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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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November 8, 1984.

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE



Brazil and Arkansas
Partners in mission
page 7



ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed

Glendon Grober (left), director of Arkansas' partnership mission with two Brazilian Baptist conventions, discusses mission needs with Don Moore, ABSC executive secretary; Milton Macedo, associate executive secretary of the Para-Amapa Convention; and John Burnett, executive secretary of the Para-Amapa Convention.

Ouachita observes homecoming Nov. 9-10

Homecoming activities at Ouachita Baptist University have been set for Nov. 9-10. The weekend will climax when the OBU Tigers host the Harding University Bison at Williams Field House at 2 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 10.

Homecoming activities will begin with a pep rally and bonfire Thursday, Nov. 8, and

the weekend will include a carnival and float display, class and organization reunions, an alumni soccer match and the homecoming parade. A concert at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 10, in Mitchell Hall Auditorium, will feature Cruse, a contemporary Christian musical group formerly known as the Cruse Family.

Church history and archives workshop offered

A regional workshop for individuals interested in writing church history and establishing religious archives will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 10, at the Student Union of Arkansas College, Batesville. The meeting is co-sponsored by the Independence County Historical Society, Arkansas College and the Religious Organizations Task Force of the Arkansas

Sequoiacentennial Commission.

Topics for the meeting are "Sources for church historians," "Writing church history," "Publishing church history," "Oral history techniques" and "Church archives."

A registration fee of \$10 covering the cost of materials is available through Nov. 5. For more information, contact Nancy Britton, 1014 Main St., Batesville, AR 72501.

Cauthen to receive rehabilitation therapy

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)—Baker James Cauthen, who suffered a mild stroke Oct. 22, was scheduled to be moved to a rehabilitation hospital Oct. 26 for therapy.

The executive director emeritus of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board reportedly has weakness on his left side and requires assistance in walking. His speech is slurred, but Mrs. Cauthen reports other brain

functions appear to be normal.

Cauthen, 74, has cancelled his speaking engagements for November and December. Other professors are covering the two classes he was teaching as visiting professor of missions at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

He will undergo rehabilitation at Kentfield Medical Hospital, Kentfield, Calif.

ABN staffer named to photo society

Millie Gill, staff writer and photographer for the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, has been named an area representative for the Photographic Society of America.

Gill will serve as an official contact person for the society, with responsibilities for membership growth. She will also assist PSA

members in understanding society activities, which include field days and photographic seminars. She will also be involved in organizing PSA chapters in the state.

A Blytheville native, Gill has served Arkansas Baptists on their state newspaper for nine years.

Dehoney announces pastoral retirement

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Wayne Dehoney, who was president of the Southern Baptist Convention 1965-66, has announced his retirement as pastor of Walnut Street Church in Louisville, Ky., effective Feb. 1, 1985.

Dehoney, 66, said he hopes to write, to conduct conferences "in other downtown, inner-city churches" to continue to preach, to be involved in missions ministries overseas and to do some teaching.

Arkansas missionaries to help enlist preachers

Two Arkansans have been enlisted by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to travel areas of the United States speaking to pastors about the possibility of answering a call to foreign missions.

Furloughing Southern Baptist missionary Don Redmon of Little Rock will travel the state of Arkansas, meeting with as many preachers as he can who are qualified for the foreign mission field. Former missionary to Taiwan Michael Norfleet, a one-time Arkansas pastor, will oversee recruitment efforts in the western United States.

Redmon, who will return to his work in Costa Rica next spring, is one of 18 furloughing missionaries being used as consultant assistants by the Foreign Mission Board's newly-organized missionary enlist-

ment department.

The missionary enlistment department was organized to keep up with foreign missionaries' requests for co-workers to start churches. For next year, about half of the job requests from missionaries overseas are for general evangelists. For 1984, more than 315 general evangelists were requested. To date, about 200 have been appointed. In the United States, 95 percent of the world's evangelical preachers minister to 5 percent of the world's population.

In the next five years, the Foreign Mission Board plans for a representative of the enlistment department to sit down with every Southern Baptist pastor in the United States who is qualified for mission work and ask him to consider it.

In this issue

4 growth in small churches

Two Arkansas Baptist congregations have discovered starting new Sunday School units can be as powerful a growth tool for small churches as for large.

8 being God's people

If Baptists cannot be God's people in the Sunbelt, which grew by 17 percent in the 1970s, Baptists cannot be his people anywhere else in the world either, says an expert who spent a year studying the religious effects of sunbelt migration on the city of Houston, Texas.

Next week:

You'll find a summary of the motions, resolutions and messages from the 131st annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, Nov. 6-7, at Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith.



Salvation, to many, seems to mean little more than escape from eternal punishment and a life with Christ throughout eternity. While salvation provides a life with our Lord, the New Testament teaches that those whom God has redeemed experience an immediate, radical change in their lives. The individual liberated by God's saving grace has not only been released from the slavery of sin but demonstrates a new love for others and a desire to serve the Master.

Jesus' redeeming work starts with the forgiveness of sin, but he goes on to change our entire attitude toward life and our relations with others. Jesus offered both physical and spiritual nourishment. He never compartmentalized life into the sacred and the secular. Jesus' clear priority, however, was to bring individuals to a life-changing experience through his atoning death.

The salvation offered by Christ provides the abundant life here and now and continues this new life after physical death. Any less would come close to the gnostic concept which promises joy and liberation only after death.

Gnosticism emphasized a distinction between the spiritual and the physical. They maintained a dualism which taught that the soul and the body were composed of radically different kinds of substances. The spiritual part of man was inherently good, while all the physical was made of evil matter. They maintained that they had a secret knowledge of some liberation in this life but the ultimate freedom can be reached only when an individual is released from this world.

Since the Gnostics maintained matter was evil, they denied Jesus had a physical body. If Christ had no physical body, it precluded his resurrection from the dead. The Gospels, however, clearly affirm that Jesus was really human, that he was God incarnate in the flesh and that he was resurrected bodily from the dead.

Although, there are probably no modern Christians who would endorse gnosticism, we do have a kind of dualism which separates the secular from the sacred. This dichotomy emphasizes the necessity of salvation to secure one's place in eternity but denies the responsibility to love others and serve God here and now.

The word "love" is used in so many different ways in English that often we fail to understand its meaning in the New Testament. We speak of loving our spouses, our children, our churches, our country and our favorite fruit. The meaning of the word "love" is different in each case.

Perhaps the best way to understand the concept of love, as set forth by Christ, is to consider how he portrayed love. As we examine these examples, we should note the command Jesus gave

to his followers. Jesus told his disciples on the night of the last supper, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you..." (John 13:34).

One vivid portrait of Jesus' love is found in his dealing with Simon Peter after Christ's resurrection. Peter had denied his Master three times prior to the crucifixion. When Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him, he began by using the Greek word for self-loving love (agape). Peter could respond by only using the word for love in the sense of friendship (philia), a lesser love. Our Lord was helping Peter to see that true Christian love is often a slow, painful process.

The greatest example of love is the sacrificial, atoning death of Christ. At Calvary, we see our Master voluntarily taking the sins of every individual in the world upon himself. He, who knew no sin, voluntarily became sin so all who would accept his saving grace might have life eternal.

Jesus redeemed his disciples for service. John said that true love puts action to the words it speaks (see 1 John 3:18). We are to serve by ministering to both the physical and the spiritual needs of those with whom we have contact.

Christ spelled out for his followers how they were to serve him in reaching the world as he said, "While you are going, therefore, disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you..." (Matt. 28:19-20; author's translation).

This passage states the task of service for every Christian. The priority to "disciple all nations" (make Christians) is shown by the use of an imperative verb. We can make disciples only as we go and tell others about Christ. Once we have made disciples, we are to baptize them and then we are to teach them.

The infinitive "to observe" is most significant. Basically, it means "to watch over," or, "to guard." We are to keep in the sense of preserving or protecting so that new Christians will not be harmed. Those who are won to Christ are to serve by doing the things he has commanded and in so doing we are passing on his commandments to those who follow after us.

So the living, reigning King sent his servants out into a hostile, wicked world with the task of carrying his message to the ends of the earth. Our task is not to be safe but to serve. Our King has not told us to be successful but to be faithful. We are to leave the results in his hands. So long as we are in service and love, we can know that our Master will say "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Arkansas Baptist

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Small Sunday schools find growth potential

WYNNE, Ark. (BSSB)—Two Arkansas churches have found that outreach programs and starting new units can be effective Sunday School growth tools for small churches as well as large ones.

Sunday school enrollment at Brookwood Church in Little Rock increased from 80 to 230 in three years after the church started new classes, developed an outreach program and eventually added educational space, according to John Ashcraft, pastor.

Oxford Church, Oxford, increased its Sunday School enrollment from 92 in May to 127 in October after changing from one adult class to three and developing a more effective recordkeeping system, said Steve Stevenson, Sunday School director.

Brookwood church had an average Sunday School attendance of about 45 when Ashcraft became pastor three years ago and now has about 125. The growth first started after the church began an Action program to find new prospects, Ashcraft said.

Starting two new classes three years ago was a big move since that increased the number of classes by a third, he explained. Now the church has 15 classes and opened a new education building 15 months ago, he said.

During the three years of growth, the church had 60 baptisms. The church has a goal of an enrollment of 300 by the end

of the 1985 church year.

In May, Noble Wiles became the first full-time pastor at Oxford. He had earlier served as pastor of that church more than 30 years ago.

Sunday School attendance has increased from 30 in May to approximately 60 in October. A church training program has been added and giving has quadrupled since May.

"An outreach program will be next," Stevenson, the Sunday School director, said.

Wiles envisions a Sunday School attendance of 150 with an enrollment of 200 to 225 even though the town's population is only 520.

Brookwood and Oxford churches were participating in a weekend small Sunday school leadership conference at the Tri-County Baptist Camp in Wynne. The conference was the third of 22 conferences scheduled for the 1984-85 church year, said Daryl Heath, consultant in the small Sunday School administration section of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Seventeen churches participated in the Wynne conference, according to Freddie Pike, Arkansas Baptist Sunday School director.

The conference, led by Heath, includes information for small churches on planning workers' meetings, outreach programs, visitation, and Sunday school development.



Pickets prepare—Concerned citizens met at a Little Rock church Oct. 27 for instructions and then selected their placards prior to picketing bookstores and theaters that are "selling, displaying or promoting pornographic books, pictures, films, or other obscene materials." The Christian Civic Foundation of Arkansas coordinated the effort, the second in the Little Rock area this year. CCF director John Finn reported that businesses had been closed as the result of the first session.



The Southern accent

Steve Lemke

Southern Baptist or independent Baptist?

I'm proud to be a Southern Baptist. I was born in a Southern Baptist hospital. My father has taught at a Southern Baptist college. My family has attended a Southern Baptist church every time the door was open for as long as I can remember. My father is a Southern Baptist deacon, and my mother has been active in Southern Baptist Sunday school work for many years.

It really grieves me, then, to see so many churches in the last few years who have desired to dissociate themselves from the Southern Baptist Convention by calling themselves "independent Baptist churches." Although they intend by use of that term to distinguish themselves from Southern Baptists, in fact they are betraying their own fundamental misunderstanding concerning what Southern Baptists are all about!

Every local Southern Baptist church is an independent Baptist church. The Baptist Faith and Message statement emphasizes the autonomy of the local church. No Southern Baptist church is coerced to give money through the Cooperative Program. No church is reprimanded if they choose not to

use denominational programs and materials. No denominational official, be they the president of the Sunday School Board, the president of the convention, the president of a seminary, or the associational missionary, may give orders to a local church.

In an association in Texas in which I served, there was a church which traditionally contributed nothing through the Cooperative Program, gave little or nothing to the special mission offering, routinely ignored denominational meetings at all levels and held denominational publications in low regard. Yet, not only were they not threatened by some denominational official, they also continued to have equal access to all the denominational program helps available to churches with a much more sacrificial denominational commitment. There is simply no such thing as a local Southern Baptist church that is enslaved to a denominational hierarchy!

On the other hand, most independent Southern Baptist churches recognize the need for voluntary (not compulsory) dependence. They do not have such an indepen-

dent spirit that they cannot come to depend upon one another within the Body of Christ. They are not so independent that they cannot joyfully join hands with Christians from outside their own local church fellowship. They are not so independent that they cannot cooperate with other churches to support mission efforts and Christian education. Most importantly, they are not so independent that they are ultimately controlled by merely their pastor, deacons or a majority vote of the congregation.

Rather, just as the branches are dependent upon the vine for life, so the local church is dependent upon its head, Jesus Christ, for its life. The church which is fruitful for God is not one with a fierce spirit of independence, but one with an humble spirit of dependence on and submission to the will of God.

So I'm still proud to be a Southern Baptist. I hope you are, too!

Steve Lemke is professor of religion at Southern Baptist College.

You'll be glad to know...

Membership in our missionary organizations show strong growth trends! WMU membership in our churches, which includes the women and children's organizations, has shown an increase for the sixth year in a row, reaching a total of 27,819. Over 4,100 women and girls attended state mission events conducted by the WMU this year.

New units of Brotherhood work increased by nearly 12 percent.



Moore

Ten new Baptist Men's fellowship groups have been formed that will bring men from common vocations together from all over the state who will share in joint mission adventures that will educate the men and greatly assist the missionaries.

How significant is this? You judge! Only 651 churches out of 1,266 have given to the Lottie Moon Foreign Mission offering, Annie Armstrong Home Mission offering and the Dixie Jackson State Mission offering. This proves one thing conclusively, Baptists will not support a cause, however good, if they are not kept informed about the needs and about the good results.

I assure you, the churches most likely to carry a burden and provide the support for missions at home and abroad are those involved in missionary education. Jesus prayed for "the kingdom on earth," not simply the kingdom at the county seat church or the country crossroads. However great God's work on your church field, it is not the world. It is just a small, small part of the world. You can touch the world, if you will be open to it. If you will take the time, provide some encouragement and support, do some study and delight in those who are trying to lead our churches in missionary education, you can lead your church to be a true New Testament church, a missionary church.

Don Moore is executive secretary of Arkansas Baptist State Convention.



'Herein is love'...

(1 John 4:10)

Pray for Arkansas' Brazil partnership

Tide receding

Dr. Sneed's remarks on study are interesting. I have the feeling that the "tide of anti-intellectualism" is receding. This may be only wishful thinking, but it seems that just during the past five years more books and study tools are available than ever before, and more people are making use of them.

We need to carefully avoid equating time spent in the classroom with study. Like all other tools, this one is sometimes used well, sometimes not. I suppose we have all had the disappointment of seeing degreed "anti-intellectuals", who only thought of schooling as a tool for vocational advancement and had as little spirit of inquiry as some with the least formal training. I had rather avoid the word "education", for some imply by it that time spent sitting in class insures knowledge and competence, which is far from true. —Clay Hale, El Dorado

A further standard?

Thank you very much for your concise and informative editorial entitled "Baptist Headquarters." Although most are aware of the facts which were detailed in that article, it was very helpful to our people to have it stated in such an understandable and erudite fashion. I agree wholeheartedly with your assessment of true Southern Baptist polity.

One question has been raised from the laity which I have struggled to address appropriately, and I thought that perhaps you could shed some light on it. Having stated that "our polity grows out of the doctrine of the individual priesthood of the believer" and "no one has authority or coerce a church..."; how is this to be reconciled with the article printed in the convention review section of the Oct. 4 ABN entitled "Suggestions from the Credentials Committee?"

It appears that there is something more than the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church involved when it is insinuated that a "regular" Baptist church is one which conforms to a certain standard or creed. If the convention is to "refuse to seat any messengers from any church that accepts alien immersion; practice open communion; or affiliate with any branch of the Federal Council of Churches, World Council of Churches, or any other

Letters to the editor

organization similar to or growing out of such"; what does that do to the principle that "in the New Testament, the authority always rested with the congregation?"

Also does the word "affiliate" in the preceding paragraph include pastors who participate in ministerial associations that have members from churches in the WCC or NCC? And what about churches who give to World hunger relief or Bible societies which are endorsed by some branch or associate of the FCC, WCC or NCC? — A.E. Maines; Rogers

Fun and games?

In reply to the letter of Mr. Bob Richardson in the Oct. 25 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist News Magazine*, if the writer thinks there were 2 million abortions last year, then surely figures would show twice that number of people bringing people into the world to be abused, killed or "used" by others. If not so, why do we see and read about this every day?

As to adoption, why do we still have children who are not adopted? Why are these people for having a girl or woman go nine months with a fetus inside her that she has no say so about it being put there? Do some people think all pregnancies come from fun and games or are God inspired?

I still truly believe life as we know it here on Earth is breath, the air we breathe. Only God knows when life does begin; but all things considered I would not uphold a man's (or woman's) desire to force a child or woman to go nine months, just because she is that way. I still believe that decision should be left to the girl or woman who has to deal with it personally.

A person who may have an abortion is no less a Christian than any other person who asks the Lord for forgiveness. God knows each person's heart. We all have sinned and ask the Lord every day for forgiveness.

If the person carrying a fetus dies, it would die too, inside her without the breath of life, air. There are so many persons on earth that need help, I feel we could work together more to overcome problems here.

Oh yes, about prayer. I have been taught to always keep a prayer in my heart, law or no law. —Name withheld by request

Toll-free number tells latest mission needs

Global Circuit, the foreign missions prayer hot line for Southern Baptists, begins its 14th year Nov. 23. The toll-free telephone line will offer up-to-date mission prayer requests through Dec. 10.

Taped messages containing short, specific prayer requests will change Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays during the 18-day period.

The national toll-free number is

1-800-446-2725. It's open to everyone except callers in Virginia, Alaska and Hawaii, who must dial 1-800-355-6581. Those callers will be charged for a two-minute direct-dial call.

Last year, 6,711 calls were recorded, far below the 14,000 recorded in 1982. This year the Foreign Mission Board will shorten the taped messages and activate three incoming lines for the toll-free number instead of two, so fewer callers will get a busy signal.

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

people

Mrs. Lillian Hardin was honored Sept. 30 by the Sunshine and Gold Star Sunday school classes of Barnett Memorial Church in Little Rock in recognition of her 85th birthday.

Central Church in Bald Knob ordained Eddie Meharg to the ministry Oct. 14. Meharg is interim pastor of the West Point Church.

Billy Duncan has resigned as pastor of the Gregory Church.

Curtis Honts will join the staff of Lakeshore Drive in Little Rock Nov. 25 as minister of education and youth. A native of Bartlesville, Okla., he is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served for five years as minister of education at the College Avenue Church in Fort Worth, Texas. He and his wife, Toni, will move to Little Rock in November.

Jack Bean has resigned as pastor of the Thornburg Church at Perryville.

Gary Akers is serving as pastor of the East Church in Wynne, going there from the Togo Church at Parkin.

Jesse Taylor and James Hill recently participated in a basic leadership seminar sponsored by the Associational Administration Department of the Home Mission Board. Taylor is director of missions for Rocky Bayou Association and Hill serves as DOM for Calvary Association.

Liz McCarver was recognized Oct. 14 by Matthews Memorial Church in Pine Bluff for her services as organist.

Jim Duffel joined the staff of West Memphis First Church Sept. 1 as youth director. He came there from Park Avenue Church in Nashville, Tenn., where he was administrator and principal of the Park Avenue Christian School. He is a native of Weiner and a graduate of both

Tournament results told

Alan Moore of Hope and Dwayne Fischer of Little Rock won their respective flights in the first annual fall church staff golf tournament held in Benton Oct. 29.

Johnny Jackson of Little Rock and Charles Vance of Texarkana tied for second in the championship flight behind Moore. Holland Ball of Jacksonville finished second in the first flight.

Southern Baptist College and Arkansas State University. He is married to the former Pam Shelton. They have three children.

Steve Kiefer is serving as youth director at Natural Steps Church in Roland. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and a former summer youth director of the Lewisville First Church. He has attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and is employed at the Elizabeth Mitchell Children's Center in Little Rock.

briefs

Dermott Church has contributed \$1,200 to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention revolving loan fund. This building loan fund has been much in demand with some churches on the waiting list for two years. The Dermott Church is also a strong contributor to the Cooperative Program.

Batesville First Church recently ordained Lewis Hirschy and Buford Grady as deacons.

Paragould First Church signed a contract Oct. 22 for the purchase of a 16-rank pipe organ with chimes. It will replace an organ that was installed in 1924 and will be paid for, in part, by an organ fund

established over ten years ago. The purchase of the organ coincides with the celebration of the church's 100th anniversary in 1985. Signing the contract were Pauline Sheridan, organist; Winfred Bridges, pastor; Norman Kelley, treasurer and Phil Hardin, minister of music.

Russellville First Church will host a seminar Nov. 10 for single adults of Arkansas River Valley. Chris Elkins, minister to single adults at Little Rock First Church, will be leader. Stephen P. Davis is pastor of the host church.

Sylvan Hills First Church in North Little Rock held a deacon ordination service Oct. 28 for Jay Stevens and Bob Tubbs.

Monticello First Church was in a recent Monday through Friday revival led by Clifford Palmer, pastor of Springdale First Church, and Paul Williams, minister of music for Little Rock Calvary Church. The revival began with a state missions emphasis on Sunday led by Glendon Grober, associate director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Fayetteville First Church recognized Edith Griffin Oct. 21 for her services as preschool coordinator and playlearn director.

ABN photo / Millie Gill



Edward Chappell checks out the steering mechanism on his new three-wheel bicycle, a gift from a group of caring youth and adults who participated in the June 25-30 session at Siloam Springs. This special bicycle was designed and built for Chappell, a cerebral palsy victim, by Bill Griffith, a deacon in the Beryl Church at Vilonia. Inspecting the gift with Edward are his parents, Rev. and Mrs. David Chappell, youth of the Hardin Church were Chappell is pastor and Zenell Manning, a church member who served as counselor at the Siloam Springs session.

Applications for Brazil/Arkansas partnership mission sought

by J. Everett Sneed

Partnership missions matches a Baptist convention on the foreign mission field with a state convention in the United States. The Arkansas-Brazil project will officially begin in March, 1985, and conclude in Dec. 1987.

Guidelines for the project were established by Arkansas leadership, field missionaries serving in Brazil, Brazilian national pastors and lay people and administrative personnel from the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond. The needs discussed are similar to the ones found in our communities in Arkansas, except they are intensified by the vastness of the land area, the lack of resources in Brazil and the difficulty in travel.

In the Amazon region, there is a need

for evangelistic outreach in both rural and metropolitan areas. The evangelistic projects will either seek to strengthen churches by reaching more people for Christ or establishing new churches. Other projects will seek to train and develop Brazilian church leadership.

There also is a need for community development to include literacy, agricultural, health care and nutritional projects. Some of the community development projects will be carried on in conjunction with evangelistic efforts.

The Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union conducted 66 days of prayer, beginning with the United States' Independence Day July 4 and concluding with Brazil's Independence Day Sept. 7.

The purpose of the "prayer-lift" was twofold: (1) to make certain that everything that is undertaken in this project is undergirded by divine leadership and (2) to make people aware of the tremendous needs in Brazil.

Arkansas Baptists interested in participating in the partnership should contact Glendon Grober, Baptist Leadership, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. Applicants should include their skills, along with the times their schedules will permit them to go. Dr. Grober is working on procedures for matching Arkansans with specific projects.

J. Everett Sneed is editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

Brazil/Arkansas partnership project needs

The following are official requests from the Para-Amama Convention for 1985:

March 4-6, an individual to lead in evangelistic techniques for the students at the seminary.

May 11-17, individuals to lead in a RA olympic-type activity.

May 18-25, individuals to lead in an RA olympic-type activity.

May, individuals to lead a pastors and wives retreat.

June-August, four student workers to serve in a variety of activities.

June 23-30, individuals to build book stands and supervise book fair.

July 7-14, individual to lead evangelistic home Bible study clinic(s).

July 7-14, leadership personnel to lead in a multi-ministry clinic.

July 16-21, individuals to lead a Sunday school evangelism clinic.

July 21-28, individuals to preach in simultaneous revivals.

July 21-28, individuals to sing in a choral group led by Amon Baker.

August 4-8, individuals to conduct WMU leadership clinic.

August 12-17 or 19-24, individuals to lead urban evangelism congress.

September 1-8, individuals to preach in simultaneous revivals.

September 1-8, individuals to do camp construction.

October 6-13, individuals to lead stewardship clinic.

October 15-18, individuals to lead Continuing Witnessing Training.

October 20-24, individuals to provide leadership in religious education training at seminary.

There are 37 requests to start new churches during the three-year project. Individuals will be needed to assist in every facet of beginning work, including personal evangelism, preaching and construction of buildings.

Official requests that have come from the Amazonas-Roraima Convention:

April, five revival teams are needed to work in 10 churches. Each project will require 10 to 20 team individuals.

September, five revival teams have been requested, each of these will require 10 to 20 individuals.



Study offers Baptists strategy for metropolitan ministry

by Michael Tutterow

ATLANTA (BP)—Based on a one-year in depth study of Houston, Texas, seminary professor Larry L. McSwain proposed a strategy of ministry and evangelism for Southern Baptists in sunbelt cities during a conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

McSwain, professor of church and community at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., spent a one-year sabbatical as research consultant for the Atlanta-based mission agency. He studied demographic changes and their effect on Houston religious life, particularly among Southern Baptists.

"Our strength is in the sunbelt," McSwain said. "If we cannot be the people of God in Houston, we cannot hope to be such in Jakarta, or Mexico City, or Bangkok or any other city of the world." The South grew by 17 percent during the 1970s, he added. "Because we are a Southern people, we have to be concerned" about reaching the South's growing population, especially in the major cities, he said.

He contended any missions strategy for reaching sunbelt cities must be an associational strategy. The complexity of the urban environment requires a unified church effort to make any significant impact upon the lives of people living there, he said.

Baptists' priorities for urban ministry must begin with evangelism, he said, but added evangelism of the "unchurched" must take precedence over evangelism of the "churched." Many churches are concentrating on reaching new people moving into a community who were members of churches elsewhere instead of reaching those who previously have not been involved in church life, he explained.

Much of the conversion growth reported in Houston stemmed from conversion of people from other denominations and transfers from other parts of the country, not conversion of unchurched people, he observed.

Southern Baptists must place more emphasis on training lay persons for evangelism among friends and co-workers. He also said

evangelism programming must shift to field personnel.

He observed a current denominational pattern of hiring "more and more people as managers to supervise a smaller and smaller work force." But, he contended, there is more need for "front-line folks who live and work in neighborhoods with little supervision. We must send people, empower them for a task and let them be accountable for it," he said.

"If the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) can mobilize 120 young people who provide their full support for 18 months to work in missions in (Houston), Southern Baptists ought to be able to place 300 (full-time) evangelists in the unchurched neighborhoods" of the city, asserted McSwain.

McSwain challenged the Home Mission Board to re-think its strategy of being a mission equipping agency and to again become a missionary sending agency, but admitted "Southern Baptists will have to really increase their giving to fund this kind of strategy."

McSwain charged Baptists must make reaching young adults a priority to insure a future for the church since one-third of the American population was born between 1946 and 1961. "We have a whole glut of young adults reaching their decision point about church," he explained. "If they come back to the church, they will do so at the time of marriage and the birth of a child. If churches don't reach the 30-year-olds and up population within the next three years, we will have a significant portion of the post-war generation unchurched."

"If we reach that group, we've built into the church structure the leadership for the rest of the century. If we don't reach them," warned McSwain, "we can look forward to a resourceless, problematic decade in the nineties."

Church-sponsored nurseries, daycare and day schools could be an effective tool for reaching the city, said McSwain. He also suggested churches offer a gift package to families having babies in their area.

He also noted Houston's growing ethnic population represents sunbelt cities' need for more aggressive evangelism and church starting efforts among language culture groups. Training materials courses, instructors and accredited degree work were named as priorities among Houston ethnic church leaders, said McSwain.

He called on Baptists to form "a denominational task force charged with the responsibility of developing a multi-ethnic educational module which can provide multiple levels of educational achievement" for Southern Baptist ethnics.

Baptists cannot afford to concentrate on growth and exclude ministries of care for human need, added McSwain.

Southern Baptists are doing an "incredible" job in ministry yet most Baptists are unaware of it because ministry which doesn't produce baptisms is seen as suspect, he lamented. "There are some things we need to do whether anyone is saved or not."

He advocated Baptist involvement in a highly-visible ministry which will show the denomination's commitment to caring for the poor and needy. He also challenged local churches to become more involved in developing their own ministries, lending more support to associational ministries and developing links with public sector resources to help persons in need.

McSwain added if Southern Baptists "don't settle their denominational conflicts, the opportunity for reaching the population will pass us by. Our energy has been diverted to an internal struggle at precisely the wrong time," he explained.

"Baptists are going to have to re-focus on the meaning of cooperation," McSwain asserted. "Local autonomy is not what we ought to stress as a denomination; we're not independent Southern Baptists."

"What we need to stress is we have a world that requires a unified effort of all us together if it is to be changed for Jesus Christ," he said.

Michael Tutterow is assistant news editor for the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press.

Texas Baptists support their universities and colleges, survey says

DALLAS (BP)—Texas Baptists overwhelmingly expressed confidence in their eight universities and colleges in a statewide survey conducted by the public relations department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Almost 99 percent of the 1,554 participants surveyed said Christian education should remain a high priority in Texas Baptist life. More than 90 percent would strongly recommend or encourage a child or grandchild to attend a Texas Baptist school.

The study was done at the request of the presidents of the Texas Baptist schools to for-

mulate a comprehensive public relations program for Christian education.

The 18 questions asked on the survey covered concerns such as the future of Christian education, success of graduates, strengths and weaknesses of Christian education, stewardship of Cooperative Program funds and channels for distributing information about the schools.

Other results of the survey indicated more than 90 percent of the respondents believe the quality of education at a Texas Baptist university or college is equal or superior to an education at a state school. More than

75 percent rated the overall program of Texas Baptist schools as outstanding or good.

When asked to rate the success of graduates from a Texas Baptist school, more than 80 percent of the respondents believe they do "well" or "very well" in their chosen profession.

Three main strengths of Baptist schools, according to the respondents, are the spiritual emphasis on the campuses, the quality of education offered and the Christian commitment of the faculty. The overwhelming weakness cited is the cost of education.

Denominational strife tiring, Louisiana layman says

by Marv Knox

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)—Southern Baptist laypeople have grown weary of denominational strife and long for unified progress, says a layman who is president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

And if Raymond Boswell's wish comes true, Southern Baptists will live in harmony, be more evangelistic and have stronger Sunday schools.

Boswell, a Shreveport businessman and Louisiana convention president, shared his "wish list" with members of the LBC executive board and staff during a recent meeting.

"I wish our Baptist people could find a theological position under a broad umbrella that would not violate the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer," Boswell said, adding he wishes Baptists "would not make every issue a test of fellowship."

He admitted "no church or denomination can exist very long without a sound doctrinal position anchored in the Word of God."

Report identifies fastest-growing SBC churches

ATLANTA (BP)—The location of a church contributes more to its growth potential than any other factor, according to a recent Southern Baptist Home Mission Board research report.

The published study concluded the majority (60 percent) of the 671 fastest-growing churches in the Southern Baptist Convention were located in neighborhoods where the population was increasing. Most of the remainder were in stable neighborhoods, the report noted, with only 3.3 percent of the churches located in neighborhoods described as declining.

Two researchers, Phillip Jones, director of the Home Mission Board's planning and services research department, and David Jones, director of Jones Counseling and Research Services, Inc. in Jackson, Miss., compiled data to determine the SBC's fastest-growing churches from 1975 to 1980.

The two researchers used four factors to examine growth patterns of 32,784 Southern Baptist churches: (1) net change in total membership from 1975 to 1980; (2) percentage change in total membership from 1975 to 1980; (3) net change in Sunday school enrollment from 1975 to 1980, and (4) percentage change in Sunday school enrollment from 1975 to 1980.

Using the factors, the two researchers identified 671 Southern Baptist churches as the fastest-growing congregations in the Southern Baptist Convention.

They also surfaced the nation's top 10 fastest-growing churches for the five-year period for a report in *MissionsUSA* magazine.

Listed alphabetically, the churches and the percentages of total membership increase from 1975 to 1980, only one of the factors used to determine the top 10, were: Casa Adobes (397 percent), Tucson, Ariz.; Central

However, he warned "laity is getting a bit weary of continued discussion about the things that we disagree on while neglecting the things we hold in common."

Boswell said no element of the current SBC theological/political controversy "should keep us from doing what we are called to do—bring men to God through Christ our Lord."

In another wish, Boswell expressed the hope "our churches could get a fresh new insight into the genius of the Sunday school for reaching people."

"Great Sunday schools build great churches," he insisted. As support for his claim, he cited various trends and events in recent church history in which Sunday schools were the foundations of strong churches.

"I wish all our people, including myself, would daily practice lifestyle evangelism," Boswell said, expressing yet another hope.

"Solomon said, 'He that winneth souls is wise,'" he quoted. "If we gave ourselves to

winning the lost and equipping the saved, we'd have less time for the critiquing of another man's theology."

The LBC president also said he wishes Southern Baptists would understand "our total outreach efforts channeled through Cooperative Program giving." The Cooperative Program is the SBC's unified budget.

He pointed out many of the ministries which the Cooperative Program enables Southern Baptists to do "thrill" him and make him excited about being part of such an undertaking.

"I thrill to be a Southern Baptist," he added. "When the last electronic church has gone off the air for lack of funds, Southern Baptists will still be out there preaching the gospel to the four corners of the earth till Jesus comes again."

Marv Knox is associate editor of the Louisiana Baptist Message.

unchurched, statistics showed the bulk of their growth came from membership transfers. "In general," the report added, "churches grow at the expense of other churches."

(5) Fastest-growing churches tended to emphasize numerical growth more than comparison churches, the researchers said.

(6) Fastest-growing churches boasted pastors with at least 10 years experience and four to five years in their present church. Pastors of the comparison group also averaged 10 years of pastoral experience but only two to three years in their present location.

(7) Fastest-growing churches were begun more recently than random sample churches. The median age of fastest-growing churches was 24 years versus 63 years for the comparison group.

(8) The report also noted laity of the fastest-growing churches thought of themselves as being better equipped for ministry than did laity of the typical SBC church.

(9) Laity in the typical SBC churches pictured their pastor as being more warm, easy-going and quiet than did the laity of the fastest-growing churches, who saw their pastor as more dynamic and pulpit-oriented.

(10) Responses of church members and pastors of fastest-growing churches identified in a similar 1977 study differed very little from responses given in the 1984 study.

Other characteristics noted in the study showed fastest-growing churches and typical churches alike were comprised of mostly whites, were located in predominantly white communities, had average family incomes of \$15,000 to \$30,000 annually and had not started a mission in the last five years.

Most church programs and outreach of the two groups were identical, including ranking evangelism as the most important area of church ministry, the researchers observed.

Your state convention at work

Missions

Church extension purpose

"In his setting and lifestyle." The need for a new congregation may not always be geography. There may be a language group, a low-income pocket of people who are not involved in the existing churches.



Tidsworth

Of course, the meeting place of any congregation should be near enough to the people that they can participate in more than just a Sunday morning program. It should be "in convenient reach" of the people.

"To be involved in the ministry and fellowship." The new church in Jerusalem practiced fellowship, shared the gospel and ministered to people. They prayed and learned the Word. They grew in the Lord. I think all agree that it is meant for every Christian to participate in these experiences, if at all possible.

"A New Testament body of believers." Some groups may exist that we would not consider scripturally sound on salvation, doctrine or practice. We believe we are commissioned to give all people the opportunity to be involved in a group that believes and practices the New Testament teachings to the very best of our understanding.

Future goals, objectives and actions of the church extension program will be based on this purpose. — **Floyd Tidsworth Jr., church extension director**

Evangelism

Sin and confession

The life of David is a perfect example of how God hates sin but loves the sinner. David observed and desired the very



Shell

beautiful woman, Bathsheba. He took her and committed immorality with another man's wife. David was caught in his sin because Bathsheba conceived of his child. David reasoned in his mind, "I am the king. I can take care of my sin".

This is always a great mistake for a person to think he can care for his own sin. David sent for Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, saying, "Come home and spend a furlough with your wife". Uriah came home but would not even so much as spend one night with his wife. Uriah was so committed to the cause that he would not go to his wife. David then became more

desperate in his sin. He wrote a note and sent it by the hand of Uriah to the commander-in-chief. The note stated, "Set Uriah in the midst of the battle. Withdraw from him and let him be killed". Now, David is guilty of murder.

The preacher came to see him. Nathan stated, "David, thou art the man". David could have rebelled and said, "Nathan, it is none of your business, I am the king and I'll do as I please" or he could repent.

David came to God confessing sin and crying out for repentance. Only then was he able to express the words of Psalms 32:1, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered". We, too, can be happy as God forgives our sins following our genuine confession of them. — **Clarence Shell, director**

Christian Life Council

An urgent appeal

Most have heard the saying, "Grace is free but it has to be piped in." This has been said in relation to personal salvation in Christ from our sins.



Parker

Whenever a moral issue campaign such as casino gambling is carried on, even though we as voters no longer pay "poll taxes" in order to cast our ballots to defeat an issue, there are financial expenses.

Many churches and individuals of practically all denominations have already contributed to the Citizens United Against Gambling effort in Arkansas. Our fellow Baptists and other Christian friends in Garland County are extremely grateful for the way so many are contributing prayerful support in keeping casino gambling out of their area. In case you personally or your church haven't participated in meeting this financial need, make your check to Citizens United Against Gambling and send it to C.U.A.G., 11500 Rodney Parham Road, Suite 3, Little Rock, AR 72212.

There absolutely must be a burying of the issue now, in 1984, so the pro-casino forces will not return as quickly for another attempt to take over Arkansas.

"Better is little with righteousness than great revenues without right" (Prov. 16:8). "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Ps. 127:1). — **Bob Parker, director**

Family and Child Care

A brighter tomorrow

I would encourage people to support the Thanksgiving Offering because:

"I know by personal experience the good

the Homes does. I shudder to think what my life would have been like had I not lived at the Home during my most influential years. Thank God for the right influence at the right time." — **Betty (1960-1968)**

"I want to the Home because my parents were unable to provide a good home for me and it allowed me to be brought up in the church and to learn that there is a God and that He loves me." — **Paul (1956-1965)**

"The work that is done at the Baptist Home is, without a doubt, complete love." — **Sue (1974-1975)**

"When I look back on my life before I came to the Home, things looked very grim and hopeless. I know the Home gave me a chance to have a good life. I almost missed it, but thanks to the Home, I made it! I received so much, I could never repay the Home." — **Joyce (1958-1963)**

"They would be helping children who definitely need it and want it. These children are not 'problem children'; they are children with problems, problems of all sorts and sizes. They need to know someone loves them and cares, genuinely cares, for them. The home represented comfort and security—something I had never before known." — **Pat (1959-1962)**

These words of encouragement from former children of "ours" should challenge us to do our best in "sharing for a brighter tomorrow". A bountiful Thanksgiving Offering will strengthen all that we do to bring light to the lives of children. — **Johnny G. Biggs, executive director**

Cooperative Program

Is the C. P. personal?

How personal is the Cooperative Program? Perhaps, this letter received by the Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services says it best. Pertinent information has been omitted, but the spelling and grammar have been retained.

To whom ever it may concern,

My name is . . . I am 15 years old. I was born on . . . When I heard about your home and knowing that it is a crischen home, I knew that it had to be the place for me. See, I need to go some where, so that I am not in anyone's way and where someone loves me and wants me to be, somewhere where I know I'm wanted. I hope that the home is the place.

I hope that someone up there would want me to come up and stay. Because every day I feel worse about myself. Knowing that I'm in everyone's why and no one want's me to be here.

If you will welcome me and have a place for me, please sent someone down to talk to me. Like Rose Jones.

I need someone to want me.

When you give your tithes and offerings through your church and the church in turn throws a portion of that in world outreach

through the Cooperative Program, you make help available for people like the author of this letter. This letter's author may never have heard of the Cooperative Program by that name but had heard of Rose Jones and the ABFCCS ministry. People (you) helping people (the letter's author) through people (Rose Jones and ABFCCS) in the name of Christ is the Cooperative Program. — L. L. Collins Jr., associate executive secretary

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Little Rock

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Tuesday, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon; 1:45 - 4:30 p.m.
6:30 - 9:10 p.m.



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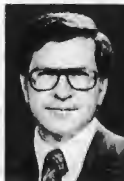
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Survey of fired ministers draws revealing portrait

by Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Perhaps the most significant lesson Southern Baptists can learn from the rash of forced terminations of ministers is how to be responsible when entering into new ministry situations.

"There needs to be more verbal negotiations between the church and the prospective minister," according to Brooks Faulkner, supervisor of the career guidance section of the church administration department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Faulkner recently released a new survey on forced termination in which communications systems of ministers appear to be inadequate. Nearly half of the respondents said they were unaware of problems or plans to fire them.

Researchers contacted ministers who were forced to resign during the past 18 months. Names were submitted by state convention church-minister relations directors and directors of missions. From these names, a systematic sample of 400 ministers was elected for the study of which 246 responses were usable.

The two most frequent reasons stated by respondents for forced terminations were small but powerful minority of members (66 percent) and factions in the congregation (41 percent). Other frequently mentioned factors were different leadership styles, too lengthy a tenure, too authoritarian or dictatorial, couldn't get along with members and not spending enough time on the job.

Even though 90 percent of the respondents indicated at least one of the warning signs existed in their situation, a surprising 44 percent reported the termination was sudden and without warning.

"It is important for a minister to look at the pulse beat of the church," Faulkner said. "People who don't know what's going on are awfully insensitive. I suppose most of the terminated ministers who had no advance knowledge of termination mean that no one came and discussed termination with them formally."

Respondents reported the most frequent way (36 percent) in which forced terminations were handled was "immediate severance with pay for a definite period of time."

Faulkner said ministers who are terminated

should be given six months with full pay to give them time to find work. He said industry frequently has a more compassionate policy on fired workers than do churches. There are numerous reports of two weeks' or a month's salary for terminated ministers, with the added loss of housing.

For Faulkner, one of the most significant statistics in the survey was the age of the respondents. There were 62 percent of respondents between 35 and 54, ages which usually are considered the heart of a healthy contributing minister's career.

This contradicts, at least among the respondents, the belief that most ministers who are terminated are either young and inexperienced or old and unyielding.

Sources of support reported by ministers before, during and after the termination were: wife, 91 percent; church members, 73 percent; director of missions, 70 percent; fellow Baptist ministers outside the community, 68 percent; other family members, 67 percent; Baptist pastors in community, 66 percent; and close friends not included above, 61 percent.

Faulkner said ministers who rely solely on wives for support in times of crisis will quickly deplete their energies. He said it is unfair to carry only problems home to wives, but ministers should share victories as well.

Equally as revealing was the fact 78 percent of the respondents said the church had terminated previous pastors or staff members prior to their going to the church. Also, 63 percent of the churches had experienced two or more terminations.

According to the survey, an important finding is that 60 percent of the ministers who

went to churches which had terminated ministers were unaware of the "termination history" of the church. Another third were not fully informed regarding the church's history of terminations.

A total of 51 percent of the churches reported by respondents were in the 300 or fewer membership category.

Faulkner advises pastors to always talk with directors of missions and other pastors in the community before going into a new church situation. The verbal negotiation at the beginning can save many problems later.

"Don't go into a new church situation blind," Faulkner said. "Don't just say 'It's God's will.' Every Christian believes that, but God intends for us to use good judgment and not just spontaneous reaction."

Faulkner cited one Southern Baptist Convention church with which he is acquainted that has forced out five ministers in the last 11 years. "It would be naive and irrational for a minister to go into that church not knowing why the terminations took place."

For the record, 80 percent of the respondents in the survey have already found employment, and two-thirds of that number are in Southern Baptist churches. Most of the ministers found their employment on their own or through friends.

The study of forced termination of Southern Baptist ministers was prepared by the research services department of the Sunday School Board.

Jim Lowry is a program interpretation specialist with the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn.

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Record participation reflects commitment to marriage growth

by Gail Rothwell

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—The record number of couples attending three national marriage enrichment weekends reflects an awareness on the part of Southern Baptists that relationships cannot grow without regular attention, according to a denominational marriage specialist.

Gary Hauk, supervisor of the family enrichment section in the Baptist Sunday School Board's family ministry department, said more than 1,750 persons attended three full festival of marriage conferences at either Ridgecrest (N.C.) or Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

"The growth represents an awareness on the part of Baptist couples that healthy family relationships are the foundation of a healthy church," said Hauk. "These conferences give couples an opportunity to learn skills that will strengthen their relationship."

Conference leaders at the second fall festival Oct. 13-14 were Janice and Mahan Siler of Raleigh, N.C., and Juanita and

Wallace Denton, Lafayette, Ind.

Denton, professor of family therapy and director of the marriage and family therapy program at Purdue University, told participants both partners in a marriage must choose to stay married. Citing statistics which show more than 40 percent of all couples getting married this year will also get a divorce, he said couples must decide to work at a relationship.

Noting several qualities which characterize healthy relationships, Denton said, "Healthy families make time to be together. They aren't afraid to say no to outside activities which crowd their family time. In today's busy world sometimes you have to make an appointment to be with your family."

Denton believes all families face the same basic problems, but strong families "learn to communicate their differences and their difficulties. They also have an over-arching awareness God is working in and through all that happens."

Both the Dentons and the Silers agreed healthy families are good communicators and listeners and have developed skills which allow them to express appreciation for one another.

Mahan Siler told participants people operate under old taboos which prohibit them from freely expressing their feelings. "The marriage relationship must be a journey from taking each other for granted to taking each other with gratitude," said Siler, senior minister at Pullen Memorial

Church, Raleigh.

He explained the old taboos, which say "I can't express my feelings or tell you what I need," keep couples from experiencing intimacy or closeness in their relationship.

"You must learn to assume the responsibility for your own feelings and needs and then communicate them to your spouse. You can't expect your mate to read your mind," he emphasized.

Siler said he believes the greatest barrier to intimacy is suppressed anger. He encouraged couples to deal with anger by owning their feelings and communicating them to their spouse. "It's okay to say I feel hurt or angry. It's not okay to attack each other instead of the problem," he said.

The Silers challenged couples to find role models for their marriage. "We learn values from people with whom we identify and, to a certain extent incorporate these qualities into our relationships," he said.

Traits they said they found helpful from their "mentor" couple include flexible roles in the marriage relationship, commitment to growth, the value of a private time and a sense of life together as a gift from God.

Conferees also participated in interest sessions on developing good communication, intimacy, parenting, sexuality, developing a family worship time, two-career marriages and issues in re-marriage.

Gail Rothwell is a reporter for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn.

SINGLE ADULTS



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International

The Christian's hope

by Dennis Smith, First Church, Camden

Basic passages: I Thessalonians 1:1-3; 4:9-18

Focal passages: I Thessalonians 4:1-18

Central truth: The Christian can depend on Jesus' return.

Man has always needed the comfort of a personal God, one he can see and hear. That is why man has worshipped idols so many times. People have a desire to see and hear Jesus. A junior high student once remarked that he could not understand why Jesus did not just come on the television and tell everyone what to do.

Paul is running into trouble in Thessalonica with people who are getting nervous about the return of the Jesus they worship and about those people that have died since Jesus went into heaven. They want to see and hear Jesus. Paul wants to assure them that every Christian will get to go to heaven and that Jesus will return just as he said he would.

People today do not really believe Jesus is coming back. They live their lives as if no one will ever know or care what they have done. They would not believe even if Jesus came on the television and explained it to them. Christians must make it clear, by what they say and the way they live, that Christ is coming back and the time is still unknown. It could be two thousand years from now; it could be tomorrow. Paul warns us that it will be as a thief in the night. We will not have warning. Life must be lived as if Jesus was coming back today.

Jesus' return is a marvelous promise for Christians. It also poses a responsibility. We must live in the victory of his return as well as let other people know that the return is really going to happen. This victory allows us to witness, worship and have power over the evil forces of this world. Christians will live differently in the anticipation of Christ's return. The world is watching, and we must show the difference.

This lesson treatment is based on the International Bible Lessons for Christian Teaching, *Unleash Series*. Copyright International Council of Education. Used by permission.

Life and Work

Using the Bible

by Billy White, Second Church, Little Rock

Basic passages: Acts 8:1-40

Focal passage: Acts 8:27-36

Central truth: Responsibility is required in one's use of the Scripture.

What a tremendous inheritance the Bible is. In it we find the light for our way (Ps. 119:105) and nourishment for our souls. There is bread and honey (Matt. 4:4, Ps. 19:10), milk and meat (I Pe. 2:2-3, Heb. 5:14).

With great privilege comes responsibility. To whom much is given much shall be required. Today's text speaks to the responsibility Scripture places upon us for its use.

First, we have a responsibility for its distribution (v.28). Though the passage lacks the force of a direct imperative to this end, it provides a reminder concerning Bible distribution. Have you ever wondered where this black man acquired the copy of Scripture he was reading? Chances are he didn't take it from a temple pew since the law excluded eunuchs from the congregation of Israel (Dt. 23:1). Maybe this seeker had met one of the Way in the court of the Gentiles and was investigating a gift received. Whatever the case, we must never forget that God's Word is truth to be shared, seed to be sown and light to be disseminated.

Second, we have a responsibility for its interpretation (v. 31). Good layman Philip was there to answer the seeker's questions. They had Sunday school in a chariot! Note Philip's qualifications as a teacher: 1) available for God's use anywhere (v. 26) to anyone (v. 27) (race and social background were no barriers to him.) 2) spirit-led (v. 29); 3) informed (v. 35), he was well enough educated in the Bible to be able to answer another's questions; 4) Christ-centered (v. 35), redemption through Jesus Christ is the message of the Bible. Philip not only knew the Word of God, he knew the God of the Word! It behoves us as we interpret the gospel to communicate it as accurately as possible, free from human prejudice and tradition.

Third, we have a responsibility for obedience (v. 36). It wasn't enough for the eunuch to give mental assent to the good news he had received. He was compelled to give outward evidence of his inward experience. The first step of Christian discipleship was following the Master in immersion (v. 38). Fuss as we will over biblical authority, this Ethiopian teaches us the one who believes the Bible is the one who models Christ in his lifestyle.

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Bible Book

The Covenant with death

by Joe Statton, Central Church, Magnolia

Basic passage: Isaiah 28:1-31:9

Focal passage: Isaiah 28:7, 14-15; 30:1-3, 8-13, 15

Central truth: Men and nations often experience unneeded pain and destruction by not trusting in God's wisdom and power.

We often hear someone say "Just tell me the truth, I can take it." We, like the people of Israel, are a people who want to hear the "truth" but want the option of either accepting or rejecting its implications. Isaiah lived among a people whose leaders only wanted to hear the truth when it was "good" truth. They had already determined their plan of action; all they wanted was well-laid plans sanctioned by God and his prophet.

We have not moved much closer today toward trust in God. We, like the Israelites, are self-willed, humanistic people who grossly underestimate the power and provisions of our loving Saviour.

The leaders of Judah somehow thought that God would understand if they didn't completely comply with his instructions. They believed that God "helps those who help themselves." The problem was that they only wanted God to pronounce a blessing on a rebellious "we'll do it ourselves" philosophy.

The second concept described in this passage expands on the first. Not only does man wish to make his own plans independently of God, he also cannot believe that life's most complex problems can be solved with simple faith in God. It's all too simple. We've got to worry, plan and struggle. It's just not enough to trust. Judah sincerely believed that security could be theirs in an alliance with atheistic, military might, but it was not enough.

A third implication has to do with relationship. The leaders of Judah did not trust in God because they did not know God. They needed human solutions because they didn't really know the "Alpha and Omega." We also must remember that our God is not only a God of the past but, more importantly, a God of the present and the future. We do not have to face the future with uncertainty.

Isaiah also speaks of divine protection (30:15, 18, 20). When life's severe hardships come, God stands ready to help. We may not escape all of the pain and sorrow in life, but we can know he will protect those who follow his path of trustful surrender.

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'Prof' Johnson receives Mullins Award

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—R. Inman Johnson, who taught thousands of ministers in music and speech during a 45-year career at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., has received the 1984 E.Y. Mullins Denominational Service Award.

Johnson, 89, is the oldest living retired member of the Southern seminary faculty.

His affiliation with the seminary stretches back into the nineteenth century, when he lived in student housing as the son of a seminary student.

He joined Southern's faculty in 1919, during the presidency of Mullins, the seminary's fourth president, to teach the seminary's first classes offered in elocution and music.

Thais censor Baptist film, call it divisive 'nonsense'

BANGKOK, Thailand (BP)—Thai government officials have censored the newest film produced through Southern Baptists in the country, calling it "nonsense" and divisive.

The Thailand Censorship Committee in Bangkok has declared "Rak Apha" ("Forgiving Love) to be "spreading religion by using economics, politics and social events to divide the unity of the people of Thailand."

Baptist Mass Communications of the Thailand Baptist Mission officially premiered the film Sept. 23 at Immanuel Church in Bangkok and later learned it had to be shown to

censors. The mission hopes to appeal.

Mattani Rutnin, a Thai Christian drama professor at Thammasat University—one of the leading universities in Thailand, adapted "Rak Apha" as a screenplay from the Old Testament story of Joseph. The professor worked into the story scenes dealing with the office of the prime minister—the reason given for letting censors examine it.

In 1,010 Baptist film showings to more than 115,000 viewers in 12 months ending April 30, 132 people accepted Jesus Christ and 46 made other decisions.

Southeastern faculty supports President Lolley

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—The faculty of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., unanimously adopted a resolution of support for President W. Randall Lolley and renewed their commitment to "fulfill our calling."

The resolution, adopted at the regular monthly meeting of the 38-member faculty, cited Lolley for "providing significant leadership for this seminary and throughout the Southern Baptist Convention in a time of grave challenges to our evangelistic, missionary and educational work. . . ."

Lolley's commitment of time, talent and energy was seen as "a source of encourage-

ment and inspiration" to the members of the teaching staff, according to the resolution.

He was further lauded for his affirmation of "the ministries of women in the tasks to which God has called them or yet shall call them. . . and for his work "to open the doors of opportunity for ministry to all persons who are thus called. . . ."

The resolution expressed "gratitude for and our hearty support of President Lolley."

Lolley, who was not present for the discussion and adoption of the resolution, celebrated on Aug. 1 ten years as president of the Southern Baptist Convention seminary.

Southern trustees affirm Honeycutt's role

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—The executive committee of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's board of trustees has affirmed the right and responsibility of seminary President Roy Lee Honeycutt to take an active leadership role in the Southern Baptist Convention.

In a strongly worded resolution, trustees supported Honeycutt's "current leadership role in the denomination as an appropriate part of his responsibility as president."

Trustees also indicated agreement with Honeycutt's "assessment and response to the political issues addressed in his 1984 convocation address and in *The Tie*, the official seminary publication.

In the convocation address in late August, Honeycutt declared "holy war" on what he called "unholy forces which, if left unchecked, will destroy essential qualities of both our convention and this seminary."

Honeycutt also challenged the seminary community and all Southern Baptists to fulfill their Christian and denominational duty to preserve the Baptist heritage of priesthood

of the believer, soul competency and freedom of conscience in Christ.

Honeycutt's plea to "maintain the unity and the diversity of the Southern Baptist Convention and to conduct ourselves at all times with honor and personal integrity" also were reaffirmed by the resolution.

"Successive presidents of the seminary have confronted critical and, at times, controversial national and denominational issues not only on the basis of personal Christian conscience but as a direct and appropriate responsibility of the president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary," the resolution says.

In pledging support of Honeycutt, the trustees called on Southern Baptists "to reaffirm our historic Baptist emphases," to return to an open Southern Baptist Convention, and reaffirmed "the Southern Baptist Convention's action in 1979 at Houston, by which the convention adopted a motion rejecting overt political activity as a convention process."

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