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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

12-6-1984

December 6, 1984

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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December 6, 1984

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

Celebrating the past,
anticipating the future
pages 8-9

On the cover



ABN photo / Millie Gill

Wilma McCandis and Judy Newton, members of Viola First Church, joined in celebration of that congregation's 100th anniversary Nov. 18. Donning the garb of days gone by, church members commemorated a century of Christian ministry in Viola.

In this issue

7 a ministry of books

For more than three decades, Arkansas Imogene DeLap of Fayetteville has helped others grow in Christ through her ministry as a media librarian.

12 more SBC aid to Ethiopia

Southern Baptists have sent \$50,000 in emergency relief aid to missionaries in southwest Ethiopia to minister to victims of that country's terrible drought and famine.

Student Day at Christmas offers sharing time

NASHVILLE—Student Day at Christmas should offer every student who wants to participate an opportunity to share their spiritual growth experience with their home church, according to two church staff professionals.

"If they're willing to get up there, I will find something for them to do," said Don Lum, minister of youth and activities at First Church, Columbia, Miss.

"My Mission on Campus" is the theme of this year's program sponsored by national student ministries of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

The program can fulfill three purposes within the church, according to Richard Carter, minister of education and youth at Noland Road Church, Independence, Mo.

Student Day at Christmas can allow students to share experiences and express feelings, help the church learn more about Baptist Student Union and campus ministry activities and show the students that the church does care about them, Carter said.

"Student Day at Christmas is important for the students and the church," Lum said. "Our people have pride in seeing young people they taught in earlier years sharing their experiences in front of the congregation.

Carter suggests that leaders in the college Sunday school department begin planning

early by writing students at school and assigning program responsibilities.

Lum said he usually gives the students a topic to discuss related to the theme.

Combining a youth and college choir for the Student Day at Christmas service could have a positive impact on high school students, Carter suggested.

High school students may not be thinking at the time that they will be up there in a few years," Lum said. "But when their time comes, they can look back and remember that someone has done it before."

Fellowship activities can help the church express appreciation to the college students. Carter suggests a breakfast in the home of a department leader on Sunday morning, a snack fellowship after the evening worship service, a Friday or Saturday evening fellowship or group participation in a sporting event.

As a follow-up to the program, Carter suggests that the pastor or college department leader send a note to the director of student ministries at the campuses represented telling of the students' participation.

Detailed suggestions for conducting Student Day at Christmas are included in the November issue of *Facts and Trends*, a newsletter mailed by the Sunday School Board to all church staff members.

Perkins says blacks, whites caught in trap

ATLANTA (BP)—Black and white churches are caught in a "blame-guilt" trap which prevents them from working for racial reconciliation, a black minister from Mississippi said during the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's fall urban evangelism forum.

John Perkins, founder and president emeritus of Voice of Calvary Ministries in Jackson, Miss., told about 75 Southern Baptists involved in urban evangelism what his organization has been trying to do in evangelism, community development and racial reconciliation, and warned against social pressures which deter Christian involvement.

The church is caught in two social dynamics which work against Christian action in racial reconciliation, Perkins claimed.

The black church is caught in the trap of "blame," he said. Many black people, he said, blame white folks for getting them into their situations, and expect white folks to get them out. On the other hand, many white people are caught in the trap of "guilt," and don't want to be involved

because it makes them feel guilty, he said.

Perkins urged both black and white churches to deal with guilt and blame with the good news of the gospel. "The way to get beyond our guilt and blame is at the cross," he said. "The purpose of the cross is to get rid of guilt. . . .

"You don't have to live with the guilt of the past," he said. "We can leave today, not have to worry about yesterday and move on with making a new reality for our society."

This generation, he observed, has the choice of becoming the generation which convinces the poor they really do not have dignity, or becoming the generation which could put racial prejudice behind us.

Racial prejudice denies the creation of God, he said. "Man is not a nigger, a gook, or a honkey—man was created in the image of God," he declared.

Warning the church has lost its credibility in society because it has forfeited its role and responsibility for bringing about social change, Perkins said. "The evidence of our Christian faith is our concern for the poor."



GOOD NEWS AMERICA,
GOD LOVES YOU.

March 16 - April 6, 1986



Every day's mail brings a variety of letters and news releases to the editor's desk. But joyously, we receive far more good news than bad. Though we do, occasionally, receive "hate mail"; it almost invariably comes from one of the same 10 or 12 individuals. Yet, even bad or controversial news may serve an important purpose in Baptist life.

The SBC Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va., sends frequent news releases. Some of these relate exciting stories of events on the mission field. Many review the work being done by Arkansans who are serving in distant lands. This news is a continual reminder God is at work all around the world and Southern Baptist mission money is accomplishing its purpose.

We, also, frequently receive personal letters from Arkansans who are serving the Lord on foreign mission fields. They tell us that they eagerly await the ABN because it helps them to keep up with events that are transpiring back home. Usually, they tell of some victory that has taken place where they are laboring. Often they will share a prayer request.

A normal week will, also, bring news and letters telling of the work of our home missionaries. As we read of the home and foreign mission efforts, it becomes apparent that the same problems and difficulties confront both. The main exception is that the foreign missionary is confronted with a new language and culture. It is a thrill to know that, through our Cooperative Program gifts, we are a part of God's work at home and abroad.

The mail, also, brings letters and news releases from our Arkansas agencies and institutions. Although the shortfall in Cooperative Program receipts has placed pressure on everyone, this is seldom mentioned. It is a delight to know that every entity of Arkansas Baptists is alive and well and that, almost without exception, every area of our work is growing.

Most weeks bring letters from a wide variety of readers including pastors, retired preachers, lay people, SBC executives and seminary professors. Many of these letters contain excellent counsel for the editor and staff of the ABN. Often these individuals have read something in the Newsmagazine which helps and inspires them.

Each week, we receive Executive Director Don Moore's column entitled, "You'll be glad to know!" In this column Dr. Moore concentrates on the many positive things which are taking place in Arkansas and Southern Baptist life. All of us can rejoice in that God is blessing our efforts.

Each week, the mail brings the papers from the other state

conventions to the editor's desk. These reveal many similarities and differences. Each editor receives far more news than he can publish. It is interesting to see how news is selected and treated state by state. The editorials and "Letters to the editor" show a variety of needs across the Southern Baptist Convention.

Our mail often brings "Letters to the editor." We are able to print nearly all of these in order that our readers may profit from a variety of perspectives. "Letters to the editor" provides a forum for Arkansas Baptists to express themselves and assist in the decision making process.

Even controversial items, when handled properly, should bring a sense of fulfillment, since in any democracy (religious or secular) information is essential. Accurate data, when understood by the majority, will ultimately produce the appropriate decision. This principle has guided our country from its beginning.

Baptists have theological reasons for insisting on a free flow of information. One of the major tenets of our faith is the individual priesthood of all believers. Simply stated, this means that every believer has the right and the responsibility to do what God leads him to do, without interference from any human authority.

This soul liberty before God has led Baptists to a church polity which makes every church autonomous. This means that no church leader can coerce any local congregation to do anything it does not desire to do. This same autonomy applies in every organizational structure of Baptist life.

This much cherished liberty is both satisfying and awesome in the responsibility which attends it. Soul liberty means that, at times, there will be differences of opinion. But God, who gave us the liberty to choose, also holds us accountable for what we do. God is the perfect, infallible, supreme and ultimate Judge.

There are philosophical reasons for a Baptist state paper dealing with controversy. Baptists have never been elitists. We believe that truth and information should be shared with everyone. If only a few have all the information, a small group becomes the controller of the whole of Baptist life. Rather, we believe that all Baptists can be trusted with information, enabling them to act responsibly under God.

Fortunately, our mail is 95 percent positive. It is a blessing to know that God is using Southern Baptists in local churches, associations, state conventions and to the ends of the earth.

Arkansas Baptist

NEWMAGAZINE

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

VOLUME 83

NUMBER 47

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Betty Kennedy Managing Editor

Erwin L. McDonald, Litt D. Editor Emeritus

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

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

Copies by mail 50 cents each.

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

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 031-280) 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 \$8.50 per year (individual), \$6.00 per year (Every Resident Family Plan), \$60.00 per year (Group Plan) and \$100.00 per year (to foreign address). Second class postage paid at Little Rock, AR. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, P. O. Box 933, Little Rock, AR 72208.



One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant

Grow not weary in the fight against gambling

Whether the context is football, personal spiritual growth or a political campaign for a morally right cause, victories have a way of making us vulnerable to surprise counter-attack by the enemy. The greater the victory, the more vulnerable we are, many times. The Bible reminds us of the folly of sweeping out one devil, only to have seven devils move back in.

Arkansans would do well to consider our recent tremendous victory against legalizing casino gambling in Garland County as only round one in a long, continuing battle of many, many rounds. It may well be that we defeated Amendment 66 so clearly and overwhelmingly, that the proponents will not try again for a decade or so. That's the good news. But the bad news is that pressures for a legalized state lottery are waiting in the wing. Worse yet, they have far more states than Nevada and New Jersey to hold up as

examples for Arkansas to follow. Before the November election, 17 states already had legalized state lotteries, and 4 more (including Missouri) decided on Nov. 6 to follow the expedient crowd.

The insidious appeal of the state lottery (numbers game) is based on giving the public a way to buy a chance on instant wealth. Bettors have spent a total of more than \$5 billion on lottery tickets this year, and this averages out to more than 25 chances for every person in the United States.

Connecticut, which has one of the state lotteries, recently commissioned University of Connecticut sociologist Mark Abrahamson to make an intensive study of their state lottery. Lottery advocates did not like his findings—that the lottery is a regressive form of taxation that exploits the poor and ethnic minorities. The study reported that “the

same state that urged people to stay in school, seek job training and persevere through hard work and sacrifice, also encouraged the fatalistic belief people's lives could change dramatically if their numbers came up in the lottery.” The report added, “the state was selling one message with its right hand and another with its left.”

Needless to say, the study's findings were fiercely attacked by gambling industry leaders and the state's gambling regulatory agency. It made them as nervous as the Christian preaching of the Apostle Paul made those silversmiths in Ephesus who were enjoying profits from selling statues of Diana.

One victory against legalized gambling is great, but it is not too early to begin organizing and educating for round two.

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University.

Letters to the editor

'Many valuable roles'

As one of several persons submitting resolutions against the ordination of women to the SBC in Kansas City, I have been amazed at the publicity given opposition to the resolution that was voted by the messengers. I have been appalled at the criticism of many toward the resolution claiming the resolution says things that it actually does not say. I am asking for the privilege of speaking in favor of the resolution and hopefully clarifying to some extent the content of the resolution.

The lengthy resolution has 12 “whereas” statements and only one “be it resolved” paragraph. Many of the “whereas” portions specifically commend women, acknowledging them as co-workers in many roles of church service, emphasizing the equal dignity of men and women and recognizing women have fulfilled varied church service ministries. The last “whereas” specifically states that “women are held in high honor for their uniqueness and significant contribution to the advancement of Christ's kingdom.” For anyone to say that the resolution was a broad attack upon the women of our churches is not fair nor truthful.

What does the resolution resolve? In the one “be it resolved” paragraph it asks for the matter to be decided upon biblical grounds and not upon cultural, sociological and ecclesiastical trends nor by emotion factors. It encourages the service of women “in all aspects of church life and work other than

pastoral functions and leadership roles entailing ordination.”

I appeal to all Southern Baptists to be fair in dealing with each other in this matter. Many are in emotional reaction condemning the resolution for things it does not say.

Finally, I recognize that ordination is a local church matter. Churches will continue to ordain whomever they desire. I can accept this Baptist tradition. I'm just asking that those who disagree with the resolution voted by thousands of Southern Baptist Convention messengers grant us the right to express our biblical convictions without falsely accusing us as being anti-women or against women in many valuable ministry roles. — Johnny Jackson, Little Rock

Politics not new

Brother T.B. Maston's “One Man's Opinion,” ABN 11-22-84, sounded very much like the power brokers of the National Democratic Party after this year's election. With all due respect to Bro. Maston, he apparently does not accept the fact that God is omniscient, or the priesthood of the believer.

Whenever anyone becomes convinced they are the only one that know's God's will, or that there is no hope for a particular effort, they, in my opinion, have just elevated themselves above the all-knowing God. They have limited the power and ability of God

to do his will.

As a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and a public official, I am grieved by the usage of the term “politics.” As a small rural pastor for the past 15 years, I have had opportunity to sit in on a couple of state executive board meetings several years ago, before these so-called political convention wreckers took over. I saw deals made in the hall ways, where one person would agree to nominate his friend, and he in turn would agree to nominate his friend, and a close little circle was conduced in the halls. Is this not politics? If not, I'm deeply in need of illumination.

The problem we're dealing with is that the leadership of our convention has consulted the grass roots of Southern Baptist and has for the first time ever represented the rank and file of our denomination. This rank and file of small minded, bill paying, Southern Baptists, has for several years been upset with unscriptural doctrine and practice within our denomination.

Now, you mention the possibility of a split within the denomination. Well, this goes all the way back to Abraham and Lot. I believe the conservative moderates will continue to be the majority of Southern Baptist, and the liberals will pitch their tents toward Sodom and the well-watered Jordan Valley, leaving us with nothing but the promises of God. — Jim Glover, Sulphur Rock

Don Moore

You'll be glad to know...

... You have used us — We are glad! According to the monthly reports turned in by our staff, you have allowed us 2,031 visits in our churches during the past year. We have led 1,158 conferences in which our churches were represented 7,175 times. Many of these would be the same churches represented with repeated participation.

We would hope that some of the things we do would prove beneficial to every church. It's certain we can only help those who participate. Also, we have observed that those who use the services of our convention personnel know us best and trust us most. Thank you for letting us help you! That is not only our purpose, but also our joy.

I wish I could tell you how many miles we have traveled in this ministry. We praise our Lord for health and safety, as well as for the special privilege of ministering to our churches.

... No brag, just facts — and no slam on other groups. It's just that Arkansas Baptists are the largest and most concerned group when it comes to civic righteousness. Great efforts were used to involve all other evangelical groups in the fight against casino gambling. Their leaders and laymen were called into action. Except for one or two groups, the contributions from others were negligible.

I'm saying this not to reflect upon others, but to express appreciation for the response of our people. I am not sure there would have been a campaign had it not been for our churches.

Now, the bad news is, we learned that we are not very well prepared for a really serious confrontation on an issue that is not as clear-cut. There will likely be such issues to face us within a year or so. The amount of time required to set up county organizations, prepare materials and the difficulty in getting financial backing are a few of the areas that surprised us. We still owe \$10,000 for bills incurred in the campaign, even though we operated on a "shoestring" budget. Any help would be appreciated.

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



Moore



Woman's viewpoint

Bonnie Margason

Missions praying

What better time to consider missions praying than right in this month of emphasis on the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions? There is concern that more emphasis is placed on the offerings than is placed on this vital week of mission study. There is also concern about the lack of time the church and individuals spend in missions praying.

A sad day in the history of WMU was the first time the projected goal of the 1983 Lotie Moon Christmas offering was lowered from \$66 million to \$60 million because Southern Baptists failed to meet the previous year's goal. But of even greater concern to the Foreign and Home Mission Boards is that some churches are failing to observe the Weeks of Prayer. Missions praying is a result of missions awareness and missions education.

Specific praying is essential: "Ask and ye shall receive." There are some things God will not give us unless we ask. As we take advantage of these special weeks of prayer, let us not limit our missions praying to just these weeks. If every Baptist home would choose to follow the Missionary Birthday Calendar of Prayer daily as listed in Open

Windows and missions magazines, 7,000 missionaries would be lifted up in a year's time. Just try to imagine what could happen to the missionary, to mission work, to the one who prayed and to our churches. God's power is unleashed in concerted praying.

Carolyn Rhea, in the Mission Prayer Guide, says, "Satan dreads nothing but prayer. . . . The one concern of the Devil is to keep the saints from prayer. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray." I cannot "go into all the world" physically, as our missionaries do, but if I pray for them, I am on every mission field where they are. Through mission praying I am even in areas where doors have been closed to Southern Baptist mission efforts.

Our final consideration will be missions response. Do you dare?

Bonnie Margason, a homemaker and mother of two, served as president of the Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union 1979-84. She and her husband, Boyd, are members of Mountain Home First Church.

missionary notes

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence A. Allison, missionaries to Botswana, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: 22 Applegate, Little Rock, AR 72209). He was born in Walnut Ridge, and she is the former Alta Brasell of Pine Bluff. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1964 and reappointed in 1969.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold T. Cummins, missionaries to Kenya, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: 631 E. Montclair, 3-D, Springfield, MO 65807). A native of Arkansas, he was born in El Dorado and grew up in Calion. She is the former Betty Noe of Highlandville, Mo. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1959.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Guy Key, missionaries to Brazil, have arrived on the field for language study (address: Caixa Postal 1635, 13100 Campinas, SP, Brazil). Both are children of missionaries to Brazil and both have lived in North Little Rock. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1984.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Coy Sample, missionary associates to Nigeria, have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service (address: P. O. Box 197, Port Harcourt, Nigeria). They are natives of Arkansas. He was born in El Dorado and considers Hot Springs his hometown. She is the former Vivian Keith of Hot Springs. They were employed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1984.

Art Toalston to join Foreign Board news staff

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Art Toalston, co-news director at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, will join the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's news and information services department as staff writer Jan. 2.

He fills a vacancy left when Bill Webb was elected editor of the *Illinois Baptist*.

Toalston, 34, was religion editor for more

than five years at the Jackson (Miss.) *Daily News* before entering Southwestern seminary's master of arts in communications program in mid-1983. He became co-news director there in February and has continued his studies.

Toalston has also been a correspondent for Religious News Service and Christianity Today.

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

people

Mollie Ann Verser of Eudora died Nov. 25 at age 58. She was a former teacher and a member of the Eudora Church. Survivors include her husband, Earl E. Verser Jr. of Eudora; a son, Eddie Verser of Eudora; four daughters, Ann Swift of Waldo, Joyce Poole of Eudora, and Jane Galbo and Karen Verser, both of Russellville; her mother, Elsie Trimble of Lonoke; a brother, Walls Trimble of Little Rock; two sisters, Judge Elsjiane Roy of Little Rock and Susan Measel of Birmingham, Ala.; and six grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the Eudora Church mission fund.

Beatrice B. Carpenter of Hamburg died Nov. 25 at age 60. She was a teacher and a member of the Eastern Star. Funeral services were held Nov. 28 at the Sage Church near Batesville. Survivors include her husband, Verne E. Carpenter; a son, Samuel Lee Carpenter of Virginia Beach, Va.; a daughter, Sylvia Kay Evans of Cabot; her mother, Jennie Jahay of Fargo, Okla.; three brothers, Sidney Jahay of Pueblo, Colo., Homer Jahay of Hazelton, Kan., and Paul Jahay of Sallisaw, Okla.; two sisters, Hazel Boyd of Shattuck, Okla., and Thelma Eike of Fargo, Okla.; and five grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society.

Staton Posey has resigned as pastor of the Bradley Church to become pastor of the Union Church near El Dorado.

Mac S. Gates is serving as interim pastor of the Lakeside Church in Hot Springs.

Minh Van Lam of Fort Smith, pastor of the Vietnamese congregation at the Grand Avenue Church, recently participated in a Vietnamese-Cambodian leadership conference held at the Home Mission Board in Atlanta, Ga.

Troy Akers has resigned as pastor of the Union Valley Church to become pastor of the Pleasant Grove Church at Perryville.

Jimmy Karam spoke Nov. 15 in chapel at Criswell Bible Institute in Dallas, sharing his personal testimony of conversion.

briefly

West Memphis Calvary Church gave a reception Dec. 2 for Rev. and Mrs. Lynwood Henderson, recognizing his fifth year of service as pastor.

Macedonia Church at Bloomburg recently held a deacon ordination service for Ralph Barrington and Larry Launius.

Booneville First Church held a service Nov. 27 to dedicate a nativity scene. Residents of Booneville participated in the 30-minute service of Christmas music and scripture reading. Pastor Allen Thrasher and Skip Wofford, music director, were coordinators.

Monticello First Church recently ordained Mike Akin, Kelton Busby Jr., Ron Greenwich and Keith Norris as deacons.

Batesville West Church will observe its 75th anniversary Dec. 8-9. The celebration will begin with a Saturday evening banquet at which Don Moore, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, will be speaker. There will also be a historical drama presented by the single adult department. George Purtle, a former pastor, will speak Sunday morning and a "reunion" choir will sing.

Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock recently hosted a dinner to honor R.A. Holt as deacon emeritus.

The Pleasant Grove Church at Abbott celebrated its centennial Oct. 21 with all-day services. Porter Black, pastor, and John E. Evans, pastor emeritus, were speakers. Guest ministers were Peggy Godwin, Carolyn Goss, Glenda Cherry and Susan Pyles, all of Mansfield.

Center Cities Ministries planned for New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Jimmie Knox, director of the Baptist Exposition Ministries for the 1984 Louisiana World's Fair, will become director of Center Cities Ministries Jan. 1.

The New Orleans program, a cooperative effort of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Greater New Orleans Association, is the first ministry of its kind in the Southern Baptist Convention, according to Wayne Taylor, associate in the LBC missions division.

Taylor said Knox's responsibilities will include crisis ministry, street ministry, ministry to convention tourists, ministry to office workers and training for Baptist volunteers to assist with the programs.

Don Mabry, director of the Louisiana Baptist missions division, said office space for the program is under consideration in several locations in downtown New Orleans.

During a recent evaluation session following the close of the Baptist Exposition Ministry program, Knox and his staff of summer missionaries reported that in 22 weeks on the street they distributed 155,000 tracts, including Scripture and Bibles; made 200,000 contacts and recorded 85 professions of faith.

Major emphases of the Center City Ministries program will be to (1) contact persons registered for conventions to offer crisis counseling services while they are in New Orleans; (2) provide a continuing witness and counseling program to persons who work in offices and stores in downtown New Orleans and (3) provide witnessing teams similar to the Baptist summer missionary bluegrass and gospel bands who entertain and witness to tourists in the French Quarter.

Baptists operated a multi-faceted ministry during the World's Fair which included programs with tourists at campgrounds and street witnessing throughout the French Quarter among guests, "street people" and shop operators. This experience showed Baptists a continuing ministry in the central city is needed, Taylor said.

Knox said, "Many people do not feel comfortable with a ministry to street people, shop owners, tourists and others" who are apart from regular church channels. A training program for Baptist volunteers to become part of a permanent witnessing and counseling team will be an important part of the program, he said.

Taylor, who directs special ministries with

the Louisiana Baptist Convention, said, "We plan to develop a group of Baptists, for example, who work in a large downtown office building, to serve as Bible teachers and counselors for those in that building."

"A ministry is also planned for hotel/motel support employees where we will offer Bible study during lunch time or another convenient time. Crisis counseling for a tourist or conventionee experiencing trauma away from home will be another ministry."

Referral to a local Baptist church will be made for follow-up, especially for out-of-town guests, he said.

A summer missionary, whose French Quarter ministry made her aware evangelism is a "lifestyle" said, "I would stop to talk with people—street people, tourists or shop owners—and realized these actions were not thought ahead like church visitation night, instead it was letting the Spirit work in me as I walked down the street."

Knox said he plans to develop a broad base of participation among local Baptists who will find this type of ministry a challenge. During the second half of the fair more local Baptists were responding to the programs, he pointed out.

Media center director says rewards greater than costs

by Gail Rothwell

RIDGECREST, N.C.—Imogene DeLap believes the rewards she gains from working in Baptist media centers far outweigh any sacrifices she might make.

DeLap, media center director at First Church, Fayetteville, has spent two months at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center here where she has been the media center director for the six weeks of senior adult chautauquas.

The chautauquas, which are sponsored by the family ministry department of the Sunday School Board, have drawn approximately 10,000 senior adults to nine weeks of conferences at Ridgecrest and Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Centers.

In addition to directing the media center, DeLap taught the conference "My Personal Growth—My Responsibility" during the chautauquas. She told participants that "reading and feeding your mind will keep it alive."

One of DeLap's goals for the conference was to introduce senior adults to the variety of resources available to them through the church's media library. "If I can get a person interested in just one subject area, then their interest in other areas will be self-starting," she explained.

DeLap's love affair with media libraries began some 36 years ago when she was asked to work in the library of Winnwood Church, Kansas City, Mo. Since then she has continued to work in church media libraries and for the past three summers has directed the media centers at either Ridgecrest or Glorieta Baptist Conference Centers.

Her commitment to her work stems from the belief that media libraries are a church's partner in ministry. "Books can be used as a tool for any type of ministry," she explained.



BSSS photo / Gail Rothwell

Imogene DeLap, media center director at First Church, Fayetteville, directed the media center at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center for six weeks of senior adult chautauquas. The conferences were sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

ed. "They can be offered when you don't have the right words to say; they offer enjoyment and information to all age groups and are tools which help teachers become more effective ministers."

DeLap, 63, who travels with her husband, whom she describes as "my supporter and helper," credits the Sunday School Board's church media library department for equipping her with the skills needed to work in a media center.

"The training resources available to media librarians are excellent. They have provided me with the needed skills," she

acknowledged.

Although DeLap has no immediate plans to return to either conference center media center next year, she is quick to add that she wouldn't refuse an invitation to direct the center during another six weeks of chautauquas. "The staff here has become a part of my family and autumn in the mountains has been beautiful," she said. "But the best part has been all the new friends I have made during the conferences.

Gail Rothwell is a reporter for the Baptist Sunday School Board.

MasterLife discipleship model rooted in Indonesia mission

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—About 10 years ago, a missionary in Indonesia perused Royal Ambassadors manuals he had used as a youth in Abilene, Texas.

The missionary, Marvin Leech, gleaned some ideas for undergirding the witness of Indonesian Baptists—ideas that also led to MasterLife, a widely used Southern Baptist discipleship program.

Leech, guest professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, is the dean of theological education by extension and leader of discipleship training at the Indonesian Baptist Theological Seminary in Semarang, a city of 1.5 million people in north-central Java.

Concern for his students prompted Leech to turn to his RA materials. "In a sense, they were being trained for leadership before receiving training in discipleship." He noticed "a systematic training program" and ac-

countability in RAs, with the youth tackling concrete assignments and then reporting to their leaders which "led to formation of character and skills."

Thus, in 1976, the RA manuals "helped me to initiate a design for discipleship training in our local church," which Avery Willis, then a missionary in Indonesia, repeated in his church.

Willis later used a similar approach when, as supervisor of leadership development in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department, he led the development of MasterLife.

Today at the 40-student main campus in Indonesia, first-year students are disciplined by those in their second year who, in turn, receive training in discipleship skills from third-year students who, in turn, are supervised by the faculty.

Leech also oversees eight regional

seminary campuses with more than 500 students in a country with 158 million people spread over 3,000 islands.

Theological education by extension is "a means for reaching the world for Christ," he said. "It's not a program of preparation," as in traditional theological education, "but a program of equipping for people who are already actively involved in ministry.

"There's no way theological educators can directly train church members," Leech noted, "but it is possible to design programs for leadership training which can be reproduced directly in the life of a church."

Leaders trained through such programs then should seek "to make it possible for every Christian to have a significant ministry—to make every Christian competent to serve according to his or her gifts and abilities," Leech said.

Downpour fails to dampen spirits at Viola First Church's 100th

Viola First Church celebrated its 100th anniversary Nov. 18 with services attended by 230, despite torrential rains.

Enthusiastic members, dressed in the fashions of 1884, expressed their thankfulness for 100 years of ministry as they shared future growth plans with an emphasis on youth outreach programs.

The congregation, which originally worshipped in a local schoolhouse, erected its first building in 1919 on property donated by W. H. Bowling. There have been four building programs since that time, the last in 1983-84.

In 1952, the church purchased its first parsonage and replaced it in 1981.

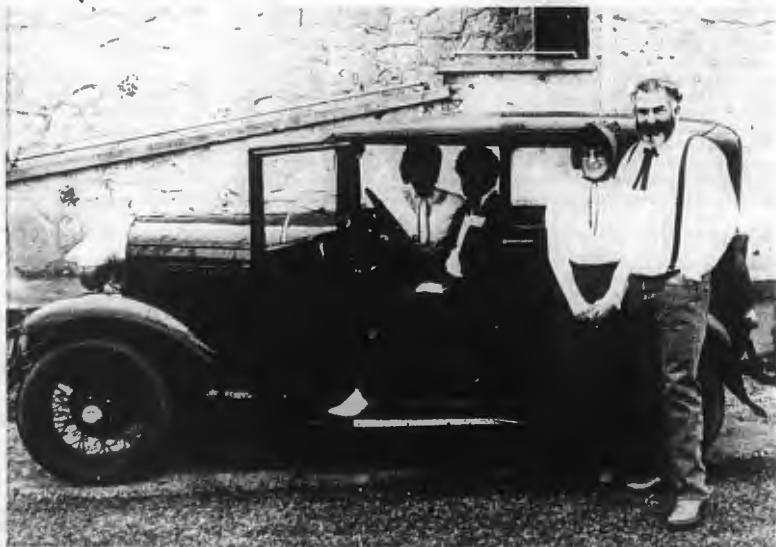
Centennial services featured A. E. Cooper of Muskogee, Okla., ordained to the ministry 60 years ago by the Viola church, and James Whitlock, pastor of Salem First Church, as speakers. Leonard Williams is pastor.

Other activities included special music presented by the youth choir and the Gospel Harvesters, a history read by Frank Oliver, an old-fashioned potluck meal and a reception. The burying of a time capsule concluded services.



AT RIGHT, Angela Richmond and her son Shean, attired in fashions of the 1890's, wait for the morning worship service to begin.

BELOW, Garry and Janice Williams (seated) and Patsy and James Carroll not only came dressed old fashioned for the centennial celebration, but came to church at 15 miles per hour in the Williams' 1930 Model A.



Anniversary celebration



An old-fashioned covered-dish noon meal provided a time of fellowship. Pastor Leonard Williams (at end of table) visits with (left to right) Arthur Cooper, ordained to the ministry 60 years ago by the Viola Church, who was centennial speaker, and Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Davidson of Melbourne. Also present was Mrs. Stanley Cooper of Arkadelphia (back to camera), widow of a former pastor.



Donald Sanders keeps a watchful eye on his infant daughter, Mysti, as she sleeps through noon-hour activities.

Gunmen rob missionary, steal car in West Beirut

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)—Southern Baptist missionary Mack Sacco was robbed and a mission car stolen in West Beirut by three well-dressed young Lebanese men Nov. 6.

The robbery occurred one afternoon as Sacco was on his way back to East Beirut from the mission office where he works as treasurer of the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Lebanon.

Three policemen stood nearby as another man, whom Sacco thought was a plain-clothes policeman, pulled Sacco off the road. Two other men then joined him. When Sacco asked for identification, one of the robbers pulled out a gun and threatened to shoot him. The robbers took the mission station wagon, mission and personal money amounting to about \$800, and Sacco's jacket, glasses and passport while afternoon traffic passed by.

African Baptist church continues, uncowed

LIVUYU, South West Africa (BP)—When animals or people get hungry enough, they've been known to eat almost anything. But members of a struggling, little Baptist congregation in the bush area of northern South West Africa didn't expect cows to eat their church.

Most of the congregation are refugees who have fled fighting in their country of Angola. Others are local inhabitants of the finger of land projecting out of the Kavango-Caprivi Strip of South West Africa (Namibia).

They've faced a common problem—drought-related hunger. And they've had a common desire—to build a church in which to worship God.

Not long ago, they set out proudly to build that church, cutting poles in the forest to implant as walls and old dried cornstalks to tie onto the poles. They added a thatched roof, a pulpit made of reeds from the river's edge and benches of tree limbs held on limb forks.

Southern Baptist missionary Carlos Owens came to lead their first service, attended by the happy congregation and a chicken which nestled by the missionary's feet. Twenty believers were baptized and the Livuyu Baptist Church was organized.

Two months later, Owens returned for teaching and preaching. He was astonished to see the walls missing. Only bare poles held up the thatched roof. "Oh, missionary, look at our church," a church leader cried as he ran to greet Owens. "The cows were so hungry they ate up our church."

Animals as well as people have to do the best they can for themselves in times of drought. So the people went back to the drawing board to design a cow-proof church. When Owens returned for his next visit, they had covered the structure with heavy, inedible reeds from the river's edge.



Wilma McCandis and Judy Newton sang "Whispering Hope," a hymn from another era, in the morning worship service.

ABN photos by Mille Gill

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by Frances Carroll
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October Cooperative Program receipts below 1983

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—First month contributions to the 1984-85 national Cooperative Program, the unified budget of the Southern Baptist Convention, were slightly behind October 1983 figures.

Voluntarily gifts to the national and worldwide mission and education programs of the SBC from the 37 state conventions were \$8,603,213—\$35,042 less than a year ago. The fourth Sunday of the month was Oct. 28, which meant many contributions would not have worked their way from the local church, through the state conventions and to the national level until after the monthly books were closed.

A spot check of contributions in mid-November showed many states were up considerably.

In the 10 previous Octobers, the first

month in the SBC fiscal year, budget receipts had shown increases. In seven of those years, the increase had been in double digits. It was the sixth time in the past decade monthly income fell below the same figure from a year earlier.

In order to fund the 1984-85 basic operating budget of \$118 million, national Cooperative Program monthly receipts must average \$9,830,000. Spokesmen for the SBC Executive Committee pointed out accurate budget projections cannot be made on the basis of the first month.

In November annual meetings, two state conventions—Florida and Oklahoma—became the first to achieve 50-50 splits in undesignated Cooperative Program receipts, sending half of such receipts to national and world-wide SBC causes.

Rooms available in Dallas

Arrangments have been made with Executive Travel to reserve 75 double rooms at the rate of \$78 per night for double occupancy at the Arlington Hilton Inn, Arlington, Texas, for the

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Supreme Court rejects trio of church appeals

by Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)—Three churches, including an independent Baptist congregation, lost their legal bids in disputes with state and local governments when the U.S. Supreme Court rejected their appeals.

In unsigned orders announced Nov. 13, the court, without dissent, refused to review a Nebraska Supreme Court ruling that North Platte Church, North Platte, Neb., must comply with state regulations to keep its parochial school doors open.

The congregation was one of about 20 Nebraska congregations which defied state laws requiring teacher certification in all schools in the state, public and private. The overwhelming majority of church-related schools were already in compliance with the requirement, but North Platte Church refus-

ed to go along on grounds the state had no authority to require teacher certification.

In a written appeal to the nation's high court, the church also argued that the requirement violated parents' rights to decide which school is best for their children. (83-1974, North Platte Baptist Church v. Nebraska)

Another local congregation, First Assembly of God Church of Alexandria, Va., likewise failed to convince the justices to review a zoning dispute over a church school.

Last June the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals held that zoning restrictions attached to the church's special use permit to operate its school did not violate the First Amendment's establishment of religion clause because they had the strictly secular

purpose of promoting public health, safety and welfare.

The church argued unsuccessfully that the First Amendment's free exercise of religion clause encompassed its right to operate a school on its property to further its ministry without government interference. (84-445, First Assembly of God Church v. City of Alexandria, Va.)

In a third action, the high court also rejected the appeal of a non-profit church corporation which owns and operates a commercial television station in Hartford, Conn. The church, Faith Center, was denied property tax exemption by the city of Hartford.

Stan Haste is information director for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Ministers to get new retirement plan, increased protection

DALLAS (BP)—State conventions aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention unanimously approved in their fall meetings the allocation of Cooperative Program funds to a new retirement plan for ministers, but they were divided on the inclusion of church employees.

Thirteen state conventions adopted the version of the new Church Annuity Plan which will channel these funds into the retirement accounts of ministers and employees serving churches which cooperate with the state convention.

Effective Jan. 1, 1988, the plan will contain a matching feature which will allow ministers the possibility of generating three dollars for each dollar they contribute. The church will match the individual's initial contribution on a two-for-one basis, up to 10 percent of pay. After the required contributions are made by the individual and the church,

the state convention will match one-half of the church's contributions up to \$35 per month for each participant.

All contributions made by the member and the church will be channeled to the member's account. The first \$210 contributed each year by the state convention will fund supplemental disability and survivor benefits for the member. All monies exceeding \$210 will be added to the member's retirement income account.

Lay employees will be afforded the same matching feature if they work 20 hours per week and have been employed by the church three years. Those conventions that did not vote to include the lay employees in 1988 will include them no later than 1988.

The new plan is designed to improve retirement benefits for those persons who devote their lives to serving Southern Baptist churches.

Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan said the plan is a result of the concern among the Annuity Board trustees, staff and state executive directors over the large numbers of retired ministers, missionaries and their families who are living in poverty. He said the failure of the churches to provide adequate funds for a retirement program has been a major factor in the cause of the situation.

Morgan said the unanimous approval of the state conventions is encouraging. "Their approval indicates Baptists are ready to do something to assure their ministers can live with dignity when they retire," he said.

State conventions which voted to include ministers and lay employees in 1988 are: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New England, New York, Northern Plains, Oklahoma, Virginia, and Wyoming.

Southern Baptists send \$50,000 to Ethiopia, study ways to help

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptists have sent \$50,000 to Ethiopia for famine relief and will send a team to explore other ways they can help alleviate hunger there.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board wired the money to help missionaries assist other evangelicals who are feeding about 10,000 people daily around Walata in southwestern Ethiopia. The money should help feed another 15,000 each day, said John Cheyne, the board's relief specialist.

Cheyne was expected to leave Nov. 23 with one or two other staffers to help Ethiopia missionaries explore creative ways to help with famine relief in spite of a small mission staff and other limitations.

The Foreign Mission Board has spent more than \$3 million for African relief and development during 1984 and expects to spend another \$3 million during 1985. Most

relief agencies are predicting the drought will continue next year, becoming even worse in some countries. About a fourth of the board's worldwide relief allocations this year—more than \$1.7 million—has gone for food distribution in African countries.

In recent years, Southern Baptists have given about \$6 million a year for worldwide hunger and relief. Because they already had given to help such needs, the Foreign Mission Board was able to send the \$50,000 the same day missionaries requested it, said R. Keith Parks, board president.

Southern Baptists who give for hunger relief can be sure their money will be used for that because they've already given through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to provide the system of missionaries through which such relief can be administered, said Parks.

The Foreign Mission Board is far more than a relief agency, he said. Southern Baptist missionaries make a day-in, day-out commitment to live among a people, to offer spiritual and physical ministries which can help transform their lives.

Thirty to 70 Southern Baptists a day—born by television reports of the Ethiopia famine—have been calling the Foreign Mission Board since the end of October asking how they can help. They have given more than \$5,700 designated for Ethiopian relief this year and much more for African relief.

Ethiopia is suffering some of the worst famine in Africa, but more than 20 African nations are suffering critical food shortages this year. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization already has listed 11 countries where it expects food shortages next year and predicts that list will grow.

Paschall wants committee to facilitate SBC peace

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—H. Franklin Paschall, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has proposed a committee approach to end the current controversy in the denomination.

Paschall's recommendation came in separate speeches at the Tennessee Baptist Pastors' Conference in Nashville and the Kentucky Baptist Convention in Louisville.

Later in the week at the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the messengers unanimously approved a resolution to affirm the spirit and the principle of the proposal.

Paschall suggested "the Southern Baptist Convention authorize the appointment of a committee which would include representatives of our agencies and leaders of the conservative group who feel there has been a departure from what is commonly believed among us as expressed in the Baptist Faith and Message. This committee would report to the Southern Baptist Convention as soon as possible on specific ways to affect reconciliation, strengthen unity and equip us to meet the awesome challenge of today's

world with the glorious gospel of Christ."

The latter part of Paschall's message dealt with the current atmosphere within the denomination. "In our day of division and an hour of hostility in the convention, it is imperative that every Southern Baptist seek to know and to have the mind of Christ."

Noting the convention has become politicized, polarized and divided right down the middle, Paschall predicted, "A split or splintering is not only possible but inevitable unless we mend our ways.

"I know we can and I believe we will mend our ways," the retired pastor of Nashville's First Church added.

Stating he is a "conservative in theology" and that the Bible is "the Book of my life," Paschall noted he had refused to be a part of any faction in the convention. "I am identified with the Southern Baptist establishment, but I am also one of the grassroots people. It is therefore easy for me to understand from whence come the differing points of view."

Paschall emphasized the recommendation

was his own idea. "I have met with no group in political caucus. I have no ax to grind."

He believes the Baptist Faith and Message is a good and acceptable basis for our fellowship and the solution to the convention's problems. "With this basis, let those who have sharp differences talk and pray until a way is found for us to be one people once more in faith and mission," Paschall explained.

"Then there would be no need to organize and to politicize before each annual session of the convention," he said. "Then we can have an open convention, letting the Lord lead us in all matters, including the election of the president, trusting one another to do what is right before God."

At the end of his messages Paschall invited convention attendees to kneel in prayer and to commit themselves to pray for the peace and healing of the convention.

[A similar proposal for appointing a reconciliation committee was defeated by messengers to the Kansas City Southern Baptist Convention last June.]

South Carolina group challenged to recover 'lost' ground

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (BP)—Approximately 175 persons gathered at Ocean View Baptist Church in Myrtle Beach, S.C., heard the president of Southern Baptists' oldest seminary explain, "We want to take back what has been lost."

The statement, by Roy L. Honeycutt, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Louisville, Ky., referred to gains in control of the Southern Baptist Convention by what Honeycutt called the "independent fundamentalist political party."

The SBC will convene in Dallas June 11-13 and Honeycutt urged Southern Baptists to "vote your conscience. Southern Baptists ought to do their duty and maintain their integrity."

Honeycutt, who earlier had spoken at the South Carolina Baptist Convention, said, "Nearly everywhere I go people are concerned. Groups are springing up and people are asking, 'How can we stop this?'"

He said he is "quite optimistic" the Dallas meeting can halt what he characterized as six years of "creating our own ruin as

Southern Baptists."

"This is not a theological issue," he said, "but a political issue with theological overtones and as a political problem, it involves a political solution."

Honeycutt said he is ill at ease using political methods, but added, "I must be involved. Never before have I been involved in such a conflict and I don't want to be again."

He said he is also uncomfortable with political organizations on either side of the conflict. "We don't need an 'us'," he said, "anyone than we need 'them'."

Honeycutt said "our heritage as Southern Baptists is at stake." He also said the more conservative group is trying to "rewrite history."

"We have never been held together by a theological system," he said, "but rather by a way of doing evangelism, missions and education."

Referring to the Southern Baptist Convention's "tremendous sense of unity and diversity," he said, "We have something unique

in Christianity."

A. Harold Cole, retired executive secretary-treasurer of the South Carolina convention, presided at the meeting.

Describing his 43 years in ministry as "a heavy investment in the Southern Baptist Convention," Cole said he never has known a crisis "of the serious dimension of today."

Cole said he had "prayed and been patient," but now it is time to "holler fire." Challenging Southern Baptists to "work within the frame work" of the SBC and to vote, he said, "I can no longer watch the convention be torn apart and changed."

David Matthews, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greenville, said the "mainstream of Southern Baptist life has not been represented" at recent Southern Baptist Conventions. He pointed out only 446 of the state convention's 1700 plus churches had representatives at the Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City and only nine had more than five messengers.

South Carolina attendance in Kansas City was 915, he said.

Colorado school 'given' to Southwest Baptist University

BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP)—Trustees of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., have accepted the gift of the charter of the Colorado Baptist University. The school, located in the Denver suburb of Aurora, will operate as an extended studies center of SBU.

The institution currently has 51 students enrolled; 20 of them full-time (taking at least

12 hours). Classes are primarily offered in late afternoon and evening. Offices and classrooms are in an educational facility also used by Webster University and Aurora Community College. All three institutions use the Central Aurora Library.

According to James Sells, chancellor at Southwest Baptist University, about 16 years

ago, a handful of Coloradians, who had their roots in Missouri and the Midwest, formed Colorado Baptist College.

SBU administrators have been working with CBU officials on establishing goals and objectives, developing curriculum, promoting enrollment and soliciting help from concerned individuals in Colorado.

Your state convention at work

Cooperative Program CP update

The end of the current budget year is just ahead. The books will close for 1984-on Tuesday, Jan. 8, 1985.



Collins

As of Nov. 21, we had received 81.66 percent of the total budget. In order to reach the budget, we must receive almost \$2 million by the end of December.

All of the ministries of Arkansas Baptists, as well as Southern Baptists, will suffer if we do not reach our goal. It is not a matter of reaching a goal — it is providing resources to reach people.

This shortfall no doubt reflects the fact that church budgets are also running behind. I would like to challenge every member of every church to make this a matter of special prayer. Seek the will of God about what you should do as God's steward in these next days. I believe that God's people are capable of doing anything they commit themselves to do for the glory of God. — **L. L. Collins Jr., associate executive director**

Church Training Youth-Adult Workshops

Youth and Adult Church Training leaders will have some excellent training opportunities the week of Jan. 21. Our department will conduct 15 area Youth-Adult Church Training Workshops that week. Each workshop will be scheduled for one night in each location, meeting from 7 until 9 p.m.



Holley

On Monday night, Jan. 21, the workshops will be held at Elmdale Church in Springdale; First Church, Mountain Home; Walnut Street Church, Jonesboro; First Church, Blytheville; and Immanuel Church, El Dorado.

On Tuesday night, Jan. 22, the workshops will meet at South Side Church in Ft. Smith; First Church, Harrison; First Church, Batesville; First Church, Forrest City; and Rock Street Church, Texarkana.

On Thursday night, Jan. 24, the locations will be Second Church, Russellville; South Side Church, Pine Bluff; First Church, Monticello; First Church, Hot Springs; and Olivet Church, Little Rock.

Youth and adult leaders will be in separate conferences at each location.


Pastors and church staff members, Church Training directors and all adult members are encouraged to attend the workshops. In each of the workshops, the participants will receive help with organization, curriculum selection, planning the Sunday night session and enlistment. — **Robert Holley, director**

Evangelism A daily cleansed life

Daily witnessing for Christ is directly related to a daily cleansed life. John stated in 1 John 1:5 "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." God is like a perfect jewel without flaw. Peter stated in 1 Peter 1:16, "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." Our lives should radiate Godliness and illustrate holiness.

To live a daily cleansed life one must be honest with himself. 1 John 1:6 states, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." Some years ago a pastor was approached by the church treasurer. The treasurer stated, "We must do something about our music and youth director. Each Sunday he is putting \$1 in his offering envelope and listing it as \$10." Needless to say, this music and youth director had little influence in leading someone to Christ.

The closer we come to the holiness of God, the more clearly we see ourselves. Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up and exclaimed, "Woe is me for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips." God stated, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." It is a refreshing experience to live a daily cleansed life. — **Clarence Shell, director**



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Missions Ripe fields

Jesus told us to "look on the fields," (John 4:35). Certainly the "fields" in Arkansas abound with people.



Tidsworth

Enlarged rural communities that were once very small now have so many people out on the country road that a new church may be needed. Center Ridge in Conway County now has a school with 600 students but no Baptist church.

Mobile home courts, some with hundreds of people, are developing in the state. It takes a specialized ministry to reach some of these families. A new mission may be needed.

Multi-family housing such as apartment buildings can be seen in many Arkansas towns. Our record in reaching people from this kind of housing in existing churches is not very good.

Growing communities would be those where all the present church houses would seat less than 50 percent of the population. Even though churches exist, more are needed. — **Floyd Tidsworth Jr., church extension director**

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International

A summons to decision

by Randy Maxwell, West Church, Batesville

Basic passage: Nehemiah 8-9

Focal passage: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 9:10; 9:1-3

Central truth: The Bible is a powerful instrument in calling persons to commitment.

Nehemiah had been summoned from Persia to help the children of Israel rebuild the city walls of Jerusalem. The day came when the tremendous task was complete. In Nehemiah 8-9, we read of the worship experience that followed.

With the children of Israel standing in reverence to the reading of God's Word, Ezra read a familiar passage from the Law of Moses which the Lord had given to Israel.

The generation which had passed since the time of Nehemiah's effective religious leadership had neglected the observance of the Torah. Thus their first reaction when they heard the Law again was guilt accompanied by weeping and mourning.

The convicting power of the Word can cause guilt when the Word has been neglected, but Ezra comforted the people and proclaimed a feast to celebrate the renewal of their commitment to God. After all, the religion proclaimed by the Bible is never a burden to be borne, but an opportunity for genuine joy and spiritual fulfillment. The remainder of the verses in Nehemiah 8 tell of the celebration that issued the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles.

When we come to chapter 9, we find that the "revival" is now in its twenty-fourth day and the scene has changed once again. The children of Israel have fasted for two days and stand assembled clad in sackcloth and ashes—a sign of true repentance.

We see that the reading of God's law made the Jews freshly conscious that they were a "called-out" people, "the holy seed," and that their relations with non-Jews were illicit. As the people continued to expose their hearts to God's Word, they began to confess their sins as well as the sins of the father. In fact they spent a large part of the day in confession. The last phrase of verse 3 indicates that the renewing of their commitments to God culminated in true worship.

How many times do we attend services at the church and really fail to worship? Truly the good news of God's Word is still "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" and the source for revival to every believer who is willing to respond to the Bible's message in repentance and confession of sin.

Life and Work

*Joseph*by Leroy P. Stringfield
First Church, Jacksonville

Basic passage: Matthew 1:18-20; 2:13-15, 20-22

Focal passage: Matthew 1:20

Central truth: Believers need to know and follow God's will, not religious customs.

The Christmas season is an appropriate time to reflect upon Joseph's predicament. On the one hand, Matthew testifies Joseph was of an acceptable lineage (1:16) and that he was a "just" man (1:19). "Just" does not mean Joseph was particularly nice or merciful, but that he carefully observed the Law.

On the other hand, Joseph discovered Mary was pregnant. He did not desire a public scandal, so he dealt with the matter privately. This man could have stoned Mary and won public accolades for his great zeal for the Law.

Joseph needed assistance; he was in turmoil. God resolved the conflict, leaving Christians two excellent spiritual lessons.

First, verse 20 indicates Joseph was willing to think carefully instead of acting rashly. What excellent advice for sensitive Christians who occasionally prefer to take matters into their own hands. Thinking is an internal endeavor. Choosing to reflect, ponder or analytically consider alternatives often is more difficult than parading one's piety before one's religious peers. The more troublesome the matter, the more thoughtful one should be.

The second lesson concerns the method of God's revelation to Joseph. Verse 20 says God appeared to him in a dream. Can one imagine dream-evidence being presented today in a court of law? We live in an empirical society where truth is measured materially by the senses. Spiritual things, however, are communicated in a mystical, non-physical manner, commonly through what are called faith experiences. God revealed his truth to Joseph through dreams (Matt. 2:13, 19).

Joseph's entire experience is actually a combat between the natural and the supernatural. The incarnation and the virgin conception of Jesus defy secular minds. Modern Christians have an advantage, however, for believers today know about an empty tomb and a resurrected Lord. A salvation experience provides the basis for a glad and unqualified acceptance of other events that defy natural law. Joseph seemingly had a glimpse of God's glory. We can bathe in the entire revelation.

Bible Book

God's offer of salvation

by Tom Smith, First Church, Bentonville

Basic passage: Isaiah 54:1 to 55:13

Focal passage: Isaiah 55:1-2

Central truth: God's act of mercy provides salvation and produces repentance.

Isaiah was a prophet with hope. Old Testament prophets were usually either "foretellers" (predictors of future events) or "forttellers" (those who looked at existing conditions and forecast impending consequences). Isaiah was both of these in his diagnosis of and prognosis for Israel.

The message of salvation to God's remnant included outward prosperity (54:2). This promise was not something new. It was simply a continuation of the promise to Abraham (Gen. 13:16). The eternal truth here is not "fame and fortune" for those who are "saved." It is the dependability of God's Word in fulfilling the purpose for which it was spoken (55:11).

When God created mankind, he said "It is good." Man's fall did not change God's feelings about us because his thoughts are not conditioned by circumstances (55:8; 54:10). God is love (1 Jn. 4:8, 16), and this is unconditional. He does not play favorites but invites "whosoever" to intimate relationship with him (55:1).

Although the Heavenly Father's love is unconditional, experiencing this agape-love is conditional. The scriptures are filled with passages that set forth the pre-requisites for right relationship with God.

The Law says "Repent and be forgiven." This is clearly salvation by works because one must "do" something before being able to experience God's love. Let us remember that God's love is a gift and that he makes us right. This is the doctrine of justification. Too often we confuse it with the doctrine of sanctification, which tells us how God remakes us into his image.

This offer of salvation does require certain things of its recipients. It requires a deep hungering and thirsting of the soul (55:1). It requires making Christ our "Magnificent Obsession" whereby we seek him with all of our being (55:6; Lk. 10:27). This cannot be accomplished without repentance, an inward change of direction.

God's mercy is the attribute of his love which pardons guilty sinners (54:7-8, 10; 55:3, 7). The Hebrew word for "mercy" is "chesed" and means "God's loving-kindness." This assurance of "sins forgiven" is reason for joy (55:12!)

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Russian Baptist churches to receive 10,000 Bibles

STUTTGART, West Germany (BP)—At the headquarters of the United Bible Societies in Stuttgart, an intensive effort is underway to assure delivery of 10,000 Russian-language Bibles to Baptist congregations in the USSR before the year ends.

More than 500,000 sheets of special thin paper came from Northern England. The Biblia-Druck GmbH of Stuttgart turned over its facilities to the Bible production, since the import license expires by the end of December.

After printing, the Bibles will be shipped from Stuttgart, via a transport agency to the German Democratic Republic, through

Poland and on to Moscow. There the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists will undertake distribution. The AUCCEB received the import permit in July, according to the European Baptist Press Service.

A UBS spokesman said the major portion of costs of printing and transport will be financed through contributions to the UBS World Service funds but Baptist congregations in western Europe have pledged substantial support, too.

The last large delivery of Bibles for the USSR was in 1978, when 25,000 Bibles were sent from Stuttgart directly to Moscow.

Baptists struggle to relieve suffering in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (BP)—Mexican Baptists and Southern Baptist representatives in Mexico City scrambled Nov. 20 to provide help as the death toll from the previous day's natural gas explosions and fires passed 300.

"We have a Baptist doctor who's in charge of treating 200 burn patients at a Lions Club (in the disaster area)," reported David Daniell, Southern Baptist relief coordinator for Mexico. "We've chosen to work through him in providing medical supplies. The Baptist student center at the national university is providing blankets."

Daniell said Mexican Baptists had issued an appeal for blood donors and Southern Baptist representatives were requesting disaster relief funds from the Southern Bap-

tist Foreign Mission Board. Representatives who tried to donate blood on the evening of the disaster were turned away because of an overwhelming number of volunteers, he said.

Four Baptist churches and four mission points are located in the vicinity of the disaster, as well as a medical clinic sponsored by First Church, Mexico City. But all clinic personnel were evacuated along with some 100,000 other people in the working-class neighborhoods around the fuel tanks which exploded Nov. 19. The area was still sealed off Nov. 20 and no reports had been received on Baptist families and churches in the area, Daniell said. Seventeen Southern Baptist families live in Mexico City.

New York installs Igleheart as missions director

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (BP)—Glenn Igleheart, director of the interfaith witness department for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board for the past nine years, was installed recently as director of the missions division for the Baptist Convention of New York.

A native of Kentucky, Igleheart had worked with the board's interfaith witness department for 16 years. For seven years before becoming national program leader based in Atlanta, he had been an area director of interfaith witness for 19 states in the eastern part of the country, based in Glen Ridge, N.J.

In an unusual step, Clarkston Church in suburban Atlanta where the Iglehearts have been members, observed "Glenn and Nancy Igleheart Day" and commissioned the Iglehearts as representatives of Georgia to New York. The Georgia Baptist Convention and the Baptist Convention of New York are linked together as sister state conventions through the HMB.

In his new position in New York, Igleheart will be responsible for coordinating 10 missions programs in New York, northern New Jersey and western Connecticut.

George Bullard named S.C. missions director

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (BP)—George W. Bullard Jr., manager of the Megafocus Cities Program at the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board in Atlanta, has been named director of the South Carolina Baptist Convention's missions department, effective Feb. 1, 1985.

Bullard, who also serves as associate director of the Home Mission Board's metropolitan missions department, was elected during a meeting of the state convention's 79-member general board on Nov. 14 in conjunction with the meeting of the South Carolina convention.

Bullard, 34, succeeds N. Larry Bryson who resigned last March after an audit revealed finance discrepancies in excess of \$36,000.

The missions department's assignment spans Christian social ministries, language missions, urban church development, multi-family housing, black church relations, interfaith witness, a missions linkage with Baptists in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, student summer missions, church extension and chaplaincy programs.

Bullard will be responsible for directing a total missions department budget which will exceed \$918,000 in 1985.

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DR HAROLD C HENNETT
460 JAMES ROBERTSON PKY
CHICAGO, IL 60631

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