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November 22, 1984

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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November 22, 1984

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE



Giving thanks
for blessings—
'tis the season

On the cover



BSSB photo / David Haywood

Though saying grace before lunch is a daily occurrence for a child such as this one at a day care center operated by a Baptist church, Christians throughout the United States will stop to say a special thanks for all of life's blessings at Thanksgiving.

Ceremonies to honor drunk driving victims

Victims of drunk driving will be memorialized and honored at a candlelight vigil beginning at 7 p.m. Dec. 10 on the steps of the State Capitol in Little Rock.

The event is being sponsored by three chapters of Mothers Against Drunk Driving in the state (also known as Motorists Against Drunk Driving.)

The vigil will feature the lighting of a candle for each person killed or injured by an intoxicated motorist, provided the name is sent to the MADD groups at P.O. Box 5157, Little Rock, AR 72204. Families or friends may also call Candy Williamson at 225-5469 to submit a person's name.

Families of the victim will be asked to light

the candle, available to do it. Each victim's name will be read as the candle is lighted.

On display inside the capitol building will be posters and essays on the theme "One for the Road is One Too Many." The contest, which offers prizes, is open to students in all schools in Pulaski County. Plans for the Central Arkansas contest will be announced soon, as will a similar contest in White County.

A spokesman for the MADD groups said the vigil and contest was planned to keep the public aware of the continuing toll of victims of drunken drivers, even though Arkansas has in place recently updated DWI legislation.

New Sunday school lesson writer begins

Tom Smith, pastor of First Church, Bentonville, begins this week writing the Bible Book series Sunday school lessons for "Lessons for living."

Smith, a native of Lonoke, is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has also completed officers' and chaplains' orientation courses at Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Ala.

Before coming to Bentonville, Smith served as pastor of a church in Kentucky. He has worked in youth, music and revival ministries and as acting associate editor of the *Western Recorder*, the Kentucky Baptist newspaper.

Smith is married to the former Margaret Bruce of Hickory Plains. They have three children: John, Bill and Joshua.



Smith

In this issue

4 SBC perspective

Long-time seminary professor T.B. Maston looks at the political struggles in the Southern Baptist Convention and asks some questions about the results of the techniques employed.

10 who was elected

Arkansas Baptists elected to boards and committees by the messengers to the annual meeting are listed. Also, coverage, in photos, of other events of the convention accompany that report.

Gambling opponents lament 'Black Tuesday'

WASHINGTON (BP)—Election Day 1984 turned out to be "Black Tuesday" for anti-gambling forces as more states adopted some form of legalized gambling than in any single year in American history.

Voters approved gambling proposals in five of seven elections around the country. The only defeats for the gambling industry were casino votes in Arkansas and Colorado.

The big winner of the day was the lottery industry, which scored victories in California, Oregon, West Virginia and Missouri.

Lottery supporters in California spent about \$1.6 million—principally from Scientific Games, Inc., a lottery products corporation headquartered in Atlanta—in collecting signatures to get the issue on the ballot and to underwrite promotional expenses.

In Oregon, lottery backers were expected to spend about \$250,000 to the opponent's \$10,000. Scientific Games again was a major supplier of funds for the initiative drive.

West Virginia voters approved a lottery after a relatively low-key campaign which put to a vote a proposal passed by the state legislature more than a year earlier.

In Missouri, voters overwhelming approved both a state-operated lottery and pari-mutuel gambling. Missouri Baptists had worked with a diverse group of religious organizations to oppose the measures. Nevertheless, the lottery passed with about 67 percent approval, and pari-mutuel gambling received 60 percent approval.

The pari-mutuel vote was particularly disturbing for its opponents since the issue was put on the ballot even though proponents lacked enough legitimate signatures after fraudulent signatures on the petitions were thrown out.

Of the seven gambling votes, five were placed on the ballot by the initiative process, effectively bypassing state legislatures where gambling opponents had concentrated their efforts. In the initiative process, an issue can be placed on the ballot if a minimum level of valid signatures is certified by the appropriate state official.

"The gambling industry seems to have discovered the most effective technique for getting the issue before the voters," said anti-gambling spokesman Larry Braidfoot of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "With this initiative process the deliberation of elected officials is circumvented. Hearings are not held; factual information is not amassed. The issue becomes one where voters are wooed with mass sums of money pumped into a promotional campaign by the gambling forces."

Braidfoot and other anti-gambling strategists anticipate an avalanche of gambling initiatives in 1985.

"The level of intensity was high this year, but that is nothing compared to what we will encounter in 1985," said Braidfoot. "If we do not begin now to prepare for this challenge, the results will only worsen."



For 90 years, Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services has been meeting special needs. Since 1894, Arkansas Baptists have been ministering to the needs of children. At first we provided the Baptist Orphan's Home. Today, the agency provides a much wider ministry, maintaining Christian services to children and their families. The purpose is to help hurting children in the name of Christ.

Family and Child Care Services still maintains a home for children at Monticello. Johnny G. Biggs, executive director of the agency, observes that the needs of children are more complex today than they were in the past. Divorce, abuse and neglect are but a few of the events which impact on some of the children to whom ministry is given.

The goal of the agency is to mature and develop the children into responsible adults. A number of years ago, five children arrived at the children's home. Their father was deceased and their mother had suffered a paralyzing stroke. There was no one to care for them until Family and Child Care Services stepped in. Today, all are responsible Christian adults, active in local Baptist churches.

This past year, the children's home has given care to 99 children. Besides the basics of food, shelter and clothing, the children are provided with religious education, recreational activities, counseling, tutorial services, church, school and community involvement. The most important ingredient is love.

The Christian message of God's love permeates and undergirds everything that is done by the agency. Seventeen accepted Christ as savior at the children's home, and 10 at other Family and Child Care facilities. Thus, a total of 27 found Christ through the ministry of Family and Child Care Services.

The young people at the children's home attend worship services at local Baptist churches on Sunday morning. On Sunday and Wednesday evening, vespers services are held at the home. The youth are encouraged to become involved in the services by singing, sharing, Bible study and prayer. Some young people have the opportunity to hear the message of salvation for the first time and to attend Siloam Springs in the summer.

Counseling services are offered for children and families by Family and Child Care Services. These professionally trained Christian counselors, located at area offices in Little Rock, Jonesboro, Fayetteville, Harrison and Hope, help in resolving parent-child conflicts, marital difficulties and personal pro-

blems. Often homes are saved from divorce and parent-child relations are strengthened. Last year, Family and Child Care counselors responded to an all-time high of 1,044 new referrals.

The first choice for children is living at home with their own parents. When this is impossible, the second best care is a foster home in which children live in a family setting with caring individuals. The Child Care staff selects foster homes on the basis of careful study. Foster homes are supervised by Child Care personnel and monthly assistance is offered in meeting the children's needs.

A fourth ministry maintained by Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services is the Emergency Relief Home which provides temporary emergency care for children who have been sexually or physically abused or abandoned. One small child who was brought to an Emergency Receiving Home was being beaten by both the father and mother with clothes hangers.

Currently Emergency Receiving Homes are located in Camden, Little Rock and Sherwood. Others are to be opened in the near future. Last year, these homes cared for 217 abused and neglected children from birth to 12 years of age.

Child Care is currently responding to requests from three new areas of the state. Calvary Association in Searcy is in the process of building and furnishing an Emergency Receiving Home to be funded and operated by Family and Child Care Services. First Church, Paragould, and Greene County Association have expressed an interest in establishing an Emergency Receiving Home in Paragould, and North Arkansas Association has appointed a committee to study the selection of facilities for an Emergency Receiving Home in their area.

Family and Child Care Executive Director Biggs said, "We are grateful for the Cooperative Program support we receive each month, which provides a firm financial floor on which we can build to meet the needs of our child care ministry." Yet, direct offerings from Arkansas Baptist churches continue to assist in meeting the ever-growing needs of hurting children. Last year 1,066 of the 1,266 churches in the Arkansas Baptist Convention gave an all-time high of \$375,289.

Many churches take an offering for Child Care Services at Thanksgiving. Every Christian should prayerfully consider what God would have him to give to help hurting children. Remember Jesus said, "... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

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

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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 300 words and must not defame the character of persons. They must be marked "for publication."

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

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The Southern accent

Steve Lemke

Southern Baptist or Bible Baptist?

In the last few years, I have noticed a number of independent Baptist churches calling themselves "Bible Baptist churches." They seem to think that this name distinguishes them in some way from Southern Baptists. They are sadly mistaken.

To tell a Southern Baptist that he doesn't love the Bible very much is like telling a husband he doesn't love his wife very much. "Them's fightin' words!" Southern Baptists are people who honor the Book. The Baptist Faith and Message statement refers to the Bible as "divinely inspired," "a perfect treasure," "it has God for its author," and its contents are "truth without mixture of error." Whether we used the word "inerrancy," "infallibility" or the "the authority of Scripture," Southern Baptists are a Bible-believing people who recognize Scripture as the supreme standard and authority for all truth.

Of course, different people have different

interpretations of Scripture. No one of us has the perfect interpretation of the Bible. Even the recent controversy among Southern Baptists reflects that we are concerned that the authority of Scripture never be adulterated.

To tell the truth, I have never known a Southern Baptist who told me they did not believe in the authority of Scripture. Admittedly, I have always been a member of conservative, Bible-believing churches. But in all my years of attending Southern Baptist churches, I have never had a pastor who was not firmly convinced of the authority of Scripture. While attending Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, I never had a teacher who taught me anything but reverence for every page of God's Word. While serving as a pastor of a Southern Baptist church, I have never had a member or a fellow pastor who did not affirm the absolute authority of Scripture. So, for me, a Southern Baptist who says he disbelieves even a single word of Scrip-

ture is like a U.F.O.—I've heard people say they exist, but I've never seen one personally. Have you ever personally heard a Southern Baptist say they don't believe in the Bible?

On the other hand, Southern Baptists are not guilty of bibliolatry, either. We love the Bible because the Bible shows us Jesus. We do not worship the Bible; we worship the God we meet through the Bible. But the Bible is the only divinely-inspired guide, the only ultimate standard for faith and practice, the only divine revelation by which we may refer all questions of God. All reason, theology, ethics, feelings and church activities must be measured in the light of Scripture.

So don't tell that Southern Baptists don't accept the authority of Scripture. I know better!

Steve Lemke is professor of religion at Southern College.

One man's opinion

by T.B. Maston

FORT WORTH, Texas — I have been a member of a Southern Baptist church for more than 70 years. I taught in one of our seminaries for more than 40 years. I personally consider the present crisis in the Southern Baptist Convention the most serious that the convention has faced in my lifetime.

While some who are actively involved in the struggle to gain control of our convention may be motivated to some degree by theological differences with convention leadership, this is evidently not true for most of those who are actively in the leadership of this effort. For most of these, the motivation seems clearly to be primarily political rather than theological. Their primary concern is to gain control of the convention and hence of its boards, agencies and institutions.

Unfortunately, in this "political" struggle some well-trained and effective pastors are permitting themselves to be used or manipulated by the relatively few who are in basic control of the movement. This, to me personally, is the most serious disappointment of the whole matter. Some of these pastors are doubtlessly my former students.

The democratic process is being used in this effort to gain control of the SBC. Those leading the effort or movement have done their homework well. They know that if they can pick presidents of the convention over a long enough period of time who will do what they want, they can use their appoint-

ive powers to control ultimately the convention and its boards and institutions. In reality, as many of us see it, they will use the democratic process to destroy ultimately democracy itself.

They may claim that their "victories" prove that they are a majority, but many of us do not believe they are a majority. Control, in recent years, reveals one of the dangers of a democracy. A well-regimented minority can control so long as the majority continues to do nothing to meet their challenge.

It seems to me that some of the defenders of our convention and its agencies are tending to magnify theological differences too much. This is my personal conviction because, as previously suggested, theological differences are not the main concern of most of the leaders of the movement to gain control of the SBC.

But there is another reason why the theological should not be emphasized too much. There are some pastors who are strong supporters of the SBC, including some of the pastors of our strongest churches, who agree with what seems to be the theological thrust of those who would take over our convention. One of these pastors said to me on one occasion, "I agree with them theologically, but I disagree with them politically." He is a strong supporter of our total Southern Baptist program.

"Peace! Peace!" That has been the plea

of some who are trying to take over the convention after the most recent election of the officers of the convention. What if they had not won that election? The test of their sincerity is whether they would make the same plea if the election had turned out differently.

My judgement is that unless there is a split within the ranks or a change of leadership of the movement to take over the Southern Baptist Convention, the ultimate results of the takeover would be a disaster for and to Southern Baptists. There would be a drastic change if not the actual elimination of some boards and institutions to which some of us have given our lives.

There are two or three questions that concern some of us very much. Can the defenders of our convention meet the challenge of those who are seeking to control it without adopting some of the political techniques and strategies of those who are seeking to gain control? If the answer to the preceding question is "No," there is an additional perplexing and disturbing question: Can the methods of those who have been using political maneuvering in the effort to take over our convention be used by those who defend it without losing the spirit and concern that has so largely made us what we are?

T.B. Maston is professor emeritus of Christian ethics, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Don Moore

You'll be glad to know...

... 1984 convention — one of the best!

While no attempt has been made to get a consensus on this, repeated unsolicited comments were to the effect that this was a most enjoyable and blessed convention. One messenger said it was one of the few she would want to retain in her memory. This speaks to the attitude and spirit of Arkansas Baptist people. The fellowship was splendid. Participation was great. Messengers seemed to be more consistent in staying in the convention sessions. The significant actions taken, as reported in last week's *News magazine*, were blessed of God. And, who can forget what we heard and felt when Dr. Bud Fray told us of the missionary actions that had to be canceled in South Africa when they were told that both Lottie Moon and Cooperative Program gifts were each two million dollars short last year. Everyone must have felt "that cannot happen again."



Moore

... Other unforgettable were (1) The announced reconciliation of First Church, Russellville and the Dardanelle-Russellville Association, along with a letter of apology to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. What a work of God! (2) The fabulous music in the opening session offered by four local church choirs and orchestra. (3) And, the moving Parade of Nations conducted by the youth of Grand Avenue Church in the missions service.

... Registration was good! Conventions out of the middle of the state are usually poorly attended. We overcame that with 998 messengers registered. This is good for an average year, even in Little Rock. Our thanks to the local people who kept 10 couples and some of our foreign missionaries in their homes. Director of missions, fellow pastors and even churches made it possible for some to attend who normally could not.

... Grand Avenue people did an absolutely thrilling job of hosting us. All personnel, programs and activities were focused upon helping us have a good experience. It paid off well! We deeply appreciate it.

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

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

Your state convention at work

Family and Child Care From the Children's Home

Seeing children and youth make a profession of faith in Christ and joyfully follow him in baptism is a beautiful sight indeed for staff at Arkansas Baptist Home for Children, and for other Sunday school and youth workers who have invested time and effort in the lives of our children.

Within the last month four young people were baptized at Second Church and four at First Church. One other has made a profession of faith, and will be baptized at a later date. Two of our boys gave their testimonies at Second Church, and no one could doubt the sincerity of their words.

What does this mean for those who have

made a new commitment to the Lord? No more problems? Certainly not, but it does mean they now have a source of strength they did not have before. Even though earthly fathers may have failed them, they now have a loving Heavenly Father who loves and understands them to the point of feeling their deepest woes.

What does this mean for adults who work with them? Perhaps a new challenge to be a channel of the Father's love, to realize anew the responsibility of sharing what has been given to us. A time to remember again our own salvation experience and to ask our Heavenly Father for a child-like heart. — **Eula Armstrong, director of special activities, Arkansas Baptist Home for Children**

missionary notes

Mr. and Mrs. J. Stephen Ford, missionaries to Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), have completed language study in France and arrived on their field of service (address: Mission Baptist, PB 580, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso). He is a native of Magnolia. She is the former Sharon Curtis of Memphis, Tenn. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1983.

Shirley Jackson, missionary to Brazil, has completed furlough and returned to the field (address: Caixa Postal 950, 20001 Rio de Janeiro RJ, Brazil). She was born in Bentonville, Ark., and grew up near Natchez, Miss. She was appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1956.

Mr. and Mrs. Stephen A. Smith, missionaries to Portugal, report a change of address (Quinta das Palmeiras, Lote 68, 138, 2780 Oeiras, Portugal). He is a native of Camden. The former Tommie Shaddox, she was born in Oakland, Calif., and considers North Little Rock her hometown. They were appointed in 1983.

Mr. and Mrs. William F. Wardlaw, missionaries to Japan, have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service (address: 3-1-21 Takamaru Mikawa, Takarazuka 665 Japan). He was born in Texarkana and grew up in Tyler and Longview, Texas. She considers Norfolk, Va. her hometown. They were appointed in 1984.

Cooperative Program report: October

Summary for Oct. 1984	Year	Jan. - Oct. gifts	
		Over (under)	% increase over previous year
Received	1979	\$ 32,872.78	11.42
Budget	1980	214,558.50	11.51
	1981	103,505.12	10.96
	1982	(147,128.86)	9.61
	1983	(62,003.31)	11.00
	1984	(355,733.24)	4.84

For the second month in a row Arkansas Baptists have exceeded the budget. The increase for October was nearly \$14,000 or 1.55 percent. We have two months to make the annual budget. Pray that this is accomplished.—**L.L. Collins**

Seminaries involve 8,769 through SEED ministry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Bivocational pastors, persons in preparation for ministry and lay persons seeking new ways to minister were among the 8,769 persons who received training through Seminary External Education Division (SEED) during 1983-84. Operated jointly by the six Southern Bap-

tist seminaries, SEED provides off-campus theological study opportunities through its two departments, Seminary Extension and Seminary Studies. Its programs are designed for individuals who have been unable to attend a seminary, even though they already may be on a church staff.

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

people

Larry R. Childers was ordained to the ministry Oct. 28 at the Bingham Road Church in Little Rock. Childers is pastor of the Forest Tower Church in Little Rock.

Rodney Rains is serving as interim pastor of the Valley Church at Searcy.

Kent Jennings has accepted a call to join the staff of Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith as assistant pastor/administrator. Jennings will move to Fort Smith from Dallas, Texas, where he has been serving as assistant business administrator and controller at First Church.

Hal Gallop Sr. has resigned as interim pastor of the Zion Hill Church.

Paul Horner has joined the staff of West Memphis Second Church as minister of youth and youth music.

J. Lowell Ponder has resigned as associate pastor at Fayetteville First Church.

Ruth Ann Wade has joined the Baptist Sunday School Board as a consultant in the adult program section of the Sunday School department. She was an instructor in home economics at Ouachita Baptist University and also has served as an adult special worker with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. A native of El Dorado, she holds a bachelor of science degree in home economics from OBU and a master of science degree in housing from Florida State University.

Colley would rather counsel couples than divorce them

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)—When Nathaniel Colley Jr. found himself trying to prevent divorces instead of helping couples get them, he realized law might not be his forte. So he will practice truth and justice in a different arena—Baptist ministry.

The 28-year-old son of Nathaniel Colley Sr., a prominent Sacramento attorney, worked at his father's law firm for the past four years but his philosophy and approach to law became incompatible with his father's, so he left the firm in July.

Colley started classes this fall at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. His family is still having difficulty accepting his decision to become a National Baptist minister, Colley admitted.

"It's been painful because (being in practice) together has been everyone's lifelong assumption and dream," Colley explained. "You know, I love my father. . . . But the

David Hillier has resigned as pastor of the Cedar Creek because of illness.

Donnie Stephens is serving as pastor of the Cedar Creek Church.

Dennis Corder of Perryville and Clay Terry of Siloam Springs are recipients of \$550 1984-85 presidential scholarships at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Corder is the son of Mary Corder and the late Eugene Corder and Terry is the son of Dr. and Mrs. John V. Terry.

Art D. Dunham of Newport received the Gladys Berquist Child Development Center attendance scholarship for 1984-85 at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the son of Art Dunham.

briefly

Augusta First Church recently presented a Sunday School pin to Ginger Kreis for 20 years perfect attendance. Her daughter, Lana, was given a three-year pin. Others honored were Eddie Hall for 14 years; Brian Miller, 11 years; Chris Brown, four years; and Mrs. Bobby Brown, Joseph Brown, Zena Pearrow and Kasper Hines, one year.

Huntsville First Church celebrated the dedication of their new educational space Oct. 28. Sam Dunham, a former pastor, was speaker for the morning worship hour that was followed by a fellowship dinner and an afternoon dedication led by Harold G. Gateley,

Lord has other plans for me. As the expression goes, 'I hear a different drummer.'"

Colley, the youngest of five children and the only son, graduated from the University of Michigan in 1977 and went on to earn his law degree from the university's law school. After graduation in 1979, he immediately began working as a law clerk at his father's firm, alongside his sister, Natalie, also an attorney.

"It's no secret I hated family law precisely because it's dividing marriages," he says. "People start using their children as weapons against each other."

Colley felt best when he advised couples to work on their problems rather than giving up the marriage, even though it meant a loss of clients and money to him. He recalls one estranged couple with whom he and his wife socialized. Following many discussions with Colley, the couple reconciled and the

director of missions for Washington-Madison Association. The educational wing of more than 3,000 square feet houses a library, office, Sunday School rooms and a choir room. The building committee included Hoy Haught, Richard Edminsten, Quentin Goynne and James Hamill. Joseph Dillon is pastor.

Pleasant Valley Church at Sidon held deacon ordination services Oct. 21 for Ronnie Holeyfield.

Trinity Church at Searcy ordained Dale Johnson and Phil Mooneyham as deacons Oct. 21.

Nashville First Church adopted a resolution Nov. 7, honoring pastor John Holston for his 13 years of service to the church and for his support of both the Arkansas Baptist State and the Southern Baptist Conventions. Holston delivered at the annual sermon at the ABSC held in Fort Smith, Nov. 6-7.

Fort Smith First Church recently closed a tent revival led by Tom Melzoni of Dallas, Texas, and the musical group "Rejoice" from Fort Smith. The Fort Smith church, which has moved into multiple Sunday Schools, had 2,700 in attendance for High Attendance Day, Oct. 28.

Pleasant Grove Church at Abbott observed its 100th anniversary Oct. 21 with Sunday School, the morning worship service and an afternoon program that included special music, testimonies and a message by John Evans, pastor emeritus.

wife sent him a letter thanking him for refusing their divorce case.

"Time and again, I've seen the Lord work in these marriages. I am just an instrument for him," says Colley.

When Colley receives his master of divinity degree in about three years, he hopes to return to Sacramento and concentrate on family counseling.

Colley also has resigned himself to a minister's salary that won't come close to the money he was making as an attorney. But he's confident he, his wife and three daughters, ages one, five and eight, will get by on savings and other resources.

"If you're going into the ministry looking for a good-paying job, you're going in for the wrong reason. You have to go in with the faith that the Lord will provide," he says. "The money in law practice didn't make me happy."

Convention, auxiliary officers elected at Fort Smith



Arkansas Baptists attending the annual meeting of the state convention Nov. 6-7 in Fort Smith elected auxiliary group leadership for the new year, as well as the constitutional officers of the convention. At left, messengers cast ballots in one of three constitutional elections. Jon Stubblefield, Magnolia, was re-elected president; Jerry Wilson, El Dorado, was elected first vice-president and John McClanahan, Pine Bluff, second vice-president. Below, members of the convention Tellers Committee count ballots in the run-off election between Wilson and Jesse Reed of Little Rock. Photographs of officers elected by convention auxiliaries appear elsewhere in this section.



ABN photos / Millie Gill

Pastors' Conference officers elected Tuesday, Nov. 6, before the opening of the annual meeting, were (left to right) Ben Rowell, First Church, Rogers, first vice-president; Nick Garland, Second Church, Hot Springs, president; and Rich Kincl, First Church, Berryville, second vice-president. The two-day Pastors' Conference program included messages from Zig Ziglar, Bill Stafford, Mike Gilchrist, Bill Bennett and Cecil Ray. Special music was provided by Richard Smith, Brent Powell and adult and youth ensembles from Olivet, Little Rock.

Audio tapes of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention may be obtained from the ABCS Executive Director's office, Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. Tapes are of full sessions only, cost \$3 each and must be ordered by Dec. 3.



Sidelights—Below, an OBU student keeps his calculus close at hand while waiting for his brass ensemble performance. Right, Joe Timmons, of Little Rock, "recalls" a little of the history of the state Baptist newspaper.



ABN photos / Millie Gill



ABN photo / Millie Gill



ABREA officers—Mark Short (right), minister of music at Fayetteville First Church, was elected president of the Arkansas Baptist Religious Education Association during its annual sessions Nov. 5 and 6. Others named officers were Carey Scott (left), minister of education and evangelism at First Church of Forrest City, first vice-president; David Henderson, minister of education at Pine Bluff, First Church, second vice-president; and Bill Falkner (center), associate in the state Church Training Department, secretary-treasurer. The ABREA, composed of education and music personnel, adopted a resolution favoring the development of a state conference center. The action was to be communicated to the state convention's executive board. The group met at First Church, Fort Smith, and heard speakers who told them to maintain their physical fitness so they could serve God; learn to choose their commitments carefully and control their time; and to begin with building their personal Christian lives to deal with stress.



Ministers' Wives elected Carolyn Byrum, of Carlisle (right), president, and Ruth Carswell, of Little Rock (left), secretary. Not pictured is Norma Kirkpatrick, of Heber Springs, elected vice-president. The wives program featured displays of favorite Christmas traditions, testimonies about memorable Christmases and a reminder from Betty Dilday, of-Fort Worth, Texas, about the challenges of sharing a Christian leader's ministry.



Strengthening Families

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

NOVEMBER 4-7 1984 GRAND AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH FORT SMITH



ABN photos / Millie Gill

Executive Board members elected Eddie McCord, of Benton (right), president, and Ferrell Morgan, of Fort Smith (center), vice-president. Far left, Strengthening Families was the program theme selected for the 1984 Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Three Bible studies by Joel Gregory, assistant professor of preaching from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, highlighted the emphasis.



ABN photo / Millie Gill

Rehearsal—Above, Betty Wilfong of the ABSC Church Training Department runs the state Baptist Student Union crew through their portion of a multi-media presentation on Executive Board program ministries. Left, Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine board officers for 1985 are (left to right) Merle Milligan, Harrison, vice-president; Lane Strother, Mountain Home, president; and Charles Chesser, Carlisle, secretary.



ABSC board and committee members elected

Executive Board

Terms to expire 1987

Arkansas Valley
Ashley
Bartholomew
Calvary
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1985 Convention

Date: Nov. 19-21, 1985

Place: Ouachita Baptist University
Arkadelphia

1988 Convention

New date: Nov. 1-3, 1988

Place: Park Hill Church
North Little Rock

1989 Convention

Date: November 7-9, 1989

First Church, Little Rock

Southern Baptist missionaries set to re-enter Mozambique

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptist missionaries will re-enter Mozambique in late 1985 or early 1986 when a new missionary couple completes orientation and Portuguese language study.

Mozambique officially became the 105th Southern Baptist mission field at the Foreign Mission Board's October meeting. The board appointed Alabama pastor James R. Brock

and his wife, Brenda, to do church development, evangelism and leadership training in the southern African nation.

Southern Baptists had missionaries in Mozambique earlier, but they departed in September 1975 because anti-American sentiment, then prevalent in the newly-independent Marxist nation, made their work practically impossible.

The Brocks will enter orientation at the board's Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va., in January 1985, and then go to Portugal for language study the following April. The board is seeking another couple for the same work.

Mozambique, which has been troubled by political unrest and austere economic conditions, has become a high priority because of "tremendous evangelistic potential," according to Marion G. (Bud) Fray, the board's associate director for Southern Africa.

The Mozambique Baptist Convention, which invited Southern Baptists to re-enter

the country, currently operates with eight churches and 26 mission congregations. "We have a tremendous opportunity to help train leaders in this young convention which stands on the edge of really doing something for Jesus Christ," Fray said.

Meanwhile, national Baptists from six nations where Southern Baptists have missionaries have been responding to needs in Mozambique.

Brazilian Baptists have sent a missionary couple and two single missionaries to work there on a full-time basis, while Southern Baptist missionaries and national Baptists in five surrounding African nations have provided hunger relief, evangelistic and leadership training assistance.

In the latest effort, an inter-racial team from South Africa took in more than 15 tons of relief supplies and did evangelistic work, according to Southern Baptist missionaries Dwight and Lila Reagan, who accompanied the team.



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Partnership Study Set in November


Foreign Mission Study 1984 is listed November 18-21 on the denominational calendar. This year's theme is "Partnership in Missions." Listed below are titles and resources available for different age groups.

ADULTS. *The Partnership Principle*, a book by Stan Hastey, Ron Boswell, Clark Scanlon and Mike Creswell. How Southern Baptists work together with Baptists in Brazil, Mexico and Curaçao. "Of Pairs and Apples: A Partnership Story," video and filmstrip. BTN telecasts at 1 p.m. (CST) November 6 (Missions Hour) and November 19.

YOUTH. *Winners*, a book by Martha Skelton. Partnership between Oklahoma Baptist youth and Spanish Baptist youth in Europe. "Spain's Partnership and Music," audiocassette.

CHILDREN. *The Welcome Knock*, a book by Lila Mefford. A Spanish Baptist pastor's son and a Southern Baptist missionary's daughter become partners in missions. *Amigos*, a book by Barbara Crider. A missionary's son in Spain develops the courage to tell others about Jesus.

Printed resources, filmstrips and audiocassettes are available in local Baptist Book Stores. Videotapes can be purchased through Video Tape Service, 127 Ninth Avenue, North, Nashville, TN 37234.

THE COMMISSION magazine is a resource partner to other materials for FMS '84. Look for the symbol  on related study topic articles. In 1984 check the January, June/July, August and October/November issues. A subscription to THE COMMISSION will provide foreign missions information year-round.

The Commission
MAGAZINE OF THE FOREIGN MISSION BOARD
Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230

Contact the leader of the Woman's Missionary Union or Brotherhood for details of the study in your church.

SBC agencies plan missions curriculum

ALANTA (BP)—For the first time in history, representatives of five Southern Baptist Convention agencies planned a coordinated missions education curriculum for the local church during the years 1988-89.

"This is an historic meeting," said June Whitlow, associate executive director of Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, who presided over the meeting held at offices of the SBC Home Mission Board. During the two-day meeting, representatives of the Home and Foreign Mission Boards made presentations outlining their long-range plans for the years 1988-89.

Following the presentations, representatives of the Sunday School Board, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood Commission drafted proposed curriculum topics for members of their organizations to study during 1988-89, reporting the topics to the whole group for evaluation and discussion. The curriculum ideas were not finalized, however, since they must go through an

established approval process at each agency.

Morton Rose, vice-president for church programs and services at the Sunday School Board, said such a meeting to develop a coordinated missions curriculum would not have been possible 20 years ago. He added that Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust emphasis has not only made it possible, but desirable and essential. "We've been doing a great job in missions and missions education for years, but we're only beginning to do what we really ought to be doing in coordinated curriculum development," he said.

Although each agency's curriculum will differ, the major coordinated emphasis on foreign missions for the years 1988-89 will be on leadership training and the major emphasis on home missions for the same period will be on cooperative participation in missions. About 75 representatives from the five agencies attended the two-day curriculum coordination meeting.

Texas Baptists give \$5.2 million

DALLAS (BP)—Texas Baptists gave more than \$5.2 million for missions through the Cooperative Program in October—the largest amount ever given by a state Baptist convention in one month.

Texas Baptists gave \$5,254,158 in October which was \$774,991, or 17.3 percent, above the required budget of \$4,479,167.

The October total exceeds the previous record of \$5,071,942 set in May 1984. The two months mark the only times receipts of a state convention's Cooperative Program budget have topped the \$5 million mark.

The \$5.2 million is an increase of \$1,570,233, or 42.6 percent, over the \$3,683,924 received in October 1983.

The 1984 total received to date in Texas

through the Cooperative Program is \$45,599,021. The Texas Baptist Cooperative Program budget for 1984 is \$53,750,000. SBC world-wide causes receive 36.1 percent of the total receipts.

William M. Pinson Jr., executive director of the BGCT, said, "We are grateful to God that Texas Baptists continue to be good stewards of their money in spite of adverse economic conditions.

"Due to the giving of Texas Baptists the basic Texas Baptist Cooperative Program budget is being met. However, we all pray that the giving in November and December will be even greater so that we can meet the challenge budget."

'Stand up for Jesus,' Southern Baptists told in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Southern Baptists must "stand up for Jesus"—not their own special interests—if the conflict in their midst is to be resolved, William H. Elder III told participants in a conference on issues facing the Southern Baptist Convention.

Elder's analysis came at the end of the conference Nov. 2-4, sponsored by St. Charles Avenue Church in New Orleans, where he is pastor. About 200 persons from eight states attended.

"The real crisis we face in the Southern Baptist Convention is a crisis of the Holy Spirit," Elder said. "We are grieving the Spirit these days," he added, noting political strife has rocked the SBC for five years.

"Grieving the Spirit happens when people of faith allow their differences to separate them from each other and use their differences to establish hierarchies and power blocks," he said. It also happens when people "simply assume God is on our side and therefore make holy our own preferences and pre-dispositions, instead of making our preferences and pre-dispositions by what's already on his holy list," he added.

Southern Baptists are "guilty on both counts," Elder insisted, noting the effect "is to shrink the conduits through which the Spirit's power comes to us when, what we really need to do is to free up the Spirit."

Southern Baptists can do this by realizing that differences among them are real, by recognizing the sinfulness of grieving the Spirit and by repenting of the sins which

separate them from each other and the Spirit, he said.

"The only way we can really pull off this freeing of the Spirit is by 'standing up' not first for the Bible or for our history or for our polity but for Jesus," Elder said. "For standing up for Jesus surely means standing up with him as our norm, as our standard, standing by his side." If Southern Baptists truly stand up for Jesus, they "might just see him once again out in front, waving us on, saying, 'Come together, follow me—for I am the way, the truth and the life,'" he concluded.

Other speakers in the conference included: Glenn Hilburn, chairman of the department of religion at Baylor University, Waco, Texas; Frank Stagg, emeritus professor of New Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and Bill Sherman, pastor of Woodmont Church in Nashville, Tenn.

The Southern Baptist Convention was "emphatically not created as a consequence of theological differences but for the propagation of the Bible," Hilburn said. He provided a sketch of Baptist history and noted Baptists traditionally have stood for several principles—liberty of conscience and the separation of church and state, evangelism, ministerial education and missions—which have united them beyond theological differences.

But a yearning for "security" has caused some Southern Baptists to seek theological orthodoxy, Hilburn said. He emphasized this

leaning toward rigid theological interpretations has contributed to the erosion of Southern Baptist identity in recent years. Instead of placing their trust and hope for security in orthodoxy, Southern Baptists need to "find the authority of Jesus Christ" and be "open to the spirit of God," he noted.

Stagg said authority of the Bible—center of much recent SBC debate—should be "understood, according to its purpose and nothing else." He indicated Baptists' focus should be on how the Bible is "authoritative for faith and practice"—something all of them can affirm—rather than on theories about the inspiration of Scripture or its scientific or historical authority.

Sherman lamented "most layfolk don't know what's going on" in the Southern Baptist Convention. He described what he believes to be a political "machine" which has been used to "control the democratic process of the SBC" by controlling the convention's presidential elections and the president's appointments.

But Sherman said all Southern Baptists, laypeople included, can help heal the convention by being informed about SBC issues, sharing concerns and insights with others and participating in the SBC annual meetings. Informed Southern Baptists who attend the annual meetings and vote their consciences, immune to political manipulation of any kind, he said, will be "acting to preserve what is worthy of having in our noble convention."

Claas, Dunn condemn abduction of Central American Baptists

WASHINGTON (BP)—The chief executive officers of two Baptist groups, with memberships of 25 million and 27 million respectively, have condemned the recent kidnapping and arrest of fellow Baptists in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

In a joint statement Nov. 2, Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Gerhard Claas and Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs Executive Director James M. Dunn decried the Oct. 5 kidnapping of Nicaraguan Baptist youth leader Marcia Chamorro and the Oct. 28 arrest of Baptist leader Miguel Castro Garcia of El Salvador.

"Such abductions of religious leaders mark gross violations of basic human rights, the primary of which is religious liberty," Claas and Dunn declared.

Chamorro was among a group of

volunteer government teachers kidnapped by "contra" forces opposed to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. During the Oct. 5 incident, some 60 armed contras killed one of the teachers and kidnapped five others, including the 18-year-old Chamorro. The fate of the five remains unknown.

Castro, 30-year-old pastor of Emmanuel Church in San Salvador, reportedly was abducted by plainclothes policemen as he was driving home from church services Oct. 28. He was released two days later and immediately deported to Sweden.

The statement by Claas and Dunn, while not siding with any of the warring interests in the two troubled Central American nations, said they nevertheless: "...condemn categorically every act of terrorism aimed at persons whose sense of religious calling in-

cludes addressing the pressing social and moral issues of their societies. Civilized people everywhere surely mourn and protest the lot of those who are terrorized for the sake of conscience."

In addition, Claas and Dunn called on Baptists worldwide "to be constantly alert to such deprivation of basic human rights and to be prepared courageously to stand in the gap when religious liberty and other fundamental freedoms are denied fellow believers."

Claas and BWA Deputy General Secretary Denton Lotz protested the arrest of Castro in Oct. 29 telegrams to President Reagan, El Salvador President Jose Napoleon Duarte, U.S. ambassador to El Salvador Thomas Pickering and to El Salvador's ministry of defense.

Extremists in India attack Baptist church starter

KARNATAKA, India (BP)—About 140 religious extremists surrounded an Indian Baptist pastor and held him captive for more than three hours Oct. 14, forcing him to write a statement vowing to leave the area.

The extremists, members of the militant Hindu party Rashtriya Swayam Sevadala (RSS), locked themselves and Pastor M. Ramaiah in a village hall and began mock-

ing and abusing him, condemning his church-starting efforts in the state of Karnataka.

Despite the harassment, Ramaiah has remained in the area. After the attack, believers at his church continued to meet, spending two days in prayer and fasting. Classes for church member training, begun in September, have continued.

On the day he was attacked, Ramaiah had just finished a Sunday morning service when two young people came to see him. They said village elders wanted to talk to him. Ramaiah followed the young people to a meeting hall. As soon as he entered, someone bolted the door. He was threatened with his life if he refused to write the statement they demanded.

Act now, urges missions leader; no end soon for Africa drought

by Mary Jane Welch

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptists must act now if they want to help prevent the Ethiopian tragedy from spreading across Africa, says a missions leader who's seen the African drought firsthand.

"There's no end in sight," says John Mills, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board director for West Africa. "We're frustrated in not being able to do all we'd like to right now, but next year is likely to be worse." Both the United Nations disaster relief coordinator and the International Red Cross have issued similar warnings in recent weeks.

Graphic film footage of starving Ethiopian refugees has brought that nation's plight to American attention in recent weeks, but the U.N. Relief coordinator's office has warned 27 African nations urgently need food. More than 35 million people—many of them children—in 18 of the worst-hit countries desperately need help.

Southern Baptists are already helping in many of those countries but had better start thinking about next year, warns Mills. Based on news reports, missionary comments and his own travel, Mills predicts the drought will strike even harder next year in the belt of countries bordering the southern Sahara from Senegal to Ethiopia.

Mali, where Southern Baptist missionaries distributed 5,000 tons of grain this year, faces conditions typical in those countries. While rains renewed the parched fields of coastal West Africa this year, they diminished as they moved inland. For the fifth year in Mali, the rains failed. Famine conditions usually felt during the last months before harvest have become a year-round threat.

Already, the Mali government has declared everything about three-fourths of the country a disaster area for next year. They've officially asked Southern Baptists to give the same help they gave this year.

Other West African countries where Southern Baptist missionaries work—Burkina Faso (Upper Volta), Niger and Senegal especially—also have shortages. Niger has already reported a 350,000-ton cereal deficit for the year, the country's largest ever, according to West Africa magazine. Nearby Chad and Mauritania face a critical situation.

Mills believes Southern Baptists have a responsibility to help in those countries where they can. To do the most good he urges them to start now. Waiting until a crisis develops like that in Ethiopia is not the way to do hunger relief, he says.

"By the time publicity reaches the public it's almost too late," he says. "The frantic efforts that are managed now, while they're laudable, are really too late and are tragic in that it's been obvious that this has been coming for a long time. Already we can see it's going to be there for next year because the rain hasn't come."

Because the world ignored early warnings about the coming famine, many have died

who shouldn't have, he said. While that is the greatest drawback to last-minute relief efforts, there are other problems.

Donors are having to use planes to fly in grain and medicines that could have been shipped more cheaply by surface. Hastily thrown-together distribution plans often fail to get the grain to those in remote areas who need it most. Some falls into the hands of profiteers and some rots unused.

Much better is a distribution plan such as that used in Mali this year by Southern Baptist missionaries Norman and Beverly Coad, says Mills. They began planning months ahead so the grain could be shipped by sea. They involved almost all evangelical churches in the country to see that grain got to the most remote places. And they enlisted Muslim observers on each team to assure everyone grain was distributed fairly.

Even with careful planning, the Coads could not avoid all the pitfalls of relief work. Congress stalled the African grain bill in Congress while debating tacked-on military aid for Central America. By the time grain was released to Africa, it was almost too late. They had to move the grain more than 1,000 miles inland as soon as it arrived to beat a hoped-for rainy season.

Even without rain, getting to remote villages over poor or non-existent roads posed special problems. Regular trucks bogged down in the sand. Distribution teams needed expensive four- or five-ton four-wheel-drive vehicles to cross the desert. They were rescued by Norwegian Christian volunteers who had been provided such trucks.

Although the Mali government has requested more aid for next year, Mills says he has cautioned against making promises.

Money and personnel are two factors limiting Southern Baptist response to hunger needs, said Mills. The need for money is ap-

parent, but the need for people, especially career missionaries, is just as crucial.

Southern Baptists have an advantage over many relief agencies in having missionaries already on the field with the language and cultural skills to work effectively in a country. But in many of the drought-stricken countries, their numbers are small. Right now two missionaries are in Mali; four in Niger; 10 in Senegal.

The Coads used two volunteers, other evangelical missionaries and a number of Malians in grain distribution, but they are so exhausted now they don't know whether they can undertake a similar relief program again next year, says Mills.

The Foreign Mission Board is not content just to keep meeting crisis needs, says Mills. People in much of West Africa always live on a fine line between life and death. Whereas a crop failure may be a temporary setback for a U.S. farmer, it may mean death for an African farmer who is able to raise only enough to get by each year.

Helping Africans raise their production so there's a little extra in good years to be saved for crisis years is an aim of Southern Baptist development programs such as that planned for the Kenieba area of Mali. And for that more career missionaries will be needed—an agriculturalist, a public health worker and a nutritionist.

Because Southern Baptists are in many places where people need help, Mills says they should look to the biblical account of Joseph dealing with an earlier African famine. "We need to be as wise as he was—to see things coming and set up warehouses, start early," says Mills.

Mary Jane Welch is a Foreign Mission Board staff writer.

Famine bill dies in Congress

WASHINGTON (BP)—While Congress in its final days debated and raised the national debt and approved "pork barrel" legislation, a comprehensive African famine aid bill got lost in the shuffle.

H.R. 6203, the Africa Relief and Recovery Act, called for emergency funds to aid millions of starving Africans suffering from drought-inflicted famine.

The legislation, which supporters hope to resurrect in January, would have provided \$450 million in food and non-food assistance to 28 African nations where approximately 150 million people face severe food shortages.

The U.S. Food for Peace program would have received \$265 million for food aid. Another \$185 million would have been directed toward assistance for health, transportation and refugee services, seeds and agricultural rehabilitation.

W. David Lockard, who directs hunger education and action for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, pointed out unless new legislation is approved, Africa will receive less U.S. food relief in 1985 than in 1984, even though conditions have worsened dramatically.

"Despite almost daily reports of the incredible suffering in Africa and despite the efforts of many hunger activists in support of H.R. 6203, Congress elected not to act on this vital piece of legislation," Lockard said. "Millions of lives—most of them children—depend on swift appropriations by the new Congress in January."

In hardest-hit Ethiopia, about six million people face possible starvation. In Mozambique more than 100,000 people are already dead, and more would have perished if sizeable emergency supplies had not been distributed in 1984.

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For contest rules and entry form, contact Tom Eggleston, Potpourri Contest, 1759 Hunting Creek Lane, Conway, GA 30208.

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Holding on to the truth

by Dennis Smith, First Church, Camden

Basic passage: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-15

Focal passage: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

Central truth: The Christian must be faithful to the gospel and always watchful for Christ's return.

It looks like Paul's days and ours are not so different. Even in the first century, men were making reputations on predicting the Second Coming. In the case found in our scripture passage, someone had proclaimed it had already happened (perhaps he had written a best seller book!) Paul was forced to explain that Jesus had not returned and certain signs must precede the correct time of the return.

We will not attempt to explain the signs. Other commentaries can help, even though there seem to be as many theories as commentators. We do know that there are some scriptural guidelines to the Lord's return. Men are always trying to decode, explain or concoct a calendar for God to follow. The Christian must beware. Remember, even Jesus did not know the time (see Matt. 24:36). If Jesus did not know, how can a man brave enough to write a book or draw a chart explain the mystery?

The most important facts boil down to this: certain things will happen that will stand as signs of the times (such as the coming of the lawless one). Then Jesus will return, defeating Satan. Anything beyond this moves into the realm of the controversial (in fact, many may find this goes too far) and borders on the false teaching that Paul had to deal with in Thessalonica. It is fruitless to argue how or when. Christians, we know who wins in the end and where we stand in the battle. We would be much better off living in the victory and not arguing about how the war is to be fought.

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Life and Work

Working through the church

by Billy White, Second Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Acts 20:13-38, 19:1-41

Focal passage: Acts 20:18-28

Central truth: Believers should serve the Lord through his church.

Someone has suggested there are four classes of church members: the tired, the retired, the tiresome, and the tireless. Perhaps you can identify with this assessment. Surely the Apostle Paul's involvement with Christ's church was of the tireless variety.

The book of Acts testifies to his productivity. Perhaps as many as 20 new churches were born because of Paul's efforts. He refers to over 80 persons by name in his letters, 30 of which he claims to have personally brought to Christ. But not only did he start churches and fill churches, he equipped pastors to lead them. Timothy, Titus, Tychicus and Silas were some of his "preacher boys."

The same tireless spirit that characterized this great man's life was evidenced in Ephesus, the location which occasioned the experience of our focal text. It is no surprise that Paul's closing remarks to these leaders were church-related. The grave importance of working with and through God's church is the theme of his message.

First, he lets his own record speak (vv. 18-21). Paul's was a life lived with faithful reference to Christ's church. He was no "Lone Ranger" believer. He had lived with these people. He had shared their homes (v.20). They had witnessed his lifestyle personally (vv. 19, 33-34). The church had heard him teach (19:9-10) and preach (20:3-7). He had invested his life with these believers, spending more time with them than any other New Testament church (v. 31). Now as he prepared to leave, he reminded them of his purpose for living (v. 24) and how he had sought to share the gospel of God's grace through his work in the local church.

In the final verse of our text, Paul admonishes the local Christian leadership to follow his example and shoulder their responsibility to their church (v. 28). As shepherds of God's flock they were to protect themselves and their church from false teaching and provide quality spiritual care for her members.

"If you love me, then feed my sheep," Jesus instructed Peter (Jn. 21:17). Acts 20 reminds us once again that working through the local church is a wonderful and biblical way of demonstrating our love for Christ.

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Bible Book

"God's world plan revealed"

by Tom Smith, First Church, Bentonville

Basic passage: Isaiah 40:1 to 48:22

Focal passage: Isaiah 40:1-3; 42:1-4; 45:20-25

Central truth: Our sinfulness doesn't defeat God's greatness as seen in Christ.

We serve a great God who is a constant in changing times. He truly is the "anchor of the soul," regardless of the circumstances we encounter (Heb. 6:19). The prophet Isaiah knew this and in our passage describes the greatness of God, the sinfulness of man and the servanthood of the redeemed.

No person can properly worship God until he stands in reverent awe at the greatness of God. Isaiah described Yahweh's uniqueness by writing that he had no competition (40:18, 25; 44:8; 45:5, 18, 21-22; 46:5, 9). God's greatness is also evident in his eternalness (44:6; 45:6; 48:12).

We are to praise God for who he is and thank him for what he does. Isaiah thanked God for his enduring Word (40:8), for his sovereign rule over all of creation (40:12, 15, 22) and for his dealings with mankind. Almighty God is to be praised and thanked for his continuing presence (41:10, 13-14, 17), his constant power (40:29-31) and his complete provision of forgiveness (43:25; 44:22).

When we clearly see "the Lord high and lifted up" (Is. 6:1b), we must utter with Isaiah: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips. . ." (Is. 6:5a). When God's greatness is revealed, our sinfulness can no longer be concealed.

In Isaiah 40:1-48:22, the prophet clearly depicts the characteristics and consequences of sinfulness. There is hopelessness (41:29), rebellion (44:18-19), self-deceit (44:20), contention with God (45:9-10) and stiff-necked stubbornness (48:4). The result is consumption by wickedness (42:17-25), nakedness (47:3), judgment (47:1-15) and no peace (48:22).

The gospel tells of God's greatness and man's sinfulness. It also tells of the servanthood of the redeemed. When God's Spirit dwells within us (42:1), we seek to help others find hope (42:6-7), sing a new song (42:10), remember his many blessings (43:2-4; 46:4) and his presence (41:10, 13-14; 43:5; 44:8), witness with praise (43:10, 21), have new direction (48:17) and experience God's peace and prosperity (48:18-19). This has been God's plan from the beginning!

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Trustees challenged to promote annuity plan

DALLAS (BP)—The greatest scandal facing the Southern Baptist Convention is the large number of poverty-stricken annuitants, a retired denominational executive told trustees of the SBC Annuity Board.

Grady C. Cothen, president emeritus of the Baptist Sunday School Board, said at the November meeting, thousands of retired Southern Baptists ministers, missionaries and their widows who are living on less than \$200 per month is a "national scandal" for modern-day Southern Baptists and is a result of "our ecclesiology and polity."

Cothen said although the autonomy of the local church has been the strength of the denomination, it has led to a strong "individualism" which has not always been responsibly exercised.

"All of the pastors' relationships are directed to the church, thus isolating them from the Baptist community," he said, adding the church is responsible for "ordaining, employing, granting tenure and designing the benefit structure of its minister." Cothen noted this action tends to increase isolation and makes it more difficult to have a proper retirement.

"Many church laypeople don't see the need for providing their minister with an adequate retirement plan and the minister doesn't want to force the issue," he added. Cothen praised the foresight of the board

in developing a new pension plan for Southern Baptists serving the local church. He urged trustees and staff to "develop new and creative ideas" to get the laypeople and the ministers involved in the new Church Annuity Plan.

In reference to annuitants who are in need, Cothen said more Southern Baptists should be encouraged to become involved in the "Adopt An Annuitant" program offered through the Annuity Board. The program allows interested donors to contribute \$50 per month to an anonymous needy annuitant.

Action taken by the board included the addition of a Fixed Fund to the Voluntary Annuity Plan, and the approval of a lump-sum benefit payment to ministers or church staff members who have left denominational service.

The new Fixed Fund will replace the current Bond Fund and will be invested primarily in fixed income assets which may include arrangements with commercial insurance companies. Persons with investments in the Bond Fund will have the opportunity to transfer them to other funds within the plan.

Participants in the Church Annuity Plan who have less than \$3,500 in their retirement income account, and are no longer serving the denomination, may receive their benefits in a lump sum.

Volunteers aid continuing Tanzania surge

TUKUYU, Tanzania (BP)—Another round of revival has broken out in Tanzania, this time in the country's Rungwe district, where 3,498 Africans made professions of faith in an evangelistic crusade.

The two-week crusade, planned by Southern Baptist missionary Olan Burrow and featuring a team of volunteers from four states, took place in late September in schools, homes and churches in the area.

It follows earlier revivals in which volunteers from the States, missionaries and national Baptists collaborated to record 4,119 professions of faith in the Kyela district and about 1,000 decisions in Bukoba.

The crusades are forerunners of an emphasis in the East African nation which will involve about 21 volunteer evangelistic teams in 1984-85. The volunteer enlistment department of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will recruit the teams to work with Tanzania missionaries and national leaders, according to Wayne Bristow, the board's associate volunteer enlistment director. Bristow participated in the Rungwe revival along with eight other volunteers from Georgia, Texas and California.

Evangelistic emphasis will dovetail with emphasis on Sunday school development in Tanzania in 1985 as part of an East Africa-wide emphasis of Southern Baptist missions.

The week after the Rungwe district revival, Tanzanian Baptists met in Iringa, Tanzania, for their annual meeting and a national

evangelism conference designed to point toward the growing emphasis on evangelism. The conference program featured Bristow and missionaries Harry Garvin of Uganda and Boyd Pearce of Kenya.

The Tanzanians pledged at the Iringa sessions to unite their efforts to start new Sunday schools throughout Tanzania, renew their personal witnessing efforts and train teachers to be soul winners "shoulder to shoulder" with the pastors, according to missionary Lynn Burrow.

In the Rungwe district crusade, many schoolteachers, village leaders and even some village chairmen—former chiefs under the old tribal system—accepted Jesus Christ. In one instance a young girl chased one of the vehicles and asked how she could accept Jesus as savior.

"One man, over 95 years of age, joyfully accepted Christ in his home after Wayne Bristow witnessed to him," Mrs. Burrow reported. "It was an answer to many years' prayer of his children and grandchildren."

Another African man came forward in the crusade to volunteer for service as a foreign missionary and two team members from the States may apply for foreign missions service as a result of their trip.

Mrs. Burrow said the team attributed its success to prayers of Christians across the United States, and especially those in the volunteers' own churches, some of whom prayed around the clock.

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