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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

12-13-1984

December 13, 1984

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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December 13, 1984

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE



Giving,
not getting

On the cover



ABN photo / Millie Gill

Though some may be content to let the church minister to them, many others are determined to be a blessing to others. Singles and their leaders from Little Rock Second Church recently prepared stockings for children under the care of Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services.

In this issue

7 bringing books to life

For more than 2,000 students from the Little Rock area, books became more than paper and ink when they had an opportunity to meet "real, live authors" in a book fair sponsored by the Little Rock Baptist Book Store.

11-12 budget cuts hit home

Baptist leaders have voiced their concern over Reagan administration budget proposals which would eliminate ministers' housing benefits entirely and perhaps discourage congregational giving as well.

No issue on Dec. 27

No issue of the ABN will be published on Dec. 27, the last of three such skip weeks in 1984.

Focus of Christmas should be giving

NASHVILLE—Christmas provides churches an excellent opportunity through fellowships to help members focus on the proper meaning of Christmas, according to Frank Hart Smith.

Smith, a consultant on retreats and social recreation for the Sunday School Board's church recreation department, said "Christmas has become so commercialized that the whole idea is what I can get or eat. Christmas can very easily be centered around oneself."

According to Smith, Southern Baptists need to emphasize the true meaning of Christmas, which is Christ—the greatest gift. The emphasis should be on giving, not receiving. "Christmas is a time for families, both individual and church families," said Smith. "Christmas also provides a good opportunity for churches to renew the feeling of family."

Smith noted that the idea of fellowship is also strengthened at Christmas because we are celebrating the gift of Christ.

Churches should look for ways to strengthen the idea of giving at Christmas by designing events that focus on the giving theme, said Smith.

One suggestion is to have a "White Christmas" fellowship, for which church members bring food staples wrapped in white paper. The food can then be used by the church for benevolent needs during Christmas.

Another idea according to Smith is for a Sunday school class to adopt a needy child and take him on a shopping spree. "A pounding for the church staff to show appreciation is another way a church can focus on giving."

"Whatever the event, the focus should be on giving for a need instead of giving just to give," said Smith.

Empty feelings come at Christmas when we want more and don't get it, noted Smith. "But when we give, we always get a lot back because giving is one way we have of being like God."

ACTS schedules 17 Christmas specials

FORT WORTH, Texas—Seventeen upcoming Christmas specials on Southern Baptists' American Christian Television System will help remind viewers of the true spirit of the holidays.

Beginning Monday, Dec. 17, ACTS will pre-empt much of its regular family entertainment programming to carry the seasonal specials. Most will be repeated during a two-week period.

Highlighting the list of specials is "Truce in the Forest," an award-winning one-hour drama about German and American soldiers during World War II who both seek shelter in a secluded cabin and find a moment of peace when they lay down their weapons long enough to celebrate Christmas.

"Truce in the Forest" will be shown Dec. 18 at 11 p.m., Dec. 19 at 3 a.m. and 9 a.m., Dec. 20 at 4 p.m. and Dec. 21 at 4 a.m. and 10 a.m.

"No Escape from Christmas" is a half-hour drama about a couple's attempt to fight the

bitterness that follows the loss of their only child. It will be carried on ACTS Dec. 18 at 6:30 p.m. and Dec. 19 at 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.

"The Other Wise Man" is an adaptation of Henry Van Dyke's fictional account of a fourth wise man who misses his audience with the Christ child in order to help a person in need. The half-hour special will be shown Dec. 20 at 6:30 p.m. and Dec. 21 at 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Rounding out ACTS' Christmas schedule are other costume and contemporary dramas, as well as musical and animated specials. In all, 64 special Christmas broadcasts will be carried over the network.

ACTS is a satellite network of family and Christian entertainment programming carried on 120 cable TV systems and three TV stations across the country. Operated by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, the network reaches more than 2 million homes.

November surge brightens CP picture

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—November contributions of \$9,693,000 through the national Cooperative Program have brightened the budget picture for Southern Baptist mission and education programs.

The November 1984 figures were 20.87 percent (\$1,673,565) above 1983 receipts for the same month. Two months into the 1984-85 fiscal year, the national Cooperative Program has received almost \$18.3 million, 9.84 percent ahead of the first two months last fiscal year.

The figures provided good news to balance a somber October report when voluntary

contributions from the 37 state conventions affiliated with the SBC were \$8.6 million. In order to meet the 1984-85 basic operating budget of \$118 million, the national Cooperative Program must average more than \$9.83 million each month.

November 1984 receipts were a monthly record and marked the first time November contributions had passed the \$9 million mark. The first time the months had broken the \$8 million mark was 1983 (\$8,019,435). The figure is more than double the collections of six years ago (\$4,696,217 in November 1978).



It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of January Bible Study. Nothing could be more meaningful to the life of a church than a thorough understanding of the Word of God. This year's Bible study in Psalms contains great theological concepts, as well as some of the greatest devotional material ever written. This study should challenge each of us to be at our best.

The Psalter contains 150 poems or songs covering a period from about 1250 B.C. until the latter part of the fifth century B.C. The Hebrews were unfamiliar with meter as it was used by the Europeans. A line of Hebrew poetry is, usually, broken into two or three parts, each of which is called a "stitch." There are stress words, however which give many poems a certain recognizable rhythm.

Hebrew poetry had what is called "parallelism" as its major poetic vehicle. Three kinds of parallelism were employed. These were: (1) synonymous, in which the second stitch or line repeated the thought of the first; (2) antiphic parallelism, in which the second line contrasts the first; and (3) synthetic parallelism, in which the second line supplements or completes the first. Several Psalms also use the acrostic structure in which each line or couplet uses a letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Although the Psalms were written over a long period of time and with a variety of circumstances, one can deduce a great deal about the life of the Hebrew people and their theological concepts. The Psalms give great insight into the Hebrews' belief concerning God. Their belief in a monotheistic God came in sharp contrast to the polytheistic ideas of the other nations. The Psalms identify many of the characteristics of God, such as righteousness, justice, mercy and faithfulness. These attributes are grounded in God himself and are the basic principles of his governing of the world. Perhaps the most frequent characteristic identified by the writers of the Psalms is that the Lord is gracious. He forgives iniquities and lends a petitioning ear to those who serve him.

Second, the Psalms give a great deal of insight into the Hebrew concept of the world. There is little or no display of abstract love of nature or the beauty of the outdoors. Their real interest was in the concept that the heavens and the earth are the handiwork of God. The world and nature demonstrates God's great creative power.

The Psalms give a great deal of insight into the Hebrew concept of man. Man is the highest creation of God and the master of the animal world. At the same time, the Psalmist ex-

presses surprise and amazement that God should be mindful of man. The Psalms provide little information on the afterlife of man. This should not be surprising, however, since Christ had not come into the world and conquered death.

The Psalms have played an important part in the worship of both Jews and Christians across the years. Originally, the Psalms were the Jewish songbook. Today, the Jews use the Psalms as prayers. While Christian worship follows no uniform pattern, it would appear that the Psalter established itself as a model for both public and private devotion early in the life of Christianity. Many Christians have found great comfort and help from the Psalms across the years.

Fred M. Wood, who was pastor of the Eudora Church, Memphis, Tenn. for 31 years, is now engaged in full-time preaching, teaching and writing, has done an outstanding job with the textbook entitled, "Psalms: Songs from Life." Since there are 150 Psalms, it becomes impossible for all of these to be dealt with in a short period of time. In order to solve this problem, Dr. Wood has divided the Psalms into eight categories and has chosen four Psalms to represent each of these categories. The book is readable, inspirational and contains a wealth of material concerning the Psalms and the life of the Hebrew people.

January Bible Study is generally most effective when the book is covered in a relatively short time. Major themes and ideas should be emphasized so those in attendance will have a comprehensive overview of the book and its truths.

Pastors should make every effort to encourage attendance for the study of Psalms. Interest can sometimes be stimulated by preaching from the book to be studied. In this instance, the pastor might choose to preach from a few of the Psalms prior to the actual study.

Churches should encourage members to attend January Bible Study with the same intensity that they attend members for revivals. Interest can sometimes be stimulated by having a guest teacher. The use of the filmstrip to preview the book can, also, encourage attendance.

The time in which the church offers January Bible Study will have a major impact on attendance. The study should be scheduled well in advance so that members can place the study on their personal calendars. Many congregations are finding it helpful to begin the study on a Sunday and close on a Wednesday. This utilizes two days in which members are already accustomed to coming to the church.

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

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

VOLUME 83

NUMBER 48

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Copies by mail 50 cents each.

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

Advertising rates on request.

Opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the writer.

Member of the Southern Baptist Press Association.

The Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine (USPS 301-280) is published weekly, except the third week in April, at July 4 and Dec. 25, by the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, Inc., Little Rock, AR. Subscription rates are \$6.50 per year (individuals), \$5.40 per year (Every Resident Family Plan), \$8.00 per year (Group Plan) and \$18.00 per year (to foreign address). Second class postage paid at Little Rock, AR. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, P. O. Box 582, Little Rock, AR 72203.



The Southern accent

Steve Lemke

Southern Baptists are missionary Baptists

Many Baptist churches today identify themselves as Missionary Baptist churches. Their name comes from their disagreement with Southern Baptists about the proper method of sending missionaries. They put the burden of missionary administration on the local churches and the missionaries themselves. Southern Baptists have found it more effective to have a board to supervise mission efforts on behalf of the churches.

The difference between these two plans of missions support is enormous. The missionary sent by a Missionary Baptist church must get a sponsorship from a local church. The local church budgets money for one or two missionaries, providing their monetary support. This works well in theory, but not so well in practice.

From the missionary's perspective, his support becomes a question of "who he knows." Since one church usually cannot

provide all of his support, the missionary must personally plead his case before several churches. Obviously, the one gifted as a dramatic speaker will have the advantage over other missionaries. Often the missionary who is supported by a local church is a relative of some member of the church. The missionary cannot go overseas until he has raised his support from the churches.

Even after he is on the mission field, the "faith" missionary is putting his faith in the churches who support him. He must correspond with the churches, justifying his support with progress reports. Yet his support is held by a fine thread. Every time the church changes pastors, every new church budget or simply at the church's whim, the missionary's support can be totally withdrawn. As a result, the missionary must leave his work to come back and raise more money.

Southern Baptists have a much better ap-

proach to missions support. Through the Cooperative Program and special missions offerings, the local churches contribute the money for the support of our missionaries. We then entrust the the Foreign and Home Mission Boards the responsibility of administering the missionaries' support.

The missionary thus has a greater sense of security about his support. He doesn't have to be a great speaker, to "know" the right people or to constantly return to America to raise his support. He can concentrate on doing the work God has called him to do. Perhaps that is why Southern Baptists have the largest number of missionaries of all evangelical groups!

Southern Baptists are missionary! Aren't you proud to be a Southern Baptist?

Steve Lemke is professor of religion at Southern Baptist College.

Local consultants to aid new work in state

Eight Arkansans were trained as new work consultants in a seminar held in Little Rock Nov. 15 and 16. They will now be available to work with churches to start and develop the missions they sponsor, under the coordination of Arkansas Church Extension Director Floyd Tidsworth.

The seminar was led by Ken Neibel of the Church Extension Division of the SBC Home Mission Board. The consultants were trained to advise churches and missions on using resources and employing sound prin-

ciples in beginning and developing the new work.

Tidsworth said the consultants will work closely with the associational director of missions and the associational development program where the mission is located.

The consultants, all of whom have been involved in new missions, are the following: Hilton Lane, pastor at Fairfield Bay First Church; Jack Ramsey, pastor at Pine Bluff's Lee Memorial Church; R.H. Dorris, retired state missions director; Roy Nix, a layman

in Immanuel Church of Little Rock; Glenn Hickey, director of Missions for Pulaski Association; Jim Browne, pastor at Cotton Plant First Church; Neal Stevens, pastor at Crossroads Church at Portia; and Troy Prince, retired executive director of the Alaska convention of Baptists.

Requests for consultant help should be directed to Tidsworth at the Missions Department, Arkansas Baptist State Convention, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. The phone number is 376-4791.

Letters to the editor

Important items

There will be two big items before the United States Congress when it meets in January 1985. I think that all Christians should write to their Senators and their Representative in the House about them.

1. Balance the budget. If they do not balance the federal budget, we will very likely face national bankruptcy and our money and investments will be worthless—our own and our church's.

2. Vote no on the Genocide Treaty. This treaty would allow a court outside our country and outside the protection of our Constitution to try us. Therefore, it is unconstitutional. It can take any of us or our minister, church leaders or political leader to trial for "inhumane" acts toward anyone.

These are very important to all of us. — Russ Curry, Bentonville

Good books

Three books that I recommend for pastors: *The New Little Moon Story* by Catherine B. Allen spoke to current problems in the church one hundred years ago. *Baptist Polity* by James Sullivan tells us how boards and conventions function. *Blue Prints* by Lloyd Elder has a wealth of information that could help us face the tomorrows. — John S. Ashcraft, Little Rock

Editor's note:

Thank you for your letter to the editor regarding these, three fine books. I certainly agree with you that these books contain exceedingly helpful information that every pastor should be acquainted with. These books would also be helpful to all lay leadership. — JEJ

It Doesn't Stack Up Without You

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
National Goal: \$66,000,000

Week Of Prayer For Foreign Missions
December 2-9, 1984

Don Moore

You'll be glad to know...

... A millennium of service has been provided in my life time by 30 foreign missionaries who retired last year. I have supported all of them since I was a little boy. I knew none of them personally. One day I will know them well, along with all of those won to Christ through them on their respective fields. My gifts sustained them an average of 40 years and six months each. What a joy will fill my heart

to join these heroes of the faith with their spiritual descendants around the throne to praise the Lord Jesus who gave us abundant life and motivated us to make it available to others.

It is exciting to be a part of a ministry where 30 ordinary people are called, commissioned and supported so that they can provide 1,000 years of witness! This happened because we Southern Baptists have given through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas offering. We must continue to do this. With world needs so great, we need to make unusually sacrificial contributions this year. With our missionaries willing to commit the most productive decades of their lives to the cause, how can we neglect to give them maximum support.

... Who took their places? Many of the retirees left places that have not and will not be filled. Of the 482 requests for evangelistic field missionaries last year, only 52 were filled. Could it be that many pastors call on their people to obey God every week who are not obeying him themselves with regard to missions? Could it be that church leaders' reluctance to become knowledgeable and involved in missions is out of fear that such involvement would necessitate their own consideration of "a call"? Could it be that lack of commitment in giving, praying and going on the part of the laity has grown out of the failure of pastors to enthusiastically educate and inspire their people in missions?

True concern for the lost cannot terminate at the borders of our church fields. Nor can our love for Jesus be so restricted. If its real, it must reach to all.

Let's do our best for foreign missions through the Christmas offering and the resolve to work at missions year 'round in 1985.

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



Moore



Food and fellowship

Virginia Kirk and Jane Purtle

Gifts

"They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh and presented them to him" (Matt. 2:11).

Mary and Joseph must have been surprised and delighted to receive these gifts. The foreign visitors said by their coming that Jesus was an important person in history. They expressed their adoration and appreciation for him through their gifts. Their coming and their gifts meant a lot to Mary and Joseph—and to us. They gave Jesus' parents the courage to protect him at all costs and probably financed the trip into Egypt.

This Christmas when we follow the example of the Eastern worshippers, we, too, express appreciation and care. The gesture of going and saying, "I think you deserve a gift," means a lot. Then we leave behind the gift. And that means a lot too. Even a small container of cookies or a loaf of bread may live in the memory of the receiver for many years.

Few of us have gold, frankincense or myrrh to give, but almost all of us can give the welcome gift of food. If you want your gift to last through year, put it in a useful container—a canister, basket, dish, mug or decorative jar.

The possibilities for gifts are endless. Think of yourself and your resources, what you like to make and what you do well. Then think of your receiver. What will he or she like and find useful? Make up a beverage mix such as spiced tea or hot chocolate and put it in a mug or decorative jar. Place jars of homemade pickles, relish or jelly in a small basket. Or put two kinds of cheese and a box of crackers on a cheese board. Make up a large batch of party mix or granola and package in decorative tins.

If you have time to pick out pecans or other nuts, they will be a most welcome gift for holiday cooking. And don't forget the old standbys—a holiday cake or a plate of cookies. A loaf of sweet bread and a stick of real butter are a welcome change from heavier holiday desserts. Simple things like a canister of homemade Master Mix and some recipes or a sourdough starter and rolls will fit some people on your list.

This luscious holiday cake was given to us many years ago by a friend in our church. It's a good substitute for those who do not like standard fruit cake.

Lemon nut cake

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 lb. real butter | 1 tsp. baking powder |
| 2 cups sugar | 2 oz. lemon extract |
| 6 eggs | 1 cup golden raisins |
| 4 cups flour | 1 lb. coarsely chopped pecans |
| 1 medium-sized bottle maraschino cherries, drained and chopped | |
- Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs and beat well. Add flour, baking powder and lemon extract. Beat. Stir in cherries, raisins and pecans. Bake at 275 degrees for two hours or until done.

Virginia Kirk, professor emeritus at Arkansas College, is a member of Batesville First Church. Jane Purtle, formerly of Batesville, now lives and teaches in Tyler, Texas. They have enjoyed cooking together for several years.

It Doesn't Add Up Without You

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

National Goal: \$66,000,000
Week Of Prayer For
Foreign Missions

December 2-9, 1984



by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

people

M. Brent Fields was ordained to the ministry Nov. 25 at Walnut Street Church in Jonesboro. He began serving Oct. 7 as pastor of the Antoine Church. Fields is a senior at Ouachita Baptist University, majoring in religion and speech.

LaMar Herndon III is serving as pastor of the North Main Church in Sheridan. He formerly served as pastor of the Woodson Church in Little Rock.

R. D. Harrington has resigned as pastor of the East End Church in Hensley to retire.

Lehman Webb of North Little Rock is serving as interim pastor of the Cabot First Church.

Jimmy Vinson has resigned as pastor of Brown's Chapel at Manila to become pastor of the Everett Street Church in Kennett, Mo.

J. D. Passmore has resigned as director of missions of Independence Association

to become pastor of the First Church of Union Gap, Wash.

John Franklin has resigned as minister of education at Calvary Church in Blytheville.

Johnny Smith is serving as pastor of the Dell Church, moving there from Jonesboro. He has served previously as pastor of the Memorial Church in Blytheville.

David Poe has resigned as pastor of the Number Nine Church following six years of service there. He is now serving as pastor of the Wood Springs Church in Jonesboro.

Dale Ellenberg is serving as pastor of the Whitton Church. A native of Greenville, S. C., he is a student at Mid-America Seminary.

Rick Busby has resigned as youth and music director at the Mountain View Church and is residing in Oil Trough.

J. Everett Sneed was speaker for a Nov. 30 naturalization ceremony in which 63 persons received U.S. citizenship. Sneed, editor of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, spoke on freedom of religion and of the press. **Charles Chesser**, pastor of the Carlisle First Church, brought the invocation. Judge **Elsijane Roy** conducted the ceremony.

briefly

Immanuel Church in Little Rock observed "Demonstration Day" Dec. 2. Member contributions totaled \$255,000, the largest offering in the history of the church. The congregation also completed an endowment of \$306,000 for the W.O. Vaught Chair of Bible at Ouachita Baptist University. The endowment fund will remain open to add funds for employing a secretary for the Bible chair.

Grand Avenue Church in Hot Springs honored both the bus ministry and Sunday school workers with a Dec. 8 banquet. **Bob Reno** was speaker.

Southern Baptist College holds annual Bible conference



Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge held its annual Bible conference Dec. 3-5, 1984. Concentrating on the theme "Revive us again," speakers preached from 2 Chronicles 7:14, each taking a phrase from the passage as their text. Program personalities were (front row, left to right) Earl Humble and Steve Lemke, SBC faculty; David Shackleford, Oakhaven

Church, Memphis; Thomas Hinson, First Church, West Memphis; Billy Walker, SBC staff and conference director; (back row) Rex Holt Jr., Central Church, Jonesboro; Lendol Jackson, New Hope Church, Hardy; Bob Barnett, First Church, Gravel Ridge; Kerry Powell, First Church, Forrest City; and David Jackson, Central Church, Jonesboro.

Little Rock book fair brings students, authors together

by Charles Willis

LITTLE ROCK, Ark.—More than 2,000 students from public and private schools in the Little Rock area were brought together with authors and illustrators by the Baptist Book Store here this fall.

The three-day fair attracted the interest of teachers, librarians and school administrators as an opportunity to encourage an interest in reading among students, grade 3-6.

"Reading is one of our priorities," said Juanita Carter, supervisor of library services for the Little Rock School District. "These children have very few opportunities to meet real, live authors. You can just see their interest build," she said of their reaction to the event. "Authors are rather abstract. Here children can see they are real people."

Reflecting that school participation in such an event requires special effort, Carter said the provision of "money for buses, scheduling buses and rescheduling lunches reflect the enthusiasm of both teachers and principals."

Pöłaski Academy's Marylee Nobel, a media specialist, concurred that the fair "encourages children to read more of these authors' books and may be a springboard to more reading, period." Nobel characterized the fair as a "very well organized event. I've been amazed at how cooperative everyone at the Baptist Book Store has been."

Featured personalities included William Armstrong, Robert Burch, Robert Kraus and Annie Fitzgerald.

Armstrong, author of *Sounder*, and Burch, author of *Ida Early Comes Over the Mountain*, answered questions from students who had read their works and discussed factors



Busloads of students formed long lines throughout the three-day event.

that led them to writing careers.

Kraus, an author, illustrator and publisher, read to groups from his books and drew humorous cartoon sketches to illustrate his conversation with students.

Fitzgerald, an illustrator from Limerick, Ireland, drew countless original sketches of her "Dear God Kids" for classes and individuals.

All four autographed books and were on hand at an evening open house to talk with local educators and interested parents who visited the store.

Charles Willis is news media coordinator for the Baptist Sunday School Board.



BSSS photos / Charles Willis

(Below) Author William Armstrong held the attention of group after group of students. (Below right) Book Store Manager Bob Barnett (right) helps busy store clerks assist students with purchases. (Right) Annie Fitzgerald puts the finishing touches on a "Dear God Kids" sketch.



Evangelism leaders express concern over baptism decline

VANCOUVER, B.C. (BP)—Southern Baptist evangelism leaders meeting in Canada expressed "grave concern" after being told baptism of new converts declined during 1983-84.

"We are not winning America to Christ, we are losing," the state directors of evangelism said in a consensus statement. They pledged to pray daily for revival and called on all Southern Baptists to make evangelism their top priority.

During the conference, SBC Home Mission Board researcher Jack Washington presented a statistical report indicating SBC churches baptized about 375,000 new believers during 1983-84, the third consecutive year decline.

Washington pointed out it is the second time in the 1980s the number of baptisms has been below the 400,000 mark.

Washington said his report was based on a telephone survey of the state convention offices, which receive copies of the "Uniform Church Letter" statistical report provided by the 35,000-plus churches affiliated with the 14.1 million member SBC.

Washington said the reports indicate the number of baptisms increased in eight state conventions (plus Puerto Rico).

State conventions reporting increases were Hawaii (up 33 percent), Kansas-Nebraska, Missouri, Nevada, Virginia, Pennsylvania-South Jersey, South Carolina and Wyoming.

Decreases in baptisms were reported by 23 state conventions. Three were the same, and four had no data available, said Washington, HMB research associate.

Washington said the data does not indicate "why" the decline in baptisms occurred during a time when Southern Baptists are placing heavy emphasis on Bold Mission Thrust and evangelism. However, he observed that in 1983, 6,002 SBC churches, almost one-sixth of the total, reported no baptisms during the entire year.

A study of statistics since 1980 revealed the number of adults baptized has remained fairly constant, Washington added. The decreases during the past three years have been primarily among children and youth, Washington said.

As "baby boom" youth grow older, there will be almost five million fewer youth during the later part of the 1980s, according to census reports. Washington predicted the decrease in baptisms is likely to continue unless there is a major change in the trends.

Several speakers during the three-day national conference referred to the statistical decline, suggesting other possible reasons.

Bob Hamblin, SBC Home Mission Board vice-president for evangelism, said the decrease is an indication Southern Baptists are not really concerned about evangelism.

In another speech, C.B. Hogue of Tulsa, Okla., executive director-elect of the California Southern Baptist General Convention, blamed the decline in baptisms and lack of concern about evangelism on the members of SBC churches.

"Do you know why we are down in baptisms?" Hogue asked rhetorically. "It's because we have too many unregenerate members in our churches."

Joe Ford, associate vice-president in the Home Mission Board evangelism section, blamed the decline in baptisms on current controversies in the SBC and Baptist press coverage of controversies.

"Baptisms are down, and I'm not surprised," Ford said. "Even the Baptist press has 'bought into' the value system of the secular press. Rather than seeking to diffuse much of the controversy, they (Baptist editors) have fanned the fires of it in our convention."

"I believe that is a direct cause for the decline in baptisms in our convention," Ford said.

"I'm not laying all the blame at their feet," he added. "I'm simply saying it is time for those who are leaders who do not believe in that to call Baptist press to an accounting and say it is time that we do not feed our people that which they do not need to be dwelling on all the time."

"That's going to be unpopular," Ford acknowledged. "The truth usually is."

Photo by Glendon Grober



Clarence Shell (center), director of the evangelism department for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was elected president of the Southern Baptist state directors of evangelism in their recent meeting in Vancouver, B.C. Don Ledbetter, of Nevada, was elected vice-president, and Jack Smith, of Pennsylvania, was elected secretary-treasurer.

Drugs, gambling still spell 'cash' for organized crime

WASHINGTON (BP)—Drug trafficking and illegal gambling remain major sources of revenue in organized crime's dramatic expansion and diversification, according to testimony given recently before the Presidential Commission on Organized Crime.

"Americans today are victimized not only by traditional crime groups, but also by new criminal networks engaged in narcotics trafficking and numerous other illegal activities, including gambling, extortion and prostitution," Judge Irving R. Kaufman, commission chairman, stated at the hearings.

Hearings focused attention on the emergency of Asian crime "families" from

Japan and Vietnam who, along with motorcycle gangs, represent the new face of organized crime in America.

The Japanese Yazuka, a network of about 100,000 persons, was labeled by Kaufman as "devastating and dangerous." Activities range from money laundering to prostitution. The group has been identified as cooperating with New York crime figures.

Vietnamese operations in 13 different states engage in major gambling operations along with narcotics trade, murder, prostitution and other illegal activities.

Drug smuggling between South America and the United States—and cooperative ef-

orts to combat the massive problem—was special concern of the hearings. Officials in Columbia and Peru have been assassinated during recent attempts to crack down on drug trafficking by organized crime figures.

Anti-gambling expert Larry Braidford, who has followed closely the series of hearings, believes Americans "have grown too complacent about the problem of organized crime and its relationship to many social evils." The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission staff member warned "It is time the public listened anew to its law enforcement officers about this menace that plagues our society."

Snow no barrier to Maine missions volunteer

by Linda Lawson

AUBURN, Maine (BP)—“No, Lord, it snows up there,” was Mary Beth Caffey’s first response at the thought of moving from Waco, Texas, to help churches in upper New England strengthen their educational ministries.

Nonetheless, Caffey began work Sept. 1 as a Mission Service Corps volunteer, with her primary assignment for the next year being to help start eight Sunday schools in Maine where there are now five Southern Baptist churches and two missions.

She will lead in finding buildings and training workers for the Bible study units. “I’m like a minister of education for the state of Maine,” she said.

Caffey, formerly minister of education at Park Lake Drive Church in Waco, also is a youth consultant for the Baptist Convention of New England.

Caffey’s move to the Northeast was the next step in a spiritual journey that began last February. “I came to a point in my life that I wanted to do whatever the Lord wanted—wherever he wanted me to do it,” she noted.

Funds to support her two-year term as a volunteer were provided by the Virginia State Convention (partnership convention with New England) and from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board’s contract funds for starting new Sunday schools. Also, “churches and individuals in Texas have given sacrificially to help me,” said Caffey.

Even though the 23 years of Baptist work in Maine often have been characterized by struggle, Caffey believes churches in the state are now in a position to grow. However, a lack of space and money to buy land and buildings remain two major barriers, she noted.

“It has amazed me the positive attitudes these people have,” Caffey reflected. “Any space they can turn into a class they are using in our churches. They have a mentality of not making excuses. These people are raised adapting. I tell them they are troopers,” she said.

While Caffey’s seminary training and church experience are valuable assets in training workers, she is quick to emphasize she is gaining valuable spiritual insights from the people with whom she works.

“The folks in Maine are ready to see God work. They believe God is going to do something,” said Caffey. “Anyone can get the education. These folks have the spirit. They know the God to whom they are praying. I’m learning from them to have vision.”

Caffey, who spent 12 days in New England in May while deciding to make the move, said she came to Maine knowing the problems as well as the opportunities.



Mary Beth Caffey (right), who is helping start eight new Sunday schools in Maine as a full-time, self-supporting Mission Service Corps volunteer, talks with Al Riddley, director of religious education for the Baptist Convention of New England.

“They shot straight with me before I came up,” she said. “They made sure I knew the way it could be. I knew what I was coming into. I’m extremely grateful for that.”

Caffey said it is difficult to predict how many of the new units will become missions or churches. “I do know we’re getting ready to grow. I don’t know what that will mean numerically. If we gain two or three new churches out of this, each will be a group reaching people for Christ.”

New units in Maine do not have the luxury of drawing from long-time Southern Baptist church members to help them get started, Caffey emphasized.

“They have to win people to the Lord. There is no Southern Baptist base to draw on. That’s the kind of challenge these folks have,” she said.

Linda Lawson is news supervisor for the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Baptist leaders from five nations plan global evangelism meeting

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Baptist leaders from five nations have taken a step in what could evolve into a cooperative effort among Christians of all cultures to saturate the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Leaders from Brazil, Nigeria, Korea, Jamaica and the United States met Nov. 20 in Richmond, Va., to begin planning a three-day Global Consultation on World Evangelization next summer. The meeting will be held June 26-28 in connection with the Southern Baptist Foreign Missions Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

The meeting could lead to a new level of world cooperation among Baptists, sharing resources such as people, money and visa availability to fulfill a common global strategy.

The consultation will cover various approaches to evangelization, including testimonies of Baptists who have been successful in specific types of evangelism throughout the world. Delegates will decide what to recommend—if anything—in moving toward a cooperative world mission strategy. No recommendation will be binding on the Baptist bodies represented.

"In this time in which we live, there is a global effort in almost every human endeavor," said Jamaica Azariah McKenzie, executive secretary of the Caribbean Baptist

Fellowship. "God's people should be out in front, launching global efforts, but unfortunately the church has trailed in this."

During the planning session the group agreed missions can no longer be seen as reaching out to Third World countries but must be envisioned as all cultures reaching back and forth to each other. God has dealt different measures of various gifts to different national groups, the leaders decided, and these should be shared. Global cooperation, they agreed, will require those who previously received missionaries to think of themselves as senders, and vice versa.

"I see what we are trying to do here as a higher step, a great improvement over partnership between a convention and missionaries on the field," said Samuel T. Ola Akande, the Nigerian Baptist Convention's general secretary. "Here people can share from all over the world. We can learn from sharing together."

Up to five members will be invited from each national Baptist group attending, and the conference probably will be conducted in six languages. Attendance will be by invitation only, and those who come will provide their own travel funds. Southern Baptists will participate in the consultation as equal partners with other Baptist groups.

"This is not a consultation like we've had in the past to talk about the work of the

Foreign Mission Board," said the Southern Baptist board's president, R. Keith Parks. "What we're talking about is sitting down as equal partners to talk about how the various ones of us who are involved in foreign missions can coordinate and plan strategy in order to better reach the whole world."

Parks hopes the ideas which emerge from the consultation will make an impact on other Baptist groups and on other Christians beyond Baptists. "But we have to start in a limited arena, and model something that is 'productive,'" he said. "Then on the basis of some actual happenings we would be in a position to share it in a broader Baptist, or even a broader Christian, fellowship."

Waldemiro Tymchak, executive secretary for Brazilian Baptists' World Mission Board, said he could see several possible areas of worldwide cooperation, including: many groups focusing on reaching an individual city with the gospel; groups helping other groups who are not sending missionaries but who want to do so, and groups sharing their resources to educate Christian leaders and meet physical human needs.

"Partnership can combine all the world's people and create (spiritual) power, I believe that," said Stephen No, director of Baptist Church Development for the Korea Baptist Convention. "Partnership is the word the world needs this day."

Brazilian Baptists sacrificing to finance missions

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—With an annual inflation rate of more than 200 percent and currency devaluation, Brazilian Baptists dedicated to a strong foreign missions effort face what appears to be an impossible task.

But God achieves the impossible, according to Waldemiro Tymchak, executive secretary of the Brazilian World Mission Board. He believes Brazil's Baptists are able to maintain 100 missionaries in 15 countries on four continents only because God never fails.

"From the point of view of that which is practical, it seems impossible," said Tymchak during a recent visit to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. "But we can see the greatness of God in using us to do that which is impossible."

Their first obstacle is inflation. Giving has become more sacrificial as the annual inflation rate has built to 215 percent. But with such rapid inflation, money loses 30 percent of its worth between the time churches collect it and the time it reaches the board.

A second obstacle is devaluation of the cruzeiro, Brazil's unit of money. Cruzeiros given in missions offerings must be sent overseas in fixed dollar amounts. Because of the cruzeiro's devaluation it took more than two times (230 percent) as many cruzeiros

to equal the same number of dollars sent to the field last year.

"It's a challenge, but it is a victorious challenge. We're not really defeated in this, because the more struggles we have, the more victories we have," Tymchak said. "When we submit ourselves to God's will to do missions in the context of all these difficulties, God never fails—he always blesses. We have observed this: we send, but we are the ones blessed."

Because Brazilian Baptists have committed themselves to missions, their missions program has continued to expand. "What we need to see today more than anything else is that God is acting. He is moving among our churches in Brazil in light of the fact that we are developing a greater missionary vision. God has said, 'Go!' and our people continue to obey."

More than 360 churches have been organized annually in Brazil during recent years, Tymchak said. Many of them, though unable to build a meeting place, have raised large sums for mission offerings. And thousands of young people have been called into the ministry in the midst of economic hardship.

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Cauthen receiving therapy at home

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)—Baker James Cauthen is receiving outpatient therapy at his apartment near Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., after being released from a rehabilitation hospital Nov. 23.

The executive director-emeritus of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board is

making good progress following a mild stroke he suffered Oct. 22, according to Mrs. Cauthen. He is walking outside some with a cane and exercising to help regain strength in his left hand and arm, she said.

The Cauthens plan to fly to their son's home in Greensboro, N.C., Dec. 16 and then drive to their home in Richmond, Va.

Korea evangelism campaign leads 7,200 to Christ

SEOUL, South Korea (BP)—Nearly 7,200 people committed their lives to Christ during a recent partnership evangelism crusade in South Korea.

The October crusade teamed 150 Southern Baptist volunteers from more than 20 states with missionaries and Korean Baptists in 34 churches for two weeks of evangelistic church services, home visitation

and special outreach events. The American volunteers were recruited through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Almost 3,000 decisions for Christ were recorded in churches and homes. More than 4,000 others came in schools, hospitals, prisons and factories reached by partnership teams. Another 226 Koreans committed themselves to vocational Christian service.

Mexico cancels TV programs, leaves door open

MEXICO CITY (BP)—The government of Mexico has canceled broadcasts of two Baptist television programs, citing the Mexican constitution's prohibition of references to God and the Bible on radio and television.

But the government left open the door for continued Baptist programming as long as it falls within government limitations and gains prior approval from the interior department, which regulates broadcasting.

A government official said the two canceled programs—"Circle Three" and the "JOT" cartoon series—violate the constitutional

limit, according to Sofia Alarcón, general manager of the National Baptist Convention of Mexico's media department.

"Circle Three" is a 39-part series featuring interviews, music and short evangelistic messages that has been broadcast widely in Latin America. It was produced by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. The "JOT" cartoons, produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, communicate Christian values such as honesty, obedience to parents, sharing and forgiveness.

Shortage of training produces surplus of woes

DALLAS (BP)—Much of the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention can be related to the lack of training in SBC churches, said Jimmy Draper, immediate past president of the SBC.

Speaking at the Texas state church training convention, Draper, pastor of First Church, Euless, Texas, said, "To solve this problem (the controversy) we need to redirect our energies. We have been making good time," he said, "but we've been going in the wrong direction."

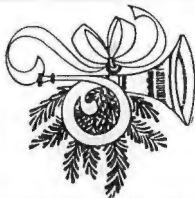
Draper used his church as an example saying he baptized 200 adults every year who "don't know Southern Baptist history or what Southern Baptist believe." He said, "Church training can help achieve goals and needs that we as a convention have today."

He also said Southern Baptists will never find unity in such things as theology or geography. "We will find unity in commitment to Jesus Christ in his effort to redeem the world. We must identify with Christ in reaching the world through evangelism, missions and starting new churches."

W. Winfred Moore, pastor of First Church, Amarillo, and president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, echoed Draper's remarks by saying, "Baptists need church training because we've got multitudes who are quitters. We need to learn to be obedient to God's word. The most prevalent sin is that of disobedience which began in the Garden of Eden and has continued. There is no substitute for obedience."

Moore said Texas Baptists have arrived at a time "when his call takes priority over everything in our lives to save our state, nation and world."

Participants at the convention, the first in more than 15 years, also were challenged to commit themselves to Mission Texas, a five-year strategy which keys on spiritual awakening, reaching people, developing believers, strengthening missions and stewardship growth.



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Treasury tax plan would axe ministers' housing benefits

WASHINGTON (BP)—Besides establishing what many religious leaders feel would amount to a disincentive to charitable giving, the Treasury Department tax simplification plan would also do away with ministers' housing benefits.

Under the plan unveiled by Secretary of the Treasury Donald T. Regan, clergy housing allowances would be shelved by striking from the Internal Revenue Code a 1954 provision designed to create tax equity in clergy housing.

By doing away with clergy housing allowances altogether, the Treasury proposal would resolve a nearly two-year dispute over a 1983 IRS decision to deny clergy the nor-

mal deductions for mortgage interest and real estate taxes to the extent these expenses were paid from a tax-exempt housing allowance.

Darold H. Morgan, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Annuity Board, reacted strongly to the proposal, declaring it would have "a devastating impact on ministers, particularly those who have lived in parsonages all their active careers and are having to buy or rent homes for the first time in retirement."

Annuity Board general counsel Gary Nash also pointed to other provisions in the Treasury Department's plan that would have a negative impact on other "fringe benefits"

currently enjoyed by ministers as well as others. Benefits which would no longer be excluded from taxable income under the Treasury Department proposal include health insurance above caps of \$175 monthly for family coverage and \$70 monthly for individual coverage, group-term life insurance, and employer-provided death benefits.

Secretary Regan's massive set of recommendations, filling three thick volumes, has been presented to the President for review. Regan thus far has given no indication which of the many proposals he will accept before sending a comprehensive tax reform package to Congress early next year.

'Feminization of poverty' confronts church

WASHINGTON (BP)—The face of poverty in America increasingly is assuming the appearance of a single female with the sole responsibility of caring for her children.

"Despite all the jawboning and rhetoric about an economic recovery, the tragic trend toward the 'feminization of poverty' is getting worse rather than better," according to Foy Valentine, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Valentine cited a recent study by the Congressional Budget Office which reported women now make up 42 percent of the labor force, yet comprise over 66 percent of the people living in poverty.

Additional data from the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor and Statistics indicate last year 16.5 million persons in families headed by a single female were living in poverty. That figure represents almost

one-half the number of Americans—about 35 million—who were classified as poor.

During 1983 the government defined the poverty line at \$10,178 annual income for a family of four.

The poverty level for the nation as a whole in 1983 was slightly more than 15 percent. But among the 12 million households headed by females—many senior citizens—40 percent lived below the official poverty line, surpassing the poverty rate among blacks (35.7 percent) and Hispanics (28.4 percent).

Among racial minorities, more than half of the female-headed households lived below the federal poverty line.

Statistics indicate "not only are the numbers of female-headed households growing, but the economic conditions in those homes are worsening," said Valentine. "According to a study by the Urban Institute,

disposable income of these families shrank by an average of \$400 per family from 1980 through 1984."

The intertwined problems of poverty, hunger and disease, he added, "clearly affect most those who have the least visibility and political power."

In 1983, Valentine pointed out, another 900,000 persons slipped below the poverty line, and "almost two of every five of these so-called 'new poor' were children under the age of six."

Recent studies indicate 22 percent of America's children now live in poverty.

"Southern Baptists, under the lordship of Jesus Christ, who stood compassionately with the poor, the weak, the hungry and the powerless, must renew our commitment to social action that leads to genuine economic justice," he said.

Wamble wins parochial aid suit in Missouri

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)—Allowing federally-funded teachers to conduct classes in Missouri's parochial schools is a violation of the separation of church and state, according to a ruling by U.S. District Judge Joseph E. Stevens Jr. of Kansas City Nov. 28 in the case of *Wamble v. Bell*.

The suit, filed in 1977 by Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor G. Hugh Wamble, focused on the constitutionality of "Title I of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended."

A "bypass" provision applicable to Title I was adopted by the U.S. Congress in 1974. It allowed the federal government to bypass state departments of education in order to provide specific services to parochial school children. The particular program in question involves remedial classes in reading, language arts and mathematics to low-income students who receive below-average scores on standardized tests.

The bypass provision specifically allows the federal government to pay a third party which, in turn, hires teachers to conduct classes at parochial schools during regular school hours.

The Missouri program, funded by the federal government at an annual budget of \$2.2 million, serves some 3,700 elementary school students at 157 religiously-affiliated schools, primarily Catholic and Lutheran.

Judge Stevens ruled providing the instruction at parochial schools offers a risk of excessive entanglement of church and state. He stayed the injunction, however, until the U.S. Supreme Court rules on a similar New York case on which it is scheduled to hear oral arguments Dec. 5.

Stevens noted his ruling was prompted "by the necessity of preserving one of the most cherished freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution."

He went on to explain the program creates

dangers that teachers will be influenced by a religious school environment and might present ideological views to students.

The federal judge said providing necessary supervision of the program to insure there was no excessive entanglement of church and state would itself create excessive entanglement.

Wamble, who personally argued the case before Stevens, described the ruling as "basically a strong decision."

However, the seminary professor questioned both the excessive length of time before the ruling was made and the decision to stay the injunction pending the outcome of another case.

Pointing to the non-establishment of religion clause in the First Amendment, Wamble added, "The resolution of the constitutional question has been unresolved by the delay. The delay has abused the rights of every citizen."

Baptist leaders negative to proposed tax changes

WASHINGTON (BP)—Southern Baptist leaders are reacting with concern and perplexity to the provision in the Treasury Department's comprehensive tax reform plan which would allow deductions for charitable contributions only after they exceed two percent of the taxpayer's adjusted gross income.

Baptist officials interviewed by Baptist Press for initial reactions to the plan sent to President Reagan by Treasury Secretary Donald T. Regan Nov. 28 expressed fear the plan would curtail giving to churches, church-related institutions and other charitable causes. Their criticisms ranged from philosophical to practical.

James M. Dunn, executive director of the Washington-headquartered Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, issued a statement declaring, "All of our churches are clearly committed to meeting basic human need as an aspect of gospel ministry. Hurting people are helped by commonly accepted incentives of a national tax policy which encourages charitable giving."

Dunn, whose group represents the church-state concerns of the Southern Baptist Convention and several other U.S. Baptist bodies in the nation's capital, added: "We now face a cruel contradiction when the Administration calls upon the private sector—including churches—to respond to hunger and homelessness at the same time another part of that same government suggests a tax package that will actually discourage giving by the majority of Americans who contribute only a modest percentage of their income to charity."

That apparent contradiction in the administration tax philosophy was criticized as a "shameful and erroneous line of thinking" by Belmont College President William Trout.

Trout, whose Nashville, Tenn. school is affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, expressed frustration with the plan, saying it is actually a "modification of tax expenditure theories" advanced in an earlier day by liberal economists. That view, Trout said, holds that what goes to charity ought to be going instead to government. He expressed surprise such a view is being advanced by the supposedly conservative Reagan administration.

"A lot of people would like to see us (church-related colleges and churches) out of business," he declared, adding that over time the tax philosophy advanced in the Treasury plan "would mean the end to most charitable institutions." Even more important, he said, "it would signal an end to the pluralistic society and freedom we cherish as Americans and usher in big government in its most complete and final form."

The basic legal groundwork for the view that tax exemption for charitable institutions

is expendable was laid two years ago by the U.S. Supreme Court, Trout said, when in the cases of *Regan v. Taxation with Representation* and *Bob Jones University v. U.S.*, a narrow high court majority ruled tax exemption is a form of governmental subsidy.

Cecil A. Ray, national director of the SBC Planned Growth in Giving campaign, also expressed concern about the potential growth of government suggested in the Regan plan and insisted private organizations are more efficient in spending money than is government. Ray cited studies showing private groups' ability to make a given sum go two to three times as far as government does in providing the same social services.

Ray, whose assignment with the SBC Executive Committee is designed to enlarge dramatically Southern Baptists' level of giving as part of the denomination's Bold Mission effort, declared further: "It is vital to the welfare of our nation and its religious life that the government continue to encourage the principle of private support of churches, charities and private institutions. To destroy this principle of American life would result in a sad loss of the quality of life and in an added tax burden."

Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, said he is "strongly opposed" to the proposal and believes it would reduce what some persons give to churches, colleges, seminaries and other charities.

We now face a "cruel contradiction," being asked to assume responsibility for caring for the poor while Americans are discouraged to give.

"Although many Southern Baptists contribute much more than two percent of their income to their church, the average church member gives only two percent to his church," Bennett added. "If this amount were disallowed as a charitable contribution some—and perhaps hundreds of thousands—would cease to give anything." He expressed concern also that the plan "would penalize the liberal giver."

SBC Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan reacted by insisting, "Certainly we believe in rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but it is disturbing to see the traditional tax incentives for charitable giving treated as loopholes to be closed."

He added: "It is ironic the Treasury proposals to address the huge budget deficits of this country would disallow charitable giving deductions for the first two percent of adjusted gross income given to charity and wipe out the present favorable tax treatment for larger gifts of appreciated property to charity, when the Reagan administration is looking to churches and other charitable

organizations to pick up the country's social needs resulting from cuts in government social and welfare programs."

Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Education Commission, said he is concerned the two percent threshold might be increased "once it has been established."

Walker, whose job includes encouraging large donors to give to Baptist colleges, said such schools "will be greatly affected" because large donors will not be able to claim tax deductions for larger gifts of appreciated property. The Regan package, he said, "will certainly affect the very existence of private higher education."

Two executive directors whose state conventions voted earlier this month to divide Cooperative Program gifts 50-50 between state Baptist causes and the national SBC programs had differing reactions.

Joe L. Ingram, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, said like Walker, "I'm afraid they would keep raising" the two percent threshold. Calling the tax deductibility provision a "time-honored practice," Ingram said the government "either ought to say gifts are deductible or not deductible."

"They (government officials) ought to leave us alone," he concluded.

Dan C. Stringer, executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention, said that while he would be concerned if tax deductibility were removed altogether, "I'm not going to wring my hands over two percent." He said further, "The two percent factor is far below what we call on our people to give, particularly as we enter into Planned Growth in Giving," the program led by Ray which challenges Southern Baptists to give between 15 and 25 percent of their gross income to their churches.

"I don't think this would cause real, committed Christian stewards to stop giving," Stringer explained, adding: "I would not back off at all... because I'm giving from a different motive altogether."

A number of charitable institutions expected to suffer most if the Regan plan were to become law are not-for-profit hospitals, among them many Baptist hospitals and medical centers.

A spokesman for the largest such facility related to Southern Baptists, Baptist Memorial Hospital of Memphis, Tenn., said the Regan plan "appears to invade the area of charitable giving" and "is certain to adversely affect the amount of gifts received for charitable purposes."

Ray Jennings, director of communications at the hospital, told Baptist Press that while the facility receives no Cooperative Program funds, it relies on private contributions "to help provide care for the indigent, to establish new services and to support educational activities and research."

Your state convention at work

Christian Life Council

Fraudulent advertising

The October 1984 issue of the Harvard Medical School health letter gives helpful clues for spotting misleading advertisements. It's important to look for words like "miracle," "cure" or "breakthrough."



Parker

Among other signs of fraudulent ads are that (1) the product doesn't identify ingredients and (2) the product is declared all "natural."

The Christmas season is a time when young and old alike are deceived most by products that often call themselves "natural" and which refuse to list their ingredients as do other products.

Recently, a Cleveland State University researcher, upon examining drinking attitudes and habits in relation to exposure to advertising, reported the more adolescents see attractive ads, the more liquor they consume.

"Thus has the Lord of hosts said, dispense true justice, and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor, and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another" (Zech. 7:9-10). — **Bob Parker, director**

Evangelism

A victorious life

It is very important for a Christian witness to live a victorious life. When a person has sin in his life, it mars his fellowship with God. The only solution to sin is confession.



Shell

Confession of sin restores one to a renewed fellowship with the Heavenly Father. I John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The word "confess" is a present tense verb. That means we need to confess continually as sins enter into our lives. In genuine confession, there are three elements involved. There is a genuine sorrow for the sin. There is a willingness to turn from that sin. There is a feeling of gratitude to God for taking away that sin.

To live the victorious life, one must be willing to receive cleansing by faith. Just as one is saved by faith, one is cleansed by

their faith in Christ. God says that he will cleanse one from all unrighteousness. The believer must accept this by faith.

The victorious Christian will continue in God's grace and forget past sins. The Bible purposely says that sins are removed "as far as the east is from the west" because this cannot be measured. The Bible also says that God will put our sins behind his back to remember them no more. To know real victory, the Christian witness must confess his sins, be forgiven his sins and forget his sins. — **Clarence Shell, director**

Missions

Revitalized churches

The church started in the 50's. It was located 11 miles from town on a rural dirt road. Only a few farm families lived on the church field.



Tidsworth

But in recent years much has changed. The trend has been for people to leave the city. Many new homes have been built on the church field in the last 10 years. Of course, the road where the church house is located is blacktopped.

More than 1,000 people now live within five miles of the church building.

The church is responding to the new challenge. A pastor who can give time to visiting the unchurched, developing disciples, and leading the church has been called. Plans are in the making for modernizing and enlarging the church building. Ministries that involve all family members are being initiated. Members will be trained to visit and witness.

This is a good example of a revitalized church. Let us know if we can be of help to your church as it responds to the opportunities of the present. — **Floyd Tidsworth Jr., church extension director**

Stewardship/Annuity

The gifts that give

Charles Dickens' Christmas character, Scrooge, sent a fund raiser away empty-handed. Scrooge would not respond to pleas for the poor.

While we still have scrooges among us, most Americans are considered generous. We give dollars to door-to-door fund raisers and write checks to charitable causes.

In 1982, Americans gave approximately \$65 million for various causes with about half the amount going to churches.

The Internal Revenue Service reports on average contributions. The poor give bet-

ter than the rich. Those with under \$10,000 income gave an average of \$572 while those in the \$200,000-500,000 income bracket gave an average of \$12,199.

Whether rich or poor, Christmas stirs the spirit of giving. How can Baptists give gifts that continue to give?

Local church or mission projects are always worthy of consideration. Most churches can spot a need. The poor are never far away and some struggling church can complete a classroom with an additional contribution.

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering parades needs before us. Some mission projects are not started, others incomplete, because funds are lacking.

Arkansas Baptist institutions, Ouachita, Southern and the Family and Child Care Services are always in a receptive mood because they have real needs.

Gifts that continue to give bless the giver today and the recipients for generations. — **James A. Walker, director**

Family and Child Care

Thanks, Arkansas Baptists

Thank you, Arkansas Baptists, for your Thanksgiving Offering for our child care ministry. Your participation helps us continue reaching out to hundreds of hurting children and families. You have shown your concern and interest for children by your offering.

Arkansas Baptists have demonstrated their concern and compassion for our children for the past 90 years. Because of your interest, our child care ministry has grown in its ministry to boys and girls.

During the past year, we provided care and direction for 99 children at the Children's Home. Our Emergency Receiving Homes in Little Rock, Sherwood and Camden provided love and care to 217 abused, neglected and needy children, ages birth to 12. Our Group Home for Boys in Jonesboro cared for six boys during the year. Through our area offices in Little Rock, Jonesboro, Fayetteville, Harrison and Hope, our workers responded to 1,044 new referrals this year.

To those churches and individuals who make monthly contributions or take their offering at another time we say, "Thank you".

Please remember, we close our financial books shortly after Jan. 1. We will credit all gifts that arrive prior to the closing of our books for the current year. It will be helpful if we can receive these offerings by Dec. 31, 1984. A list of these contributions will be published in the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*.

Thank you for expressing your concern through your gifts. — **John A. Ross, director of development**

International

A witness to good news

by Randy Maxwell, West Church, Batesville

Basic passage: Acts 8:26-40

Focal passage: Acts 8:26-40

A pastor in a Chicago suburb was unusually late for the morning worship service. Many had seen him earlier in his study, and some of the men began to get worried. Finally, they sent one of the deacons back to his study to see what was the problem. When the deacon approached the study, he heard the preacher from within crying. He knocked on the door and proceeded on into the study.

When asked about the situation, the pastor replied, "Look out over all those houses. All of those people right around this church, hundreds within the sound of our chimes. People that we are not reaching, and it doesn't even bother me like it used to!"

There is a lost world out there, right around your church. In all likelihood you have friends, neighbors and maybe even loved ones who are lost. Does it bother you any more?

Many spend their time performing humanitarian deeds and easing their conscience concerning our Lord's Great Commission. Others become so wrapped up in the organization and work of the church that they simply do not have time to be the witness that Christ has called each of us to be.

But Philip was concerned. So was his he conscious of the need to be available as God's voicepiece that this deacon soon became known as "the evangelist."

Notice how the Holy Spirit used the Word of God as the Ethiopian eunuch read from the prophecy of Isaiah. As he read from that Suffering Servant passage, Philip asked if he understood what he was reading. When the eunuch responded in the negative, Philip immediately began to share Jesus with him.

Let us remember as we share Christ that it is his holy Word that brings about conviction. Remember Paul tells us in 2 Timothy that the Word is profitable for reproof. Through the Bible, we can see our need for Christ and his ability to save us.

As we see in Hebrews 4:12, the Bible shows us things that we cannot perceive on our own. The Word of God can perform that spiritual surgery that can lead to life eternal. Let us be ready like Philip to use this powerful instrument to help bring others to the saving knowledge of our Lord.

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Life and Work

Mary

by Leroy P. Stringfield, First Church, Jacksonville

Basic passage: Luke 1:38, 42-55

Focal passage: Luke 1:38

Central truth: We need to realize God's blessings are related to our submissiveness.

Reflecting upon Mary's experiences during the Christmas season can be a good spiritual exercise. The celebration of Jesus' birth may be akin to the gladness of Elizabeth when she discovered Mary's role.

A hint about Mary's paradoxical role is noted in Luke 1:35, when the writer recorded, "the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." "Overshadow" is a figure of a cloud coming upon Mary. In the minds of many biblical people, a cloud represented the glory of God. Modern people often consider a cloud to be a sign of foreboding and impending darkness or danger. Perhaps both ideas fit Mary's unique position.

Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (v. 38, KJV). The unborn forerunner, John, reacted to the recognition of Mary's role by leaping within Elizabeth's womb (v. 41). Elizabeth reacted by pronouncing a blessing upon Mary (v. 42). Mary reacted to others' recognitions by saying, "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (v. 46).

John's recognition of Jesus was a yielding to Messiah. Elizabeth's loud cry was a moment of ecstatic excitement honoring the superior role of Mary (v. 43). Mary's rejoicing was not excitement but a spirit of composed rapture. Each reaction was submissive.

Mary's submissive words in verse 38 are joyfully heavy. The Magnificat (vv. 46-55) shows Mary's mind was full of the Old Testament and its message of God's word. The mother of Messiah rejoiced for her privilege, but she probably simultaneously was aware of the prophecy of the Suffering Servant.

Mary's submission becomes a great lesson for contemporary believers. To be chosen by the Lord so often means that one shares both a crown of joy and a cross of sorrow. Mary's blessedness meant that she someday would see her son hanging on a cross.

Christians should rejoice in the blessings of Christmas, but the old year will become a new year. The joys may soon turn into tasks. Submission to God's will can be a reality if one will say with Mary, "Be it unto me according to thy word." Then the Word that was made flesh nearly 2,000 years ago can dwell more among people now.

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Bible Book

Old sins repeated

by Tom Smith, First Church, Bentonville

Basic passage: Isaiah 56:1 to 59:21

Focal passage: Isaiah 58:2-9a; 59:1-3

Central truth: One who continues his sinful habits after "salvation" reveals an unrepentant attitude

Faith and works has always been a lively topic of discussion for Christians, particularly among Baptists. Some well-meaning persons have even gone so far as to state that James and the Apostle Paul disagreed on the subject. This is truly an error. Both of these men of God agree that dynamic faith brings about a change in one's thinking and living. Our actions are rooted in our beliefs and vice versa.

The prophet Isaiah would have agreed with Paul and James. He, like Father Abraham, knew that right relationship produces right living. In this powerful passage, Isaiah clearly delineates the "Characteristics of the Corrupt and the Converted." Salvation does not automatically produce perfection. However, it does cause one to live in such a way that others sit up and take notice.

The "Characteristics of the Corrupt" are very pointed. Their idolatry has caused them to become insensitive (57:1, 5). Their infidelity (57:3) to God has caused them to judge others (57:4) and to become confused like muddy water (57:20). The end result of all this is unrest (57:21).

Everyone knows that it is useless to bathe a hog, to pour perfume on its head and tie a ribbon around its neck. The moment the door is open; the pig returns to its sty. The same is true of one who professes salvation but is unregenerate in his nature. Soon, the "newness" wears off and the unrepentant professor returns to his old way of life. Isaiah's vivid depiction of this lifestyle (59:1-13) is startling in its relevance for today's world.

The "Characteristics of the Converted" are likewise plain. One who is united with God expresses his love through service (56:6). This contrite and humble-spirited person (57:15) will daily seek God's ways (58:1) and delights to learn more about the Master (58:2).

God's sanctification brings assurance (56:5, 7; 57:13; 58:9, 11), joy (56:7), and peace (57:18-19). But let no one be misled. God's judgment is sure (59:1-2), and our sins do separate us if we fail to confess them and repent.

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Louisiana Baptist group studying options

PINEVILLE, La. (BP)—A group of Louisiana Baptists who are concerned about the future of the Southern Baptist Convention met in Pineville and decided to study the options for change open to them.

The informal meeting of about 30 persons, mostly pastors, "came into being out of concern... that the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention was not going to change unless someone determined to change it," explained John Harris, pastor of Pineville Park Church, where the meeting was held.

Although the meeting was held during the annual session of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, participants reiterated their feeling that their focus was on the Southern Baptist Convention, not the LBC.

"This is an SBC meeting. This has nothing to do with the Louisiana Baptist Convention," said Joe Blair, pastor of First Church in Ruston, who affirmed the "diversity and harmony" of the Louisiana convention.

"My heart is split in two over this," added John Robson, pastor of Southside Church in Baton Rouge. "As a Louisiana Baptist, I don't think we need this.... Louisiana Baptists will pay a price as a result of organization. But I do agree something needs to be done statewide."

"We do have, it's quite obvious, a schism in our (national) convention," said Pat Harrison, pastor of Parkview Church in Monroe, who acted as facilitator for the meeting and led a discussion of the state of affairs within

the SBC which focused on control of the convention by a "fundamentalist faction."

Harrison expressed a desire to see "denominational loyalists... recapture the balance" within the SBC. The group discussed for more than an hour the options available to help lead the SBC back to a more centrist position.

They noted politicized groups of various viewpoints in existence in other states and expressed concern about the ethical validity and schismatic dangers of "ward politics."

However, they affirmed the concept of denominational education designed to inform Southern Baptists about both their heritage and the modern-day circumstances of the SBC. They also affirmed the idea of encouraging as many Southern Baptists as possible to attend the SBC in Dallas, next June, so the convention's democratic process can function as it was intended.

With those affirmations in mind, the participants empowered Harrison to appoint a five-member "steering committee" which will explore options of education, information and perhaps organization available.

Earl Guinn of Monroe, president emeritus of Louisiana College and emeritus professor of preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., encouraged the younger ministers in their objective. "None of us here would opt for a struggle. We want peace," he said. "But I see so much at stake that silence would be an evil."

Local Presbyterian church wins fight

WASHINGTON (BP)—A dispute between a Presbyterian congregation and its mother church body came to a close when the U.S. Supreme Court let stand a lower ruling leaving the church property in question under the control of the local church.

In a one-line order announced Nov. 26, the high court declined to review a May 1984 decision of the court of appeals of New York that the First Presbyterian Church of Schenectady, N.Y., is not subject to the jurisdiction of its presbytery or of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in a dispute over the congregation's property.

The battle began in January 1977 when the local membership voted 334-4 to sever relations with the denomination over doctrinal differences. Only days after that action, the presbytery of Albany appointed an administrative commission to replace the local "session" on grounds that the decision to sever relations "violated church law."

Instead of appealing the presbytery's action to a higher church tribunal, the congregation took the presbytery to court. After a federal district court refused to enter the case, First Presbyterian sought and received a trial in a state court.

The Schenectady congregation argued the Presbyterian denomination is not hierarchical but "connectional" and "the power flows from the people upward through the church courts in contrast to an episcopal or strictly hierarchical system where the power flows from the top down."

The congregation also noted it was founded around 1760, some 30 years before the denomination's founding, that its own incorporation papers make no mention of any denominational affiliation, and that the denomination's Book of Order contained no language requiring that property in dispute revert to the denomination.

(Only in 1981, after numerous congregations successfully convinced civil courts that property in dispute belonged to them and not to the denomination did the old Presbyterian Church insert into the Book of Order a provision that local church property belongs to the denomination.)

For more than 110 years the Supreme Court has been faced with the peculiar church property problems within the Presbyterian denomination, in large measure because the Presbyterian polity is neither purely hierarchical nor congregational.

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