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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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March 19, 1987

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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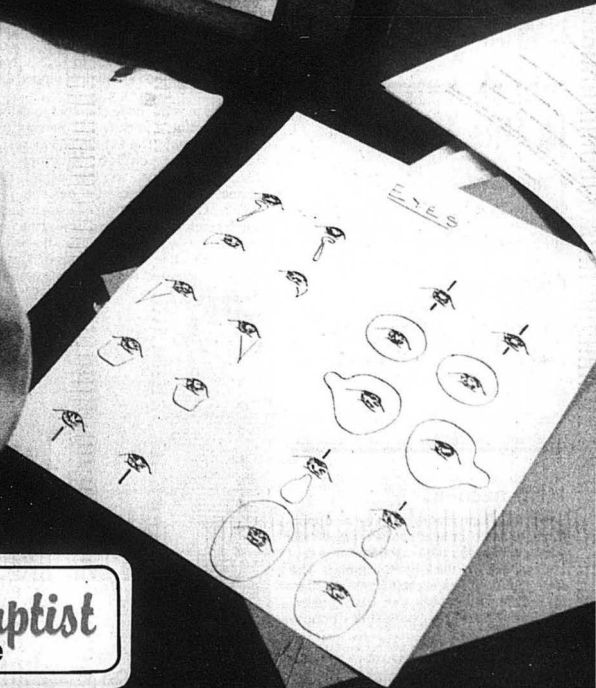
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Creative ways to minister

Mini Rec Lab
page 9



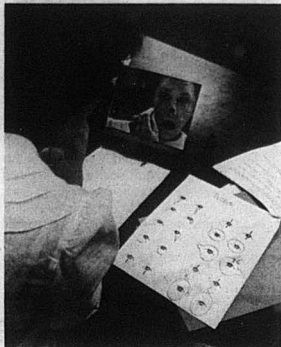
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March 19, 1987

Arkansas Baptist
Newsmagazine

On the cover



ABN photo / Millie Gill

Today's visually-oriented generation responds to highly-visual ways of ministering the gospel. Clowning is one very contemporary method of communicating "the old, old story." Participants in a March 6-7 Mini Rec Lab in North Little Rock discovered there are many exciting and low-cost ways to use recreation and the arts to share the gospel (p. 9).

In this issue

4 innovative!

Ouachita Baptist University offers an exciting new way to prepare for a young person's future education: gift certificates.

5 gospel logjam

The demand for Bibles in China is so great, commercial printers there can't turn them out fast enough. United Bible Societies is building a new, \$6.7 million printing house near Nanjing so the hunger for God's Word can be satisfied.

Help needed!

Arkansas Baptists may still have an opportunity to prevent the adoption of legislation which will extend the season for horse racing at Oaklawn Track in Hot Springs. The State House of Representatives is considering the matter this week. Call your representative at 372-6211 to express strong opposition to H.B. 2015.

Receipts outstrip missions gifts

Arkansas churches report mixed results for 1986

by Mark Kelly

While Arkansas Baptists surged ahead of other states in three areas of their work during 1986, they lagged behind the rest of the Southern Baptist Convention in four crucial categories of ministry.

Statistics released by the Research Services Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board revealed that Arkansas Baptist churches experienced healthy increases in Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood work and saw a dramatic rise in total receipts. But baptisms, Sunday School and Church Training enrollment, and mission expenditures all either lost ground during 1986 or failed to keep up with the rate of increase across the convention.

The best news for Arkansas Baptists was that 1986 saw substantial gains in Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood, and total receipts.

Arkansas churches reported 727 more Woman's Missionary Union members in 1986 than 1985, bringing total WMU enrollment in the state to 28,028. That 2.66 percent increase was more than twice the national WMU increase of 1.3 percent.

Brotherhood work experienced an even more dramatic increase over 1985, with enrollment up 3.38 percent to 12,213. Nationally, Brotherhood enrollment slipped 0.8 percent.

But total receipts in the churches took top honors, posting a healthy 9.17 percent increase over 1985. The \$11,116,625 increase brought total church receipts to \$132,287,015. Total receipts across the national convention rose 6.0 percent.

Much of that nine percent increase in local church receipts failed to find its way into increased mission expenditures, however. According to the report, Arkansas Baptist churches increased total mission expendi-

tures only 2.25 percent over 1985, compared to a full four percent SBC increase. Mission expenditures in 1986 totaled \$21,070,324.

In two other areas, Arkansas Baptist churches posted losses while nationwide statistics reflected gains. Baptisms dropped 0.89 percent to 11,955, a loss of 107 from 1985. SBC total baptisms rose 3.4 percent in 1985. Sunday School enrollment decreased 0.44 percent to 257,813, a loss of 1,141 from 1985. SBC enrollment rose 0.2 percent during the same period.

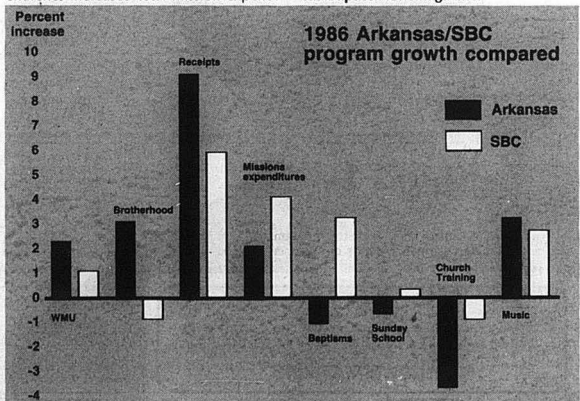
Arkansas churches also reported a drop in Church Training enrollment during 1986, as did Church Training enrollment nationwide. Arkansas enrollment declined 3.39 percent to 78,305, a loss of 2,746 over 1985. National enrollment declined 0.7 percent.

In other categories, Arkansas Baptist churches reported increases in music programs (3.38 percent), total membership (0.68 percent), additions other than baptisms (1.62 percent), and number of churches (0.16 percent). Nationwide, music programs increased 2.8 percent, total membership 0.9 percent, and new churches 0.4 percent. The change for additions other than baptisms nationally was not reported.

Nationally, a total of 6,738 churches increased Cooperative Program giving by a minimum of one percentage point of undesignated gifts, according to the report. New church-type missions numbered 1,248.

The net gain in number of churches equaled 137, compared with gains of 239 in 1985, 209 in 1984, and 229 in 1983. Non-resident membership totaled more than 4.2 million, which amounts to 29 percent of the reported total membership of 14.6 million.

Mark Kelly is managing editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.



Three lingering problems

Although Southern Baptist churches and pastors have come a long way, three inter-related problems linger on. These are a false meekness, poor pay, and a failure of personal communications between the pastor and his members. The problems produce pain, frustration and hamper the effectiveness of the Lord's work. To solve the difficulties, the congregation and pastor must work together.

Two of these problems are pointed up in an old story. One of the members, while praying for his minister, said, "Lord, keep our pastor poor, meek, and humble." After a pause, the petitioner continued, "No, Lord, you just keep him meek and humble. We'll keep him poor."

It is true that the Bible commands Christians to be meek and humble. Jesus himself said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). But a false concept has developed around the idea of meekness. In contemporary English, the word portrays a spineless person who yields and bends to every pressure. This, however, is not the idea of the word as it was used by Christ.

The term as it was often used in Jesus time applied to an animal which had been domesticated. An example would be the wild stallion that had led the entire herd. He is captured, domesticated, and trained so that his powerful body responds to every command of his master.

The pastor, as well as the church member, is to respond to the commands of Christ, not to the whims or pressures of people.

The pastor is to be courageous. The Old Testament prophets stood for right regardless of the cost. Hence, we find God's servants confronting even the kings with their sins. This courage and boldness must, however, always be coupled with love.

Sometimes pastors fail to properly communicate with their members, but it should be remembered that pastors have more problems than most because they assume the problems of their members in addition to their own. By becoming involved in the problems of others, pastors often get into big trouble with the very people they are attempting to help. Sometimes pastors pay a big price for their concern and are criticized when they are attempting to assist others.

God does not consult anyone when he calls an individual into ministry. The call is all of God and not of man, when it is a true call. God frequently calls individuals who have big problems. Everyone he calls has some weakness.

The Scripture tells us, "The word became flesh, and dwelt among us. . . ." (John 1:14). Again, "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (He. 4:15).

The editor's page

J. Everett Sneed



The principle becomes clear. Individuals who have weakness can understand the problems of others. God has reduced the gulf between the minister and those who have need. The pastor who has known the sting of defeat, heartbreak, and embarrassment can help others. He understands the problems of his congregation.

A pastor's failure to have proper personal communication with some of his members may be caused by several factors. Sometimes members intentionally misunderstand their pastor. Even though a pastor is imperfect, it is imperative that he deal frankly with sin in the pulpit. This offends some, and they intentionally misunderstand him in an effort to resist his teaching from God's Word.

Lack of proper communication may sometimes be produced by a feeling of inadequacy on the part of a pastor. To be effective in communicating and counseling, a pastor must have a realistic appraisal of his strengths and his weaknesses. There certainly should be no embarrassment to a pastor when a problem is presented which he feels is beyond his ability to handle.

Southern Baptists currently have a number of continuing education programs designed to assist the pastor in improving and evaluating his skills. It is of vital importance that a pastor know his strengths and his weaknesses.

Finally, tension between the pastor and his congregation is sometimes created by a failure of the church to meet his financial needs. It is difficult for a pastor to properly minister to his people when he is burdened with financial problems.

If an individual is seeking a perfect pastor, he will never find one, but God in his wisdom has called individuals who have problems and can understand problems to serve individuals with problems. The pastors we know care about the needs of their congregation and will do all they can to assist an individual in solving his problems.

Many churches today are seeking to justify themselves by a "package" approach to the pastor's salary. These churches will designate a certain amount of money and say to the pastor "you can divide it any way you want to. He must divide it into salary, car expense, insurance, and housing. This approach makes the church look good but in reality often provides inadequate support for the pastor.

Solution to difficulties between pastors and congregations lie in honestly facing them, eliminating false concepts, and providing properly for the pastor. Provision for a pastor should include an adequate salary as well as opportunity for continuing education. When this approach is used, both the congregation and the pastor will become more nearly what God would have them to be.

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Letters to the editor expressing opinions are invited. Letters should be typed double-space and must be signed. Letters must not contain more than 350 words and must not defame the character of persons. They must be marked "for publication."

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

Copies by mail 50 cents each.

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

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One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant

Trying to make sin safe

One of the strong characteristics of America is our concern for safety. Probably more than any other nation in the world, we try to make every part of life just as safe as is humanly possible, through teaching, preaching, legislating, administering, policing, prosecuting, and publicly punishing. Americans work hard at making all things safe.

For example, we want safe air, safe water, safe workplaces, safe food (inside the home and outside the home in restaurants), safe travel (in the air, on land, and on water), safe building construction, safe elevators, safe investments, safe streets (especially at night), safe toys and playground equipment for children, safe medicines, and safety catches on jewelry. Our concern for personal safety has led us to study hazardous wastes with dangerous levels of radioactivity and the menace of acid rain with its still mysterious impact on forest and plant life. Ecology has become a household word, and the Environmental Protection Agency adds almost daily to the list of new hazards that can potentially violate our safety. Growing concern for highway safety has led more and more states to require everyone to buckle up

with a seat belt.

The most recent campaign for safety is a strange one. In the terrible aftermath of discovering that a fatal disease known as AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is sexually transmitted, the public response is a disappointment. Rather than mounting a campaign to make crystal clear the mortal danger of sex out of wedlock, whether homosexual or heterosexual, our leadership in government and the mass media seem to be moving with blinders to focus only on making sexual promiscuity "safe."

We have made remarkable progress in our national and local efforts to tell all people— young and old—that the only answer to dangerous drugs like marijuana and cocaine is total abstinence. Abuse of one's body and the violation of God's laws cannot be made safe by any amount of popularizing on television. Homosexual or heterosexual violation of God's standards concerning marriage can never be made safe in God's sight. Clinically safe sin still grieves the heart of God.

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University.

Hunger action underway in Arkansas

The Arkansas World Hunger Committee is made up of the following persons from over our state: Larry Horne, pastor of the First Church in Charleston, chairman; Layne Smith, pastor of Rolling Hills Church in Fayetteville, vice-chairman; Pam Rusher, member of Central Church in Jonesboro; Jim West, member of First Church in Booneville; and Mrs. John McAlister, member of First Church, El Dorado.



Parker

Please take note of the following dates,

particularly the one in your area, at which time noon meetings will be held for interested persons to consider suggested ways of expressing real concern for hungry people: June 29, Fort Smith; July 20, Fayetteville; April 10, El Dorado. Jonesboro and Monticello dates will be announced later.

Those on the World Hunger Committee are available to speak to churches and associations in their geographical areas. Please contact them. They want to be a valuable part of giving emphasis to both foreign and domestic hunger needs.

The director of the Christian Life Council is liaison between the World Hunger Committee and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.—**Robert A. Parker, director, Christian Life Council**

missionary notes

Dennis L. Folds, father of **Dennis G. Folds**, missionary to Japan, died Feb. 7 in Alexandria, La. Missionary Folds is a native of Louisiana. His wife, the former Judith Synco, was born in Crosssett and lived in Hot Springs. Appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1980, they may be addressed at Uehara Plaza 2C, 2-19-18 Uehara, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151, Japan.

Editor's note: We run news about missionary address changes to help you keep up with your missionaries overseas. But some of them have a hard time keeping up with you. Newsletters sometimes return to them months after mailing because they don't have your current address. Please help our missionaries. Notify those who write you about all address changes.

OBU offers education gift certificate program

ARKADELPHIA—The Ouachita Baptist University Board of Trustees recently approved a novel financing plan that will allow parents or other individuals to pay tuition costs, now, for the future higher education of their children, friends, or family members. The plan is known as the education gift certificate program, and is only the second such program now in existence among colleges and universities in the state.

"What better investment for the future could there be than to prepay at today's costs the college education of your child, grandchild, or other close friend," said Ed Coulter, vice-president for administration.

The education gift certificate(s) may be purchased at current rates in increments of one-tenth of a semester's charges. The certificate(s) can be used for tuition only for a future semester, with a maximum of eight semesters' tuition allowed.

The certificate(s) must be held for at least one year before being honored at OBU. The certificate(s) may be transferred to another person upon written request of the purchaser. A refund of the principal only is allowed upon written request of the purchaser and return of the certificate(s). If not utilized by the recipient's 25th birthday, the certificate(s), unless transferred or refunded, will become a tax deductible gift to Ouachita. The certificate is a non-interest bearing instrument.

For more information on the education gift certificate program at Ouachita, persons should contact Joe Franz, OBU business manager, P. O. Box 3756, Arkadelphia, AR, 71923; phone (501) 246-4531, ext. 583.

Southwestern spring, annual enrollments up

FORT WORTH, Texas—The world's largest theological seminary grew a little larger during the 1986-87 academic year.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary enrolled 5,247 students on all campuses in the 1986-87 academic year, according to registrar Dan McLallen. That surpasses the previous high of 5,120 in 1983-84 and is a 3.5 percent increase over last year.

Spring semester enrollment of 4,187 is the highest spring count ever at Southwestern. Also, the increase of 41 students over the fall total is a surprise, since spring enrollment usually drops more than seven percent from the fall, McLallen said.

Spring enrollment includes 2,492 in the school of theology, 1,391 in the school of religious education, and 304 in church music. Of the total, 3,418 are men and 929 are women.

Reflected in the yearly increase is an all-time high in the number of students enrolled in theology (3,107) and a record number of new students studying theology (895).

Don Moore

You'll be glad to know...

It was my happy privilege to meet with the Executive Board of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana recently to report on the involvement of Arkansas Baptist churches and associations with the Indiana churches and associations in our Arkansas-Indiana Partnership. It was a pleasant experience. The best part of it was analyzing the reports of the directors of missions in Indiana. Several of them have



Moore

Arkansas roots: Tommy Cupples, B. T. Scrivner, James Walker, Dale Maddux, and Allan Pollock. With the added fact that R. V. Haygood is an Arkansan through and through, it is easy to see why this partnership developed and why it has been an effective relationship.

Our churches and associations have done some work in all but one of their 15 associations. While we do not know how many churches and missions have been organized; how many revivals and Bible schools have been conducted; or how many buildings have been built, bought or rented, we do know that 34 projects have been done by our associations. Some associations have had more than one project. At least 26 associations from Arkansas have been involved, most projects involving several churches.

In addition, 93 churches have had special projects which ranged from sending their pastor to sending large groups to assist in the work. Some churches are still making annual mission trips to help the churches of Indiana. Some associations and churches send monthly financial assistance. This is great! The work has been blessed and is prospering.

This partnership has provided many of our people their first contact with missions beyond their own locality. Our partnership helped trigger partnerships throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. Perhaps the small step taken with Indiana gave us the courage and vision to take a giant step in our AMAR Partnership. This is significant in itself.

Can we go on with these partnerships? The AMAR Partnership officially ends in November. The Indiana Partnership ended in 1986. I see no reason for us to stop what we have going. God is using our efforts. Our churches do not suffer from mission involvement. We may need to have some partnerships with struggling work in our own state. We can do it!

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

March 19, 1987



Woman's viewpoint

Marjorie Grober

Act, don't react

Recently, a young married person said to me, "We are in an apartment that meets our needs. I am satisfied to live there. However, our friends live in beautifully furnished houses. That makes me uncomfortable."

I thought of how to help. I remembered a sermon I had heard entitled, "Act, don't react." I have tried to apply this principle in my life. You will note I said "tried" because I fail every day. In 1955, my husband and I went to the mission field. We were very young and ready for any sacrifice. I even thought we would live in a straw hut. When I saw the other missionaries had adequate houses, I decided I needed that, too. I reacted.

I think about the discipline of our children and how the punishment often related more to the embarrassment it caused me than the actual wrongdoing.

I think the principle of act, don't react, applies to every aspect of our relationships: family, church, business, and social. However, in order to apply this principle, I must know my true values and purpose in life. If I know I am here on Jesus' mission to

bring people into his Kingdom, then all other things fit into their proper place. A threat to material things, success in life, health, being loved and thought well of by all will only affect me as it relates to my purpose.

In 1984, my husband was invited to work in Arkansas. It became more and more evident that this was God's leading. One hindrance as we sought God's will was the fear of disappointing those who had supported us so lovingly as foreign missionaries. Would they think we were quitting? Another reaction was that our Brazilian friends and co-workers would think we were abandoning the work there. A personal reaction was that it would be too easy. I would be near my children.

Then came the assurance that this was his purpose for us. Action, not reaction, was the right way to respond to God's will.

Marjorie Grober served as a Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil from 1955-1986. She is the mother of four grown children and a member of Immanuel Church in Little Rock.

Builder of China press sets completion date

NEW YORK, NY (ABS)—A completion date of May 31 has been set for constructing the building to house the Amity Printing Press outside Nanjing, People's Republic of China, the American Bible Society reports.

When the press begins operations—scheduled for late summer 1987—the Amity Press will give priority to the printing of Bibles, New Testaments, hymnals, and other Christian literature.

A slogan posted at the Jiangning Industrial Corporation site exhorts the project's workers, in Chinese, "Time is money. Quality is life. Wage a strenuous fight to finish the main building of the Amity Press within 150 days."

ABS also reports that training of the staff who will run the presses and other equipment is already underway.

The state-of-the-art-machinery, together with its installation and supervision, is being paid for by donations to the United Bible Societies, the world fellowship, through its members, including the American Bible Society.

Equipment includes a giant Timson Web Offset press together with associated bindery and other equipment needed to produce a complete book, starting with computerized typesetting equipment programmed in Mandarin Chinese script.

The commitment by UBS for the \$6.7 million installation was made at the request of Chinese Christians, who have themselves produced and distributed 1.8 million Bibles since 1980, but who are no longer able to meet the rapidly growing demand because of logjams at the commercial printers.

The 64,000-square-foot press room alone is larger than a football field, while the rest of the Amity Press complex provides housing for composition, printing, and binding, as well as the warehousing of both raw materials and finished books.

a smile or two

Measure

A man was filling out an application for credit. Among the many questions was "Length of residence in present location?"

After some mental calculation, he filled in, "40 to 50 feet, including garage."

Resources

Two men were chatting about the energy crisis. "Which of our natural resources do you think will become exhausted first?" one man asked his friend.

"The taxpayer," the other man said.

Arkansas all over

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

people

Jerry O. Threat of Morrilton has completed all requirements for the doctor of pastoral ministries degree at Bethany Theological Seminary in Dothan, Ala. He will be graduated June 11 with a 4.0 grade point average. A native of Forrest City, he was licensed to preach at Midway Church in Palestine and ordained at Haynes Church. He is currently serving as pastor of Old Hickory Church of Hattiesville.

Claude Hyde of Paragould died Feb. 16. He was a member of Calvary Church in Paragould where he had served as a van driver and custodian.

Leland Holeman of Shady Grove died Feb. 19. He was a member of Shady Grove Church where he served as a deacon. He was a landscape supervisor for Ouachita Baptist University.

Kevin Carter is serving as pastor of Scotland Church in North Central Association.

J.D. and Beth Patterson are on a dental mission trip March 4-22 to the Amazon to the Amazon River area of Brazil. The father and daughter dental team are being accompanied by Vonda Clark of Russellville, a student at Ouachita Baptist University. The trip will be the second for the dentists who are sponsored by Searcy Temple Church. In Brazil they are working with Southern Baptist missionary Luther Williams.

Jerry Creek has resigned as pastor of Hot Springs Central Church to serve as pastor of Wake Village Church in Texarkana, Texas.

Rev. and Mrs. Ernest Anderson will celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary March 29 with a reception in their El Paso home from 2-4:30 p.m. Hosting the reception will be their children, Hugh B. Anderson and Mrs. G.T. Hooten, both of North Little Rock, and James D. Anderson of El Paso; their seven grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

Otis Parnell Hammons, Evalyn Pierce Hammons, and their son, Edward Parnell Hammons, all of Forrest City recently established the Hammons Memorial Chair of Pre-Medical Studies at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., as part of the recent \$10 million endowment campaign. Dr. and Mrs. O.P. Ham-

mons are members of the 1928 graduating class of Union University.

Wilbur Herring was called March 4 to serve as interim pastor of Nettleton Church in Jonesboro. Herring retired in 1983 as pastor of Central Church, Jonesboro, following 20 years of service there. Since that time has served as interim pastor of Conway First Church, Blytheville First Church, and Wynne Church.

Allice Gamble Beard of Little Rock died Feb. 24 at age 67. She was an active member of Calvary Church, Little Rock where her funeral services were held Feb. 28. She was a retired associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and co-director of University Hospital's newborn services. She was named a professor emeritus in 1983. Survivors include her husband, Owen W. Beard; a son, William King Beard, of Little Rock; two daughters, Margaret Beard Miller of Evergreen, Col., and Barbara Jo Beard of Little Rock; a brother; and seven grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the Allice Beard Mission Fund at Calvary Church.

Terry Walters is serving as pastor of Trinity Church near Marked Tree. He moved there from Memphis.

Dr. and Mrs. Tom Cox of Mountainburg have returned from their sixth annual crusades to India where they directed a team of 17 people. Daily medical clinics and nightly crusades were conducted. Cox reported more than 5,000 professions of faith.

Richard Davis resigned March 8 as pastor of Mount Zion Church, Banner.

Greg Church has been called by Heber Springs First Church to serve as summer minister of youth and activities, effective May 31. A native of Benton, he is a graduate of Bryant High School and Ouachita Baptist University. Church is currently enrolled in the master of divinity program at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Eldon Thomas has resigned as minister of music at First Church of Delaware.

Mark Williams has joined the staff of Claud Road Church in White Hall as part-time minister of youth. He is a student at Ouachita Baptist University.

Jack and Vicki Bedford have joined the staff of Greenland First Church. He is serving as outreach director and she serves as church pianist. Both are serving as Sunday School teachers.



Second and Bethlehem Churches, both located in Searcy, held two consecutive Sundays of joint worship services to celebrate "Race Relations Sunday." The Feb. 8 service was held at Second Church with Bethlehem's Pastor T.J. Williams preaching. Music was by the Bethlehem choir, directed by Eddie Hardin, choir president. The Feb. 15 service was held at Bethlehem Church with Gary Ulrich, Second Church pastor, preaching. Music was presented by Second Church choir, directed by Virgil Brandt, minister of music. Pictured (left to right) are Brandt, Ulrich, Williams and Hardin.

Charles Womack is serving as pastor of Pea Ridge Church, coming there from First Church in Pond Creek, Okla. He and his wife, Donna, have four daughters, Julie, Megan, Beth, and Erin.

Bob Foster began serving March 15 as pastor of Charity Mission in Benton. He and his wife, Arlene, moved there from Vinita, Okla., where he served the Timber Hills Church.

Robert L. Bennett is serving as pastor of Ro-Lynn Hills Church, Rogers.

briefly

Mena First Church recently held a DiscipleYouth retreat in which 17 youth and nine adults participated. Bill Falkner, associate in the Church Training Department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was leader.

Ruddell Hill Church at Batesville recently purchased and installed a new sanctuary organ.

Timbo Calvary Church recently broke ground for a parsonage.

Batesville Calvary Church recently purchased a van for use in its outreach ministries.

Roland Church women were assisted Feb. 17 in organizing a Baptist Women's group by Mrs. Antonio Tribble and Mary Smith. Elected as officers were Martha Morgan, president and Marge Berry, secretary-treasurer. Group leaders are Barbara Fletcher, mission study; Audrey Heard, mission action; and Shirley Hurst, mission support.

Midway Church at Judsonia will hold a worship celebration April 12 to dedication of its redecorated sanctuary. James Hill, director of missions for Calvary Association, will be speaker, according to Pastor John D. Davey.

Pine Bluff Immanuel Church hosted the Southeast Arkansas Youth Discipleship Conference March 13-14 led by its minister of youth, Dave Hughey. Don Connell directed music and was guest soloist.

Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith conducted a Lay Renewal March 6-11 led by lay persons from Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma. Fred Roach was coordinator.

Gravel Ridge First is observing the six-week Sunday School promotion, "Gather the People," with special emphasis that will feature Julie Russell, Nancy Kay Adcock, Marilyn Ford, Bob Reno, Andrew Lang and Allie Freeman as speakers.

Batavia Church at Harrison mission organizations have designated Wednesday evening as "Family Night" with all organizations meeting to study about missions and to plan and do local missions projects. These studies have resulted in the organizations sending supplies to the Youth Services Center, launching of a puppet ministry, delivering fruit baskets, and involving other churches in special worship services. Graham Roberts is pastor.

Eagle Heights Church at Harrison will sponsor a Christian Youth Encounter April 23-24 with Al Fike as guest artist. Brian Kinder will direct music. Stanton Cram is pastor.

Wooster First Church broke ground March 1 for a new church plant. Participating in the service were Pastor J.C. Myers; Tommy Browning, building committee chairman; Carl Roebuck, chairman of deacons; Gene Dear, Sunday School director; Larry Harness, Church Training director; Betty Odom, Woman's Missionary Union director; and Mayor Johnnie Stone.

Liberian convicted in missionary murder

SANNIQUELLIE, Liberia (BP)—A 15-member jury convicted Liberian Benjamin M. Morris March 6 of murdering Southern Baptist missionary Libby Senter and her 10-year-old daughter, Rachel.

The jury took about 30 minutes to return a verdict in the Nimba County courthouse after hearing five days of testimony from nine prosecution witnesses and from Morris. Circuit Court Judge Timothy Swope said he would pronounce a sentence sometime the next week.

Morris, 32, was arrested Nov. 27 near the Liberian border with Ivory Coast one day after Mrs. Senter, 47, and her daughter were found dead in their Yekepa, Liberia, home. He later confessed orally and in writing that he killed the two after Mrs. Senter intervened to prevent him from molesting Rachel. Mrs. Senter was from Shelby, N.C.

Southern Baptist missionaries, including the Senter family, had befriended Morris, a Liberian Baptist seminary graduate. They knew Morris was suspected of committing sex offenses in the past, but they had dismiss-

Paragould First Church Brotherhood has launched a project to assist members with minor home repairs and errand running, according to E.V. Ellison, Brotherhood director.

Little River Association sponsored its first senior adult rally March 5 at Ridgeway Church of Nashville. There were 69 in attendance, according to Douglas Duncan, associational senior adult leader. The next meeting will be June 4 at Central Church, Mineral Springs.

Concord Church held a fellowship dinner March 1 for Pastor and Mrs. Malcolm Sample in recognition of his retirement.

Long Ridge Church at Booneville recently purchased a piano for the educational building. They also have organized children's and youth choir programs.

Pleasant Grove III Church at Waldron has increased its Cooperative Program gifts to 10 percent.

Haw Creek Church at Waldron plans to build an addition to its existing building that will house a fellowship area.

South Side Church in Pine Bluff held a noteburning service Feb. 22 in celebration of payment of a \$300,000 indebtedness on an auditorium remodeling program. Rick Erwin is pastor.

ed the accusations after coming to know him, said Bradley Brown, chairman for the group of 67 Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to work in Liberia.

In his own defense, Morris admitted in court to the murders. But departing from his earlier testimony, he said Senter hired him to commit them. Under questioning by the prosecuting attorney and the judge, Morris contradicted himself on the dates involved in the alleged hiring. Brown reported.

"Obviously the judge and the jury did not believe (Morris), because the jury came back in less than a half hour with a unanimous guilty verdict," said John Mills, who directs Southern Baptist mission work in western Africa. Under Liberian law, Morris could be hanged for the killings.

Brown, who attended the first two days of the trial, said the proceedings had "engendered widespread interest." Some of that interest grew out of the much-publicized forgiveness husband and father George Senter expressed to Morris just before his initial confession.

The Cooperative Program: getting the job done

by W. Trueman Moore

Cooperation is a trademark of Southern Baptists. Our denomination has grown into one of the largest in the nation and the world because of our missionary motivation and cooperation.

The greatest vehicle of cooperation is the Cooperative Program. This program of underwriting our work should be supported by every Southern Baptist church because it is the best method of providing ministries and mission programs that any denomination has ever found. Para-church groups and other denominations may carry on mission work or have denomination ministries. However, they are not as efficient and as closely controlled by the local churches of the denomination as are those who work together through the Cooperative Program. The Cooperative Program is getting the job done for Southern Baptists.

There are at least 10 reasons why Southern Baptists should give through the Cooperative Program to support the Lord's work outside the local church:

- (1) All the work of the denomination is included in the unified budget.
- (2) All of the funds are controlled by the local churches who are working together but, at the same time, are maintaining their autonomy.
- (3) The Cooperative Program is efficient.
- (4) God-called people who are supported through the Cooperative Program get the job done.
- (5) With the Cooperative Program there is accountability.

'How to get involved'

by Randal Everett

One of the frustrations I have experienced as a believer is the tendency to feel called to every place of need that is presented. Whether the situation is an inner-city, a foreign country, a campus ministry, or a local jail or nursing home, there is always that personal desire to do something to help.

However, it is obviously impossible to be everywhere at once. Jumping from one place of ministry to another would only add to the nonfulfillment.

It was a breakthrough when I finally realized I could multiply myself. By being a part of a mission church like Antioch (Acts 13), many areas could be touched by the outreach of our local congregation.

God has given Southern Baptists the vehicle by giving through the Cooperative Program. Arkansas Baptists have adopted an emphasis to challenge all of our churches to increased participation in the Cooperative Program.

(6) The Cooperative Program gives us a united purpose.

(7) The Cooperative Program establishes priorities.

(8) The Cooperative Program supports work in our own state.

(9) God is blessing the Cooperative Program around the world.

(10) The Cooperative Program is scriptural.

The future of our unique stewardship support system is whatever Southern Baptists want it to be. Each generation must choose to cooperate. To make that choice for this generation will require that Southern Baptists have a conviction about missionaries, confidence in fellow Baptists, and a spiritual dimension of commitment to the Holy Spirit's leadership.

The greatest challenge for the future is that all churches become involved in the life-support system for Southern Baptists' cooperative work. Pressures for expenditures at home must not be allowed to cripple the great united ministries outside the local church field.

I pray that Southern Baptists may have a big love for the lost and needy world, a bigger confidence in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the greatest commitment to personal involvement in it all through the support method provided in the Cooperative Program!

W. Trueman Moore is pastor of Eastside Church in Fort Smith.

Biblical basis: 'For God so loved . . . he gave'

One way God expresses himself to man is through his unqualified love. While man was at his lowest, God loved him.


Our relation to everyone and everything is affected by our love for God. Matthew 22:37-38 says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." This is the first and greatest commandment.

This is where the people of God start, they love God! They really love God so much that it controls their lives. When God is in control, we accomplish his purpose for our lives. We glorify God our Father.

God wants us to follow his example of giving. The biblical basis of giving is love. This is why God gave Jesus, his Son, to die for our sins and in turn gave us eternal life. This is the reason God's people will give sacrificially to reach a lost and dying world with the good news that they too can have eternal life.

As our love for God controls our giving, our love for God also controls our compassion for souls. Put these two principles together, and you have the reason for Mission Advance 1987-89: to give that others may hear and believe.

Ferrell Morgan is director of missions for Concord Association, Fort Smith, and is president of the ABCS Executive Board.



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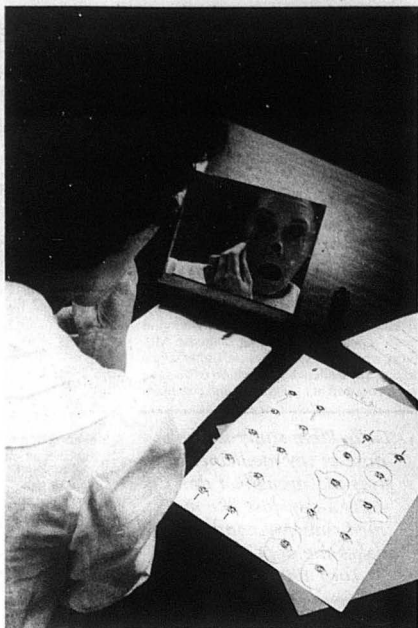
(2) Contact the Baptist Building, associate executive director's office. He will help you secure a speaker.

These speakers will come at their own expense. They simply want to help your church to grow in its participation in mission involvement through the Cooperative Program.

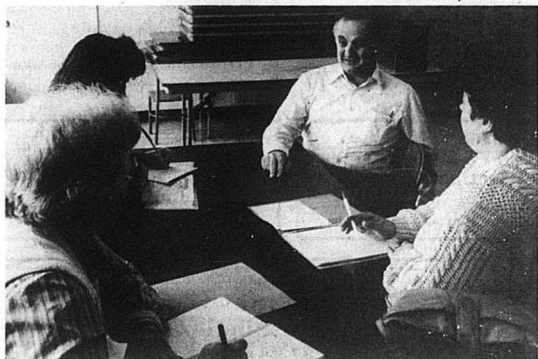
Randal Everett is pastor of First Church, Benton.



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ABN photos / Millie Gill



Church recreation is more than sports and games; it supports all the ministry and outreach programs of the church, participants were told during the March 6-7 Mini Rec Lab at Park Hill Church, North Little Rock. (Left) Everette Robertson (facing camera), of the Baptist Sunday School Board, led seminars on ministry through drama. He pointed out that many recreation ministries—such as drama, puppetry, and clowning—require little budget, staff, or space and can be used by almost any size group at any time. And because the arts are highly visual, they communicate the gospel readily to the unchurched, Robertson said. If a church will set out to make its recreation program a ministry tool, and not just entertaining activity, it will find a powerful witness for Christ, he concluded. (Above left) Doris Waddell of Mountain Home East Side Church browses through a display in the crafts ministry conference. (Above) Janet Gathright of Pine Bluff First Church practices her technique of applying clown makeup.

Mini Rec Lab introduces creative ministry resources

Marvell woman finds strength for journey in Bible study, prayer

by Mark Kelly

ABN photo / Mark Kelly

MARVELL—When Edwynne Story first became ill, her pain was so unbearable she couldn't even get dressed for five months, but her four-year battle with a little-known disease has opened new vistas on her Christian pilgrimage.

Mrs. Story, a home-maker, wife, and mother of two from Marvell, suffers from Interstitial Cystitis, an auto-immune disorder of the bladder which renders that organ's walls inelastic, decreasing its capacity and causing intense pain.

And although an estimated 500,000 persons in the United States suffer from the disease, doctors in Little Rock and Memphis were repeatedly unable to diagnose Mrs. Story's problem. One physician, after failing to find any evidence of infection or disease, even wrote off her weight loss and complaint

as "cost a small fortune," she is now able to stay on her feet and get on with her life.

The onset of her illness abruptly ended Mrs. Story's active participation in the ministries of Marvell First Church, where she is a fifth-generation member. But as she has learned to cope with her condition, she has found new avenues of expressing her ministry, despite the fact she can't be involved as much as she would like.

"There are different ways to minister," she explains. "If I can't do a Sunday School or a youth worker, I can do other things.

For example, her own constant battle with her illness made her sensitive to the needs of others also struggling with physical ailments. "I became more aware of people who are sick," she says. "I can send them cards, make phone calls, and take them food. It's hard for people who have never been sick to understand what it's like."

Her condition has deepened her personal spiritual life as well. Prayer and Bible study are now essential features of her daily walk.

"Daily Bible study is like a dose of my medicine," she asserts. "It gives me strength. I just don't miss a day, just like my medicine.

"My condition makes me depend on the Lord 100 percent," she explains. "I've learned to trust him every day with everything."

Mrs. Story recalls the time she found a handwritten note among some family papers. Penned by her grandmother, who suffered from Parkinson's Disease, the note read: "It's not what happens to us, but how we react to it."

Through her own suffering, Mrs. Story has discovered a principle her grandmother apparently knew as well: "When God gives you a task you have never done, he'll give you a strength you have never had."



Edwynne Story of Marvell has found daily Bible study and prayer indispensable resources for her daily struggle with Interstitial Cystitis.

Mark Kelly is managing editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

'Daily Bible study is like a dose of my medicine. It gives me strength. I don't miss a day, just like my medicine. My condition makes me depend on the Lord 100 percent.'

of constant pain with a snide remark: "All you women are just alike. You have the same personality defect."

"I'm not a hypochondriac, and I'm not a baby," protested Mrs. Story. "I don't dwell on poor health." When doctors at Ochsner's Clinic in New Orleans, La., finally diagnosed her disease, a wave of thankfulness swept over her.

Now she must make twice-yearly trips to New Orleans for treatment; in addition, she must visit a local physician every month. And although the travel and medical treatments

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Ling jumps ship in Mississippi River

by Breena Kent

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Peter Ling, a Chinese seaman persecuted for his Christian beliefs, jumped ship in the Mississippi River. Now he wants to train for the ministry and return to his homeland as a pastor.

In September 1986, Ling's ship was anchored near New Orleans when another crewman threatened his life. The "second engineer . . . wanted to kill me because I continued to preach the Good News to my countrymen," Ling recalls.

On Saturday morning, Sept. 28, as the second engineer attempted to kick down Ling's locked door, "I opened my window, and jumped into the river."

Speaking in broken English, Ling says, "Before I jumped, I prayed three times to the Lord, and I feel if I jump into the river, I will be protected by the Lord. Everything he will prepare for me."

During all the years that Ling had been a seaman, he had never received training in swimming. On this particular ship, however, the crew was required to have swimming lessons before the voyage.

The training proved profitable as he fought the rough current of the Mississippi River, until two Vietnamese fishermen caught him: "The fishermen asked me, 'Do you have any money?' I said, 'No, I'm penniless. I only have my Bible and an English-Chinese dictionary.' They said, 'If you have no money, you will live a very painful life here.'"

Once on shore, American police handcuffed Ling. Since he just jumped ship to escape threats on his life because of his Christian beliefs, Ling quickly told them: "I am a Christian. I should be free here." The police told me, "Don't be afraid. This is the United States, and we try to protect you."

He was brought to the immigration office, "and after they asked me some questions, they told me I can live in the U.S., and I can

look for a job," he reports.

Because Ling was a Christian, the police took him to the home of a Catholic Vietnamese family, who, through their church, arranged for him a place to stay. "They gave me clothes and \$60, and after I received a Social Security number, they introduced me to a restaurant to work," he says.

When Ling told the people who helped him he was Baptist, they brought him to Elysian Fields Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans. The pastor, Jimmy Dukes, who is on the faculty of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, found him a job at the seminary.

Ling now is studying to pass the high school graduation equivalency test so he can begin studies at the seminary.

Ling hopes to someday obtain an associate of divinity degree at New Orleans Seminary and return as a pastor to China, where his wife and child remain.

He grew up in a Christian family in China, "so when I was very young, they taught me how to worship the Lord."

Ling accepted Christ while aboard ship in Indonesia. He was listening to a Christian radio broadcast when "I told God I want to offer all my life to God."

Two years ago, he was baptized in his village in Dashabu, China, and 38 other Chinese were baptized with him.

"When I was in China, the Christian church in China was increasing rapidly, but no pastor, and so I want to be a pastor," Ling says. He notes for every 600,000 people in China, there is only one pastor.

The main reason for the lack of pastors, he explains, is a lack of theological training, especially among people in rural villages.

Four years ago, there were only two Christians in his village; now there are 150. "So I want to get wisdom here and then go back to China and start a Christian training class at the Christian theological seminary."

Pastor embarks on journey to encourage 'Timothys'

by David Reid

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Al Jackson carries the Paul-Timothy relationship to great distances.

Every year the Alabama pastor treks to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, to encourage his Timothy's—eight seminary students who have come through his church.

Just as the Apostle Paul saw a need to nurture Timothy's ministry, so the pastor of Lakeview Church in Auburn, Ala., wants to share his experiences with young ministers.

Jackson was on Southwestern's campus this winter for his annual visit. But his concern for ministerial students begins before they ever make it to Fort Worth.

In 1980 Jackson began weekly meetings with ministerial students in his church.

"We have a lot of students in our church who come to Auburn University for whatever reason and then are called to vocational Christian ministry while they're there," Jackson says. "Many of them don't really know what the ministry is all about."

So Jackson attempts to prepare them. "We talk about things out of my own experience—the kinds of practical things that happen in church life that often aren't covered in the classroom," he says. "I'll say, 'Let me tell you what happened during deacons' meeting,' or someone will ask why something was done a certain way during a service, and we'll discuss that."

The meetings also are an indirect way of fulfilling Jackson's desire to serve as a missionary. "When I was a student at Southwestern, I always attended the chapels and conferences during Missions Week and was a bit disappointed when it became clear God wasn't calling me to missions."

"I see my involvement with students as the primary way I can impact the world with the gospel beyond my own church."

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Missionaries leave Lebanon, but their hearts remain

by Art Toalston

SBC Foreign Mission Board

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)—Militiamen with machine guns watched as seven Southern Baptist missionaries and several dozen Lebanese carefully stepped off a shuttle bus.

The travelers scurried through the evening rain, stepped around mud puddles and walked up an unsteady plank into the boat in East Beirut's port.

Passports in hand, the missionaries waited for their cabins, resolved to a night on stormy seas March 5. Before long, two would become seasick.

Seasickness, however, would be minor compared to what was troubling them. They were moving from one world to another.

Behind them was a war-torn land where a stray artillery shell or bullet could have ended any of their lives. It also was a land where U.S. citizens, by government order, could no longer live.

Ahead of the missionaries was the pleasant seaside city of Larnaca on the island of Cyprus, the place where relatives and friends in the United States could count on reliable telephone service to ask, "Are you all right?"

Given the chance, the missionaries would have chosen Lebanon.

In that world, they made deep friendships by weathering the war. "It's been overwhelming to see the love the Lebanese have expressed for us" since the U.S. order was announced in late January, said Leola Ragland, an Oklahoman who has worked 33 years as a missionary in Lebanon.

As of March 7, all 24 missionaries and eight children formerly in Lebanon were in Cyprus, the last couple having come out by boat the night of March 6. They wondered what relatives and friends in the United States thought of their pleas to remain in Lebanon.

"I don't know what people in the U.S. are seeing on television or reading in the newspapers," commented Pete Dunn, an Alabamian who has been a missionary in Lebanon since 1968. He has received letters asking, "Why are you still there?"

"The perspective of people outside the country is so different from our perspective. We live among the people. We eat Lebanese food. We cry with them when they hurt. We go to the hospital and visit their sick. We go to the weddings. And they come to us.

"I respect my government," Dunn added.

"Maybe they are looking at other factors I'm not exposed to. But right now, I believe the order was unwarranted."

"I can't imagine not coming back to Lebanon" to continue working side by side with the country's Baptists, said Dunn's wife, Pat, also from Alabama.

"We were right on the threshold" of launching Baptist TV programs in Arabic," said Dunn, who directs the Baptist Center for Mass Communications, "and here we are on a boat going to Cyprus."

Frances Fuller of Arkansas, who has spent 16 years of her 23-year missionary career as a missionary in Lebanon, cited the relative security of East Beirut and neighboring towns. "We feel like we could say, 'Mr. Reagan, come and visit us. Meet our neighbors. And then think about the order!'"

"It's not that there isn't danger," she acknowledged. "We thought at times we might die for being in Lebanon."

However, for Fuller, who directs the Arab Baptist Publication Center, the risk is worth taking to be obedient to God, to do the job God chose her to do and to be with the people for whom he has given her a great love.

"Never in any period of my life have I ever been happier" than in recent years, she said. "I feel like my roots are here. I want to come back as quickly as possible."

Fuller said she struggled with the principle of obeying God rather than men. "I went through a time of thinking, 'If we obey this (order), it's because we don't want to pay the price of making God the highest authority over our lives.' I felt I was going to get on this boat feeling that I had done something

wrong."

She finally decided to obey the order, not wanting her protest to make it difficult for other missionaries later to return to Lebanon.

"We're leaving Lebanon as half-people," said Jim Ragland, also from Oklahoma, who directed Beirut Baptist School. "We feel we have left our hearts behind in the places where we have lived and worked."

"This is home for us," Mrs. Ragland said. "We know Lebanon probably better than we know America." Their four children are sad also, she said, because Lebanon is the only home they have ever known. All of them are married now, and they had hoped to bring their spouses to Lebanon some day.

When news of the order came, Ragland said, he and his wife sat across the table from each other and had their devotional together. They realized that something very tragic was about to take place in their lives, he said. "We just sat there and wept together."

Later, after they had left the school, Mrs. Ragland recounted, "Jim looked back toward West Beirut. It was raining and he said, 'I always dread rainy days like this, because it's so difficult to take care of the children.' Then, all of a sudden, we realized we weren't over there to do it.

"It has been a month of not really knowing where we are," she said.

For more than three weeks they said good-byes to Lebanese friends and co-workers, both Christians and Muslims. It was an emotional challenge, Ragland said. "How do you walk away from somebody you've known for 30 years?" he asked, weeping.

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In their cabin, aboard a boat pulling out of the east Beirut harbor, missionaries Wayne and Frances Fuller, from Wynne, Ark., cope with the disruption of their 16-plus years in Lebanon. Their departure was caused by a U.S. government order forcing Americans out of the country. Even another month in Lebanon would have been "like a gift from heaven to do our work and be with the people," said Mrs. Fuller, who directs the Arab Baptist Publication Center. Her husband is the center's business manager.

Retired missionary is last to leave West Beirut school

by Art Toalston

SBC Foreign Mission Board

LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)—When Beirut Baptist School opened its doors more than 30 years ago, Mabel Summers was there.

And when the U.S. State Department ordered Americans out of Lebanon, she was the last Southern Baptist missionary to leave the West Beirut school.

"I've left behind many friends," people who have become "family," said Summers, 72, who retired in 1985 but remained in Lebanon.

She said she hasn't gotten too emotionally upset over leaving Lebanon but probably will feel the impact more as she has time to reflect. Getting away, telling people goodbye, and winding up things occupied all her time until she boarded a boat to Cyprus.

"I don't know where I'm going from here," she added. Except, "I'm going to write and pray and do all I can, and get people in the States to pray."

A lot of people do not understand the situation, she said, explaining the majority of Lebanese people don't want civil war. "It's only a few. But the rest can't stop it. It's gotten beyond them," she laments.

"I had planned to stay another school year, and that would make 40 years" in Lebanon, she said.

Friends in the United States speculated her love for Lebanon might prompt her to refuse to obey the order. And several students at the school offered to cover whatever fines might be levied against her. But Summers said, "As a Christian citizen I didn't want to break the law."

Her experiences in Lebanon's 12-year civil war have taught her to trust God more, she said. "I go back to Isaiah: . . . in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

"I feel, as was written on a birthday card of mine one time, God never leads you where his grace cannot keep you. All through the war, even when we've had rockets around us, I had peace and trust in my heart."

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Federal judge bans 'secular humanist' texts in Alabama

by Stan Hestey

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (BP)—A federal judge has banned 37 American history, social studies and home economics textbooks from Alabama schools on grounds they teach the religion of "secular humanism" in violation of the First Amendment.

In a 111-page opinion issued March 4, Judge W.B. Hand of the U.S. District Court for Southern Alabama sided with more than 600 plaintiffs in Mobile, Ala.—including parents and schoolteachers—who claimed the challenged books ignore Christianity and other faiths while teaching anti-Christian, humanistic values. The decision, which is expected to be challenged in the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, applies only to Alabama schools.

The bitterly contested case, which divided the religious community of Mobile to the point that some plaintiffs and defendants belonged to the same congregations, dates to the 1982 challenge of an Alabama law that mandated the observance of silent prayer in the state's public schools. Ishmael Jaffree, a self-described agnostic and parent of two children enrolled in Mobile schools, challenged the silent prayer statute as an unconstitutional establishment of religion.

Judge Hand ruled against Jaffree in January 1983 in a celebrated opinion that included the assertion the First Amendment does not apply to the states and that Alabama could, if it chose, establish a state religion. On appeal, however, the 11th Circuit reversed Hand's decision. In June 1985, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the reversal.

In his March 4 opinion banning the challenged textbooks, Hand said he had reserved the right in the earlier decision to reopen the record to determine if secular humanism was being taught in Alabama schools in the event higher courts did not sustain his ruling in the Jaffree case.

Saying he had been "overwhelmed by the volume" of testimony proving the presence of secular humanism in the textbooks during the second trial—conducted over a 12-day period last October—Hand cited the lasting influence of a number of humanist educators over the last half-century. Primary among these, he wrote, was the noted humanist John Dewey.

Hand said he agreed with the assessments of some "expert" witnesses during the trial that the general condition of American public education is "abominable" and that primary and secondary schools are in "mess."

He described the textbooks banned in his ruling as "deplorable," particularly American history volumes that "discriminate against the very concept of religion, and theistic religions in particular, by omissions so serious that a student learning history from them would not be apprised of relevant facts about America's history."

The banished series of social studies texts, he said, "relegates religion to other cultures, other times and other places," while the challenged home economics books advocate "humanistic psychology."

Hand ruled that taken together, the books amounted to an unconstitutional establishment of secular humanism as the approved religion of the state.

Among top 20 industrial nations Study shows U.S. infant mortality rate worst

by Tim Fields

Christian Life Commission

WASHINGTON (BP)—A national study on infant mortality rates shows that the United States has slipped to last place among 20 industrialized nations, including almost every Western European country, Japan, Canada, and Hong Kong.

According to the study by the Children's Defense Fund, a pro-children's advocacy organization, almost 11 children out of every 1,000 born in the United States die before their first birthday.

While Japan has improved its infant mortality rate from 51 out of every 1,000 births in the period of 1950-55 to only six by 1980-1985, the United States has lowered its rate in the same time period from 28 to 11. Other countries with lower rates than the United States include the United Kingdom, 10; Canada, 9; France, 9; and Sweden, 7.

Figures on the United States show that nine of the 10 states with the highest infant mortality rate were located in the South: South Carolina, 14.7; Mississippi, 14.4; Alabama, 12.9; Georgia, 12.9; North Carolina, 12.4; Virginia, 12.1; Louisiana, 12.1; and Tennessee, 11.8. Other southern states with high rates include Kentucky, 11.5; Arkansas, 10.9; Florida, 10.8; Oklahoma, 10.8; and Texas, 10.5.

Furthermore, black infants are almost twice as likely to die as white infants. The report puts the status of black infants in stark terms: "A black infant born within five miles of the White House in our nation's capital is more likely to die in the first year of life than an infant born in Third World countries like Trinidad and Tobago or Costa Rica."

Robert Parham, director of hunger concerns for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, pointed out these figures indicate America's children are not high enough on the nation's agenda for anti-poverty and healthcare programs.

"The infant mortality rate is linked to low birth weight which often stems from malnutrition," Parham said. "Low birth weight, in turn, contributes to a host of problems, including mental retardation, blindness, hearing impairments and learning disabilities. If we invest an ounce of prevention in the next generation of Americans, it will yield us a pound of cure down the line."

In addition to reducing human and financial cost, Parham noted Christian morality calls for care of the weakest members of society—children and poor women. "Christian charity and citizenship must work in harness to help solve low birth weight problems and further lower the nation's infant mortality rate," he concluded.



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BROADMAN

Convention Uniform

In the garden

by Erwin L. McDonald, Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine editor emeritus

Basic passage: Luke 22:39-53

Focal passage: Luke 22:39-53

Central truth: The suffering of Jesus was severe and his commitment unwavering as he faced the cross.

As Jesus had taught his disciples about his approaching death on the cross, he had admonished them to "tell no one," because his time had not yet come. But now, in the fullness of time, he goes to the cross unflinchingly for the atonement of a lost world.

(1) Jesus' agony in Gethsemane (Lu. 22:39-46)

Just after the institution of the Lord's Supper and barely ahead of his arrest, Jesus retired with his apostles to the Garden of Gethsemane for communion with the heavenly Father. We cannot begin to understand his agony there as he faced the ordeal of taking upon himself the sins of all the human race. He prayed to his Father: "if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (v. 42). What a time for some of the disciples, even in their exhaustion, to fall asleep!

(2) Judas betrays his Lord (Lu. 22:47-51)

Judas, one of the highly-favored twelve, but one who had never been a genuine disciple of the Lord (Jo. 6:70-71), led Jesus' enemies into the garden, where he completed his part of a nefarious bargain by identifying for them Jesus by placing his traitor's kiss upon his cheek.

(3) The world's darkest hour (Lu. 22:52-53)

When was the earth enshrouded in its darkest hour; when was human nature revealed at its very worst? Surely the answer must be, when Jesus, the Christ, the one who in the humanity of his incarnation, tempted at all points as each and every one of us, because he was God, committed no sin—when this perfect one was taken by depraved humanity and led to his death on the cross of Calvary. Someone has pointed out that on this occasion "the treachery of Judas was matched by the cowardice of the Jewish leadership."

Jesus reminded the lawless mob as it was seizing him that he had been moving freely in and out of the temple for the last several days and had engaged in no more violent an activity than the teaching of God's word.

The power of God would soon set the enemies of Jesus back on their heels with his resurrection and the dawn of eternal day.

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Life and Work

Valuing persons

by Harry T. Kennedy, Calvary Church, Hope

Basic passage: Luke 15:11-14,17-24

Focal passage: Luke 15:17-20

Central truth: Having a broken heart over sin and a willingness to seek forgiveness puts us on the way back to our Father. You are more important to God who would rather forgive than punish.

The Lord's value of "who you are" is reflected in this popular parable in the New Testament. This parable teaches us several important facts.

(1) The father knows when to let us go! This younger son had come to the place where reason nor love could change his "will!" It had come time when the father knew he would not learn except it be the hard way of experience. Therefore, the father's permissive will allowed the son to go away.

No longer was the wisdom of the father acceptable that had protected him from harm and provided him a place of continuous supply for his needs.

(2) On our own, and in our own wisdom, we get careless. The young son soon loses everything; his money, his self respect, and his independence.

It was when all this happens and he stands in the "pig sty" that he is overwhelmed as he reassesses his life. It is then that he rediscovers what he had so carelessly, yet so willingly, lost. His heart swells with grief and remorse over what he had done. He recalls what his father did just for the servants and willingly turns back towards home.

(3) The father is always on the lookout for the return of the son. He doesn't watch the road with a vengeful spirit; but a spirit of love and forgiveness. He had every right to reject this rebellious child; but all he wanted was for the son to be back home. What love!

When the son returns, the father saw the brokenness and genuine desire for forgiveness and change. Immediately celebration breaks out as the son is restored just as God celebrates over anyone who will come back the same way as this younger son.

(4) The father restored him completely as if he had never left. That's the way it is with our Heavenly Father!

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Bible Book

Jesus crucified

by Berdell Ward, Park Hill Church, North Little Rock

Basic passage: John 19:17-37

Focal passage: John 19:17-22,26-30,32-36

Central truth: The darkest times of our lives may be moments of greatest triumph when seen from an eternal viewpoint.

Act One of today's lesson begins with a jolting shock as we see Jesus, beaten and bleeding, carrying his cross up the hill to the Place of the Skull, Golgotha. The showdown had come, but instead of a victory for Jesus and his followers, it had turned into a horrible rout. The religious leaders of Jerusalem, backed by the force of the state, had conspired to bring the full power of death against Jesus and his "movement."

Only Pilate's small act of defiance of the Jewish leaders offered them any consolation. In opposition to their wishes, he had affixed to Jesus's cross a sign identifying him as "King of the Jews" (vv. 19-22). The message of the sign was written in three languages: Hebrew, the language of the religious leaders of the day; Greek, the language of learning and philosophy; and Latin, the language of secular power.

Act Two brings us to the foot of the cross itself. As Jesus looked down through his pain at his mother and his best friend, his heart went out to them. This was no time for theology. How could he explain to them the universal forces that had brought him to this place in time? In time they would come to understand, but for the moment he had to satisfy an implacable destiny. What he could do was to offer the consolation of his love and concern by "giving" them to each other.

Act Three brings us to the final horror. Holding the power of the universe in his hand, Jesus held it at bay and voluntarily died in agony. He allowed his family and friends and followers to share in the pain of his crucifixion and death because he knew what a gift he was giving them with that death.

It was buying their freedom from the cycle of sin and punishment that had plagued mankind from the dawn of human relationships. He was giving mankind the greatest gift—the hope of everlasting life, attainable only through the darkness of his death which had to precede the glory of his resurrection.

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Southern Seminary program receives accreditation

by David Wilkinson
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—The master's degree program in social work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has been awarded accreditation by the national Council on Social Work Education.

The accreditation, the first to be granted by the council to an educational institution other than a college or university, comes 75 years after the establishment of Southern Baptists' first social work program.

In 1912, Maude Reynold McClure, principal of Woman's Missionary Union Training School, helped organize a Baptist "settlement house" in downtown Louisville, Ky., launching what is generally considered to be the beginning of Baptist center work in the Southern Baptist Convention. Baptist centers have been instrumental in providing Christian social ministry in America's urban areas.

During the same year, McClure began teaching social work courses at the Training School, beginning an educational emphasis that eventually became a full-fledged degree program at the seminary. The Carver School of Missions and Social Work, the successor

to the WMU Training School, was merged with Southern Seminary in 1963.

C. Anne Davis, dean of Southern Seminary's school of social work and a Carver School graduate, welcomed the accreditation as "a recognition of what the church is doing in terms of ministry to people."

Accreditation is important, she said, because "you can't do social work without interfacing with the world. We are trying to bridge the gap between the church and the world, so we have to meet the requirements on both sides of the bridge."

While university-based master of social work programs meet certain needs, they do not specifically prepare persons for service through the local church, Davis said.

In addition to local church ministries, Davis noted, social work graduates move into four other areas—missions through the Southern Baptist Home and Foreign Mission Boards, children's homes and homes for the aged.

Currently more than 100 students are involved in the seminary's social work program.

Education secretary backs voucher proposal

by Kathy Palen
Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (BP)—Acknowledging congressional opposition to his original education voucher proposal, Secretary of Education William J. Bennett appeared before a Senate subcommittee to urge consideration of a new "limited voucher" plan.

The use of "Compensatory Education Certificates" (CECs) is an option called for by the Reagan Administration's proposal for reauthorization of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981, which is due for congressional action. Through the two chapters of that statute, the federal government provides funds to meet special educational needs of economically and educationally disadvantaged children and to improve the overall quality of elementary and secondary education.

In November 1985, Bennett introduced a voucher proposal that would have allowed parents of disadvantaged children to obtain vouchers that could be "spent" at the public or private school of the parents' choosing for special compensatory services, general tuition or a combination of the two. Under current Chapter 1 guidelines, federal funds go to public schools providing compensatory services for eligible children.

Bennett told the Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities the new proposal would allow state and local education agencies to decide whether to use CECs, emphasizing the certificates "would not be available to parents on demand."

The secretary said the modified vouchers could be redeemed for compensatory ser-

vices only, not for general tuition.

In addition to increasing parental choice by allowing parents who receive CECs to determine at which school they would redeem the certificates, the new proposal also would "remedy discrepancies in assistance to disadvantaged private school children caused by the Supreme Court's Felton decision," Bennett said.

In that decision, the Supreme Court held unconstitutional New York City's program of sending public school employees into private schools to provide specialized services under Chapter 1. Since the decision was handed down in 1985, Bennett repeatedly has vowed to find a way around it.

Bennett testified the number of private schoolchildren participating in Chapter 1 has declined by about 20 percent since the Felton decision and the cost of serving those students has increased significantly.

"Our proposal would help restore services to private school children by enabling school districts to issue Compensatory Education Certificates and by requiring state education agencies to step in and correct deficiencies in local districts that do not provide effective and equitable services to private school children," Bennett said.

When questioned as to the constitutionality of using federal funds to purchase services from private—including church-related—schools, Bennett said there would be no entanglement problem since private schoolteachers, not public schoolteachers, would be providing the services within the private schools.