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**May 21, 1987**

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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St. Louis Preview

# Arkansas Baptist

May 21, 1987

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## IT'S UPLIFTING

### Chileans Face Inevitable 'Why?'

Baptists in Chile have faced "the inevitable question" in the weeks after two Baptist leaders were killed in traffic accidents: "Why these, Lord?" Nester Novoa, president of the pastor's conference, was killed in an auto accident in January. A week later, Juan Moya, Chilean Baptists' camp director and statistical secretary, and his son were killed in another accident. Caroline Jones, a missionary in Puerto Varas, Chile, responded, "God keeps saying to us: 'Death is not the end.'"

### Governor Starts With Prayer

BELEM, Brazil—At newly elected Gov. Helio Gueiros' request, First Baptist Church in Belem held an "evangelical worship service of thanksgiving and intercession" the night before he was sworn into office as leader of Para state. Included in the official inauguration activities, the service attracted more than 1,000 people, according to Southern Baptist missionary Loyd Moon.

### Missionaries Help With Olympics

SEOUL, South Korea—Twenty-two Southern Baptist missionaries have volunteered to teach English to Korean Olympic officials training for the 1988 Summer Olympics, to be held in South Korea. Most of the 164 officials involved have studied English in school, but will concentrate on Olympic terminology and improving conversational skills as they prepare for the estimated 250,000 foreign visitors expected for the Games.

### Austrians Launch Home Effort

VIENNA, Austria—The Austrian Baptist Union has created a home mission department and selected a full-time leader. The 12 churches in the union plan to finance the work without help from Baptists in other countries, according to a report in *Bundes Nachrichten*, the Austrian Baptists' official publication. Leading the effort will be Michael Herzog, who has been doing pioneer work in Bavaria since 1980.

## GOOD NEWS!

### Serving In Gratitude

Matthew 20:1-16

Helmut Thielicke calls this parable "a coded telegram." It must be decoded to be understood. The key to unlocking the meaning is found in Peter's question in the preceding chapter (Matt. 19:27). He wanted to know what he and the other disciples would receive for following Christ. Jesus dealt with both the question and the questioner. In doing so, he shed light on the relationship between God and persons.

His answer depicts the generosity of God toward persons. God took the initiative to seek out laborers and pay them generously. God always treats us better than we deserve.

His answer distinguished the right attitude of service: gratitude. Some of the laborers calculated the expected reward on a legal basis. Others compared the number of hours worked with other laborers. Neither was the basis of reward. Beyond the expected amount, God gave abundantly according to his grace. Therefore, gratitude is always the individual's proper response to God's rewards.

### A Father's Love For His Child

Luke 15:12-24

The rebel who repented has long starred in the story of the prodigal. The Master's intent was to present a picture of the Father's love.

Love releases. The father loved his son enough to let him go. There were some lessons his son could learn only in the "far country."

Love waits. The father loved his son enough to let him stay gone. The father waited for his son to "come to himself."

Love reinstates. The father loved his son enough to let him come home. The boy grew up, gave up, and came home. The father welcomed his son. Rejoicing replaced judgment and vengeance.

The father showed us how to love our children, giving them freedom to learn for themselves and waiting for them in loving patience. We also see the heavenly Father's love for us.

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# Our Roots Remind Us

J. EVERETT SNEED

The Southern Baptist Convention will be convening on June 16-18 in St. Louis, Mo. There are probably issues on which the messengers will disagree regarding the course of action that should be taken by our denomination. Among the possibilities for disagreement are who should be president of the Southern Baptist Convention; who should serve on the boards of agencies, institutions, and commissions; the report of the Peace Committee, etc. There are, however, both theological and historical reasons why we should be tolerant in our disagreements.

One of the great theological axioms of the New Testament is that we are to love other Christians.

Love is to continue even when there is difficulty or disagreement. This becomes abundantly evident in the apostle Paul's dealing with the church at Corinth. This congregation was perhaps the most troubled group of believers described in the New Testament. The apostle dealt with each situation in a firm but constructive manner. His words were measured, and nowhere did he accuse these individuals of not having an experience with Christ.

There are also historical reasons why some differences will be evident within our fellowship and why tolerance should prevail. Southern Baptists were molded and shaped through a variety of sources. During the 18th and 19th centuries, at least four distinct groups of Baptists emerged in the South. The first of these was in Charleston, S.C. It had its roots in the Particular Baptists of England. The Charleston Baptists believed that every individual must have a religious experience and that the Scripture is the sole authority for religious faith and practice.

We are indebted to this group of Baptists for an emphasis on theological order. In 1767, the Charleston Association adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. It became known as the Charleston Confession. It was Calvinistic in character and became a consensus of Baptist theology in the South.

The Charleston Baptists placed much emphasis on the formal worship experience and the role of the minister in the church and in the community. Naturally, they were great believers in the value of education. As a result a number of Baptist colleges, including Southern Baptist



Theological Seminary, were born.

The second group to have an impact on Southern Baptists of today were the Baptists of Sandy Creek, N.C. They were noted for their evangelistic fervor and can be traced back to the Separate Baptists. They came to New England during the era of the Great Awakening.

They believed in religious freedom and had much to do with the establishment of separation of church and state in the South. Because of their emphasis on the freedom of individual conscience, they were reluctant to sign any confession of faith.

The Baptists of Sandy Creek were evangelistic in worship. Their ministry was charismatic, and they were rugged independents. It sometimes was difficult to determine if they were Calvinistic, moderately Calvinistic, or Arminian

(believing in falling from grace). They placed little importance on education.

The third group of Baptist forefathers to have an impact on Southern Baptists were those of Georgia. This group of Baptists gave us the cooperative method of working together. They placed great emphasis on missions.

With the forming of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, a new kind of denominational structure was born, which was more cooperative than Baptists had ever been. We are indebted to the Georgia Baptists to a large extent for our mission boards (home and foreign), but this group of Baptists left a tradition of sectionalism which remained with us for many years, affecting our relationship with blacks and our outreach beyond the South.

The final group of Baptists to have an impact on Southern Baptists were those from Tennessee led by J.R. Graves. Perhaps the major contribution of this group was pride in our Baptist distinctives.

We owe much to our Baptist forefathers. Each of these groups has provided emphases which have helped to make the Southern Baptist Convention what it is today. Through the years, there has been a combining of the strengths of these groups, while many of the weaknesses have been eliminated.

The Scripture is clear. While doctrinal heresy is never to be tolerated, there must be room for honest differences of opinion. Our historical roots remind us that there will be different emphases maintained by committed Baptist leaders.

If Southern Baptists are to do God's will, we must place priority on preaching the gospel around the world. Anything that deters this emphasis is wrong.

## Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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DON MOORE

## You'll Be Glad To Know



With my theme always on things "Glad", I am suffering from "undelivered speech." There are things negative that have to be addressed. This is one of those times when I must speak on sad matters.

**Mission support reflects grave spiritual problems.** The Lottie Moon offering SBC-wide for 1986 appears to be \$5 million short of the goal. The 1988 goal was recently reduced by \$6 million to try to bring it in line with what is being done by Southern Baptists. Two questions arise. Do Southern Baptists have less money with the economy as it is? Where is the money? The answers are not difficult. Southern Baptists have the money. Where is the money? Most of the tithe has paid house, boat, camper, car, and clothes payments. Only about 2 percent of our per capita income is given to the Lord's churches. That means the 8 percent has gone for other things. Of the 2 percent that ends up at the church, where is that money?—Savings, C.D.'s, buses, buildings and additional staff. Arkansas churches have increased 26 percent in undesignated gifts from their people to their churches over the last four years. They have only increased their mission support by .3 percent (.003). Giving in proportion to God's blessing is a clear biblical principle. We are not doing that very well.

Who is carrying the banner for biblical giving in your class, department, or church? Who is teaching the children and young adults to tithe? Who is teaching the budget and finance people what the Cooperative Program accomplishes worldwide? It appears some businessmen view the Cooperative Program like taxes—you get by with paying as little as you can if you are an astute businessman. Our ignorance of God's plan and our effectiveness is catching up with us.

Although I don't like to talk money, I must sound a clarion cry. Our Task Force volunteers have the message and can come and share the need at their expense. Don't we owe it to our givers to let them know what they are accomplishing? Don't we owe it to the Lord and to the world to try to get the gospel out as quickly as possible?

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

## Letters to the Editor

### Already "Loosed"

It amuses me when some scholar purporting to be an authority on women's roles in the church today actually reveals by his janglings just how little he knows about God's Word. One such case is Leon McBeth's speech to the ladies in Birmingham May 7. McBeth is quoted as saying, "But the day has arrived when Southern Baptist men need to 'loose' Southern Baptist women to determine their own roles in Baptist life." He is also quoted as saying, "... in these latter days we reward you by explaining that God made you second-class Christians and telling you what areas in the church are off limits to you."

Perhaps someone should inform Mr. McBeth that, according to Dr. John, Jesus already "loosed" women a long time ago. "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Secondly, according to Dr. Paul, women were

second-class citizens under Judaism, but were made first-class Christians by Jesus, "... there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). Thirdly, it is not Southern Baptist men who are telling women "what areas in the church are off limits" to them but, again, it is Dr. Paul. "Let your women keep silent in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (1 Cor. 14:34-35). To Pastor Timothy, Dr. Paul wrote, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2:11-12). Also, "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife. ..." (1 Tim. 3:2). I rest my case.—**Bob Richardson**

## Woman's Viewpoint

### A Woman Who Fears the Lord

MARY IDA TIDSWORTH

"... A woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised" (Pro. 30:30b).

A woman who stands in reverence (fear) before God may be led by him into a career or to work outside the home. When our children approached college age, the Lord led me back into a full-time job.

Perhaps culture shock described my feelings when I went back to work. The Lord's name was a by-word, smoke permeated my clothes, people lived with someone they were not married to, etc., etc. The Lord showed me that these were people like Jesus walked among and loved while on earth. I needed to find ways to show his love also. It was good for me to be thrust out into the world. I realized how much I needed God's power, strength, and



love in order to honor him.

We cannot witness in the world in our own strength. But in adjusting to a job, I found it difficult to find a quiet time. Almost everyone in the building in which I worked used the elevator. One day I decided to walk up the stairs. Behind the stairs on one floor was a chair by a window overlooking the river. Since the bus I rode to work arrived 30 minutes before work time, that chair became my quiet time place.

In my quiet place, I thanked God for Christians with whom I worked and

asked strength for us each day. I prayed for problems shared by those with whom I rode the bus—my bus ministry. Office friends who were not Christians were also on my prayer list.

One morning I was especially burdened for my boss and asked for an opportunity to witness to him. As soon as I walked into the office, he looked up to say, "Power and money are the only motives people have." "You know, I believe there is another motive—following God," I replied.

Christian women who work may be used to make others thirsty for the living water of Jesus. We may be maligned or praised. Because we stand in reverence and awe before him, we know any praise is due him.

**Mary Ida Tidsworth is a member of Calvary Church, Little Rock.**

DANIEL R. GRANT

## One Layman's Opinion



### Moral Education

As Americans receive shock wave after shock wave from revelations of immorality in high and low places, more and more people ask "Who's to blame?" and "What can we do about it?"

Some blame our divorce-plagued homes. Others cite the rootlessness and mobility of urban life and the weakening of community pressures for morality. Many point

to the displacement of the church and family by television as the primary shaper and molder of values in society. Still others contend that our public schools have abandoned the teaching of morality (no more "McGuffey readers") and have become "value-free."

Is it possible that the time has come for Americans to learn yet another lesson from the Japanese? It might be helpful to look at the findings of a two-year study of Japan's schools by the U.S. Department of Education. The results were recently published in a book entitled *Japanese Education Today*, and we just might rediscover in it some of the lost secrets of early American educational success. The researchers found:

(1) Japanese teachers are expected to teach moral values, character, and good habits (such as neatness, punctuality, and respect), as well as the three R's.

(2) Intense parental involvement is expected. Mothers are especially responsible for the early education and training of children, and Japanese society judges a woman's maternal success largely on how well her children do in school.

(3) Schools frequently set curfews for children; boundaries for their movements within a neighborhood; times to get up, go to bed, study, and play; and parents are expected to enforce them.

(4) The Japanese school year usually requires about 225 days, compared to America's average school year of 180 days.

(5) The fundamental role of moral education in Japanese schools includes after-school regulations such as dress codes, prohibitions against visiting game parlors or other "undesirable" neighborhood attractions, driving before they are 18, and part-time jobs that distract students from study or expose them to bad influences. Smoking is considered a serious form of delinquency; there is little adolescent drinking; and marijuana and hard drugs are virtually unavailable.

I shudder to think how many American civil rights lawyers would get rich from the lawsuits filed by parents if we tried to adopt some of the above policies. I like the American ideal of placing ultimate responsibility for moral education on the home and church, but we seemed to do much better when the schools also were heavily committed and involved.

Is it possible that Japan is doing a better job of teaching morality than "Christian America?"

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University.

## Second in a Series of Three Ordination in the New Testament

by T.B. Maston

Professor Emeritus, Southwestern Seminary

In the original language, the word for "ordain" or "ordination" is not found in the New Testament. It is true that several words are translated "ordain" or "ordination" in some versions of the New Testament. There is very little attention in the entire New Testament to the matter of ordination, which we have tended to make very important.

Jesus, after praying all night, chose the Twelve, but there is no indication of an ordination (Luke 6:12-13). John's gospel reveals that the risen Lord said to the disciples he had chosen, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so, I send you." Then the record continues, "And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:21-22). There is no suggestion or hint of any type of ordination.

Also, there is no mention of ordination when Matthias was chosen to take the place of Judas. He was simply numbered or "enrolled with the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:26).

The closest thing to contemporary ordination found in the New Testament is the occasion when Barnabas and Saul or Paul were set apart to the work to which the Holy Spirit had called them. The record says, "Then after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia. . . ." (Acts 13:3-4). That sounds very much like the general practice we follow in ordaining someone

to the ministry in our churches.

If ordination is recognition of a special call of the Lord to a particular individual for a particular task, then it seems logical to believe that one could be ordained or set apart more than one time, since the will or purpose of the Lord seems to change or vary for some individuals from time to time.

It even seems at times that one call may be preparatory to another. For example, many and possibly most teachers in our theological seminaries originally felt the call to serve as pastors and later felt the call to be professors. Why not "set them apart" by ordaining them to their new call or task?

When I participated in the missionary orientation of our Foreign Mission Board, I asked on several occasions how many of the missionaries had had or would have a service when they would be dedicated by their local church to the missionary task. I specified that I meant they would be kneeling or standing at the front and members of the congregation would come by and lay hands on their heads and possibly pray a special prayer for them. Numbers of these missionaries had had such a service or would have it before they went to their field of ministry.

My word to them was and is to you that that was closely akin to, if not identical with, New Testament ordination. They were set apart by their church to the task to which God had previously set them apart or called them.

(Next week: The Contemporary Situation)

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# LOCAL & STATE

## Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

### People

**Audrey Nell Cobine** will be honored June 7 by Little Rock First Church with a 2 - 4:30 p.m. reception in Fellowship Hall after recognition of her 50 years of service as financial assistant.

**Ken Hucks** is on a mission tour to Ireland this month. He serves as pastor of Central Church in Marked Tree.

**Alton Ray Hipp** is serving as interim pastor of Concord Church.

**Kirk Crawford** will be ordained to the preaching ministry May 24 at Woodrow Church, Heber Springs, where he serves as pastor.

**Tim Hess** recently was named Church Musician of the Year by the Federated Music Clubs of Arkansas. He serves as organist for South Side Church in Fort Smith.

**Paul Klinger** of Texarkana will begin serving in June as pastor of Berry Street Church in Springdale, where **Burton A. Miley** is serving as interim pastor.

**Rev. and Mrs. E.S. Ray** of Pine Bluff will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary May 23 when their children host a reception from 2 - 4 p.m. at Forrest Park Church in Pine Bluff. Ray is a retired Southern Baptist pastor, having served a number of Arkansas churches in his 40 years of service.

**Zan Pierce** was ordained to the preaching ministry May 3 at Sardis Church, Montrose, where he serves as pastor.

**Tony Berry** was honored May 3 by Dardanelle First Church for his 15 years of service as pastor. He was presented an appreciation plaque and honored at a noon luncheon.

**Jim Freeman** has resigned as pastor of First Church, Glenwood.

**J.W. Love** has resigned as pastor of Black Springs Church.

**Charles Hargett** has accepted the call to serve as pastor of South Fork Church at Gurdon.

**Paul Mints and Brenda White** will serve as summer youth interns at Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith. Mints is a senior at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. He has served on the staff of Pioneer Drive Church in Abilene and First Church in Pecos, Texas. White is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University. She has served as Student to Student worker for the Baptist Student Union since January 1986, and has served as a summer missionary in southeast Arkansas.

**Doug Pruitt** has accepted a call to join the staff of Sylvan Hills First Church in North Little Rock as minister to youth and children. He is a graduate of the University of Central Arkansas at Conway. A native of Little Rock, he has been a member at Geyer Springs First Church.

**Keith Kerr** was ordained to the preaching ministry May 10 at Sylvan Hills First Church in North Little Rock. He is serving as minister to youth at Indianhead Lake Church in North Little Rock. Both churches participated in the ordination service.

**Patricia Robbins** of Hot Springs has been awarded the Chancellor's Scholarship (full tuition) for the 1987-88 academic year at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo. She is the daughter of Lanny Robbins.

**Samantha Miller** of Springdale is the recipient of a one-half tuition scholarship at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo. She is the daughter of Guy and JoAnne Miller.

**Pete Ogle** has resigned as pastor of Antioch Church at Beebe to serve as pastor of White Oak Church in Yannis, Texas.

**Tommy Price** is serving as pastor of Crosby Church at Searcy.

### Briefly

**Gravel Ridge First Church** has launched a Sunday morning Bible study ministry at Jacksonville Convalescent Center. Feigh Gwin is serving as teacher. Members volunteering to assist with the church's newly sponsored mission in Pine Meadow Mobile Home Park include Joe and Ann Morgan, Larry Johnson, Karlyn Hopson, and Pearl and Bob Chaffin. DeWayne Richards is serving as pastor. His wife, Sandy, and their two sons also will assist with the work, according to Gravel Ridge First Church Pastor Danny Veteto.



*Immanuel Church in Pine Bluff celebrated being debt-free for the first time since 1955 with a double noteburning service May 3. Participating in the service were (left to right) W.E. Bobo, church treasurer; Pastor David Moore; Thomas Ross, finance committee chairman; James Swilling, trustee; and Frank Stone, trustee.*

**Wynne Church** youth will be in New Port Richey, Fla., June 4-13 to lead backyard Bible clubs, in hopes of establishing weekday Bible programs in suburban Tampa for the Eastside Church. The youth choir also will perform at the Hardwick State Prison for Women in Georgia, the Georgia Baptist Hospital for children, and for Tampa youth rallies.

**Springdale First Church** recorded an all-time high Sunday School attendance in April with a weekly average of 2,216 as compared to 2,066 in 1985. The current enrollment of 5,145 is the highest in its history.

**Combs Church** ordained Arthur Haight to the deacon ministry April 26. Those leading the service were Pastor Walter Jesser, Doyle Downing, and Don Warford.

**Independence Association** Girls in Action will conduct a retreat May 29-30 at the associational camp, according to Joyce Powell, associational GA director. Pat Glascock, Arkansas Baptist State Convention Missions Friend/GA director, will be speaker.

**Riverside Church** in North Little Rock will celebrate its first anniversary May 24 with activities which include Bible study, morning worship, a noon luncheon and evening worship. R.H. Dorris will be guest speaker and Bill Burnett will serve as principal speaker. Moderator Joe Shelnett will give the church history.

**Bella Vista Church** has organized a Sunday School class for college and career singles with A.R. Stewart serving as teacher.

**Mountain Home First Church** honored Pastor Roy Fowler and his wife, Pat, May 17, with a reception in recognition of three years of service.

**Rogers Lakeside Church** is ministering to residents of Medi Home Nursing Home once a month as an outreach ministry. Another ministry is a free blood pressure clinic once a month staffed by three nurses who are church members.

**Beech Street First Church** in Texarkana has organized three outreach Bible study classes. Nine are enrolled in a class that meets each Sunday morning at a local restaurant with John Hough, associate pastor of education, serving as teacher. There are 16 enrolled in a class led by Roscoe and Elsie Powers at Colonial Retirement Center. Delbert Garrett is serving as teacher for a class at Greentier Retirement Center, in which five are enrolled.

**Timbo Calvary Church** has organized one youth and one median adult Sunday

School class as a result of membership growth. The church also launched a graded Church Training program May 3 and is constructing a new parsonage, according to Pastor John Ashcraft.

**Waldron Southside Church** is building an addition to its present facility that will house a baptistry, pastor's study, and dressing rooms, according to Pastor Larry Free.

**Baring Cross Church** in North Little Rock recently voted to send a contribution to assist with Southern Baptist work at Trinity Church in Hanover, N.H., where former members J.D. and Edna Albright are now members.

**East Side Church** in Trumann recently purchased a van for use in its outreach ministries. Pew cushions also were recently installed in the sanctuary.

**Beirne Church** will celebrate its 90th anniversary with homecoming revival May 24-27 for which Andy O'Kelly, a former pastor, will be speaker. Sunday activities will include Sunday School, morning worship, a noon potluck luncheon, and a 3 p.m. music program.

**Piggott First Church** recently held a revival that result in one profession of faith and one rededication. Paul Seal of Mountain Home, formerly of Piggott, was evangelist. Alan Parks, minister of music, directed music. Clyde P. Spurgin is pastor.

**Rocky Point Church** at Judsonia ordained E.A. Williams to the deacon ministry May 3.

**Jenny Lind First Church** ordained Dan Thames to the deacon ministry May 17.

**Matthews Memorial Church** at Pine Bluff dedicated a new sanctuary organ at the morning worship hour May 17.

**Prairie Grove First Church** reported that eight out of 10 goals set for April resulted in seven professions of faith, five baptisms, seven additions by letter, and the achievement of three Sunday School attendance goals.

**Russellville Second Church** Brotherhood is launching a Christian Brother ministry that will provide activities for boys, including fishing, hunting, camping, and ballgames. Don Phillips is serving as coordinator.

**Sang Avenue Church** in Fayetteville honored Pastor Paul Dennis and his wife, Pat, with an appreciation fellowship May 3. Members presented Dennis with an expense paid trip to Brazil in October, where he will assist with the AMAR project.

## Making Progress

Sponsors of the mission effort at Holiday Island in northcentral Arkansas met April 25 to review their progress and discuss the project.

Representatives of First Church, Eureka Springs; North Arkansas Association; Park Hill Church, North Little Rock; First Church, Blytheville; the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church extension program, and Golden Church, Golden, Mo., gathered to hear a progress report from Emory Day, mission pastor, and to look at budget needs and available resources.

Day reported that a Bible study group is meeting on Thursday evenings at the Holiday Island Information Center. Four to six residents of the community are involved each week, he said.

Holiday Island is a planned community development north of Eureka Springs.

## Sex Education Workshop Offered

A Family Life/Sexuality Education Conference Workshop will be held June 15-19 at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. The conference, sponsored by the Family Life Education Project in the Division of Continuing Education at the university, will be of value to teachers, church staff, and others who work with young people.

Trainers for the sessions will be Michael Young, director of the Family Life Education Project at the university, and Susan Hart, a family life education consultant from Austin, Texas.

For more information, contact Michael Young, HPER 308, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

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# 'To Know Him... To Make Him Known'

ST. LOUIS (BP)—A focus on discipleship and missions—two historical themes of Southern Baptist life—will beckon messengers to the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 16-18 in Cervantes Convention Center in St. Louis.

"To Know Him... To Make Him Known" will be the theme for the meeting, announced Stan Coffey, chairman of the SBC Order of Business Committee, which is responsible for planning the event.

"We wanted a theme that would call Southern Baptists back to our main priority of missions and evangelism," said Coffey, pastor of San Jacinto Church in Amarillo, Texas. He explained the theme's first phrase, "To Know Him," highlights the importance of discipleship and personal spiritual growth, and the second phrase, "To Make Him Known," illustrates commitment to missions and evangelism—telling the world about the gospel of Christ.

The Scripture reference for the theme is Philippians 3:10: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death..."

The theme will be interpreted by four evangelists, Coffey said. The evangelists

and their topics: Manley Beasley of Bedford, Texas, "Know Him in Prayer;" Sam Cathey of Oklahoma City, Okla., "Know Him Through the Word;" Eddie Martin of Lancaster, Pa., "Make Him Known;" and Billy Graham of Montreat, N.C., who will speak on the importance of missions and evangelism.

The St. Louis meeting will be the first one in which all theme interpretations will have been presented by full-time vocational evangelists, Coffey noted. He added the decision was made deliberately and is directed toward all vocational evangelists, "to affirm them and the work they do and involve them in the life of the convention."

Graham's sermon will be at 11:10 a.m. Thursday, June 18, and Coffey said his committee expects a larger-than-average crowd to hear the internationally known evangelist during the convention's next-to-last session: "Any time Dr. Graham preaches, a lot of people want to hear him. It will be good for the convention to hear him and get his challenge for missions and evangelism."

In addition to the four speeches, the theme will be interpreted by a hymn written especially for the 1987 annual meeting



(BP) photo

by John McKay, convention music director and music evangelist from Fort Worth, Texas. The song, "To Know Him... To Make Him Known," will be sung during each session of the meeting, Coffey said.

"We hope this theme will really put our hearts and minds back on Bold Mission Thrust," the SBC campaign to present the gospel of Christ to the whole world by the year 2000, he noted. "We hope this will renew our commitment to Bold Mission Thrust and to what the Lord has called us to do."

Bold Mission Thrust will be the topic of another convention highlight, he added. The "Bold Mission Thrust Prayer Launch," scheduled for Tuesday, June 16, at 7:25 p.m., will "kick off an organized way to involve churches in consistent prayer for Bold Mission Thrust and missions," Coffey said. "We've asked people to pray, but this will be asking people to make a commitment, sort of like a prayer chain in a local church."

Other highlights Coffey listed include the convention sermon, by Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Church of Jacksonville, Fla., at noon Wednesday, June 16, at the president's address, by Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Church of Memphis, Tenn., Tuesday morning; and two "mountain peaks"—the mission boards reports—on Tuesday and Wednesday nights.

The June meeting also will feature what is scheduled to be the final report of the SBC Peace Committee, created in 1985 to help end theological and political controversy within the 14.6-million-member convention. The Peace Committee report is set for Tuesday night, from 8:50 to 9:20.



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The Order of Business Committee considered several factors as it determined when to locate the Peace Committee report, Coffey said. "We felt we needed to have sufficient time for it," he explained, noting the report is at the end of an evening session, so time for discussion can be extended most easily. If it were conducted earlier in the day, pressing matters such as elections and fixed orders of business would make extension of time almost impossible.

Further, convention planners wanted to have the report on Tuesday, the meeting's busiest and most highly attended day, so as many convention messengers as possible could participate in the process. It also was placed immediately following the SBC Foreign Mission Board report, one of the meeting's most popular features. "We knew there would be a high interest for both reports, and by placing them back-to-back, the Peace Committee can address the largest number of messengers," Coffey said.

As with the 1986 meeting in Atlanta, the 1987 SBC in St. Louis will feature a large percentage of its business on Tuesday, the Amarillo pastor said. "We're trying pretty well to get a lot of the major business done on Tuesday. We feel until we get a lot of those things out of the way, they'll be on people's minds. We also want the best participation possible."

The St. Louis meeting is not expected to be as large as the two previous annual meetings—both, with more than 40,000 registered messengers apiece, almost twice as large as the next-largest meeting, Coffey said. But SBC '87 is expected to be large and crowded.

"We have the capacity of seating about 30,000 messengers, and we expect that many. We expect it (Cervantes Center) to be filled to capacity," he said. "Interest still is running high in the convention, and we think it will be a full house."

The main hall of the convention site will seat 27,000 messengers, and two overflow halls will hold 1,500 each.

Because of the crowded conditions, access to meeting halls will be limited to registered messengers, program participants and press, at least through Wednesday morning, Coffey said.

"We don't like to do that, but it's just necessary to see that those who are voting messengers get a seat," he explained. The rule also will apply to children of registered messengers, he added: "We'll have limited child care, and that probably will have to be on a first-come, first-served basis. We feel that even though it's a difficult thing, we'll have to follow the policy we had last year (of only children who are messengers themselves allowed in the convention hall). If they are messengers, that's a different story, but some are too young to be

messengers."

Anticipating crowded conditions, Coffey advised messengers to come early and stay put. Doors to the convention center will open at 7 a.m. each day, an hour and a half before the morning sessions start, and he suggested messengers who want to get good seats should arrive early. "When people go (to the center), they need to plan to stay," he added. "It will be that crowded."

Coffey requested the prayers of Southern Baptists as his committee finishes plans for the annual meeting and supervises it to completion: "Our committee asks prayer for us. We want to do everything we can to help the messengers and be as fair as we can to everyone."

## 'Celebrate' WMU

Southern Baptist women will look toward the centennial celebration of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union during the organization's 99th annual

meeting June 14-15 in St. Louis.

"Celebrate" will be the theme for the national WMU meeting, to be held at the Clarion Hotel. The conference will be a primary event leading up to the celebration of WMU's 100th anniversary, May 13-14, 1988, in Richmond, Va.

A featured guest at the St. Louis meeting will be June Scobee, widow of Dick Scobee, who was killed in the Challenger space shuttle disaster. She will share her experiences of the tragedy and how she depended on WMU prayer support for strength.

Music director for the meeting will be Malvie Giles from Magnolia, Ark.

## Assisting Churches

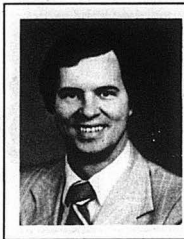
Southern Baptist associational missions directors will examine how their local organizations help churches reach America for Christ during their annual meeting June 14-15 in St. Louis.

"The Association Assisting Churches on Mission" will be the theme for the 26th annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Conference of Directors of Missions, to be held at the St. Louis Park Terrace Airport Hilton.



W O W

## ADVANCE TRAINING WORKSHOP



WOW Advance Training is a new thirteen-week personal evangelism training program for youth of all ages and their leaders. It was developed by the Personal Evangelism Department of the Home Mission Board to prepare youth for the challenge of Continuing Witness Training (CWT). The workshop is for Ministers of Youth and Youth Sunday School Outreach leaders. The training is being offered in a few select places in the United States. This workshop will certify participants as equippers to use both the WOW Event and WOW Advance Training materials. Participants must attend all training sessions to be certified. WOW Advance materials can only be obtained by a qualified equipper.

Registration is \$15 postmarked 30 days before the workshop and \$25 up to 14 days. Full refund of registration up to the 14-day deadline. No registrations or refunds can be made after the 14-day deadline. Registration fee includes all materials. It does not include travel, food or lodging. Workshops with less than 20 participants will be rescheduled. To register, send your name, address and telephone number. Make checks payable to the state Evangelism Department.

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"We will study how the association does in fact strengthen the churches for their work," said Carl J. Duck, president of the conference.

The conference will include two addresses by William M. Pinson Jr., executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in Dallas. It also will feature two Bible studies by Robert Hamblin, vice president for evangelism at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta.

## A Vision of Shalom

Southern Baptist Women in Ministry will focus on visions of healing in a broken world during the organization's fifth annual meeting in St. Louis June 13-14.

Interpretation of the theme, "Living Toward a Vision of Shalom" will seek to provide "encouragement, because of our denominational situation and world situation in general. We think all Baptists need encouragement," said Irene Vinyard Bennett, public relations chairperson for the organization.

Saturday meetings will be held at Kirkwood (Mo.) Church in suburban St. Louis, and the Sunday service will be held at the Clarion Hotel downtown.

For preregistration, contact Rebecca Turner Lawson, c/o Kirkwood Baptist

Church, 211 N. Woodlawn Ave., Kirkwood, MO 63122. Registration checks should cover conference fees: conference, \$7; Saturday lunch, \$3; and Saturday dinner, \$5.

## Equipping

Campus ministers from across the country will focus on the relationship between their spiritual journeys and their ministries to college students during the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Campus Ministers June 14-15 in St. Louis.

"Equipped for the Journey" will be the theme for the meeting, which will be held in the Mayfair Hotel in downtown St. Louis, said Pam Taylor, the association's vice president for programs.

"For the past several years, we have been on a real intellectual plane," Taylor said. "This year, we are looking at how we can grow spiritually and help our students to grow. We are going to look at our own spiritual pilgrimages and how they affect our ministry."

## 'Emmanuel Factor'

"The Emmanuel Factor" of how Christ influences and impacts the daily routine of life will be the theme of the 1987 Pastors' Conference, to be held June 14-15 in Cervantes Convention Center.

"I have urged each of the speakers to preach Jesus," said Nelson Price, president of the Pastors' Conference.

Price told Baptist Press he encouraged speakers "to preach Christ and not get involved in denominational politics. I want the conference to build up the pastors and the people who attend, and I am optimistic the speakers are going to do that."

Carl E.H. Henry, a former editor of *Christianity Today*, and Landrum P. Leavell II, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, will deliver major addresses to the conference.

David Miller, director of missions from Heber Springs, Ark., also is scheduled to speak. Tommy Hinson, pastor of First Church of West Memphis, Ark., serves as vice president of the Pastors' Conference.

## Forum Expands

An expanded format and new speakers will greet participants in the Southern Baptist Forum, to be held June 14-15 in Kiel Auditorium in St. Louis.

Previously the Forum has had just one Monday afternoon meeting, but this year's event will be comprised of sessions Sunday evening, June 14, and Monday morning and afternoon, June 15, said Charles Wade, Forum chairman.

Forum organizer Kenneth Chafin said, "We have all new speakers. This is a great big denomination with a lot of talent. We think this denomination is too big and rich in talent to go down there and hear the same people. We can use different people every year for the next 20 years and not exhaust the possibilities."

"Uniting All Things in Christ" will be the theme for the event. "We are hoping there will be a wholesome awareness that we are all different yet united," Chafin said.

## 'Stir Up the Fires'

The Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists aims to "stir up the fires of evangelism in the Southern Baptist Convention" when they meet Wednesday afternoon, June 17, in Kiel Auditorium.

Rudy Hernandez of San Antonio, Texas, president of the COSBE, said the conference will meet five times during the annual meeting of the SBC. In addition to the conference Wednesday afternoon, the group will have a business session and ban-

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quet at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, and "Afterglow" sessions at 9:30 p.m. on both Tuesday and Wednesday.

With the exception of the conference in Keil Auditorium, all of the other sessions will be held in the Ballroom at the Sheraton Hotel adjacent to the Cervantes Convention Center.

The Wednesday afternoon session is open to all who wish to attend. He added tickets will be required but will be available from all members of the COSBE or at the group's booth in the exhibit area of Cervantes Convention Center.

## State Presidents

Southern Baptist state convention presidents will meet in St. Louis on the eve of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June.

The meeting will begin at 5 p.m. June 15 at the Missouri Athletic Club in downtown St. Louis, said Frank Gunn, president of the fellowship group. The meeting will include a meal, discussion of common problems and solutions within state Baptist conventions and prayer time.

Lawson Hatfield, pastor of First Church of Fordyce, Ark., is vice-president of the group.

The group, which also meets during the February and September meetings of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee in Nashville, began in 1985, when Charles Pickering of Mississippi called other state convention presidents together to see what they could do to help bring about reconciliation within the SBC.

## 'Spiritual Songs'

An array of sounds will greet musicians from across the Southern Baptist Convention when they convene June 13-15 for the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference, to be held at First Church of Ellisville, Mo., a St. Louis suburb.

The conference's theme will be, "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing (and playing) with grace in your hearts to the Lord," based on Colossians 3:16.

"This has been a constant scriptural philosophy, to do all that we do to honor the Lord," explained Harry L. Cowan, conference president. "When we (church musicians) are working with our people, we need to be teaching and admonishing through this wonderful thing we call music."

The conference's variety of performances reflects the variety of musical ministries, from handbells to vocal solos to orchestras to graded choirs, he said.

## 'Bloom Where You're Planted'

Susan Baker, wife of U.S. Treasury Secretary James Baker, will highlight the 31st annual Conference of Southern Baptist Ministers' Wives luncheon Tuesday, June 16, in St. Louis.

"Blooming Where You Are Planted" will be the theme for the luncheon, to be held during the first day of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

Baker "will be sharing how God has used her on the political and home scene," said Ginny Sisk, conference president.

The luncheon will be held at 12:15 p.m. in the ballroom of the Sheraton Hotel, across the street from Cervantes Convention Center, site of the SBC meeting. Advance tickets will cost \$12 and may be ordered from Karen Hayner, 203 Whitehall Way, Cary, NC 27511. Each order should be accompanied by a check or money order for the amount of the tickets and a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

## Relationships

Religious educators from across the Southern Baptist Convention will focus on interpersonal relationships when they meet in St. Louis June 13-15.

"Partners in Ministry" will be the theme for the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association annual meeting, to be held at the Omni International Hotel.

"We're going to deal with interpersonal relationships. This is a time when a lot of people on church staffs are hurting," said Lloyd Householder, the association's president.

"We're going to work on healing," Householder said. Ministers' identity, their short tenures in churches and church-staff relationships are areas of concern, he added.

An elective pre-meeting seminar focusing on this issue will feature Wayne Oates, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the University of Louisville in Louisville, Ky. Oates will address "Disorders of Character: A Challenge to Religious Educators."

Registration for the annual meeting is free to SBREA members. Registration for the Oates seminar is \$25 for members and \$50 for non-members. Reservations for a banquet Monday evening, June 15, are \$18.50 per person.

Preregistration for all events is necessary, Householder said. To register, make checks payable to SBREA and write to SBREA, 8218 Alamo Rd., Brentwood, TN 37027.



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# Across the Spectrum

## Scholars Explore Shades of 'Inerrancy'

by **Marv Knox**  
Baptist Press

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—World-class conservative scholars and Southern Baptist leaders held biblical inerrancy up to the light of critical appraisal during the convention's first Conference on Biblical Inerrancy May 4-7.

They examined facet after facet of the doctrine that has become the centerpiece of Southern Baptists' theological crown jewels and the center of their eight-year-old theological/political struggle.

The conference was sponsored by the six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in North Carolina. Speakers for the conference included J.I. Packer, Regents College, Vancouver, Canada; Kenneth Kantzer, Christianity Today Institute; Clark Pinnock, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario; Millard Erickson, Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.; Mark Noll, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.; and Robert Preus, Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Definitions and explanations of inerrancy refracted off the doctrine:

— "It basically means, 'not wandering from the truth,'" said Kenneth Kantzer, chancellor of Trinity College in Deerfield, Ill. Accepting inerrancy requires the Christian to believe God caused his human writers to "freely produce just such a book as God intends Scripture to be."

— Error is an "affirmation or assertion which is an attempt to tell the truth and fails," said J.I. Packer, professor of historical and systematic theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. "Nothing that we have found convicts biblical asser-

tions of factual or moral error. No biblical phenomena need invalidate the confession of inerrancy that the teaching of Jesus and the apostles leads us to make."

— The inerrant Scriptures are "words taught by the Holy Spirit (having) that quality which makes them overwhelmingly reliable witnesses to the words and deeds of the God who has in his inspired spokesmen and in his incarnate Son disclosed himself to men for their salvation," said Robert Preus, president of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Despite the similarity of definitions, Clark Pinnock said: "Inerrancy is not the firm and clear category we are being told that it is. It is supposed to be the very answer to all our problems, and yet the inerrantists themselves cannot agree on what it signifies."

He was echoed by Millard Erickson, dean of Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., who said a too-vigorous attempt to prove inerrancy results from a misunderstanding of the term. For example, misunderstandings of inerrancy arise out of the failure to see biblical statements in their cultural contexts or extending the range of the Bible's authority to include "every subject which it mentions, or even beyond that, to subjects that it does not address."

That includes science, said Packer: "The Bible contains, strictly speaking, no scientific statements at all. Biblical statements about God explain natural processes in terms of God's personal purpose but do not describe them scientifically."

And concerning charges that the Bible misrepresents history, Packer said the Bi-

ble is more concerned with advancing knowledge of God than presenting a detailed historical outline. "Biblical history, told from the standpoint of divine overruling, is by our standards sketchy on its human side, but its omissions should not be regarded as error or suspect," he explained.

Although he said inerrancy covers all of the Bible, Preus noted the doctrine does not imply exactness of quotations, a position seconded by Kantzer, who said, "the words of Jesus in the gospels are not to be thought of as direct quotes." He explained Jesus' quotes likely are the authors' accurate paraphrases, similar to recitations of conversations by eyewitnesses.

Kantzer and Preus also pointed out "troublesome" biblical problems include apparent contradictory accounts that claim to relate the same event. Kantzer warned against over-stretching the harmonization or reconciliation of apparently discrepant accounts "for which no plausible harmonization is possible," noting, "It is not necessary for us to be able to have a plausible solution to every alleged contradiction before committing ourselves to inerrancy."

Major speakers noted the doctrine of inerrancy applies only to the original autographs (manuscripts) of Scripture, none of which exist.

## Former Leader Urges Reconciliation

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—A former crusader against liberalism in the Southern Baptist Convention has apologized for the hurt he has brought and pleaded for concessions from both sides in the SBC controversy.

Clark Pinnock, professor of systematic theology at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, spoke at the Southern Baptist Conference on Biblical Inerrancy at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center. Pinnock taught at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary from

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1965 to 1969, when he campaigned against liberalism in the convention.

"If you listened to me in the '60s about the dangers of liberal theology, perhaps you will listen to me now," Pinnock told about 1,000 people attending the conference sponsored by the six SBC seminaries.

Pinnock said he has not changed "one whit in the matter of holding to the Bible as the inspired word of God." Although he led the fight against liberalism in SBC schools in the 1960s, he said the current controversy has gone too far.

**Major speakers noted the doctrine of inerrancy applies only to the original autographs (manuscripts) of Scripture, none of which exist.**

In contrast to the 1960s, Pinnock said, he currently sees "a great evangelical denomination dangerously divided." The current debate is not between inerrancy or non-inerrancy but between an elaborate, structured view of inerrancy versus a simpler, experienced-based view, he said.

"I wish that Southern Baptists would see that within evangelicalism outside their context we have been able to maintain some peace and cooperative effort between those who think it is very important to hold a strict definition of inerrancy and those who prefer a more open attitude to the text of Scripture," Pinnock said.

"Is it that you are so numerically large that you feel you have the luxury of fighting with one another without any thought of the scandal you are causing for the Baptists and others watching from other parts of the world, or of the dangerous possibility that the Baptist work may suffer among you, too?" Pinnock asked.

## Seminary Presidents Discuss Inerrancy

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention seminary presidents touted both unity and diversity during a meeting with reporters at the SBC Conference on Biblical Inerrancy May 5.

The conference—sponsored by the six SBC seminaries—was designed to reveal "there's not that much difference" between Southern Baptists' positions on the nature of Scripture, said Russell H. Dilday, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

However, the conference also was planned to show "there's a great deal of diversity between people who choose this term

inerrancy" to describe Scripture, added Randall Lolley, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

The presidents met the press following speeches by three of the conference's six keynote speakers, all of them non-Southern Baptist evangelical scholars who ascribe to the inerrancy of Scripture. However, the scholars already had begun to describe different versions of the meaning of inerrancy.

"There are more than two positions," said Milton Ferguson of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. "The issue at hand is whether the Bible was intended to speak the last word on science, history, sociology or give comprehensive... divine insight on all matters.

"The primary issue is whether the Bible is a book of redemption on religious matters or whether it is like a comprehensive encyclopedia."

The presidents also stressed their affirmation of the truthfulness of the Bible, even though their faculties have faced criticism on that point.

"We have said it (the Bible) is not errant," Dilday said. He noted where the Bible refers to scientific elements, "it speaks not in technical language but in phenomenal language, or the way things appear. We do not expect the same precision when it speaks of science as you would a science book."

Quoting W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Church of Dallas and leader of the more conservative element in the convention, Lolley said the Bible "is a book of redemption, not science, cosmology or cosmogony. To say it is a book of redemption and religion is not to say it is in error scientifically; that is not its intent."

"The Bible does not mislead us in any area where it speaks," said William O. Crews of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

The presidents affirmed that position and said most Southern Baptists do, too.

Asked about the source of division in the denomination, Dilday said the dispute is not theological: "Ninety-nine and forty-four one-hundredths of Southern Baptists believe the Bible. We're together on basic theological principles."

Rather, the dispute is "on the kind of denomination we are," he said, noting the choices are between being "cooperative people" who want to work together "reaching the world for Christ" or "independent people" who do not work together in such a structured way.

Ferguson added that within the convention "there are people who sincerely see it (the dispute) as theological." In addition, some people with political motives also have used the theological angle to further their cause, he added.

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## Convention Uniform

### God's Agony

by Erwin L. McDonald, ABN editor emeritus

Basic passage: Hosea 10:1 to 11:11

Focal passage: Hosea 11:1-11

Central truth: God agonizes over the ungratefulness of his children.

A little girl was finally persuaded by her mother to write a note of thanks to an aunt who had sent her a birthday present. The girl wrote: "Thanks, Aunt Meg, for the pin-cushion you sent for my birthday. I have always wanted a pin-cushion, but not very much." The lesson this week focuses on the greatest ingratitude of all—that of God's children who have basked in his unmeasurable and eternal love without any show of gratitude. We are reminded of the incisive words of the prophet Isaiah, who was serving in Judah at the same time Hosea was speaking to Israel: "... I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Isa. 1:2b).

(1) God's persistent love (Ho. 11:1-7)  
Use of a modern version of this passage is suggested, for a clear understanding of such difficult verses as 2 and 4. *The Good News Bible* (GNB) is especially helpful. "But the more I called to him, the more he turned away from me. My people sacrificed to Baal; they burned incense to idols. . . I drew them to me with affection and love. I picked them up and held them to my cheek; I bent down to them and fed them" (vv. 2 and 4).

Israel's continual turning away from God would inevitably bring God's judgment upon her (Ho. 10:5-7) but, as chapter 11 reveals, even this rebellion could not cancel the heavenly Father's love.

(2) The perplexity in God's heart (Ho. 11:8-11)

As the righteous God, our heavenly Father cannot close his eyes to the rebellion of his children; there must be judgment, but as we have seen before in this series, his judgment is redemptive. Our earthly parents often said, "I do this because I love you," when they were correcting us for misconduct, but with God it is a thousand times more true.

Hope is held out in verses 10-11, in which God says three times, "I will not. . ." Christianity bears witness to the unfulfilling love and deliverance of God of all who accept his salvation and commit themselves to following him.

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

## Life and Work

### Faithful Unto Death

by Bert Thomas, Valley Church, Searcy  
Basic passage: Acts 6:8-8:2

Focal passage: Acts 6:8-15; 7:59-60

Central truth: Believers are to remain faithful to Christ even in the face of suffering.

"Not, how did he die but how did he live?" is the way an unknown author suggests to measure a man. While there may be some validity in this statement, it is not true of Stephen's life. The way that he lived and died is how we measure his life. His faithfulness even unto death is an example for all who would serve Christ.

Stephen was faithful as a servant of the church. He was selected by the church when additional leaders were needed. He is described as a man of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. In Acts 6:8, he is described as full of faith and power. These were gifts entrusted to him by God. Stephen exercised these gifts by helping the church solve a delicate problem that threatened its ministry. As a result of his faithfulness to this work, the church's ministry was more effective.

Stephen was faithful in the face of persecution. His faithfulness to his work of waiting on tables led him into a preaching ministry. The wisdom from God and the power of the Holy Spirit was so great that no enemy could resist him. Persecution was not long in coming to such an effective, faithful servant of God. Stephen's enemies had him arrested on false charges. Even in the face of death, he preached a powerful message (Acts 7:2-53). Stephen's message included a brief summary of Israel's history. He told them how God intended to include all nations in his plan of redemption but that they had rejected it and crucified the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, God's son. Stephen's enemies were so furious they were determined to kill him.

Stephen was faithful unto death. The same power that enabled Stephen to serve effectively in the past was present as he faced death. "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Look. I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!'" (Acts 7:55-56). God parted the heavens for his faithful servant and gave him strength even in death.

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## Bible Book

### Praise to the Lord

by Jimmie Sheffield, ABSC associate executive director

Basic passage: Psalms 103; 115

Focal passage: Psalms 103:1-8; 115:1-3

Central truth: The psalmist's praise of God for his blessings, especially his merciful dealing with sin, challenges all persons to confess and repent of their sin.

This lesson marks the beginning of a six-session unit from the Psalms. These lessons deal with songs of praise to God, cries of the people, songs of thanksgiving and faith, praise for the law, and songs of celebration.

Psalms 103 deals with praises for God's blessings. Verses 1-5 praises God for personal blessings. First, David thanked God for forgiveness. He had committed many sins, including adultery and murder, but God had forgiven him. Every person who has experienced God's mercy can identify with this praise.

Next, David praised God for healing. Then he thanked God for redemption. Redemption means ransom, and this was rich in meaning for the people of God. God had delivered his people from bondage. He is still redeeming people who otherwise should end up in destruction.

David also praised God for his love and mercy. God's love is indescribable. His love overwhelms us when we begin to grasp the real significance of what he has done for us through Jesus.

In verses 6-18, David turned his thoughts of praise to what God had done for the nation of Israel (v. 7). He recognized that God had not punished Israel as deserved, but, rather, God's goodness and mercy had been extended to them in great measure.

David used picturesque language to describe God's love. "For as the heavens are high above the earth," "as far as the east is from the west," and "as a father pities his children" are some of these descriptive phrases. Though these words help us appreciate God's blessings, the fact remains that to describe God's love is very difficult.

Psalms 115 also contains praise for God's mercy. The emphasis is that glory must be given to God and God alone for the blessings of life. "To God be the Glory" could have been the title of this psalm.

One truth rings loud and clear: we must personally give praise to God even as David offered his personal praise.

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## Hunger Crisis Mounts

by Marty Croll  
SBC Foreign Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptists are preparing to provide food to the southern African nation of Mozambique to help stem mass starvation which some experts predict will equal or surpass that recently experienced in Ethiopia.

The Foreign Mission Board's relief planner, John Cheyne, expects the board will release up to \$1 million, much of it for food distribution, by year's end. The need is expected to intensify as rebel troops fighting in rural Mozambique block efforts by the government to rebound from a famine two years ago.

Cheyne received a report April 30 by phone from the board's director for Eastern and Southern Africa that up to 2 million people could die even if relief equal to that provided in Ethiopia were begun immediately. At least 1 million people are estimated to be inaccessible, surrounded by fighting. The director, John Faulkner, was quoting published reports from within Mozambique.

Missionaries who plan relief in Mozambique and five bordering nations will meet with Cheyne and other board officials in Harare, Zimbabwe, June 25-30, to decide

how they will feed some of the 4.5 million Mozambicans the United Nations estimates are facing starvation.

Until then the missionaries will survey border areas of their countries to determine how to help refugees streaming into neighboring Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, South Africa and Swaziland, Cheyne said. The organization of missionaries in each country has access to \$5,000 for immediate relief work.

Cheyne said he expects the June meeting to produce longer range plans aimed at creating a strategy for the area as a whole. He said he does not know whether instability within the country will permit Southern Baptists to establish a network of feeding stations with medical assistance like those in Ethiopia.

Mozambique has been troubled by political unrest and austere economic conditions for some time, and Southern Baptists have helped supply relief to Mozambicans as they have been able.

The Mozambique Baptist Convention invited Southern Baptists to re-enter the country in 1982. Missionaries withdrew in 1975 after anti-American sentiment in the newly independent Marxist nation made their work practically impossible.

## No Adoration for Mary

SANTA SEVERA, Italy (BP)—Italian Baptists have bemoaned Pope John Paul II's re-emphasis of adoration of the Virgin Mary within the Roman Catholic Church.

A resolution expressing their concern was adopted during the Italian Baptist Union's conference on evangelism in April. The pope has proclaimed 1987 as "The Year of Mary" and re-emphasized the adoration of Mary in a recent letter to the bishops.

"While we acknowledge and hold in esteem the figure of Mary, the mother of Jesus, exactly as she is presented in the New Testament, we nonetheless refuse these at-

tempts to make her divine," the resolution notes.

The resolution states the pope is wrong to accord Mary "honors and powers which the Bible assigns only to God, to Christ and to the Holy Spirit."

In their emphasis on Mary, Catholics "exalt the creature to the detriment of the Creator (Ro. 1:25)," they take away "the unique and unrepeatable nature of the work of Jesus Christ, the one and only Mediator between God and man (1 Ti. 2:5)" and they do "a dishonor to Mary herself, the 'handmaiden of the Lord' (Luke 1:48)," the resolution notes.

## Safe Stolen; \$1,200 Lost

JERUSALEM (BP)—Thieves stole a 1,300-pound safe containing about \$1,200 in cash and checks in late April from Baptist House, a ministry to Jewish Christians in Jerusalem.

Southern Baptist representative John Anthony, director of the 62-year-old institution, said the intruders apparently broke through one door and used a key to open another in order to obtain access to the safe.

A witness who saw a truck being loaded about 8:15 p.m. April 28 outside Baptist House has submitted a description of the vehicle to police.

An employee of the institution was questioned by police but released the next day.

Anthony said the ministry has suffered four petty thefts already this year, but added, "These were professionals."

An unusually large amount of money had accumulated because the Baptist House secretary had been out a few days and banking hours had been restricted because of Israeli holidays. Most of the money stolen belonged to the Narkis Street Baptist Church, which was burned by arsonists in October 1982. Baptist House and the church, which now meets in a tent-like structure, are located on the same property.

## A SMILE OR TWO

"Credit is a matter of taking in more than you give out." —Dr. O.A. Battista

"Life is like tennis—You can't win without serving." —Dial West

"Some people think the only way to get their minds out of a rut is to let them slip into the gutter." —Cullen Hightower

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# Souls Won In Mexico

by Orville Scott  
Baptist General Convention of Texas

DALLAS (BP)—Amid strong opposition by clergy and media in Leon, Mex., called "the cradle of Mexican Catholicism," 129 Lubbock Baptists reported 682 professions of faith in Christ through a Partnership Missions effort in the Zurriel Baptist Association.

"By their zeal in serving the Lord, the brethren from Lubbock left a positive image that will never be forgotten," said Josue Gonzalez G., director of missions for Zurriel Association, which covers three states in central Mexico.

The volunteers, primarily from First Baptist Church and Iglesia Bautista Hispana, both of Lubbock, were the largest single group to serve in the Mexico Partnership, said Bill Gray, Partnership Missions coordinator for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Texas Baptists are in the early phases of a second consecutive three-year evangelistic partnership with Mexico Baptists and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The Lubbock volunteers linked hands with Mexico Baptists in many areas of ministry, said Sam Douglass, university minister at First Church of Lubbock. They did construction on eight church sites and built a clinic; held backyard Bible clubs, personal evangelism and clown ministries; and conducted medical and dental ministries under direction of general practitioner James R. Matthews and dentist Myles Sadler, both of Lubbock.

Gonzalez said the partnership volunteers who served in the city of Salamanca were warmly received by city officials. "The clowns presented a program for children, and all of the people attended," he added.

"Local authorities provided sound equipment, scenery and all that was necessary for the presentation."

Gonzalez said many people received medical aid. "This made a tremendously favorable impact and presented a good image of Baptists, not only to the city of Salamanca, but also to the city of the Valley of Santiago, Guanajuato.

"We are amazed at the ways in which the Lord used the brethren from Lubbock. Some of them, without knowing any Spanish at all, could communicate with the church members and people of the area."

Only in the city of Leon did the Catholic clergy react against the Baptists. Gray said nowhere is the environment more difficult for Baptist work. "It is from this area that the Cristero movement had its beginning toward the end of the last revolution in Mexico with the stated purpose of wiping

out evangelical Christianity," Gray said.

"Baptists who live and work in this area do so under very adverse circumstances."

The propaganda efforts of the Catholic clergy was actually favorable for the Baptists because it has projected the image of the Baptists throughout all of the region, Gonzalez said.

"Many people knew nothing about us, and by means of the propaganda from the Catholic clergy on television and radio we are now known in three states."

Gonzalez said the reaction of the Catholic clergy "does not frighten us. To the contrary, it motivates us to redouble our efforts and commitment to serve the Lord."

Many Catholics condemned the propaganda of their clergy, said Gonzalez. They criticized severely the partisan attitude of the media.

As a result of the partnership effort, the pastor of First Baptist Church of Leon, was invited to write an article for the local paper on who Baptists are and what they are doing.

"God grant that many more churches can come to Mexico to respond to the Macedonian call: 'Come to Mexico and help us,'" said Gonzalez. "There will be no problems in doing so if it is done for the glory of God."

Gray said, "The Lubbock group was, without a doubt, the best prepared team we have had go to Mexico. The requirements were strenuous and their preparation arduous, but they did it all with enthusiasm and joy."

Gray said a number of other Baptist associations in Mexico have asked to become partners in evangelism with Texas Baptist associations. There are also requests by Mexico Baptists for construction teams and vacation Bible school teams, he added.

The week of partnership missions was concluded by a rally with the crowd overflowing the courtyard, said Douglass.

"There were no 'gringos' or 'Mexicans,'" said Douglass, "just Christian brothers and sisters who love the Lord and each other. The service lasted four and one-half hours, but it had to end so the missionaries could load their buses and begin their 29-hour journey back to Lubbock. There were few dry eyes as the buses rolled out of Leon."

Asked "Would you do it all over again?" the volunteers responded unanimously, "Just tell us when," Douglass reported.

Gonzalez said, "All of the churches of our area were strengthened, revived and inspired by the enthusiasm of the brethren from Lubbock and their dedication in serving the Lord. We are sure that this work will bear fruit for time to come."

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