is the extra word that will motivate us to do our best. After all, it's for him. — **Johnny G. Biggs**, Executive Director, Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services

Baptist Student Union Open house at Camden

Our new Baptist Student Center at Southern Arkansas University Technical Branch at Camden is completed. Arkansas Baptists owe a great debt of gratitude to Dan Davies who served without remuneration as contractor for the building.



Logue

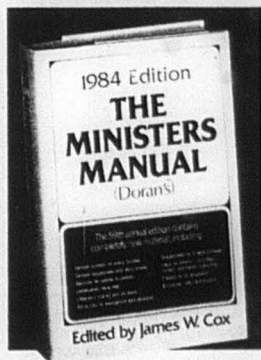
Churches in the area helping on the building include: Faith, Grace, and Hillside of Camden; First, Hampton; Southside, Fordyce; Dermott; Beech Street, Texarkana; Calvary, Hope; First, Smackover; Central, Magnolia; First, Stamps; First, Cullendale; Second and Parkview, El Dorado; Liberty, Lawson; First, Norphlett; First, Stephens; Three Creeks, Junction City; and First, Prescott. These contributions are also helping to remodel and enlarge the present Baptist Student Union at Southern Arkansas University at Magnolia.

Although the Center has not been furnished, there will be an Open House on Tuesday, Nov. 1, between 9:00 and 11:00 in the morning and between 7:00 and 9:00 in the evening. Refreshments will be served by the Woman's Missionary Union of Carey and Liberty Associations. — **Tom J. Logue**, director

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Arkansans appointed for mission service on three continents



Karl and Thelma Weathers

Five Arkansans were among 31 people named missionaries by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board Oct. 11 at River Road Church, Richmond, Va.

Karl and Thelma Weathers will work in Lebanon, where he will be a school administrator and she will be a church and home worker.

Natives of Earle, both are graduates of the University of Central Arkansas and the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. He currently attends Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

She is the former Thelma Williams,



Carey and Lynne Bates

daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Grady Williams of Earle.

Carey Bates, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ben F. Bates of Morrilton, has been appointed with his wife, Lynne Pepin Bates, to Portugal. He will work with students there, and she will be a church and home worker.

Both are graduates of the University of Tennessee at Martin. He is a graduate of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary and is currently enrolled at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Richard and Beatrice Walker have been reapointed to Equatorial Brazil, where he



Richard and Beatrice Walker

will be a general evangelist and she will be a church and home worker. The couple served in Brazil twice previously.

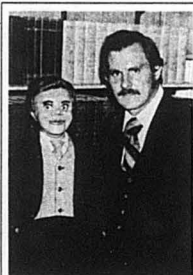
Walker is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Mrs. Walker, the former Beatrice Rodgers of Bauxite, received a diploma from the St. Vincent Infirmary School of Nursing in Little Rock.

The Walkers will return to Brazil in January, when the other two couples will begin eight weeks of orientation at Pine Mountain, Ga.

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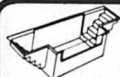


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New lesson writer begins

Johnny Jackson, pastor of Forest Highlands Church, Little Rock, begins this week writing the Bible Book series Sunday School lesson in "Lessons for living".

Jackson, a native of Brinkley, is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as pastor of churches in Texas, as well as the Louann Church and Forest Highlands in Arkansas.

Jackson is a past president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and currently serves as a member of the Home Mission Board.

He and his wife, Carleene, have four sons, ages 17 to 31.



Jackson

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News?? Whose??

Yours, Arkansas Baptists. Reports of the business of the annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention — *your business* — are the news items for our issue of Nov. 17. Don't miss your news.

**Announcing
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International

God's steadfast love

by Ed Simpson, Lonoke Church, Lonoke

Basic passage: Psalms 103:1-12

Focal passage: Ephesians 1:5-10

Central truth: God's steadfast love is worthy of our praise and practice.

Last Sunday we learned how God seeks to relate to man through the new covenant. In our lesson this week, we will discover how God relates to man through his steadfast love. Our passages of study reveal two great truths about the great love of God.

1. This love is worthy of our praise (v. 1-5).

The psalmist praised God for personal blessings in this hymn. Every individual should learn to praise God for his goodness. Also, we notice that true praise comes from the depths of one's heart, and should "bless his holy name" (v. 1). This love is worthy of praise because of the many benefits it brings into our life: forgiveness, healing, redemption from premature death, mercy and renewal of life (vv. 2-5).

We should also praise God for national blessings (vv. 6-12). God's love is evidenced in his goodness to the nation. The fact that God does not deal with us according to our sins, but rather according to his great mercy, is further reason to praise God (vv. 10,11). His love is worthy of our praise.

2. This love is worthy of our practice (Eph. 1:5-10).

How does God's love merit our devotion? God predestined us and adopted us as sons because of what Jesus did at the cross. This was all God's will, and it pleased him to make us "accepted in the beloved" — a messianic title for Jesus (vv. 5 & 6).

God's love was actualized at the cross. The power that raised Jesus to life is ours for Christian living, "according to the riches of his grace" (v. 7). This grace abounds toward each of his people (v. 8).

The great mystery, held secret in ancient days, was manifested in Christ, revealing the desire of God's heart (v. 9). "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him" (v.10). Such love demands our all.

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Life and Work

Ministering to
handicapped persons

by Oscar N. Golden, Calvary Church,
Benton

Basic passage: II Samuel 9: 1-13

Focal passage: II Samuel 9:1-3, 6-7, 9-10, 13

Central truth: It is a good thing to show kindness to the handicapped.

This passage of scripture shows David's desire to extend kindness to Saul's household. He never forgot the close friendship he had with Jonathan, Saul's son. Even though Saul had sought David's life continually, David wanted only to show kindness to Saul's descendants.

When Mephibosheth, Saul's crippled grandson, was located, David calmed his fear of retribution by an unexpected show of kindness. He was restored with his grandfather's property, given Ziba and his family to cultivate it, and was brought regularly to eat at the table of David. Even if Mephibosheth had not been crippled, David would have shown the same concern for him.

From this we can determine some great principles that will guide our actions toward those who have physical, emotional, or social handicaps.

Help for the handicapped must be motivated by a spirit of love and kindness and not pity or curiosity. Kindness is that trait of character that expresses itself in gracious, benevolent acts toward others.

In the context of this lesson, they are acts of kindness expressed toward those in any handicapping condition. Through words and actions, we will extend gracious and sympathetic treatment.

Help for the handicapped must be put into action by the meeting of very real needs, whether physical, emotional, or financial support. On the human level, we must endeavor to aid the handicapped in becoming self-sufficient, contributing members of society to the extent their handicaps will allow. A productive individual will have a better self image with greater capacity for satisfaction and fulfillment in life.

The greatest life-changing contributions we can make on a personal level to a handicapped person is to introduce him to Jesus. To put a new coat on the man without putting a new man in the coat would create the greatest handicap of all.

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Bible Book Study

Being true to Christ's lordship

by Johnny Jackson, Forest Highlands
Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Col.1:1-2:5

Focal passage: Col.1:9-2:3a

Central truth: The Lordship of Christ calls for total obedience.

Landrum Leavell, president of New Orleans Seminary, preaching in a convention a few years ago, said that becoming a Christian was "simply changing lords". The earliest Christian creed was "Jesus is Lord". Christians today need to affirm his lordship and live under his control daily.

The lordship of Christ is rooted in his deity. Paul wrote to the Colossian church combating the Gnostic heresies that denied both the real humanity and deity of Christ. The great apostle insisted the Jesus was "the image of the invisible God" (v.15) and the "fullness of God" (v.19) and is therefore rightfully lord over his people. He is creator (v.16) and redeemer (v.14).

The lordship of Christ is one of the distinctive doctrines of Southern Baptists. We have no pope, no creed, no absolute religious hierarchy, nor any human authority over us. We believe people today come to God through Christ through blood-bought redemption as the Colossian Christian did (vv.14, 20) and then are to serve him in thankfulness (v.12) and good works (v.10). We answer to him who is "pre-eminent in all things" (v.18) and to him only.

The lordship of Christ calls for total obedience. We have been rescued from bondage (v.13) and now are in the kingdom of God. Jesus asked the significant question "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say?"

Most pastors could easily repeat that searching question to a large portion of their church membership. We sing "trust and obey...". These words are true, and compliance on the part of the believer will surely please God and will bring joy and happiness.

The lordship of Christ brings peace and security to the believer. Since he is the one who "holds all things together" (v.17 Emp. N.T.), we are absolutely safe and secure in him. We can serve him with total confidence and assurance that He will care for us. This will bring peace and joy to us and cause us to be pleasing to the Lord (v.10).

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Crucial Questions for Christians

by Glen D. McGriff

Dr. McGriff would you please explain what the scripture means in Ephesians 5:22 and Colossians 3:18 pertaining to wives being in subjection to their husbands?



McGriff

about scripture rather than about what scripture teaches.

In both references, the context in which the verse appears is one of the believer's new life in Christ. The focus seems to move from general admonition to specific instruction for relational situations.

Each passage preceding the verse in question reminds believers of their relationship to Christ. All believers are to live in the context of his control (Col.3:10, Eph.5:18). They are to maintain an atmosphere of spiritual cultivation, (Col.3:16, Eph.5:19). Their whole life is to edify and enrich one another (Col.3:17, Eph.5:21).

Following these general principles, some specific applications are given. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph.5:22), "As is fit in the Lord", (Col.3:18). It appears that while the instruction is to "wives" the focus is upon the example of the "the Lord".

When believers submit themselves "unto the Lord", they are responding to his demonstrated love. It was Christ who initiated the relationship by the expression of sacrificial love. He did not acclaim authority, he acted in love.

Each of these chapters (Eph.5 and Col.3) begins with a call to a new life style, which is to reflect being "followers of God" (Eph.5:1) and "risen with Christ" (Col.3:1).

When persons are living in submission to Christ and motivated by his kind of love, it provides a climate of availability to one another. Such a climate provides freedom from fear and encourages a response of willing cooperative.

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

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

November 3, 1983



Woman's viewpoint

Alice Beard

Praying for our children

Our daughter who is in school in another state remarked in a recent phone conversation, "Isn't it hard, Mom, when all you can do for your kids is pray?" I have thought about that statement since and have been grateful for the privilege.

When your children were young, you prayed when they were sick or unhappy at school. As they grow older and more self-sufficient it is harder to know their needs and thoughts. God says he knows every thought they have and wants to chart their path for them (Ps.139:1,3,13). God wants to be consulted in every need of his children as he shares them with us.

It has seemed important to make praying with your children easy and spontaneous and a regular part of life. On the way to school you may realize your child is worried. If you stop for a minute and ask for God's help with that particular problem, you establish God's desire to be involved and his ability to intercede. Our family has carried this over into college so that when problems or hurts are expressed, often over the phone, we can stop and pray for those needs right then. While talking with our junior high granddaughter in Colorado, I realized she was apprehensive about her tonsillectomy

scheduled for the next morning, and I suggested we pray about it. She said, "Yes, let's. I know you and Mommie do that and now Mommie and I pray like the two of you pray."

Believing God, (having faith) is often the hardest part of praying for me. Yet I know that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb.11:6) or to get an answer to prayer (James 1:6).

Three truths have helped me. 1) Remembering that God gives us faith as a gift (Eph.2:8), and he wants us to ask for faith as one of the gifts of the Spirit (Luke 15:13). 2) Remembering to thank God for all his gifts and answers to prayer, both of the past and for the future (Phil.4:16). 3) Remembering how much he loves us and is able to help (Eph.3:19,20).

As we look at our children, we might say like Samuel, "God forbid that I should sin against you in ceasing to pray for you."

Dr. Alice Beard has taught pediatrics for 35 years at the Schools of Medicine at University Hospital and Children's Hospital in Little Rock. She is an active member at Calvary Church, Little Rock.

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National CP records first \$100 million year

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Contributions to the national Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention broke the \$100 million barrier for the first time during 1982-83.

Total gifts to the worldwide mission and education causes of the SBC totaled \$102,313,308 when the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, an increase of 9.61 percent and \$8,968,952 over 1981-82.

September gifts of \$9,008,042 from the 34 state Southern Baptist conventions underwrote the basic operating budget of \$100 million and 32 percent of the \$6 billion challenge budget.

"The real thrill of going over the \$100 million mark is not in the impressive row of zeros—rather it is in the lives of the people touched by the programs that money funded," Harold C. Bennett, executive director-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, said.

"It is in the hundreds of thousands who learned of the saving power of Jesus Christ because of Southern Baptist missionaries. It is the thousands of students who grew spiritually in the study of God's word at Southern Baptist seminaries. It is the lives touched by the extensive ministries of Southern Baptist agencies.

"One hundred million dollars is a lot of money—but the changed lives are to be valued beyond measure."

Florida's average gift, figured by dividing state CP contributions by convention

membership, was \$9.62, followed closely by Oklahoma at \$9.58. The national per capita gift was \$7.31.

Florida was the only state convention to be in the top 10 in per capita giving, percentage increase over 1981-82 contributions and total dollar amount contributed. Twenty-one of the 34 state conventions are in the top 10 in at least one category.

The leading per capita state conventions are mostly from the deep South—yet Maryland is fifth and Hawaii is eighth. Arkansas ranked sixth with a per capita gift of \$8.09.

In total dollar giving nine of the 34 state conventions contributed more than \$5 million to the national programs and 28 of the 34 supported the worldwide mission and education efforts of the SBC with more than \$100,000 each.

Arkansas ranked 14th nationally in dollar amount given (\$3,659,606), ahead of California's \$1,196,621.

The state conventions with the highest percentage increases are mainly in the north—yet Florida is third and Georgia is eighth. Arkansas was 26th with a 6.54 percent increase.

Prior to the 1982-83 fiscal year, monthly national Cooperative Program receipts had surpassed \$8 million only five times and \$9 million only twice since the Cooperative Program was started in 1925. This year, three months were above \$9 million and nine above \$8 million.

Canada study committee begins work

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The pluses and minuses of making the Southern Baptist Convention a bi-national body were discussed during the first meeting of the SBC Canada Study Committee.

The 21-member committee was authorized by members to the 1983 SBC in Pittsburgh to consider changing the SBC Constitution to allow seating of messengers from SBC-type churches in Canada. Most of those involved are churches affiliated with the Northwest Baptist Convention.

Currently, Article II of the constitution limits membership in the SBC to Baptists in the United States and its territories.

Fred Roach, a Dallas homebuilder and chairman, told members: "Some of us had known very little about the issue (before appointment to the committee). We have different degrees of expertise, but we will all become experts on Canada in the next six months."

Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary of the SBC Executive Committee, and one of those designated by the SBC to appoint the committee, told committee members: "This is one of the most important assignments given to any committee in many years. You can set the direction of the SBC for years to

come...the makeup of the whole SBC."

Following the meeting, Roach told Baptist Press the key issue is not whether Southern Baptists will be involved in the evangelization of Canada, but how.

"Seating of messengers is not the key issue. The key issue is how are we going to do our job effectively, to accomplish the most. We want to help Canadians establish the means to evangelize that part of the world. The question is the methods and the means to do that, and to whom are we going to give the assignment."

Roach also pledged that the committee will come to a decision on the matter, and will not defer it for further study. "We are going to act...study this thing through to completion. I believe Southern Baptists are asking for a definitive statement (from the committee)."

Currently, there are about 65 churches and missions with 4,300 members in Canada relating to the Northwest Baptist Convention, primarily in the four western provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. There are "a few" other congregations in other areas of Canada, statistics indicate.