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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

March 30, 1972

To mix or not to mix politics and religion



Dr. Grant

I happen to be one of those strange persons that believes in mixing politics and religion — that is, if you will let me define politics and religion.

Most of us have grown up hearing both political and religious leaders make strong pronouncements against mixing politics and religion. But no two groups are saying exactly the same thing when they oppose such a mixture. Consider the strange

assortment of groups that, at one time or other, use the battle cry, "Don't mix politics and religion":

Liquor dealers don't want religious leaders to be politically active in voting out legal liquor.

Gamblers don't want the churches to be politically involved in opposing legalized gambling. Polluters of the air, land, and water, don't want churches to be politically active in working for legislation prohibiting pollution of our environment.

Segregationists oppose mixing politics and religion if it means church involvement on behalf of civil rights legislation.

Communist officials in Russia, China, and the other countries they dominate, oppose mixing politics and religion by church leaders working for laws granting more religious freedom.

Many more examples could be given, but we Southern Baptists have not been very consistent in this matter. We tend to mix politics and religion when we are strongly in agreement on some issue. But we piously say, "The church should keep out of politics," when our silence tends to support the favored status quo, or simply when we are badly divided on the issue. It is amazing how many times in recent years Southern Baptists have been heard to say, "The church should not try to legislate morals," in referring to civil rights legislation, and then speak out for vigorous church action to support laws against liquor sale, gambling, or prostitution.

I believe the Christian has a vital stake in the political arena. Unless his Christian faith is counterfeit it will permeate his attitudes, motivation, and behavior in all aspects of life, including his political life as a citizen in a democracy. It is just as impossible to separate politics from religion as it is to separate life from religion. As long as we cannot find a way to separate religion from life, we should expect to mix religion and politics.

Of course, one troublesome question remains: If one believes in mixing politics and religion (as I do), how can one also believe in separation of church and state (as I do)? Just as teachers are so often "saved by the bell" from embarrassing questions, it is nice on occasion for a columnist to be saved by the end of

his column. I do believe in separation of church and state, and believe it does not contradict the idea of a strong Christian leaven in the political lump.

Daniel R. Grant

In this issue

- "Anyone for resurrection?" is the question asked in this week's sermon, written specially for Easter time. See page 16.
- The cover this week heralds the hope of resurrection with an artist's concept of the discovery of the empty tomb. See page 7 for the accompanying scripture.
- Southern Baptist College today holds groundbreaking ceremonies for their new fine arts and auditorium complex. More about it and a drawing are found on page 6.
- Three associations are working together to begin mission work at the Fairfield Bay retirement and resort community. The story is on page 10.

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

VOL. 71 MARCH 30, 1972 NO. 13

CHARLES H. ASHCRAFT *Executive Secretary and Interim Editor*
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Opinions expressed in editorials and signed articles are those of the writer. Member of Southern Baptist Press Association, Associated Church Press, Evangelical Press Association.

Abbreviations used in crediting news items: BP Baptist Press; CB Church Bulletin; DP Daily Press; EP Evangelical Press; LC Local Correspondent; AB Associational Bulletin; EBPS European Baptist Press Service.

New life in old structures — *the church*

The church, like the home, has suffered in our day at the hands of self-styled consultants. For ten years the attacks have been relentless. The church has been described as irrelevant, outmoded, decadent and hypocritical. From within and without has come the exaltation of its weaknesses and the dethronement of its virtues. High churchmen have been among those whose tongue and pens dripped with venom. Never in any subsequent era of Christendom has the church been subjected to such denunciation and foul treatment.

Along with this, we have heard the endless song against the holy men whom God has called to minister as undershepherds of his flock. Those who could not by law destroy in violence the flesh and blood man God called, have sought to destroy the one last vestige of our hope for renewal, the concept of the high calling of God in Christ which our ordained men of God possess.

It is common to see in our periodicals great historic churches such as the First Baptist Church of Birmingham and the First Baptist Church of Atlanta presented in something less than a desirable light. Deacons, church leaders and pastors are made to appear as outmoded antiques and unusable relics of a recent irretrievable day.

After reading such accounts a sinner, quite undecided as to whether he will attend any church, would hardly dash down to the church which their own kind have maligned. The people who claim no identity with God whatever often exercise more taste and charity in handling the everyday problems inside the structure of their organizations. Satan finds no more suitable reading material nor could any morsel be sweeter than the play-by-play account of trouble in God's family.

Every family should be accorded the privacy of working out their difficulties inside the family and as long as no criminal acts are committed the churches should be allowed the same courtesies.

I am wondering if there is a computer, even in the Aerospace headquarters in Houston, which could compute the total value, the immortal and intrinsic worth, the vast eternal product of either the First Baptist Church in Atlanta, or the First Baptist Church in Birmingham, both of whom have been under attack by God's own people.

Would you run this through your computer for grand totals for either of the aforementioned churches who were in business before the Civil War? Let's ask questions which could be equated for either church.

How many prayers have ascended unto God from this great church? How many sermons have been preached? How many souls have walked the aisles since the days of Abraham Lincoln?

How many revivals have been conducted? How many invitation hymns have been sung? How many

have been called into special service? How many times has the pastor, with Bible in hand, comforted the bereaved in the loss of their loved ones? How many fine brotherly deeds have been done by the church members for the needy in their area?

How many kids have walked the hallways to the Sunday School and Church Training classes? How many crushed people have sat in the big brown chair in the pastor's office to hear God's best solution for their heartbreaking problem? How many lovely, chaste couples have stood in the altar to receive their marriage rites under the favor and blessing of the church?

How many good laymen and women have been trained to be among God's brightest disciples as the years rolled around in the big old First Baptist Church? How many coins and dollars have been blessed at the altar to bring health and healing to the heathen in distant lands? How many homes have been saved and restored at the rededication period of the invitation?

How many Easter resurrection sermons heralded new hope for God's weary pilgrims? How many anthems, hymns and great gospel melodies pealed from the choir loft to rejoice the soul of God as his faithful worshipped him in singing? How many backsliders have walked forward anew to renew their vows of loyalty and have been reclaimed of God? How many frightened soldiers' wives have come forward to kneel in prayer with the pastor as casualties were mounting overseas?

How many little babies have been born into the members' families, the good news of which was announced with great pride by the good man of God and how many sweet smiles on the faces of the saints who heard about Jim and Julia's new baby girl? How many times has the pastor walked into the baptistry to enact heaven's highest witness in baptism?

How many gracious words have been spoken about the GI who came home after the war or the fine college kid home for the holidays? How many times did the pastor open the doors of glory through his highly anointed unction and heaven-inspired preaching? How many citizens walked by the church on service days and nights and heard the great organ arousing the finest emotions deepest in the human soul by the dedicated fingers of Aunt Kate?

I am so deeply moved I cannot continue. The computer is having trouble also. It is running out of numbers.

The church is an old structure. It needs new life, however, it still represents the highest hopes of man and the brightest dreams of God. Shall we insist that the very elect of God give it a chance? God bless the First Baptist Church of Birmingham and the First Baptist Church of Atlanta. I predict they will still be in business for God long after their critics have been laid to a poorly deserved rest. — Charles H. Ashcraft, Executive Secretary.

I must say it!

Strength and wisdom for the asking



Dr. Ashcraft

Strength and wisdom are worthwhile assets for the citizen and the Christian. There is hardly a place in society or the kingdom of God for weakness and irresponsibility.

Each of these assets, however, are quite within the reach of all who desire them. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him," (James 1:5). Knowledge comes

from hard toil and research. Wisdom may be yours for the asking.

About strength, Paul would advise, "Be strong in the Lord and the power of his might," (Eph. 6:10). Strength, as well as wisdom, comes from the Lord so it also is in the reach of all who wish it.

One may be weak in the flesh but strong in the Lord. Even man's weakness affords God the challenge of grace for he said unto Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made in weakness," (II Cor. 12:10). Paul's response in grace was, "For when I am weak, then am I strong," (II Cor. 12:10).

Our weakness even affords God the challenge

to do a work of grace within us. Strength and wisdom go hand in hand for without wisdom to know what to do strength would be quite useless.

If one had wisdom but no strength he would be equally useless. We should ask for wisdom to know our course in life and allow the strength of God to put the power in us to do it.

Even invalids may have strength and wisdom. They can be strong in convictions, and prayer power. They can be wise to instruct the healthy. There is no dearth of God's grace.

Perhaps we may apply the principles of strength and wisdom for this very day in our lives. Shall we begin by asking God for wisdom. This will help us look at all our resources as well as our problems.

God will give us wisdom to move out in this day under his express will. Now we are in position to ask for strength to do what God has lined out for us to do. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus, (Phil. 4:19).

Strength and wisdom are worthwhile assets quite within the reach of us all. There is no reason or excuse for mediocrity.

I must say it! — Charles H. Ashcraft, Executive Secretary.



- By the year 2000, if the United States population "stabilizes," Americans may be older, wiser and wealthier than they are today, the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future says. In the first part of its final report issued recently, the presidential commission defined a "stabilized" population as one in which the average family had two children. In 60 or 70 years, if this zero growth rate were maintained, the United States population would stop increasing when it reached about 300 million, the commission said. The combination of fewer mouths to feed and a larger proportion of workers would lead to an increase in the annual per capita income, the report said. "As income in-

creases, people show an increased preference for services, such as education and health services, as compared with manufactured goods," the report said. These expanded service industries would lead to new jobs and a demand for more highly trained workers. This situation in turn would create a demand for more schooling so that education would be continued in the working force long past the present cut-off age of 18, perhaps to 22 or even 30, the commission said. However, an end to population growth can achieve none of these goals of wisdom and wealth by itself, the commission warned. "We point out that the fruits of slower growth will be denied to those most in need of them unless deliberate changes are made in the distribution of income to those who lack it by reason of discrimination, incapacity or age," the report said.

(By Susan Fogg,
St. Louis Globe-Democrat,
March 13, 1972)

Don Corbitt ordained



Corbitt

Don Corbitt was ordained to the gospel ministry at First Church, Ratcliff, recently. Corbitt has been called as pastor of First Church, Scranton. He has previously served the Immanuel Church, Ft. Smith and Ratcliff as deacon and Sunday School Director. The Ratcliff Church licensed him to preach in March, 1970. He has been active in supply preaching and is a student in the Concord Seminary Extension Center.

The Ordaining Council included the following ministers: Bob Martin, host pastor and moderator; Boyd Baker, Mixon, clerk; James A. Griffin; Elton Pennington, North Side Charleston; Herbert Rowland, South Side Booneville; Charles Skutt, Spradling; Dan Threet, Glendale; and James Zeltner, Immanuel, Fort Smith.

Corbitt is married to the former Pat Earp of Booneville and has three children.

Great things happen

The First Baptist Church of Lambrook knows that God is alive and moving among people today. Our Church has been experiencing some great things since Lester Aldridge moved on the field June 2, 1971.

Our Church has grown from an attendance of 40 to 45 in Sunday School to a high of 179 March 12, 1972. Also, the Training Union has grown from an attendance of 16 to 30 to a high of 168 March 12, 1972. This has not just happened, we have prayed like everything depended on God and worked like everything depended on us.

We have remodeled our Sunday School and auditorium since last June and installed central heat and cooling.

In September we started a bus ministry and several have been saved through this form of outreach. We can only say, "TO GOD BE THE GLORY." We hope in the near future to be able to start another bus. We are busting at the seams now and we are making plans to build a new auditorium and convert our old auditorium into Sunday School space and a fellowship hall.

The most thrilling thing about the Lambrook Church is that we have two stores, a cotton gin, and lost souls up and down every road, waiting to be told the good news.

The sad thing is that there are hundreds of communities just like Lambrook all over Arkansas and it seems that somebody has forgotten the words of John 4:35.

The most thrilling thing in my ministry is not how much time I spend in my study, not how much my paycheck is but through going I can see the results of bringing them in from the fields of sin. Excuse the sermon but I say if we go, we will solve all the problems we have in our churches.

We have voted to have three revivals a year and we know our precious Lord is going to use us and bless us as he has done.

God has given us a great promise in Jeremiah 33:6, and we are just crazy enough to believe God.

We have just finished a great revival, with Jim Miller of Oklahoma serving as our evangelist, 38 saved, and 8 by letter. Since June there has been 67 saved, 23 by letter, and 2 by statement.

We have been referred to as being at the end of the road because of where Lambrook is located, but I want to say when you are in God's will it is the happiest road that I know anything about.

May God bless all our work—Lester Aldridge, Pastor, Lambrook Church

Why young people leave

The following is in the form of an open letter referring to Dr. D. R. Grant's "One Layman's Opinion" column in your edition of March 9, 1972.

Dear Dr. Grant:

I read with interest your responses and observations on the "...subject of why many young people leave the state and don't return." Your contention to have "the courage to work patiently for change" is well taken. For, if the Lord tells one to stay, one can expect to see some changes.

Apparently, you are of the opinion that Arkansas' youthful exitors have among their numbers "those who throw in the towel and quit." If such is the typical occasion occurring prior to an exodus, your point, again, is well taken. However, I wonder if there is not a more common situation where departed youth never got so much as "a frustrating situation" with which to deal. Other than the usual fare of functionary tasks at insulting wages, what can our State consistently point to that encourages young talent to stay?

Certainly no one likes a quitter. But, from my vantage point it seems a more fundamental point that Arkansas youth are seldom permitted access to the arena. Many an ambitious youth has uncovered his light from under a bushel for decision-makers to see and employ only to have it blown out by the winds of unreceptivity. The State has not absorbed its output of high-school and college graduates. The work to be done exists, to be sure, but permission must be granted to enter the arena.

What hurts the most is the idea that youth must do battle on one ground in

order to gain access to another. This hurts because it implies they are not accepted as being on the same team. The baton must apparently be wrested, not passed or even shared. Does the State lack confidence in its youth, thinking they have little to contribute? It seems foolish to me for Arkansas' youth to spend their energies battling for the chance to battle when they can go elsewhere and actually enter now the real battle for men's hearts and minds.

It is the best talent who leaves first, not the poorest. The "cream" is more mobile—more readily recognized and accepted elsewhere. The sooner this is realized and emphasized the sooner will those in high places cease associating the departed ones with quitting. They have gone someplace to begin.—Jack E. Forrest, graduate student, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Thanks for series

The Associational Missionaries in their annual retreat instructed me to convey to you our appreciation for your promotion of the association in the focus on a separate missionary each week in the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*.

I am happy to convey to you our thanks for this promotion. As we looked at our work in this retreat, we focused on "The Man in the Middle". We see ourselves standing between the churches and denominational agencies assisting each in the furtherance of God's Kingdom.

Be assured of our prayers for you in your work.—Carl M. Overton, Sec.-Treas., Arkansas Missionaries Fellowship

Deaths

In this column will be reported deaths (not obituaries) of members of Arkansas Baptist State Convention churches. Those reporting deaths should do so promptly. Give name, age, date of death, name of church, position.

Mrs. Allie McGory, 76, Hoxie, died recently. She was a member of First Church where she had a Sunday school attendance record of 30 years.

Mrs. Elsie Branscum, 85, Clinton, died March 21. She was a member of First Church.

Mrs. Izetta Adams Rochelle, Little Rock, died March 22. She was a member of First Church.

Wade Unchurch, 70, Russellville, died

March 21. He was a member of First Church.

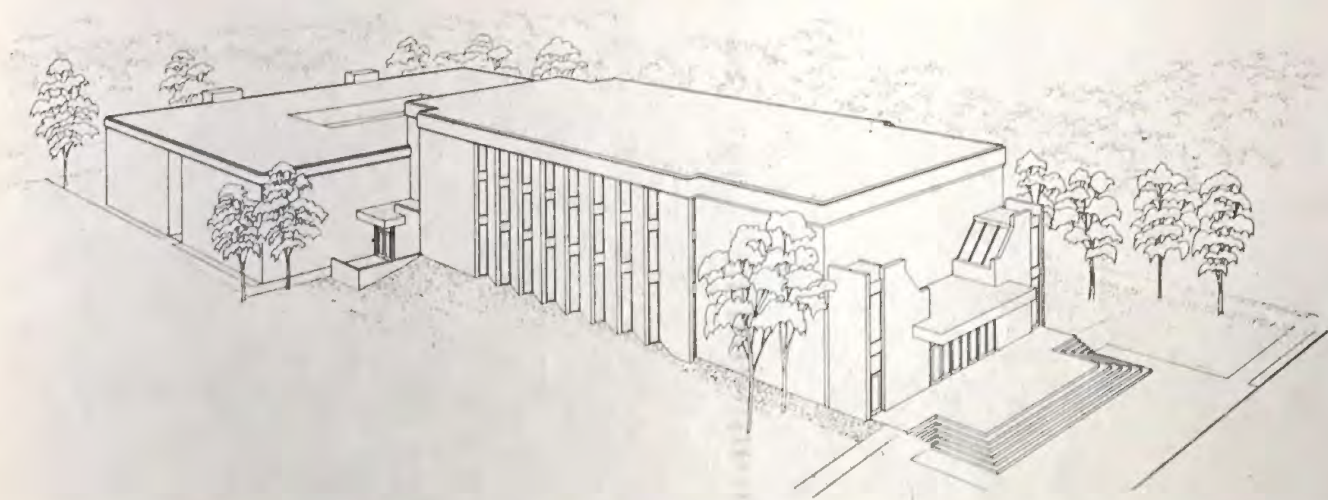
Mrs. Missouri Lemley Bennett, 88, Dermott, died March 21. She was a member of Dermott Church.

Joe H. Willingham, 84, Pine Bluff, died March 20. He was a member of First Church.

Fred E. Reed, 80, Springdale, died March 20. He was a deacon in Caudle Avenue Church.

Mrs. Myrtle Marie Newton Swayze, 49, Jerome, died March 19. She was a member of Boydell Church.

John M. Reeves, 80, Star City, died March 19. He was a member of Northside Church.



An architect's drawing of the complex.

Ground breaking held at Southern

Ground breaking ceremonies for the new Auditorium-Fine Arts Complex at Southern Baptist College, Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, are being held today (March 30) at 2 p.m.

The Fine Arts Building will provide

class rooms, lounges, choir rehearsal rooms, practice rooms for voice and piano, a painting studio, sculpture studio, photography laboratory, art gallery, and offices for professors. The auditorium will seat 1100.

A major gift of \$50,000 on the fine arts unit was made by Judge and Mrs. Edward Maddox, Harrisburg, in memory of his father, H. P. Maddox. Other funds will come from the Ouachita-Southern Advancement Campaign, President H. E. Williams said.

Woman's viewpoint

Can there be glory?

By Iris O'Neal Bowen



Mrs. Bowen

Can there be glory in an emptiness
A place where something was, but is no more,
A cave which once was filled with dark distress
With rounded stone implanted in the door?

There was no glory in our Savior's death,
No brightness as they laid him in the tomb.
They felt no stir of wings, no angel breath
While burying him within the shadowed room.

But angels came and rolled the stone away,
As Roman soldiers slept the weary night
And radiance beamed that Resurrection Day,
To fill the empty tomb with glorious light.

Our Christ is risen; O sing the glad refrain,
For he will never fill the grave again!

"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning," Luke tells us, the women who loved Jesus, and had been so faithful to him, came to the sepulchre. They brought the spices they had prepared to anoint the body of Jesus. There they found the heavy, round stone had been removed from the door. They entered the grave and found it empty. It is no wonder they were perplexed — and frightened. The appearance of the angels made them even more afraid, and they fell to their faces on the floor.

Then the angels spoke and reminded them that Jesus himself had told them that he would die, but that he would rise again the third day:

Hope sprang again, as they remembered his words, and they ran to tell others of the glorious news.

News about Missionaries

Rev. and Mrs. G. Dale Blackwood, missionary associates who are on furlough from Costa Rica, may now be addressed at 1332 S. 73rd E. Ave., Tulsa, Okla. 74112. Blackwood is a native of Hominy, Okla.; Mrs. Blackwood, the former Sue Lakey of Arkansas, was born near Casa and reared in Adona. When they were employed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1968, he was pastor of High Point Baptist Church, Raytown, Mo.

Trip for J. T. Midkiff

J. T. Midkiff, professor at Southern Baptist College for many years, is to be treated to a tour of the Bible Lands by his friends and former students in appreciation for the unselfish and dedicated service rendered in his position.

Funds are being raised now by his friends. Contributions should be sent to First National Bank in Wynne, Ark., and should be made payable to Southern Baptist College and designated for the Midkiff trip. Contributions are urged to respond before June 1st.—Thomas A. Hinson



TURNING GROUND: James Matthews, Pastor James Tallant, Clark Bowden, T. Camp, and Bill Staton.

Magazine church breaks ground

First Church, Magazine, broke ground for a new auditorium following the morning services, March 5. Pastor James Tallant, Building Committee Chairman, Bill Staton, Clark Bowden and James Matthews turned a spade of dirt as the morning congregation looked on. Superintendent of Missions James A. Griffin spoke at the morning service on Vision-Venture and Victory.

Former members from near-by and as far away as Pennsylvania were present for the ground breaking. This building will replace the present auditorium.

First, Magazine, has built an educational unit and pastorium in the past four years. This new building will give the church a new church plant adequate for the coming years. The congregation anticipates immediate construction work and occupancy in the summer.

Superintendent Griffin spoke to interested adults and youth about a laywitnessing school this fall. This church along with several others in the area, will probably have an area laywitnessing school later this year.

Associate pastor called by First, Hot Springs



Taylor

Bob Taylor has been called by First Church, Hot Springs, to serve as associate pastor. He is presently minister of music and education at First Church, El Reno, Okla.

Taylor is an ordained minister. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University with degrees in vocal and instrumental music and education. He also has attended Baylor University and the University of Oklahoma.

He has also served the First Church, Starkville, Miss.

Taylor will assume his duties at the Hot Springs church April 3.

STEWARDSHIP "STEW"



"I've got to do something about this guy. This is his second sermon on stewardship in the same year."

Springdale church is served by new pastor

Jack Bettis has resigned a managerial position to become full time pastor at Caudle Avenue Springdale. He will assume full pastoral duties, April 1.

Bettis, 35, his wife, the former Jacqueline Smith of Carlisle and their children, Karen, Victor and Barbara moved to Springdale in August of 1967. In the spring of 1971, he began serving as lay pastor for the Sonora Church east of Springdale. Elmdale Church ordained him to the gospel ministry last fall.

Bettis said the decision to leave his managerial position and enter full time ministry was made after much prayer and a certainty that God was calling him into full time service.

David Savage, University of Arkansas student from Walnut Ridge, has recently joined the church staff as music director.

The cover



The empty tomb

Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to the tomb. Suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled aside the stone and sat on it. His face shone like lightning and his clothing was a brilliant white. The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and fell into a dead faint. Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be frightened!" he said, "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified, but he isn't here! For he has come back to life again, just as he said he would. Come in and see where his body was lying . . . And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and that he is going to Galilee to meet them there. That is my message to them."—MATTHEW 28:1-7; from: The Living Bible translation

Miss Ouachita is selected

ARKADELPHIA—Anne Coppenger of Arkadelphia was crowned Miss Ouachita University in the pageant held Saturday afternoon in Mitchell Hall Auditorium.

Runners-up to the title are Peggy Hellen of Benton, first runner-up; Debbie Strickland of Dallas, Tex., second runner-up; Holly Hicks of Nashville, Tenn., third runner-up; and Kathy Vining of Little Rock, fourth runner-up.

The new Miss OBU is a senior French major and is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Raymond Coppenger of Arkadelphia. She succeeds Casey Kerr of Jacksonville as Miss OBU.

Miss Coppenger was selected by a panel of judges from a field of 15 contestants. Judging was based on beauty, modeling, talent competition and interviews.

She will represent Ouachita in the annual Miss Arkansas Pageant to be held this summer in Hot Springs.



ANNE COPPENGER of Arkadelphia (center) receives the crown of Miss Ouachita Baptist University from OBU President Daniel R. Grant. Runners-up to the title are (front, l-r) Peggy Hellen of Benton, first runner-up; Kathy Vining of Little Rock, fourth runner-up; Holly Hicks of Nashville, Tenn. third runner-up; and Debbie Strickland, second runner-up.

Christian Civic group elects new director



Harris

The Arkansas Christian Civic Foundation's Board of Directors elected Edward Whatley Harris its new executive director at a meeting March 17. Harris is pastor of Asbury Methodist Church, Little Rock.

He will assume the full-time position

June 1, succeeding W. Henry Goodloe, who will retire after six years as executive director. Dr. Goodloe also is Methodist.

Harris came to Asbury Methodist in June, 1970, after serving six years at a St. Louis church. He was licensed to preach in 1929, at the age of 19, and was admitted to the Little Rock Annual Conference in November, 1933, at Hot Springs. He has served the Lockesburg Circuit and Methodist churches at Stamps, Fordyce, Monticello, Conway, Texarkana, El Dorado, New Orleans, Pine Bluff and St. Louis.

For six years he was superintendent of the Baton Rouge District, and he has served on the Board of Ministerial Training of both the Little Rock and North Arkansas Annual Conferences. He now is a member of the Board of the United Methodist Church.

A native of Shreveport, Harris grew up at Texarkana and was licensed in his home church, First Methodist of Texarkana, to which he later returned



Four of the speakers in the World Missions Conference in Delta Association Feb. 28-March 2 were (from left) John A. Abernathy, retired, of Hot Springs, who served 43 years in China, Korea, and Philippine Islands; Ben Hope, North Little Rock, missionary to Brazil; Joe D. Rubert, Hot Springs, chaplain of the Rehabilitation Center; and Samuel Hernandez, Phoenix, Ariz. pastor to Spanish-speaking people.—Photo by The Dermott News

as pastor for four years.

He was educated in the Texarkana public schools, Texarkana Junior College, Emory University and the Candler School of Theology of Emory, at Atlanta. He has done graduate study at Garrett Biblical Institute, Northwestern Uni-

versity and Union Theological Seminary.

He and his wife, the former Mabel Martin Harris of Warren, have a daughter, Miss Elizabeth Martin Harris, who is a junior at Hendrix College at Conway.

Your superintendent of missions at work

Gainesville and Current River cooperate for bigger program

Since April 1, 1963, J. Russell Duffer has served as superintendent of missions for the Gainesville Association in Clay County and the Current River Association in Randolph County.



Duffer

The Gainesville Association is one of the oldest in the state, having been organized in 1853 with four member-churches. Now composed of 13 churches, the association closed its 118th year with a report of 43 baptisms for the year and Co-

operative Program gifts of \$15,412.

Organized in 1914, Current River Association has 18 churches, and in 1971 reported 113 baptisms and \$12,569 in gifts to the Cooperative Program.

Many of the churches are small in membership, but all but three or four carry on a fulltime preaching program and most provide pastors' homes.

The two associations cooperate in the employment of a missionary under a working agreement supervised by the Joint Board which is elected annually. The missionary resides in Corning in a home provided by the associations.

Joint projects of the associations include VBS clinics, Sunday School and Training Union emphasis, Stewardship

and Evangelism rallies, World Missions Conferences, and special projects planned and promoted in cooperation with the State Convention, such as the Ouachita-Southern Advancement Campaign.

An outstanding feature of the work is the monthly Youth Rally. A recent Valentine Banquet at Piggott drew an attendance of 311 from the two associations.

Current River and Gainesville and six other associations in the area jointly own Ravenden Springs Camp. Located on a beautiful six-acre site near the town of Ravenden Springs, the camp has five self-contained cabins, a large tabernacle, spacious kitchen and dining facilities, recreation and concession stand tabernacle, and swimming pool. The interest of the churches in the camp program is manifested in their gifts which make it possible for the youth of the associations to attend at a very low cost. Each year the camp season brings inspiration and blessing to the lives of the young people of the area.

In addition to his many duties in connection with the phases of his work mentioned above, Missionary Duffer spends much time planning and conferring with pastors and leaders about their work, meeting with pulpit committees, teaching Bible courses, directing committees, supplying pulpits, and conducting revivals.

Stewardship camp-in planned for next month

Since 1961 I have been involved in stewardship work of some type, and since 1962 my family and I have been campers.

What does one of these have to do with the other? Well, frankly, nothing directly. But indirectly there is a very definite relationship.

In recent years, more and more leisure time has become available to the average American family, and many of them have found a new joy and a togetherness in family camping. If that family learns how to use its leisure time in a way that is not only enjoyable but also spiritually rewarding and pleasing to our Lord, then it stands to reason that the level of spiritual maturity will deepen. Now what could be more conducive to financial stewardship than to have a family fully committed to the Lord and witnessing for Him at every opportunity?

Ecology is also one of the "in things" these days, but the Christian's responsibility as a steward of the land pre-dates by hundreds of years the current interest in ecology. If, therefore, the Christian adequately learns the lesson that God created and owns all material things, whether it be land or money, isn't it logical that he is in position to become a better financial steward?

Now, for the punch line. A Stewardship Camp-In is being sponsored by this department at the Heber Springs Recreation Area, a Corps of Engineers campground on Greers Ferry Lake, on Friday and Saturday, April 28-29. There will be a brief, informal worship service on Friday evening and two hours of Bible study on stewardship on Saturday morning.

The program will be very brief and very simple, and each family can choose its own camp site and plan its own trip. If you are interested in attending and want further details, write to this department for a descriptive brochure. — Roy F. Lewis, Secretary of Stewardship-Cooperative Program

BSU sponsors lecturer

Miss Rosalind Rinker, former missionary and author and lecturer, spoke at Fayetteville, March 26-28, under the sponsorship of the Baptist Student Union. She led two prayer workshops—one at First Church on Sunday night and one at the Baptist Student Center on Monday night. On Tuesday night at the Baptist Student Center, she led a workshop on personal evangelism.



Superintendent of Missions Duffer (center) participated in a note burning ceremony March 12 at Witt's Chapel Church, Maynard. Others are (left) Lehman Wright, Troy Cochran, and Herman Holland, all deacons of the church.

Associations to sponsor mission in Fairfield Bay retirement area

Three associations — Van Buren County, Little Red River, and Calvary — have formed a joint missions committee specifically to begin a new mission at Fairfield Bay on Greers Ferry Lake. Their proposal is a unique but exciting example of cooperative missions on the local level.

A. W. Upchurch Jr., pastor of the Kensett church, is moderator, and Glen Williams, pastor of the Pleasant Valley church, Van Buren County Association, is the clerk. The committee is further composed of the superintendents of missions and two other representatives from each of the cooperating associations.

Fairfield Bay, located in Van Buren County, is a growing resort and retirement community. A recent tabulation by the developer lists 7300 property owners from more than 40 states. There are 225 permanent type homes already completed with another 120 projected annually. Also, there are 259 mobile homes situated in the area. These structures house approximately

400 people regularly, while many others are weekend residents and tourists.

The opening date for the work has been changed from Easter Sunday to a date soon after a mission pastor is obtained. The mission will meet temporarily in a hall provided by the developer, who will later give property for a permanent church site when the mission is ready to build.

The three associations involved and the State Missions Department propose to give adequate financial support at the outset to enable the mission to begin with a fulltime pastor on the field. The Pleasant Valley church will be the sponsoring church while the development of the mission will be supervised by the joint committee in cooperation with the church.

Superintendents of missions who have led significantly in this project are David Miller, Little Red River; Refus Caldwell, Van Buren County; and Bill Burnett, Calvary.—R. H. Dorris, Director of State Missions.

Children's Home needs sponsors on four levels

We have received a number of letters recently in response to an article on the Sponsor Program. We appreciate this interest. It is encouraging that many want to become involved in helping a child living at the Children's Home. Our sponsors are significant people — especially to our children. The following letter, written to a ladies' group who requested additional information, will perhaps clarify some of the questions often asked by those interested in sponsoring a child.

Dear Friends:

I was happy to get your letter requesting information on our sponsor program.

We have a four-part program. These are total sponsors, co-sponsors, special friends, and allowance sponsors. The total sponsors contribute the total cost of the clothing needed for one child. The co-sponsors provide part of the cost. The special friends do whatever they feel able to do during the year. They usually remember the child on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas, or any other special time.

The allowance sponsor provides the weekly allowance for one child. This allowance is for cokes, skating, movies, or however they wish to use it. The allowance is \$1.00 and up per week, depending on age (the older ones get \$1.25), so you can see how this mounts up for an average of fifty children in a year's time. We have a very urgent need for more allowance sponsors.

All contributions given to a child are used only as designated for that child. The allowance is given out weekly but the clothing money is deposited in the clothing account and is used as the housemother requests clothing for the child.

If you would like to help in any part of the sponsor program, I will be glad to give you the name of a child and other necessary information. Most of our children are teenagers. Please express your preference of a girl or boy.

I hope this will help you as you make your decision. We appreciate your interest.

Sincerely yours,
Mrs. Vivian Peacock,
P. O. Box 180, Monticello, Ark. 71655.

Mrs. Peacock will be happy to correspond with you and introduce to you a young person who would benefit from your involvement.—Johnny G. Biggs, Executive Director.



MEMBERS OF THE JOINT MISSIONS COMMITTEE: Moderator Upchurch and Clerk Williams are seated at the right front. Others seated (left to right) are R. F. Weeks, Pee Dee; Missionary Refus Caldwell; H. M. Dugger, Sidon; L. E. Barrett, Rosebud; Eugene Hughes, Concord; A. A. Durkee, Judsonia; and Missionary David Miller. Standing are Mr. Meacham, Fairfield Communities Land Company, and Missionary Bill Burnett.

The people who reach people

Perhaps the most important single emphasis of any local church in the next few months will be the Lay Evangelism School. This is a week when local church members meet from 7 until 9 Monday through Friday nights to study WIN materials. This witness-involvement-now program should receive priority in our churches.

A lay evangelism school can do more for a church in outreach than anything else I know, because it prepares each participant for daily witnessing. The entire school is built upon laying spiritual foundations for the Christian life.

Kenneth Chafin says, "The answer to lay evangelism is not found in slick materials, in well designed manuals. Lay evangelism is of the Spirit, for the Spirit, and by the Spirit. If the world could be changed by materials and manuals it would have been changed long ago."

We must return to the New Testament fundamentals. The witnessing of the laity started in the New Testament days. This kind of witnessing revives a church. It is the best method known for mobilizing

the total membership of a church for its supreme task — winning the lost to Christ. However, it must never be placed over against any other form of evangelism. It must never be "either — or", but always "both — and". It prepares for and undergirds all other forms of evangelism. It will revitalize the church members. Great churches that are baptizing a lot of people major on personal witnessing.

First Church in Fayetteville will have a school, including day training sessions, April 23-30. Charles Baker of Texas will be the director.

First Church Mena will have a school July 10-14, Jesse S. Reed, director. Day training sessions will be provided.

Park Hill Church will have a school Sept. 10 to 14, Tom Starkes, Home Mission Board, director. Day training sessions will also be provided.

Calvary Church, Little Rock, will have a school Oct. 23 through 27. Dr. Leonard Sanderson, Director of Evangelism, Louisiana Baptist Convention, will be the director. Day training sessions will also be provided.

Sept. 7 and 8 at the Pastor's Witnessing Retreat at Camp Paron, we shall major on teaching the manuals for lay evangelism schools. Extra help will be brought in from the Sunday School Board and staff members from Baptist Building will also be used. — Jesse S. Reed, Director of Evangelism.

First, Booneville calls music, youth minister

James E. Harris is the new minister of music and youth of First Church, Booneville. He assumed his full-time duties there on March 15. He had served as minister of music at Markham Street Church, Little Rock, before accepting the call to Booneville.

Harris is a graduate of Westark Junior College, Ft. Smith, and Arkansas Polytechnic College, Russellville, from which he received his master of music degree. He is married to the former Sandy Johnson of Van Buren. They have one child, a daughter, six-month-old Julie Marie.

ADULT CHURCH TRAINING LITERATURE

April — May — June

BAPTIST ADULTS

Unit 1: April 2-16. **Because I Live, Ye Shall Live Also** — A unit dealing with the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection.

Unit 2: April 23-May 7. **My All for Christ** — A unit in the area of Christian living.

Unit 3: May 4-28. **Be Ye Transformed** — A unit dealing with the development of the spiritual life.

Unit 4: June 4-25. **Twentieth Century Evangelism** — A unit in the area of evangelism.

SKILL

Unit 1: Managing Conflict in Marriage — Skills in Marital Harmony — An examination of the pressure points in marriage and how marital partners may deal with them.

Unit 2: Guiding Children — Skills in Molding Personality — An examination of current knowledge about children — and guidelines on how this information is helpful in assisting children to develop moral, spiritual, and aesthetic values.

Unit 3: Creative Ways to Family Worship Skills in Family Worship. An examination of numerous ways to conduct family worship with accompanying activities to assist adults in developing skills in family worship.

SOURCE

Unit 1: April 2-30. **Christianity and the Sciences** — A unit exploring the relationship of theology to certain other disciplines as resources in ministry and witness.

Unit 2: May 7-28. **People of God** — A unit related to world population and Christian parenthood.

Unit 3: June 4-25. **When Living Is Easy** — A unit exploring the growing importance of leisure time in modern society and offering guidance in developing a Christian view of leisure.

Undated Unit: Christ in Today's City — Sessions dealing with the problems peculiar to urban living and offering guidance in bringing Christian principles to bear upon these problems.

NOW

Unit 1: Political Man — Deals with feasible options for involvement in politics.

Unit 2: Economic Man — Study of selected problems in economic life which impinge upon and directly affect human lives.

Unit 3: Environmental Man — Deals with specific environmental problems with the purpose of uncovering the major moral issues and responsibilities.

Royal Ambassadors program

By Paige Patterson

"Of all the programs sponsored by Southern Baptist churches through the years, it is the Royal Ambassadors Program that I owe whatever credit may be due to human institutions.

At a time when Sunday School was not a challenge and Training Union often bored me, I found the Royal Ambassadors program challenging indeed. Although I sang in choirs, I was not gifted musically. Consequently, the Royal Ambassadors Program became one of the places in which I could feel real achievement in serving Christ.

It was in the Royal Ambassadors program that I first learned to give my witness for Jesus Christ. It was there that I memorized the passages of scripture that has stayed with me until this present hour.

It was among the Royal Ambassadors boys and their counselors that I learned

of missionary demands and came to feel that people throughout the world were my responsibility. The development of this missionary consciousness, coupled with the numerous activities of the Royal Ambassadors program, helped to develop me in ways that no other organization could ever have done. I, frankly, attribute whatever success I have had in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the work of the Saviour on a human level to the Royal Ambassadors program of First Church in Beaumont, Tex.

I am convinced that the knowledge apprehended and the attitudes developed in Royal Ambassadors did more than any other aspect of the church program to shape my future. I thank God for the Royal Ambassadors program and commend it to all as worthy of the best leadership that Baptist churches can provide for it."

CP the Cooperative Program and ...

The Stewardship Commission

By James V. Lackey

Executive Director-Treasurer

The Stewardship Commission could not continue to exist without Cooperative Program support. Without the Stewardship Commission there would be no coordinated Southern Baptist Convention voice encouraging individual stewardship growth or providing church budget development assistance; neither would there be a consistent advocate of the Cooperative Program.

Southern Baptists receive many bargains, one of which is the service received for the money expended for stewardship education and promotion. Only a fraction of each Cooperative Program penny is spent in developing Christian stewards and telling the Cooperative Program story. A secular professional company would demand and deserve an amount equal to ten times what the Stewardship Commission receives to perform a similar service.

The Stewardship Commission is the only Southern Baptist Convention agency that has been given the specific program assignment "to create an awareness of the Cooperative Program as a channel of support for the programs of the state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention." All SBC agencies are at work encouraging continued and increased support of the Cooperative Program and the Stewardship Commission could not do its work effectively without their support along with the support of the state conventions.

Although the Stewardship Commission has three important areas of work, a large portion of the Cooperative Program money received is used to develop plans and produce materials that inform Southern Baptists of the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries of the denomination supported by Cooperative Program monies.

Pastors and laymen alike say to us, "Tell us more about the Cooperative Program, tell us where the money goes, and tell us who and what the Cooperative Program supports." That is exactly what we are striving to do better each year.

Between parson and pew A lady of importance

By Velma Merritt



Mrs. Merritt

She's often the first impression given of the church by the way she answers the telephone. The skill she uses in preparing the mimeographed or printed church papers shows if things are neat and orderly or shoddy and is a reflection of the church itself. Her ability to keep confidences can be a help to the church staff and members. She's often considered of little importance, but in reality is one of the most important people in the church.

The value of the church secretary is often realized only by the pastor. He knows that an efficient secretary can have a ministry to the congregation through the work she does. To him the skilled secretary serves as an extension of his own ministry as she saves him many valuable man hours. It is often

his secretary who knows of some small tragedy or happy event in the life of a member which needs to be called to his attention. She knows that some of the things she hears need to be passed to the pastor and that other things do not.

Occasionally she may do some counseling. In distress a troubled person will talk with anyone who will listen and if the pastor is not available, his secretary is during office hours.

The church secretary is usually a self-starter because much of the time she works entirely on her own. She keeps up with the events of the church and gently pleads with the congregation to "Please let me know when you have activities planned."

To the people the competent church secretary is often a bridge to get information to the pastor when he is unreachable. She is appreciated for her helpfulness. Many members of the congregation forget, however, that she has definite working hours and call on her to remember to do something for them at times when she is not in the office.

She is seldom remembered in prayer.

The secretary sometimes says or thinks to herself, "Those people don't know what I do. They think I just sit here and answer the phone all day and have nothing else to do. I'd like for them to follow me around just one day."

She serves as a private secretary but tries to please all the members of the congregation. As receptionist, she hopes to leave a good impression of her church. Frequently she serves as the editor of church publications so her secretarial skills need to be tops. She knows a little about all phases of church life so she can be of help to callers.

A thought of appreciation expressed to your church secretary for a job done well could just make her day a little better.



Orville Boyd Jenkins

Through the Baptist Student Union of State College of Arkansas I made many friends and found an atmosphere in which one could talk freely and honestly without feeling threatened or shy. We could air our beliefs and doubts and learn and share with others. BSU first offered me a place, or community, where I was accepted without any preconditions. This I first experienced from our director, Winston Hardman, when I was having some serious decisions to make and was being rejected elsewhere. Through this attitude of the students and their leaders in BSU I learned to re-evaluate myself, re-accept myself, and re-affirm myself. During my years in college, I learned a new level of self-sufficiency which was actually based on a new awareness of the presence of God.

(Orville Boyd Jenkins is serving with the Foreign Mission Board as a Journeyman in Kenya, East Africa.)



ARKANSAS CHAPLAINS: (l. to r.) W. H. Heard, Wilson Deese, Ralph Shaddox, E. A. Richmond, Dewie Williams, Joe Rubert.

State chaplains attend seminar

Chaplains being directed and supported by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention attended their quarterly meeting March 13. This was the first such meeting of the year and the first meeting with the Missions Department's new Director of Chaplaincy Ministries, Wilson Deese.

The chaplains attended a clinical seminar at the North Little Rock Division of the VA Hospital at Fort Roots. The seminar was led by Dr. Ernest Bruder of Washington, D. C. Dr. Bruder is Director of Protestant Chaplains Activities at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Washington. After the morning seminar the chaplains and their wives attended a luncheon and fellowship at the cafeteria of the Memorial Hospital in North Little Rock. The luncheon was hosted by Chaplain

Deese and R. H. Dorris, Director of the Department of Missions.

Chaplains attending were: W. H. Heard, Arkansas Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Booneville; E. A. Richmond, Boys Training School, Pine Bluff; Joe Rubert, Rehabilitation Center, Hot Springs; Ralph Shaddox, Jail Ministries, Jonesboro; and Dewie Williams, Cummins Prison. Also present for the luncheon were Mrs. Heard, Mrs. Rupert, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Dorris, and Mrs. Deese.

The next meeting for the chaplains is May 18. Chaplains from the military (active and reserve) those from institutions and industries not under the direction of the Department of Missions are cordially invited to attend.—Wilson Deese, Director of Chaplaincy Ministries

WMU Regional Mission action workshop

The ninth of 15 regional mission action workshops sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, and the Home Mission Board, SBC, will be held at Ouachita University, Arkadelphia, May 17-18.

A battery of ministering, witnessing experts in working with the aging, drug abusers, language groups, and other

people of special need will conduct specialized conferences in these areas.

The conference will run from 1 p.m. on the opening day, through all day and evening on the second day, and until noon on the third day. WMU representatives will teach methods of organizing and administering mission action programs. A battery of Home Mission Board experts will offer specific training in a choice of eleven target ministries.

All kinds of mission action workers are

invited. Pastors, church staff members, WMU officers and leaders, and mission action group members are most likely to benefit from the program.

Reservations for room and board should be made directly with Dean B. Aldon Dixon, Ouachita University, Arkadelphia, Ark. 71923. For reservations, send \$2 fee per person. Cost of room and board will be \$10.50 per person. (\$1 additional for linens.) Rates begin after lunch on May 17.

—Nancy Cooper, Executive Secretary and Treasurer

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A

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\$200 PER WEEK –UP TO \$10,400

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Our new Hospital Income Plan will help offset these extra expenses at a small cost that every subscriber can well afford. \$1.00 pays the first month's premium regardless of age or the number of members in the family to be protected. Then you, in accordance with your age, will pay the low rates in the following schedule.

MEN OR WOMEN	
\$200.00 WEEKLY BENEFIT	MONTHLY PREMIUM
Ages 18 thru 49.....	\$5.00
Ages 50 thru 65.....	\$7.00
Ages 66 thru 74.....	\$9.00
Ages 75 thru 90.....	\$13.50
Each child (0-17).....	\$1.50

MEN OR WOMEN	
\$100.00 WEEKLY BENEFIT	MONTHLY PREMIUM
Ages 18 thru 49.....	\$2.50
Ages 50 thru 65.....	\$3.50
Ages 66 thru 74.....	\$4.50
Ages 75 thru 90.....	\$6.75
Each child (0-17).....	\$.75

(Children receive one-half Hospital Benefits)

ACT NOW — First month's protection for only \$1.00. Money back guarantee if you are not 100% satisfied — your good will is highly valued by us, so if you are not satisfied, return your policy within ten days for a refund in full.

11 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ANSWERED THAT TELL YOU HOW STANDARD'S \$100.00 A WEEK EXTRA CASH INCOME GIVES YOU PROTECTION YOU NEED. TAX FREE.

1. WHY ARE THE PREMIUMS SO LOW?

This is a mass enrollment. No agent will call, therefore, you avoid paying agent's commissions, but you must mail the enrollment form along with \$1.00 within 30 days from the edition date of this publication.

2. WHAT IF I AM OVER 65?

Even if you are over 65, this plan pays you extra cash in addition to Medicare, cash to spend as you choose — enjoy peace of mind. **Cash paid directly to you.**

3. HOW LONG WILL I BE PROTECTED?

You will be paid \$200 (or \$100.00) per week when you are hospitalized for as long as 52 weeks, up to \$10,400.00 (or \$5,200.00) for either sickness or accident.

4. MUST I BE CONFINED FOR A FULL WEEK TO RECEIVE BENEFITS?

NO, you will be paid at the rate of \$28.56 (or \$14.28) per day. Benefits begin the first day for accident and after the third day of confinement for sickness.

5. ARE BENEFITS TAX FREE?

YES, all benefits are tax free and paid directly to you, unless you wish to assign the benefits to your hospital or doctor.

6. HOW DOES THE MONEY BACK GUARANTEE WORK?

Examine the policy in the privacy of your home, show it to your doctor, friends or attorney. They will tell you this is the best offer for the premium charged. If not completely satisfied, return in 10 days for a full refund.

7. WHEN DOES THE COVERAGE BECOME EFFECTIVE?

The same day that we receive your completed form along with \$1.00 and issue your policy.

8. IS THIS COMPANY LICENSED IN YOUR STATE?

YES, Standard Life and Accident is Licensed, and conforms to all state laws, with many years of faithful service to policy holders.

9. WHAT IS NOT COVERED BY THIS POLICY?

The only conditions not covered are hospital confinement due to military service, suicide, venereal disease, mental derangement, rest cure, dental work, childbirth or complications of pregnancy, and confinement in a government hospital.

10. HOW WILL I PAY THE PREMIUMS AFTER THE FIRST MONTH?

Within 30 days after you receive your policy, we will send you a premium notice by mail, then you may pay one, three, six or twelve months premiums as you wish. A discount will be allowed if you pay other than monthly.

11. HOW DO I OBTAIN THIS EXTREMELY LOW-COST PROGRAM?

Just complete the enrollment form at the left of this page, and mail it with \$1.00 to

the company address below. **Remember, no salesman will call, and as this is a limited enrollment, mail the form today.**

This policy is renewable at the option of the company only, and premiums may be subject to change

REMEMBER, NO SALESMAN OR AGENT WILL CALL. SPECIAL LIMITED ENROLLMENT ENDS 30 DAYS FROM THE EDITION DATE OF THIS PUBLICATION. DO NOT DELAY — FILL OUT AND MAIL THE FORM TOGETHER WITH \$1.00, NO MATTER HOW MANY OF YOUR FAMILY WISH TO ENROLL.

Make all checks or money orders payable to:
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Gentlemen: I am enclosing \$1.00 in payment for one month's insurance for Standard Life's Paycheck Protection Plan.

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of Birth, Mo. _____ Day _____ Year _____ Age _____

My Occupation is _____

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I desire the following WEEKLY BENEFIT \$200.00 \$100.00

I also hereby apply for coverage for the members of my family listed below:

FIRST NAMES — MIDDLE NAMES — LAST NAMES DATE OF BIRTH

	(APPLICANT)	DATE OF BIRTH			
		MO.	DAY	YEAR	AGE
1. _____					
2. _____					
3. _____					
4. _____					
5. _____					

List additional names on separate sheet and enclose with this application blank.

To the best of your knowledge and belief, have you or any person listed above ever had high or low blood pressure, heart trouble, diabetes, cancer, arthritis or tuberculosis or have you or they, within the last five years, been disabled by either accident or illness, had medical advice or treatment, taken medication for any condition, or been advised to have a surgical operation?

Yes No

If so, give details stating persons affected, cause, date, name and address of attending physician and whether fully recovered.

The undersigned hereby authorized Standard Life and Accident Insurance Company to contact their family physician for any necessary information.

Date _____ Signature _____

Form 52 MG Rev B 2317

ARB3

Anyone for resurrection?

John 11:23-27, 32-44

By Don B. Harbuck

Pastor, First Church, El Dorado

Easter has the edge on other seasons as the symbol of contemporary Christianity. Greater crowds push into the sanctuaries of worship at this time than at any other. Some who attend have no intention of returning until next year. Most of us come, often from habit and even against our wills, to repeat a ritual of the church that reveals both life and death. Life shines forth in our memory of Christ's resurrection and in the hope of resurrection to come. But death is here, too. We look to the past in memory; we face the future in hope; but in doing so, we can easily turn our backs on the present. People who only exist in the past and the future are dead for the present. I suggest that the church is often guilty on this score.

For this reason it has been written: "On Sunday the town clock strikes 12 Noon and the church on the corner gives up its dead." This statement has enough truth to sting.

Thank God, such is not always the case. If it were, there would finally be no church at all. Thank God for congregations like the Universal City Baptist Church in San Antonio and for pastor Don Shehorn, who demonstrate the reality of resurrection in the present tense. I pay public tribute to these people for the debt I owe them—for the life they shared with me, for the table to which they invited me, for a great sermon the pastor preached. On this Easter I am obeying the Biblical command: "Freely ye have received, freely give." I am calling you to resurrection in the here and now! I can do so because I believe that life in the present is possible.

The typical "orthodox" rejoinder to the offer of a "now" resurrection may be found in Martha's words. Jesus had said to this sister, grieved at the death of Lazarus, "Your brother will rise again." And she answered, almost matter-of-factly: "Yes, I know, in the resurrection at the last day he shall rise again." But this seemed to supply no comfort for her distressed spirit. Doctrines that deal only with distant realities rarely help people in a present difficulty.

But Jesus refused to keep resurrection isolated in some remote future. He personalized it by claiming, "I am the resurrection. . .;" he turned the future into present tense with these words, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Earlier he had sounded the same note, saying: "The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and those that hear shall live" (John 5:25).

Thus at its center the Christian message trumpets a resurrection promise open to all who respond to the Son of Man and his invitation.

I realize, strange as it may seem, that a here-and-now resurrection is not immediately popular. For one reason, we find it painful to admit the one necessary prerequisite to resurrection, namely, death. Who among us will readily acknowledge being dead? Only the lifeless, after all, can be candidates for resurrection.

We sometimes suspect our own deadness, but we have learned long since the impropriety of revealing our flaws. What great pretenders we are! Truth is so far from us that when an honest voice speaks up we want to silence it. Take stock of the lengths we will go to disguise the tombs we inhabit. John Killinger writes that, as a college student, when his prayer partners were overwhelmed with religious emotion, he proceeded to fake the same feelings although such impulses were completely absent from him.

A seminary professor told of doing the same thing where speaking in tongues was concerned. A young woman admitted that her testimonies about miracles happening in response to her prayers were embellished fabrications designed to make her acceptable in a particular religious group. Oh, how painful to admit that we dwell among the tombs!

Religion, so we see, is especially vulnerable at this point. Jesus scorched the Pharisees for their pretensions. He resorted to graveyard terminology for an apt description of them. You are like whitened sepulchers. Outwardly everything is in order, beautiful and appealing, but inside, only death.

But even to sense our condition privately is a big step in the right direction. Take the old professor in Ingmar Bergman's movie, "Wild Strawberries." One night he dreams of taking a morning walk in his home town and encountering a funeral procession. Just as the wagon bearing the coffin makes a sharp turn to enter the churchyard, the coffin wrenches loose, rolls off, and dislodges the corpse at his feet. Reluctantly, the professor takes hold of the body to put it back in the coffin, but a strange thing happens: the corpse grabs his arm and struggles with him until they stand face to face. In horror the professor looks into the face of the dead man and sees himself. When he awoke from his dream and the immediate shock of the experience had

passed, he knew instantly its meaning. He had been living as a dead man. His thinking, his attitudes, his personal attentions were all vested somewhere in the past. He was a live, walking corpse. It was a terrible vision, but it helped to save his life. He resolved never again to sink into that condition.

How often some pivotal turning in our journey gets its impetus from a shocking circumstance! Mary and Martha found it so. Lazarus, their beloved brother, fell sick and despite all their efforts to bring healing he died. Despair was compounded by their disappointment in Jesus. They had sent for him, but he had refused to come in time. These sisters trying to cling to faith in spite of bitterness remind me of so many cases I have seen. "If you had been here, Jesus, my brother would not have died." The past is remembered, rehashed, regretted until the present itself lies in ruins.

There are occasions when the suffering pushes its victims through the darkness until the dawn begins breaking. They see that God doesn't operate on man's little timetable. They begin to understand that God is the center of life, not they. They start to realize why God must leave people alone until they are ready to accept God on his own terms. They begin to fathom the painful truth that resurrection cannot occur until they face the deadness of their lives.

We are so slow to recognize our own problems until some prophet of God like Nathan, points the finger of accusation at us and shouts: "Thou art the man!" Consider this example. A beautiful lady, the mother of several fine children, could not remember when her life had not been centered in the church. To all outward appearances she was an ideal Christian, having done all the right things. Inside, her heart was lifeless and without joy. But no one knew. She made sure of that. She always smiled.

Then came the time when a new pastor began to trouble her with his insistent question: "Are you happy?" Sure, Of course, Certainly! Repeatedly she gave the "right" answer until the hollowness of it echoed through her soul. She could deny her emptiness no longer. With the help of the pastor and others she discovered the meaning of "grace" which opens the tomb and sets people free to live. For years she had been a Christian but for almost as long she had been trapped in the tomb of legalism, perfectionism, and self-condemnation.

Praise God for the people and events he uses to show us our tombs, for only when we see the sepulchers that imprison us can we be set free.

Where is your tomb? Is it the same kind occupied by the "perfect" Christian woman I've just described. She began, like the Galatians long ago, by receiving the grace of God, the free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ. In time, the old spirit of finding peace and assurance by achievement took over her life and made her miserable. Our conscience, if it is sensitive at all, can dream up more duties than we can ever perform. We finally get so irritated with ourselves for falling below standards that we deal harshly with others. We start living in the tomb of self-condemnation and we try to put other people in the grave, too. We develop into those grimly spiritual persons that turn the world gray with death.

Perhaps yours is a different tomb altogether. Loneliness may be its name. Some great loss left a grave in your soul and you've never left it. Fear may be your tomb. Awed by the risks of life, you fearfully cling to your shroud, not wanting to be hurt in an effort to live. Lust may have entombed you: addiction to drink or drugs or food or money or power or sex may be holding you in the realm of the dead. Raging envy and jealousy may be your grave. Life seems a mockery to you when you walk among the dead.

To all that are in the graves, whatever the name of your tomb, listen: "The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and those that hear shall live" (John 5:25). The proclaimer of these words is the same one who stood before the sepulcher of his friend and shouted: "Lazarus, come forth!" He stands before your tomb and says, "Come forth! Come forth and live. Come forth by faith and live!" Anyone for resurrection?

Not as many as you may think. It is far from being the majority idea. And we love to be in the majority, whether silent or noisy! Statisticians on every hand have made us so "majority" conscious that I sometimes think, if all the statisticians in the country were laid end to end, it would be a good thing. The majority reject resurrection because it offers a life that is so costly to accept.

Costly, you ask? By all means. Resurrection in the Jesus style puts on you the robe of your own unique personhood and endows you with gifts that belong to you alone. At first blush, this makes us feel glad, but then we freeze up with anxiety. If I am myself, a special, new, unrepeatable creature of God's resurrecting grace, how can I fit into a world that demands conformity? There will be no well-defined pattern for me to copy, no well-detailed path pointing my way. I shall have to make

my own journey by the grace and guidance of God. Who wants to be a pioneer? Danger lies in that direction.

Besides, resurrected life runs against the grain of what is permissible in polite society. The living must always endure the hostilities of the dead. Gravedwellers have ever resented those who break their ranks and move up to another dimension. Far safer and more acceptable it is to recite the catechism of the dead. Once you have heard the voice of Jesus call you from the grave, you will spend the rest of your days intimidating those who dwell among the tombs.

What does a person say who has experienced resurrection, the one who has found real life in Jesus Christ? He says to the death world about him: "Don't put your thumb on me again. Don't try to squeeze me into your mold. God has given me life and I am going to live it. No man will take my life from me; I will lay it down of myself."

If you want this costly life, listen, listen to the voice of Jesus that calls you: "Come forth, come forth and live!" But some shrink back from this here-and-now resurrection for yet another reason. It involves the resurrected ones in a mission that is so demanding to fulfill. Those returned from the grave know they cannot hoard life; they must share it. Having been set free, they must set others free. But how can this be? Is it not the voice of the Son of Man that wakes the dead?

Reconstruct that Lazarus miracle again. Jesus calls him forth from the grave. There he stands all bound in graveclothes. What now? Jesus commands the living: "Unbind him and let him loose." This, then, becomes our task—to unbind people and let them go free. We have not the power to make people live. That is God's prerogative alone. He must speak the resurrecting word. Until he does, there is no life. Yet we, too, participate in the full flowering of potential in human life.

If we fail of our duty, we condemn others so often to a stunted half life. Many, many individuals are just one person away from the full, free experience of God's grace. That person may well be you. Hear Jesus' command, "Unbind him and let him go."

Homes have the power of binding and loosing. Never forget that! When God's grace does not freshen the climate of family life, houses become tombs. Parents cannot resurrect their children, but they can unbind them and let them loose.

Schools may do the same or refuse to do it. Some of us can remember with everlasting gratitude those teachers who

removed the shroud from our souls and set us free. I can recall them by name even now who read my adolescent poetry and did not scorn it, who heard my youthful dreams without cynicism, who believed in me more than I believed in myself—who, in a score of ways, unbound me and let me go free.

What about society—in all of its dimensions? Can the community complex serve the needs of persons or must people, except for the privileged few, always be the pawns of society? What is a just society? One that unbinds its citizens and sets them free! One that removes, as far as possible, those graveclothes of poverty, discrimination, injustice, and war from the bodies and souls of its people.

What of the churches? Is not our task of unbinding and loosing, also? Have we been guilty of failing the resurrected on this matter? Do we loose them? I fear not, many times. We don't care to have those returned from the dead living among us. They may shake us up and expose the tombs we boastfully inhabit. They may change the course of our dull and passionless existence. They may say something that will upset our ordered programs.

But remember, if we fail to set people free, we contribute to their bondage. In the name of life, we can perpetuate death. Like Pharisees, we can compass sea and land to make one convert and turn him into an apostle of death twice as zealous for the grave as ourselves.

That's why churches are so important. Because, either life or death, love or hate, peace or war will be spawned in them.

Eleanor, King Henry's estranged wife, speaks to her quarreling sons in that powerful drama, *The Lion in Winter*. Her words could apply to the church, indeed, do apply—for they were written of a period when Christianity held universal sway in civilization.

It is eleven eighty-three and we're barbarians. How clear we make it. Oh, my piglets, we're the origins of war. Not history's forces nor the times nor justice nor the lack of it nor causes nor religions nor ideas nor kinds of government nor any other thing. We are the killers; we breed war. We carry it, like syphilis, inside. Dead bodies rot in field and stream because the living ones are rotten. For the love of God, can't we love one another just a little? That's how peace begins. We have so much to love each other for. We have such possibilities, my children; we could change the world.

However popular, yet unpopular, a

Resurrection

(From page 17)

here-and-now resurrection may be, we cannot escape its incredible possibility. It will not, even on Easter, let us quietly retreat to the past and dwell on Jesus' triumph over death. It will not even when all the pews are full, let us think that believing in a future resurrection at the last day is enough. It is the now resurrection that connects past and future. It is that possible resurrection of our lives from the tombs of fear and sin, from doubt and despair, from hatred and envy that disturbs our sleep in this hour. The voice of the Son of God is probing the darkness of every grave here with the promise and power of resurrection—now. Can you hear his voice? Will you answer it?

Despite not the revolutionary power of a voice. "Incline your ear; hear and your soul shall live" is the inspired promise from Isaiah. Turn to every decisive moment in history and there you will find the summons of a voice. Little Samuel hears his own name break the silence of the shrine at Shiloh; Isaiah answers God's search for a prophet as he worships in the temple; Saul takes an about face because of a voice on the Damascus road; Augustine in the garden at Milan hears those chanting words: "Take up and read; take up and read;" Joan of Arc listens to her angelic voices in Domremy pealing like bells at evening; Luther's mighty life is a complete mystery until we reckon on the voice that commanded him: "Be strong. Play the man. There is a life beyond death."

Yes, I will answer the voice of the Son of God! Yes, almost, I can hear someone cry. The "now" is what troubles and trips me. Never fear; it did the same for John Wesley. Seven weeks before his heart was strangely warmed at Aldersgate, he preached on the text: "The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live." In his *Journal* he wrote this entry: "I can see the promise but it is afar off." Afar off, John Wesley? Not far, at all.

I say the same to everyone in a grave. Not far, but near. Right now, Jesus stands before the tomb, calls your name, and says, "Come forth by faith and live!"

Many already know this great coming forth. But you need now to have those binding graveclothes removed so you can walk free.

Somewhere in the world's great panorama of need and possibility each and all of us can find a place. Let not this hour of resurrection pass without including you. Stand forth on the side of life. Anyone for resurrection?

Doctrines of the faith

The absoluteness of God

By Jimmy A. Millikin
Southern Baptist College



Dr. Millikin

The absoluteness of God is not an easy concept for us to grasp. This is due, no doubt, to the fact that we are finite creatures. As fallen creatures, we have never achieved or experienced absoluteness in any form. Thus it is difficult for us to understand God's absoluteness. Nevertheless, the term "absoluteness" denotes an idea that we cannot do away with in our concept of God. Basically, it conveys two essential characteristics of God's nature.

First, it denotes that God is an independent, self-existent Being. God was not caused, nor is he dependent on anything outside himself for his existence. He revealed himself to Moses as "I am that I am" (Ex. 3:14). He is not dependent on the world for life and being; he does not need anything (Acts 17:25). He

is the living God who "has life in himself" (Jn. 5:26). In other words, God has the source and ground of his being in himself.

While God is not dependent on anything outside himself for his existence, everything else is dependent on God for its existence. God is the source of all that lives and exists. God existed before the world began and he can exist without the world, but the world and man cannot exist without God (Acts 17:25).

To be sure, this is hard to be understood. It involves the proverbial question, "Where did God come from?" The only answer is that God always was. He has no beginning. He is the uncaused cause. Incomprehensible but true!

The second idea the absoluteness of God denotes is that God is unlimited in his Being. Another term sometimes used to express this idea is "infinity." We often say that God is infinite and man is finite. By this we mean that God is perfect and unlimited whereas man is imperfect and limited.

God is perfect and unlimited in every respect in which we can think of him. However, there are four particular areas which are usually emphasized:

First, God is unlimited by time. This is usually expressed by the term "eternal". When we say God is eternal we mean that he has neither beginning nor end (Rev. 1:8). God does not grow, develop, and become old (Psa. 102:24-27; Mal. 3:6). He existed before the world began, and he will continue when history has ended (Psa. 40:2).

Second, God is unlimited by space. This concept is expressed by the term "omnipresence". God is everywhere. He fills the whole heaven and earth (Jer. 23:23f.). He is "not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:27f.). No one can escape this all-present God (Psa. 139).

Third, God is unlimited in his knowledge. This we call "omniscience". God knows everything. His knowledge is not limited by time, by the amount of knowledge in the world, nor anything else. "His understanding is infinite" (Psa. 147:5). He knows the future and the past as well as the present. He knows even the smallest details, like the numbering of the hairs of our heads (Lk. 12:7).

Fourth, God is unlimited in his power. This is known as "omnipotence". It means that God's power knows no bounds or limitations. God can do anything he wills to do. He has power over the world of nature (Psa. 107:25-29), heavenly creatures (Dan. 4:35), and human actions (Ja. 4:12-15). Even Satan is under the power and authority of God (Jb. 1:12; Lk. 22:31-32). Nothing is too hard for God (Gen. 18:14). With him all things are possible (Matt. 19:26).

Some modern views of God hold to a limited, finite God who is simply doing the best he can to overcome sin and evil. According to these views even God cannot guarantee the outcome. This is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is an absolutist God who has all authority and power. He has things under his control. He knows the outcome, and it will be according to his divine purpose (Eph. 1:11). Hallelujah!

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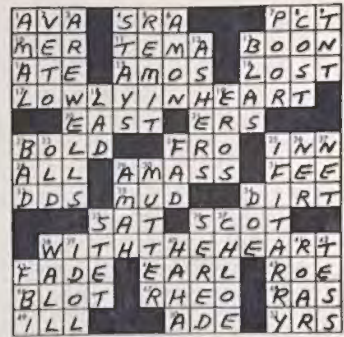
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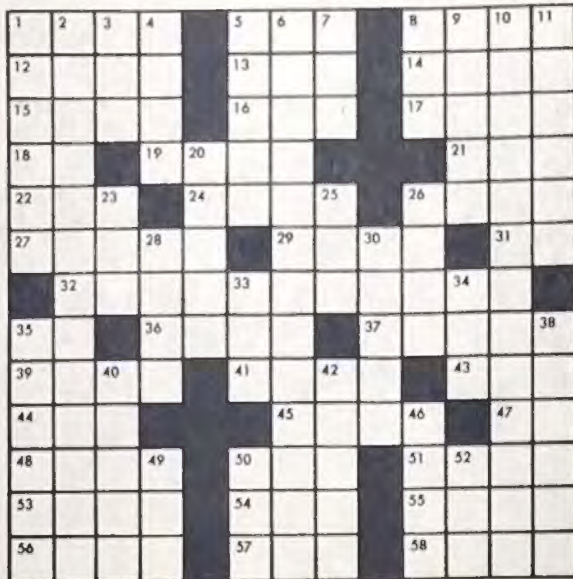
Bible puzzle

Last week's answers



CRYPTOVERSE

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden" (Matt. 11:28).



- 36 Hosea in the New Testament (Rom. 9:25)
 37 More recent
 39 "thy throne, O God, is for _____" (Heb. 1:8)
 41 Singing group
 43 Born
 44 Kind of top
 45 It shows the wind direction
 47 Per diem (abbr.)
 48 Bronte character
 50 Judas had it (John 13:29)
 51 Raised platform
 53 Christmas word
 54 Biblical plain (Neh. 6:2)
 55 Girl's name
 56 Egyptian king (poss.)
 57 Weights (abbr.)
 58 Latvian capital

DOWN

- 1 "Elizabeth . . . conceived a son in her _____" (Luke 1:36; two words)
 2 What God may do (Mark 11:25; three words)
 3 Aviation (abbr.)
 4 Female ruff (pl.)
 5 Prince of Simeon (1 Chron. 4:36)
 6 Ungrateful one (Matt. 18:32; two words)
 7 Teachers organization
 8 City vehicle
 9 Part of a house (two words)
 10 "When Jesus therefore _____" (John 11:33; three words)
 11 Classify
 20 British noblemen
 23 Arnold Palmer, for instance
 25 Theater sign (abbr.)
 26 Monster
 28 Scent
 30 The border of Moab (Num. 21:13)
 33 Eventually
 34 Possess
 35 If we do not do it we shall perish (Luke 13:3)
 38 Wonders and signs were shown here (Acts 7:36; two words)
 40 Heron
 42 Villian in Othello (poss.)
 46 A tower (Gen. 35:21)
 49 Letter (pl.)
 50 "I _____ my knees unto the Father" (Eph. 3:14)
 52 Bird

ACROSS

- 1 Grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:15)
 5 Beard of grain
 8 Dwelling (Sp.)
 12 Wash
 13 "signifying what death he should _____" (John 18:32)
 14 Son of Jether (1 Chron. 7:38; poss.)
 15 Unit of force
 16 International Cooperation Administration (abbr.)
 17 "Their _____ also shall dash the young" (Isa. 13:18)

- 18 Audio frequency (abbr.)
 19 "the Greeks _____ after wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:22)
 21 Exclamation
 22 Political party (abbr.)
 24 English country festivals
 26 Hebrew measure
 27 "ran greedily after the _____ of Balaam" (Jude 11)
 29 "burn incense unto their _____" (Hab. 1:16)
 31 Football position (abbr.)
 32 It worketh repentance (2 Cor. 7:10; two words)
 35 State (abbr.)

Cryptoverse

IDFTO MYDRQ RQADAMYDA MDPFRV HAAR
 MYD DAJATRGTKA

Today's Cryptoverse clue: A equals E

Instructions for working CRYPTOVERSE

One letter simply stands for another. Here's how it works: N X O H X O K L is S H E P H E R D. In this example, X is used for H, O for E, N for S, etc. Single letters, apostrophies, and length and formation of the words are all hints.

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Games Husbands and Wives Play, by John W. Drakeford, Broadman, 1970, \$2.95

Ideal for couples and their counselors, this book can give marriage "opponents" the help they need to become marriage "partners."

The Zondervan Pastor's Annual 1972, by T. T. Crabtree, Zondervan, \$4.95

A planned preaching program for a full year, this includes 52 morning and 52 evening services, complete with sermon outlines and illustrations, as well as talks for mid-week prayer services.

Nature, Garden or Desert?, by Eric C. Rust, Word, 1971, \$4.95.

Dealing with the Christian's concern and involvement in the ecological issue, Dr. Rust, of the faculty of Southern Seminary, Louisville, points out that man in his bodily form is a part of nature and that the incarnation and resurrection promise the redemption of nature as well as of man. He feels that the renewal of man's relationship to nature is one dimension of the church's redemptive mission.

Isaiah, Prophecies, Promises, Warnings, by W. E. Vine, Zondervan, \$1.95

The Douglas Sunday School Lessons 1971, Nelson, \$2.95

A Caterpillar Anthology, edited by Clayton Eshleman, Anchor, \$2.50

The Marriage Affair, The Family Counselor, edited by J. Allan Peterson, Tyndale, \$2.95

Library Services in the Church, compiled by Wayne E. Todd, Convention, \$1

Understanding Youth, by T. Garvice and Dorothy Murphee, Convention, \$1

A first Book of Daily Readings, by Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Eerdmans, \$2.95

A Treasury of Dwight L. Moody, edited by Ralph G. Turnbull, Baker, \$2.95

Not Made for Defeat, by Douglas Hall, Zondervan, \$1.95

Sourcebook 70-71, Church Planning Series, \$1.75

Design for Christian Marriage, by Dwight Hervey Small, Revell, 95¢

The Yoga System, a guide to physical and spiritual well-being, by Mithrapuram K. Alexander, Christopher, \$3.95

The Scarlet Thread Through the Bible, by W. A. Criswell, Broadman

One year as First Baptist Church, Dallas, prepared for a New Year watch service, the deacons invited Pastor Criswell to "begin preaching at 7:30 p.m. and preach till after midnight. Dr. Criswell accepted the invitation and the large auditorium was packed out throughout the service. The hours-long sermon was recorded and later transcribed to make this book. Beginning with "The Creation and the Fall," Dr. Criswell preached through "The Apocalypse and the Consummation of the Age."

Wheatly Church, March 6-12; H. Lee Lewis, Warren, evangelist; 18 professions of faith, 17 for baptism, 7 by letter, 15 rededications, and 1 surrender for special service. Byzie L. Parr is pastor.

First Wakefield, Little Rock, Feb. 27-March 5; Jack Parchman, evangelist; 29 professions of faith.

Needham Church, Jonesboro, March 6-12; Jack Parchman, evangelist; 9 professions of faith, 2 by letter.

Nutts Chapel, Marmaduke, March 31-April 2; youth-led, evangelist will be Gary Gregory.

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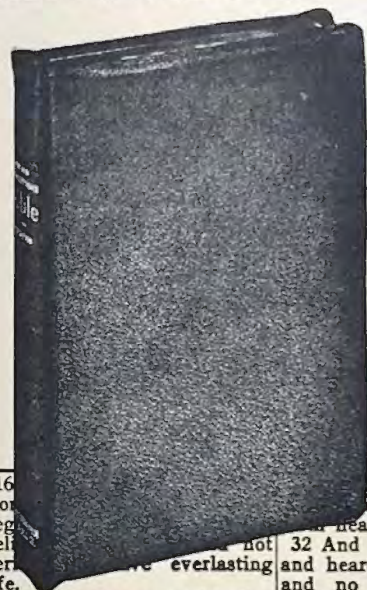
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only begotten Son of God. ... 35 The Fat
and hath giv

ACTUAL SIZE TYPE SAMPLE

The church proclaims the risen lord

By Vester E. Wolber
Ouachita University

International
I Corinthians 15
April 2, 1972

Paul had also learned from Chloe's family (1:10-11; 11:18) that there were quarrels and divisions among the memberships of the Corinthian church, and it seems likely that his systematic treatment of the resurrection doctrine was intended to settle a deep theological problem in the church. Some of them were saying that "there is no resurrection of the dead" (15:12); that is the false doctrine which he refutes in this chapter.

Definitive facts of the gospel (15:1-4)

Paul opens discussion of the subject by reminding his friends in Corinth of the terms of the Gospel which he had preached to them when he founded the church there. He appeals to their Christian experience by reminding them that they had received that good news, were saved by it, and continue to stand in it.

In a careful analysis of that gospel which he had received from Christ he says that it contains three historical facts: Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he was raised on the third day. The first and third items — his death and resurrection—are declared to be in accord with Old Testament scriptures.

Since the heresy which Paul is refuting has to do with the third item in the gospel — the resurrection of Jesus — he now concentrates on that point.

Historical evidences of Jesus' resurrection (5-11)

The first two appearances cited here are also recorded in the Gospels: he appeared to Peter whom Paul continues to call Cephas, the Aramaic word for rock which Jesus assigned to Simon (John 1:42); and to the twelve in the upper room on the day of Jesus' resurrection, and on other occasions (Matt. 28:17; Luke 24:34; John 20:26).

The really significant fact of this citation is that the apostle, writing some 25 years after the event, says that most of these witnesses were still alive. His purpose in this statement of fact is to remind his readers that these witnesses were still available for testimony. The apostles welcomed investigation into the historical claims of the Christian movement. Good.

The James to whom Christ appeared was in all likelihood not the apostle but his own half-brother who later became the chief spokesman for the Jerusalem church (Acts 15). The apostle who bore

that name had been killed about a dozen years before this letter was written.

The last mentioned appearance was to Paul on the conversion road. It is significant that Paul lists this appearance along with the other appearances, and thus leaves an open-ended suggestion that our own conversion and other experiences with Christ also constitute valid evidence of Jesus' resurrection. The only Christ which Paul, the greatest exponent of the Christian faith, ever knew is the same resurrected Christ whom we know.

Intellectual refutation of the heresy (12-19)

Some in the church were saying that there is to be no resurrection of the dead in the future, and in these verses Paul holds up that idea and asks them to examine it rationally. He wants them to examine their belief intellectually, but also in the light of their Christian experience.

Some of us lose our intellectual battles because, instead of attacking false ideas, we attack those who hold those ideas. Not so the apostle: he assumed that those who denied the resurrection believed the gospel, had experienced conversion, and still had faith in Christ. Moreover, he assumed that they believed that Christ had been raised.

1. His first and basic argument is that if there is no resurrection of the dead, that would also exclude Christ: therefore Christ was not raised. Here is a powerful argument to one who has had a spiritual encounter with Christ and has come away a converted man, a regenerated person. Such a person knows that he has come to know Christ: he has experiential knowledge. But he could not have a spiritual experience with one who had not been able to get beyond Joseph's tomb, could he? So Paul's first argument is that in denying human resurrection they were also denying Christ's resurrection which they had not really intended to do.

2. The remainder of his arguments are founded on the first: if Christ has not been raised (1) my preaching is vain (empty, founded on nothing) and (2) your faith is vain (empty, unreal, without foundation.) He takes up each of these two points and pursues them further.

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(1) I have been misrepresenting God and preaching falsehood, if Christ was not raised. Some of Paul's rugged honesty needs to be exercised in answering those in our day who try to separate the gospel of Christ from historical reality. A ricochet gospel bounced off a gossamer cloud bank is not enough for sensible people. Paul and his companions stood ankle deep in historical facts as they proclaimed the gospel of a historical death and historical resurrection.

(2) Your faith is futile (fruitless) and you are still in your sins, if Christ has not been raised. Paul's idea is that none but a resurrected Christ, a living Christ, can forgive sin. The Christian experience of faith is not belief in a creedal or doctrinal statement but a trustful submission to a living person: it is a person-to-person encounter.

The text goes on to say that those who have died believing in Christ have perished, if Christ did not conquer death for them. He closes the section with the summary statement that if we have hope for this life only we are of all men not to be pitied.

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The will of the risen Lord

By L. H. Coleman, Th.D.
Pastor, Immanuel Church, Pine Bluff

Having studied the book of Luke the past six months in our Sunday School lessons we shall spend the next six months in the study of the book of Acts. The study is entitled "What God Expects Of His People". The accomplishments of the early church were phenomenal as recorded by Dr. Luke in his second volume (as you know the books of Luke and Acts have the same author, Luke, the only Gentile writer in the entire Bible).

The book of Acts begins with an account of Christ's ascension and ends with Paul's imprisonment at Rome. The period of time covered in the book of Acts is from 30 to 63 A.D. The book does not record the martyrdom of Paul; the book ends rather abruptly. The principal characters in the book are Peter and Paul. Acts records such events as Pentecost which followed Christ's death, Stephen's martyrdom and Paul's three missionary journeys. So a rich study lies before us. What a thrill to learn of the progress of the gospel's triumph during such an important time in the history of Christianity.

The first unit, consisting of three lessons, deals with "Spirit-filled witnesses".

Following The Resurrection (Acts 1:1-3)

Please note Luke's purpose in writing the book of Acts:

1. To enlist the aid of Theophilus in having Paul released from prison.
2. To show the Roman favor toward Paul.
3. To show the universality of the gospel.
4. To reconcile Jewish and Pauline parties within Christianity.
5. To show the beginnings of Christianity.

In verse one Luke dedicates volume two (just as he did his first volume) to Theophilus, which means "lover of God" or "loved by God". Maybe he was the first reader of the book. He was a high Roman official, a wealthy man and perhaps Luke dedicated his two books to him because he bore the expense of publication.

Verses one and two state a central theme of the book — what Jesus continued to do and teach through his apostles.

Verse three is important. The apostles needed to bear witness of Christ's resurrection. Consequently during a period of 40 days Christ appeared and rendered himself visible unto them. What a testimony they could give to

the world. What a story they could tell!

The Promise of Power (Acts 1:4-8)

In the above verses please note the following:

1. Promise of the baptism of the Holy Ghost vs. 4,5.
2. Preparation for the ascension. vs. 6-8.
 - (1). Speculation about the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. v. 6.
 - (2). The answer of Jesus. v. 7.
 - (3). *The promise of power; commission to witness.* v. 8.

Christ emphasized his baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost upon his disciples (cf. Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16). Have you received this baptism? The baptism fell at Pentecost. Joel 2:28ff was fulfilled at Pentecost. What is meant by the baptism of the Holy Ghost? To state it briefly (actually 5-10 pages would be needed to go into the doctrine in depth study), we need to yield, surrender and submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit. We need to be overwhelmed ("immersed") by the Holy Spirit. Instead of praying "Lord, give me the Holy Spirit" we could best pray, "Lord, I give myself to the Holy Spirit. Use me as you see fit." The greatest need in our churches today is the baptism of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The ascension (Acts 1:9-11)

In the passage please observe actually two items: the account of the ascension of Christ and the promise of Christ's second advent.

Only the book of Acts records the 40 days between the resurrection and the ascension. From Paul's writings we learn that Christ was raised in a spiritual, glorified body (as contrasted to a physical one) and that his appearances were real and those of a heavenly being. Perhaps the ascension followed Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene (see John 20:17) between the appearances to Mary and the disciples.

The next item on Christ's agenda following his ascension was the receiving of the Holy Spirit by the disciples. The followers of Christ went forth following the ascension in supernatural power, the power of the Spirit.

Verse eleven states clearly the promise of the second coming of Christ.

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Life & Work

April 2, 1972

Acts 1:1-11

Christ said he would come again (see John 14:3). The angel said Christ would come again. The doctrine of the second coming of Christ is a precious, cherished belief of true Christians.

Conclusion

These first 11 verses form the backdrop for what happened at Pentecost. Please reread these verses and use *The Living Bible* to compare with the King James Version. Get the setting firmly in your mind. The promise of power was given. These early disciples must be equipped for the great task of witnessing.

The question we need to ask ourselves concerns our powerlessness today. Why? We simply are trying to do the work of God in our own strength. We desperately need the power of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, in our lives to do the work of God. Will you ask for and receive this power? Now?

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The Presbyterian minister had been summoned to the bedside of the Methodist woman who was very ill. As he went up to the walk, he met the little daughter and said to her, "I am very glad your mother remembered me in her illness. Is your minister out of town?" "No," answered the child. "He's at home, but we thought it might be something contagious and we didn't want to expose him to it."

"Dad, did you go to school when you were a little boy?"

"I sure did—never missed a day."

"There, Ma, don't you see? It won't do me any good either!"



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A smile or two

The clergyman's eloquence may have been at fault, still he felt annoyed to find that an old gentleman fell asleep during the sermon on two consecutive Sundays. So, after the service on the Second week, he told the boy who accompanied the sleeper that he wished to speak with him.

"My boy," said the minister, when they were alone, "who is that elderly gentleman you attend church with?"

"Grandpa," was the reply.

"Well," said the clergyman, "if you will only keep him awake during the sermon, I'll give you a dime each week."

The boy fell in with the arrangement, and for the next two weeks the old gentleman listened attentively to the sermon. The third week, however, found him soundly asleep.

The vexed clergyman sent for the boy and said: "I am very angry with you. Didn't I promise you a dime a week to keep him awake?"

"Yes," replied the boy, "But Grandpa now gives me a quarter not to disturb him."

A mother missed the eggs from under the turkey hen and asked little Bill if he knew what had become of them.

"Sure I know," said Bill, "I put them in the dog house. We want puppies, not turkeys."

Several old-timers were talking about old days in the West and the Indians. "I'll never forget the time I killed my first Indian," one recalled.

"Shoot him?" asked another.

"Nope," said the old man.

"Kill him hand-to-hand with a knife?"

"Nope, nothing like that," was the reply. "Ran him to death."

"How far did you chase him?"

"Didn't," said the old-timer. "I was in front."

A clergyman named Jordan had a son at college. The son was about to take his final examination and naturally the father asked the boy to let him know as soon as possible how he got on.

One day the father received a telegram which read: "Hymn 254, verse five, last two lines."

Looking up the reference in the hymn book, he read: "Sorrow vanished, labour ended, Jordan passed."

So you have been singing in the choir?"

"Yes"

"What part do you sing?"

"Well, I went in as first bass, but they changed it to short stop when they heard my voice."

Attendance report

March 19, 1972

Church	Sunday School	Training Union	Ch. Adns.
Alexander, First	41	25	
Alma, First	272	88	
Arkadelphia, Second	225	211	
Berine, First	64	24	
Berryville			
First	163	56	
Freeman Heights	152	59	
Rock Springs	113	80	
Blytheville			
Calvary	213	77	
Gosnell	206	71	
Booneville			
First	237	178	
Glendale	81	33	2
Camden, First	514	106	4
Charleston, North Side	85	60	
Cherokee Village	129	18	1
Crossett			
First	600	158	2
Mt. Olive	247	135	1
Concord, Mt. Zion	40	11	
Dumas, First	248	57	
El Dorado, Ebenezer	159	57	
Farmington, First	101	47	
Forrest City			
First	658	158	
Second	240	107	
Fl. Smith			
First	1244	342	6
Haven Heights	239		5
Trinity	189	68	
Gentry, First	201	79	
Grandview	85	53	
Greenwood, First	302	104	2
Hampton, First	198	54	1
Harrison			
Eagle Heights	287	116	
Northvale	148	82	
Helena, First	291	75	
Hope			
Calvary	189	85	
First	543	173	2
Hot Springs, Park Place	487	158	2
Jacksonville			
Bayou Meto	167	91	2
First	441	93	3
Marshall Road	359	127	3
Jonesboro			
Central	472	177	1
Nettleton	289	107	
Lake City, Bethabara	139	117	4
Lake Village, Parkway	79	40	1
Lavaca, First	300	167	3
Lepanto, First	285	162	
Little Rock			
Geyer Springs	758	213	8
Life Line	749	145	4
Magnolia, Central	663	202	1
Marked Tree, First	195	63	
Melbourne			
Belview	171	96	1
First	134	60	1
Monticello, Second	195	92	2
Mountain Home, First	392	100	12
North Little Rock			
Baring Cross	586	158	7
Calvary	408	135	
First	311	122	
Levy	476	78	
Park Hill	785	117	13
Sixteenth Street	64	35	
Paris, First	386	65	4
Pine Bluff			
Centennial	200	59	
Dollarway	124	57	11
East Side	174	91	
First	661	165	
Green Meadows	57	26	
Second	155	73	1
Rogers, First	747	161	
Russellville, Second	256	86	1
Springdale			
Berry Street	102	46	1
Caudle Avenue	123	40	5
Elmdale	378	101	4
First	756	130	2
Oak Grove	68	33	
Stephens, First	126	85	
Strong, First	157	59	
Texarkana, Beech Street	489	94	
Van Buren, First	494	206	3
Mission	40		
Vandervoort	38	24	
Warren			
Immanuel	295	101	
Southside	69	59	2
West Memphis			
Calvary	226	102	1
Vanderbilt Avenue	115	76	2

In the world of religion

Mexico City evangelicals to march

MEXICO CITY (EP) — A massive evangelical rally is expected to draw 80,000 people from all parts of the country here March 21. The rally will be preceded by a parade through the downtown area which will include eleven floats.

Each year the National Committee for Evangelical Defense sponsors a rally on March 21 in honor of the birth of Benito Juarez, Mexico's great hero and contemporary of Lincoln, whose reforms permitted the entrance of Protestantism into the country more than 100 years ago. Attendance at the rally usually ranges from 2,000 to 10,000 people; this year the Mexican

Evangelism-in-Depth movement is adding enthusiasm and impetus to the occasion. All denominations are participating.

On hand will be 35 guests of the Latin America Mission's Golden Anniversary Tour, led by Mr. and Mrs. Reed Miller of L.A.M. headquarters in New Jersey. The tour will later visit Panama and Costa Rica.

Evangelicals in Mexico, according to official 1970 census figures, comprise only 1.9 percent of the total population of 50 million, but many thousands have been converted during the Evangelism-in-Depth movement which began in early 1971.

Religious married women happiest

NEW YORK (EP) — The happiest of all Americans are very religious married women, aged 18 to 34, in the middle-income bracket.

That was the finding of a telephone survey conducted by the advertising firm of Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn.

"Unhappiness is approximately five times higher among non-religious people than among those who claim to be 'very religious,'" the report stated.

The report concluded: "One wonders . . . where are the alienated, anomic, sick, guilty, the people at the breaking point? . . . The average American seems to be a relatively contented individual."



BUS CONFERENCE LEADERS — Among the program personalities for the National Conference on Bus Outreach are (top row, from left) D. Lewis White, bus outreach consultant in the Sunday School department of the Sunday School Board; Jaroy Weber, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala.; A. V. Washburn, secretary of the Sunday School department of the Sunday School Board; (second row, from left) Eugene Skelton, editor of general materials, Sunday School department of the Board; William A. Powell, secretary of the department of survey and special studies, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board; and Bernard Spooner, minister of education at Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Registration for the conference, April 17-18 at Woodridge Baptist Church, Houston, may be made by sending a \$3 fee to National Conference on Bus Outreach, Sunday School Department, 127 Ninth Avenue, North, Nashville, Tennessee 37234.

Clergy organize for Democratic convention

MIAMI (EP) — Religious leaders here hope that the kinds of incidents which marred the Democratic National Convention in Chicago and the Republican National Convention in Miami in 1968 won't happen here this summer when the Democrats meet to select their Presidential candidate.

Organized as the Religious and Community Leaders Concerned with the Democratic National Convention, the ministers and laymen have set up the Inter-religious Coordinating Center.

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