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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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August 4, 1988

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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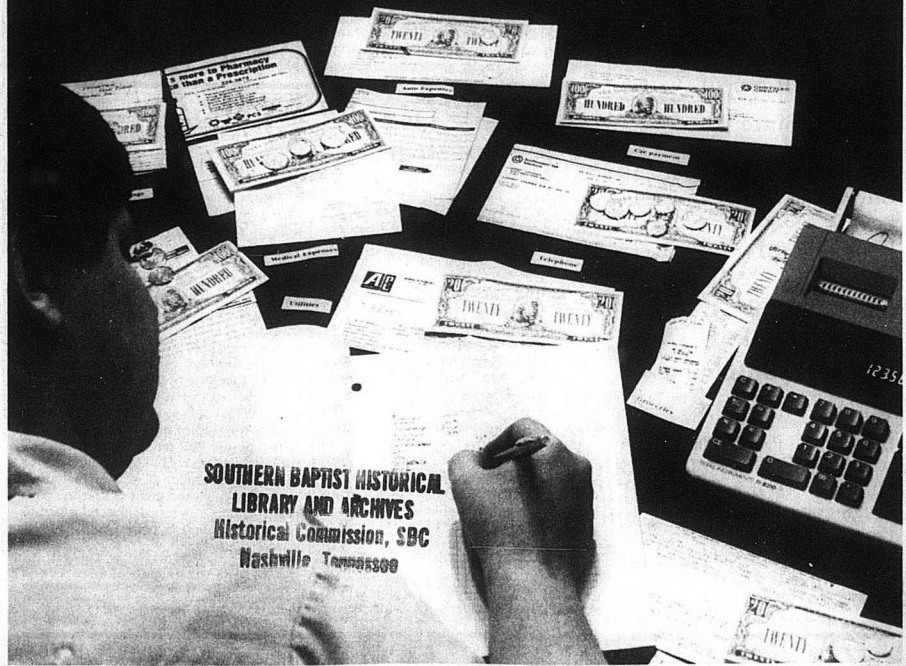
'Man Your Hammers!'

Arkansas Baptist

August 4, 1988

NEWSMAGAZINE

In Search of Financial Freedom



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ABN photo / Millie Gill

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IT'S UPLIFTING

Home Restored For Widow, Son

DALLAS (BP)—The fire-gutted home of a 79-year-old widow and her handicapped son will soon have a fully rebuilt interior, thanks to the disaster relief ministry of Meadowbrook Baptist Church in Irving, Texas.

In mid-May, the Irving Fire Department notified Meadowbrook Church that a fire had completely ruined the interior of an uninsured elderly woman's home. A representative of the disaster relief team at Meadowbrook then contacted the Red Cross to coordinate rebuilding efforts.

After temporary housing was arranged for the fire victims, the Baptist Men and Woman's Missionary Union chapters of the church scheduled a clean-up day at the burned-out house and enlisted volunteer workers to begin the refurbishing project.

"We had about 36 volunteers involved in the clean-up that first weekend," said Bud Tarver, director of the disaster relief team. "Since then, we've had about four or five retired men who have been working during the week."

Volunteer workers have completed taping and bedding the interior of the house and now are involved in repainting. Laborers expect the project to be com-

pleted by the end of July.

Although the woman whose home was damaged professes to be a Christian, she readily admits to not having been active in any church, Tarver said. He believes she may become more involved in church and more faithful in her Christian walk as a result of Meadowbrook's ministry.

"I've extended an invitation to her and told her we've still got a few empty pews available," he said. "Maybe I'm overly optimistic, but I fully believe she'll be visiting us soon."

Meadowbrook Church has sponsored a disaster relief ministry for eight years. The team has responded to a number of emergencies, including the crash of Delta Flight 191 at Dallas-Fort Worth airport in August 1985.

"We've worked with the fire department in disaster relief before, so they know to call us," said Tarver. "In fact, there was another fire three days after the one at this lady's house, involving 24 families. We put six of them up in a motel."

Although Tarver said he has been involved in disaster relief and special ministry projects for several years, he is always gratified by the response in his church when an appeal is made for volunteers.

"I never cease to be amazed at how people respond in these situations," he said.

GOOD NEWS!

True Worship

Philippians 3:1-11

In these verses Paul discussed barriers to the true worship of God. He began by refuting the claims of evil workers, or false teachers, who sought to infiltrate the church. He concluded by supplying a pattern for true worship based on his own spiritual pilgrimage.

Things renounced as loss in true worship (vv. 3-7)—The proud achievements of Saul of Tarsus were but refuse to Paul. One by one he cast them aside: physical inheritance—"of the tribe of Benjamin," misdirected zeal—"persecuting the church," righteousness—"in the law, blameless," personal attainment—"a Pharisee." The boastful Pharisee of Jesus' parable is here miraculously transformed into the penitent publican, who smote his breast and cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Lk. 18:10-13).

Things pursued as goals in true worship (vv. 8-9)—The first goal is an intimate knowledge of Christ gained through experience and acquaintance with him. The second goal is a righteous life which comes

not by works of the flesh but through faith in Christ.

Things possessed as gain in true worship (vv. 10-11)—In his parable of the unclean spirit, Jesus warned against leaving empty the house from which evil occupants had been cast (Lk. 11:24-26). Paul zealously filled the void with fresh aspirations. He expressed first a longing to possess the power of Christ's resurrection (v. 10).

Paul saw Christ's resurrection as victory over the forces of sin and death, and Paul coveted that kind of power in his own life. He knew that Christ's resurrection power was available only to those willing to share the "fellowship of his sufferings" (v. 10). In this phrase Paul referred not to Christ's suffering on Calvary but to his suffering for righteousness sake. If we evaluate our losses and gains and goals in keeping with Paul's example, we shall indeed worship God in spirit and in truth.

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Irresponsible Cartoon

J. EVERETT SNEED

Recently CBS Television aired a program which depicted Mighty Mouse inhaling an unknown substance. While the cartoon did not say that Mighty Mouse was inhaling cocaine, the obvious conclusion to be drawn by children and others watching would be that the substance was cocaine. Children respond to suggestion freely. Hence, such presentation will have widespread negative effect. Christians should voice their strong disapproval of such irresponsible action to CBS Television and the program sponsors.

The Mighty Mouse cartoon was the work of Ralph Bakshi, who created the first X-rated pornographic cartoon, "Fritz the Cat," in 1972. The X-rated pornographic cartoon was funded in part by *Playboy Magazine*.

The recent Mighty Mouse cartoon, first aired April 23, was entitled "Mighty Mouse: The New Adventure." The two largest advertisers of this cartoon were Phillip Morris-General Foods and RJR Nabisco.

CBS Television continues to deny that the substance inhaled by Mighty Mouse was cocaine. They have given several different explanations of the substance that was being sniffed. Among the explanations set forth by CBS is that it was Mighty Mouse's "lucky chunk of cheese." Later they changed it to "crushed stems, tomatoes and flour." Since the cartoon provides no explanation of the substance being inhaled, the obvious conclusion is that it was cocaine.

CBS becomes an even worse offender in view of the drug crisis facing our country at the present time and the destructive havoc that is taking place in the lives of our children and young people. The position of CBS becomes even grimmer since they refuse to apologize for airing the film and even ran it at least two additional times after being made aware of the Mighty Mouse scene.

Even the cartoon sequence itself leads an individual to believe that it is some kind of drug that is being inhaled. As the sequence begins, Mighty Mouse is sitting in front of his fire, depressed. After a time, he takes the substance in his hand and clearly sniffs it up his nose. The cartoon then depicts him as being relaxed and euphoric.

Cocaine in its pure form is a white crystalline powder extracted from the leaves of the South American cocoa plant.



The drug sold on the street is a mixture of the pure substance (cocaine hydrochloride) and various adulterants added to increase the quantity and to increase the seller's profit.

Most cocaine users "snort" cocaine or inhale the powdered mixture. Another form of the drug is called "freebase" and is made by chemically converting the street drug into a base form that can be smoked. This substance is commonly known as "crack." Smoking "crack" is especially dangerous and has produced numerous fatalities.

Cocaine is an extremely addictive substance. Researchers have found that an addicted animal will prefer cocaine to food, even if starved. Sometimes people who have been using the drug for a period of time continue to use it just to feel "nor-

mal" or to avoid severe depression or fatigue. Virtually no one who becomes addicted to cocaine thought they would.

After long periods of usage, depression can become chronic, hallucinations often occur, and signs of psychosis may appear. Early signs of trouble are increased irritability, short temper, and paranoia. Prolonged usage of cocaine can affect both the heart and the brain.

This damaging and possibly life threatening habit is extremely expensive. The cost for a cocaine addict has been estimated to range from \$200 to \$3,000 per week. Users can also pay an additional price in damage of health, career, and personal life. No matter who the individual is, cocaine cost too much.

The most important question is, "Is cocaine available in Arkansas?" It definitely is! Although we do not have statistics in hand on the availability of cocaine, we as Christians need to do all that we can to prevent all forms of drug usage in our state.

We encourage you to join with those who oppose the airing of the Mighty Mouse episode. To help, write the following individuals:

Mr. Lawrence Tisch
President CBS, Inc. 51 West 52nd Street
New York, NY 10019

Mr. Hamish Maxwell
Chairman Phillip Morris-General Foods
120 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Mr. J. Tylee Wilson
Chairman RJR Nabisco
300 Galleria Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30339

Arkansas Baptist NEWSMAGAZINE

VOLUME 87 NUMBER 28
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Letters to the Editor

DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know

We're making a difference! So many needs and challenges are so great that few honestly believe the whole scene can be changed on any of these needs. But we as Christians believe



we can make a difference. In fact, that is our theme around the Baptist building, "Making a difference" in our churches. That is our purpose and reason for being.

It was such a thrill to me when Keith Parks, president of the Foreign Mission Board, asked if he and his wife could have lunch with me and Shirley at the Southern Baptist Convention. There were two reasons he asked to do this. They needed seats in the restaurant. But he also needed to share a word that had just been shared with the Foreign Mission Board the day before.

The word he shared was that "of all of the major, old-line state conventions, Arkansas had the highest percent increase in giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering of any of the states." What a thrill that we could set the pace! Bless you, dear people, for undergirding and equipping almost 3,900 foreign missionaries in 112 countries of the world. The gifts we give are nothing like the price they pay to get the good news of Jesus out to the world.

There is no one reason why our churches have increased their gifts to the Lottie Moon offering by 9 percent in one year. There are many. One reason is that our WMU organizations are enjoying greater participation and effectiveness. Another is that our Brotherhood Department has been constantly involving pastors and laypeople in mission projects. Missions Advance speakers have carried the message of need to our churches. AMAR, the three-year Brazil partnership, made foreign mission needs real to hundreds, if not thousands of our people. A mission-saturated state convention last November prepared our hearts for great giving the next month. I am sure there are other reasons, but these are the ones that seem most likely to have impacted our giving. May God be praised! We're making a difference!

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

Key Word

I would like to commend Dr. J. Everett Sneed on his well-balanced treatment of the Priesthood of the Believer in his July 21st editorial in the *Arkansas Baptist*. I think the key word for all pastors to remember as we seek to lead our churches is the word "balance." I appreciate Dr. Sneed's emphasis on this word as he discussed the passing of Resolution Five at the Southern Baptist Convention last month. I also do not see how a responsible, honest Christian with a love for God and his Word could interpret this cherished doctrine to mean that a person can believe anything he wants to and remain a Southern Baptist. Now he may believe anything he wants to, but if he uses that belief to avoid responsibility and accountability to authority, or if his belief does not rest soundly upon the foundation of the Word of God, then he has not properly understood the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer and he has not approached the Scriptures in an honest, responsible

way.

The priesthood of the believer means that an ol' country boy from rural Mississippi, like myself, with no social, political, or economic clout can have access into the throneroom of the Almighty and through grace receive his undivided attention! Now that's something to get excited about!

Never was this doctrine meant to be a means to circumvent biblical authority, nor was it meant to be a scourge for dictatorial pastors to use on their congregations. Yes, the Bible says that we have been given the oversight of our congregations and they should respect us, but we must remember that authority cannot be demanded, for forced authority is never true authority. It must be earned, and it is not earned by reminding them every day of our authority, but by serving them in love and demonstrating a humble spirit before them. It is the balance of servant-leadership that we desperately need in our churches today.

Thank you, Dr. Sneed, for pin-pointing that need.—Terry Long, Berryville

Woman's Viewpoint

Time with the Children

LUE ROSS

How much time do we actually spend together as a family? Our lifestyle today doesn't leave much time for this. Some way we must "work it in."

When our children are babies, we are all so proud of them. I have worked in nursery in Sunday School at church for 20 years. I've seen all the proud young mothers and fathers bring their precious ones in. They are all so proud of them. While they are real young, as pre-schoolers, we spend all our time with them teaching them to bathe, comb their hair, what to eat and what to wear, training them that they may always do good.

All too quickly six years pass and it's time to start school. Now we have to share our children as the



door of the school opens and we walk in. We've spent all our time with our children and now they spend eight hours away from us with new friends and experiences. Their teachers train them and direct their little minds, helping them to live by every rule to get the best they can from school.

The next thing we know, junior high is here and our children are involved in activities that take them away more and more. Less time is spent together as a family at home. It is so impor-

tant now as peer pressure begins to take its toll that we communicate with our children.

High school days leave us with no time together. All the school activities, church activities plus working takes all their time. This is one of the most important times we need to spend time together. After high school, our children are gone from home. Their values concerning the family have been established.

The Bible is clear concerning the raising of children. In Proverbs it says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Lue Ross is a teacher with Pulaski County Schools, the mother of two sons, and a member of Geyer Springs First Church.

I'm For It!

It? What is It? "Missions Advance 87-89, Phase II." I have had the privilege to be involved with "Missions Advance" since the idea was first presented by Dr. Allen Thrasher in a Budget Formula Review Committee meeting in 1985 or 1986. I was for it then; I'm still for it. Why?

Because:

(1) It's biblical. The work of the church has been missions and evangelism since Jesus established the church and set the agenda. "Missions Advance 87-89, Phase II" is an excellent tool you can use to inform Arkansas Baptist of our needs and our opportunities. It also focuses on the biblical mandate and the biblical methods for carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth.

(2) It's baptistic. Baptists have always been people who paid for their ministries through tithes and offerings. Since 1925 when the Cooperative Program was born, we have paid for our work beyond our own communities cooperatively. "Missions Advance 87-89, Phase II" encourages churches of all sizes to consider increasing their cooperative gifts. It may seem that a small increase like 1 percent per year isn't much, but think what that will be if 1,000 Arkansas churches do that for the next few years. Believe me, it will be significant.

(3) It's beneficial. All of the recipients of Cooperative Program funds, Arkansas Baptist Executive Board programs, Arkansas Baptist agencies and institutions, the Home Mission Board, the Foreign Mission Board and others can do their work without worry as to where the money is coming from. It is also beneficial to those of us who give because we have a part in "making disciples" in all nations.

So, let's put our money where our mouth is. My wife and I give at least a tithe of our income plus additional offerings to our local church, First Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Arkansas. Our church gives 18 percent of budget receipts to the Cooperative Program. This amount has increased 1 one percent per year for the past seven years. The dream I have is that some day we can give 50 percent of budget receipts to the Cooperative Program. I'm for it! Let's do it!

If you would like more information about "Missions Advance 87-89, Phase II," please contact Jimmie Sheffield at 501-376-4791.—**Jerre Mitchell, pastor, First Church, Fayetteville**

DANIEL R. GRANT

One Layman's Opinion



Reflecting On Goals

I have never believed in letting old correspondence, notes, and files stack up around my desk, office, or home, for a very long time—certainly not for longer periods than two or three years. Such was the case recently when I discovered some notes and files from Ouachita's Centennial Celebration temporarily placed on the edge of my desk some two or three years ago. It was a copy of my inaugural address delivered at Ouachita almost 18 years ago, in which I tried to outline some challenging goals for me personally, as well as for the Ouachita family, as I began my tenure as president. I had reexamined it in 1986 as we explored "Second Century Goals" for Ouachita. Now, the yellowed pages brought on a nostalgic trip back to the day when the speech was delivered.

I asked for help in placing Ouachita "on the cutting edge in Christian higher education." I suggested that there are two principal thrusts of the cutting edge—one for educational excellence, and the other for Christian excellence. With embarrassing lack of originality, I suggested that three of the key words in educational excellence are individualism (individual dignity and identity for the student as a person), relevance (making the classroom relevant to current problems of society), and cooperation (new approaches to intercollegiate cooperation, public and private, to use our scarce resources more effectively).

For symmetry, I suppose, I said being on the cutting edge in Christian excellence also involves at least three things: (1) having concern for authentic Christian morality on and off the campus, (2) being of special service to the denomination, and (3) relating goals and methods of higher education to those of the Christian faith and life.

How quickly the years have passed since those challenging goals were enunciated. I would not be so bold as to claim that Ouachita has accomplished these goals. My hope is that the goals enunciated to Ouachita in 1970 are even more clearly the goals of the Ouachita family in 1988. I am convinced they are, and the new generations of young people can count on it.

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia.

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NAILBENDERS FOR JESUS

'Man Your Hammers!'

by Tyler Treadway
Conway Log Cabin Democrat

Heat from the melting June sun beat down on the nearly white concrete slab and bounced back up as men positioned trusses and toenailed them in place.

For the strongest of bodies it is energy-sapping work that sometimes doesn't seem worth its monetary rewards. For the men working on Zion Baptist Church, most of them retirees and all of them working voluntarily, the heat was a secondary concern. Primary was the mission to build a house of worship.

They call themselves the Nailbenders for Jesus, and they plan to build the church on Caneey Creek Road just north of Lake Conway in 10 days. A day and a half into the job, already the framework for all of the walls was up and about a third of the trusses were in place.

"When you work for a boss like Jesus," Frank Allan, leader of the group, said, "you really get to work. I think we can have it built in 10 days. We plan to hold a service in here Sunday (today)."

"We have to hold the service here," Robert Flowers, pastor of the church, said. "With our regular congregation and all these folks here there's not enough room in the trailer."

"The trailer" is a modified mobile home parked behind Flowers' house that serves as the church's temporary sanctuary. The building has a capacity for 41 because that's how many folding chairs there are. Attendance averages in the 30s. Zion Baptist Church held its first service in August—in Flowers' carport. There were 19 people in attendance.

"We felt there was a definite need for a church here," Flowers, who previously was pastor at Blaney Hill Baptist Church, said. "There are about 300 families in this area and no church to serve them. We conducted a survey last summer and found that a lot of people were interested in forming a church."

"We feel that in about five years we'll reach the capacity for this building," Flowers said. "We've got four more acres we can expand on, but we're going to build the church one step at a time. We certainly couldn't build this church without help from folks like the Nailbenders."

"The Nailbenders group is the best thing that ever happened to me," Allan said. (A Boston native and a retired ship captain in the U.S. Merchant Marine, Allan has a way of turning R's into H's that doesn't sound like a typical Southern Baptist.) "When I retired in 1982, we moved to Arkansas, to

a place near Williford (Sharp County). For a while I spent most of my time fixing up the place, but after that I felt something was lacking."

Allan read about a group of Baptists in Texas who built churches for mission congregations. They called themselves Builders for the Glory of God. Allan liked the idea and joined the group. He spent the next four years building mission churches in Texas.

It was last October, while he was working on a church at Zavalla, Texas, that Allan said, "God grabbed me by the scruff of the neck and said it was time I went back to Arkansas with the same proposition."

Allan wrote a couple of stories in *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* about the Texas experience and his proposal to begin a similar group in Arkansas and spoke to several churches and church-related groups. For his efforts he received commitments from 11 men to become Nailbenders.

"Basically," Allan said, "the Nailbenders are a group of Baptist men and women

dedicated to helping build new churches, especially mission churches, that couldn't be built otherwise if we didn't supply the labor." The Zion building, for example, would have cost the small congregation about \$125,000 to construct. Allan said, "We'll probably be able to save them 50 to 60 percent of that."

The group began its first job May 9, a 6,500-square-foot building for Newark Southern Baptist Church at Newark (Independence County). With help from members of the congregation and weekend volunteers, particularly a church at Forrest City that sent six laborers, the building was completed May 20.

The church on Lake Conway is the Nailbenders' second project, and the group is scheduled to be in Clinton in August.

"The folks in Texas build three churches a month," Allan said, "That's what we're aiming for."

The Nailbenders begin work from the slab up, which has to be poured and ready with rough-in plumbing when they arrive. They build the framework, lay the



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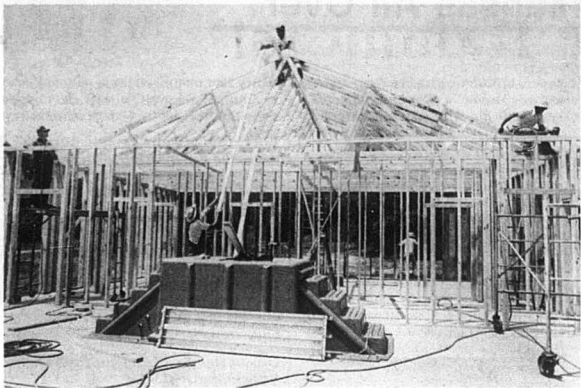
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PEOPLE TO DEPEND ON



Arkansas Nailbenders hard at work

roof decking, install the exterior siding, hang sheetrock and do some trim carpentry, including cabinet building. They don't paint or prepare the sheetrock walls for painting.

Eight men began work on the church Monday morning. By Tuesday afternoon the number was 13. Most are accompanied by their wives.

Nailbenders at the worksite hail from throughout the state, as far north as Siloam Springs, as far south as El Dorado, as far

west as Glenwood (Pike County) and as far east as Jonesboro.

Faulkner County is represented by Tom and Norma Elmore of Damascus. Elmore recently retired as director of the Boy Scout camp on Cove Creek. The two spend most of their time traveling in a 40-foot mobile home.

"About all we've got left at Damascus is a post office box," Elmore said. "This is something we've always wanted to do."

"Not everyone on the crew has carpentry experience," Allan said. "We'll take folks who have to look at the instructions on the nail keg to see which end of the nail to hit. They have to be willing to learn, and we're more than willing to take the time to teach them. Myself I was pretty much a shade-tree carpenter. Working with those folks for four years in Texas, I learned a lot."

Ken Forga of Glenwood is the construction expert for the crew. A semi-retired

contractor, Forga takes on just enough paying jobs to keep him going between Nailbenders' projects, Allan said.

In the future, Allan said the Nailbenders hope to be organized enough to have up to 40 trailers at self-sufficient campsites. They also plan to hold revival meetings on the last three evenings they are at a job. "Unfortunately, we won't be able to do that this time," he said.

"Our pay is one hot meal a day," Allan said, "And I tell you, it's usually a great feeding."

The men take breaks at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. in the cool shade of the campground. The wives are in charge of making sure there's plenty of water, iced tea, lemonade, and cookies to go around.

"We call them the Grandmas on the Go," Allan said. The women don't seem to mind the title.

"We love it," Mrs. Elmore said. "We're all proud of being grandmas. And we love being part of the Nailbenders. It's wonderful. Retirement's great, but it's nice to be able to do something fulfilling for the Lord."

"One of my duties is to make sure nobody overextends himself," Allan said as he took a sip of tea. "As an old seafaring man, I know the importance of safety. In this heat, and with this crew, it's especially important. We even have folks out here who've had bypass surgery. Everyone knows how to pace themselves. If you need to sit down and rest, you sit down and rest. That's no problem. Actually, it's beautiful how everybody enjoys the work and gets along. We've only been together a few months, and it feels like we've known each other forever."

That said, Allan took one last draw on his tea. "Are we ready to go?" he asked, looking around at his tired but willing charges. "Gentlemen, man your hammers."

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People

Kenneth R. Williams Jr. is serving as pastor of Chapel Hill Church, Jacksonville,

and was serving as pastor of Brookwood First Church. A native of North Carolina, he is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served churches in both Arkansas and Texas. Williams is married to the former Linda Elizabeth Darling.



Homer Haltom retired June 26 as pastor of Woodland Church, Clarksville, where he had served since 1985. He and his wife, Mary, will make their home near Little Rock.

Mark LaGrone has joined the staff of Arkadelphia Second Church as minister of education and youth. He and his wife, Janice, moved on the field July 31.

Nick O'Nale has joined the staff of Calvary Church, Benton, as minister of youth, going there from Dalark Mission, Arkadelphia.

Dan Sowell began serving Aug. 1 as full-time pastor of Pinnacle Mission. He has been a chaplain intern at Baptist Medical Center.

Glenn Lenox of El Dorado was named to the spring academic honors list at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville, Ky.

Steve W. Lemke is serving as pastor of Hillcrest Church in Bryan, Texas, going there from Southern Baptist College, where he served as chairman of the department of religion and philosophy.

Joe Wofford has resigned as minister of music and youth at First Church, Marianna, to continue his education at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Mike Talley has joined the staff of Sunset Lane Church in Little Rock as minister of education and youth.

Michael C. Cosker is serving as pastor of First Southern Church, Holly Grove. He is

a student at Mid-America Seminary and has attended Mobile College, Mobile, Ala. Cosker and his wife, Cheryl, have twin sons, Nathan Daniel, and Joshua Joseph, five.

David Graves is serving West Helena Church as summer youth minister. He is a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University.

Bill Hollaway has resigned as minister of education at First Church, Stuttgart, to serve as director of the new Arkansas/Japan Project located on the campus of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Kelly Shewmaker and **Mark Burgess**, members of the older children's Sunday School department at Jacksonville First Church, were presented an achievement certificate July 17 in recognition of their memorizing the quarterly Scripture passage and memory verse for each Sunday.

Ollie Noles has resigned as pastor of New Mount Tabor Church, Blakely.

Ricky Morrow is serving as pastor of Pearcy Church. He and his wife, Terri, have three children, Scotty, Stephanie, and Stacy.

Robert Wright and **Yvonne Curtis** have joined the staff of First Church, Dardanelle. Wright is serving as minister of music and Curtis is serving as minister of youth.

Steve Stege has resigned as associate pastor of education at Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith, following five years of service. He has accepted a call to serve as minister of education at First Church, Lubbock, Texas.

Duane Hamby has resigned as pastor of Bethel Church at Potter.

Danny Williams began serving July 17 as pastor of Sonora Church, Springdale. He and his wife, Lisa, have two children, Rachelle and Danielle.

Dwayne Chappell has resigned as bus minister and minister to youth at First Church, Rogers, to continue his education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.



Beech Street First Church in Texarkana received the Baptist Sunday School Board's Eagle Award for church growth in a ceremony July 10. The award recognizes growth in net enrollment, prospects, teaching units, workers, workers' meeting attendance, training awards, contacts, and people involved in outreach. Beech Street placed 208 out of more than 37,000 Southern Baptist churches. Participating in the ceremony were (left to right) Pastor Mike Huckabee; Andy Anderson, Baptist Sunday School Board; H.T. Shull, Sunday School director; John Benjamin, adult division coordinator; and John Hough, minister of education.

Briefly

Sycamore Church at Gurdon recently ordained Frank White to the deacon ministry.

Calvary Church in West Memphis observed its 34th anniversary July 17 with homecoming activities which included Bible study, worship, a fellowship meal, and an afternoon program of testimonies and music.

Lake City Church is nearing completion of construction on a parsonage and additional education space. Construction on a sanctuary with a projected cost of \$185,000, to be completed in October, was launched July 5.

Brookwood Church in Little Rock will celebrate its 43rd anniversary Aug. 14.

Pulaski Heights Church in Little Rock will observe its 75th anniversary Aug. 26-28 with activities which will include a singspiration, ice cream feast, golf tournament, picnic, the placing of a time capsule, a special time of worship, and a luncheon. Martha Owens, Kathryn Tripp, and Janie Howell have written a history book for the occasion.

Warren First Church youth choir returned July 30 from a tour in Texas, performing at churches in Terrell, Nacogdoches, and Dallas.

Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith youth will be in Gary, Ind., Aug. 6-13 to assist with work at Wicker Avenue Church.

Twin Lakes Mission was launched July 17 in the Diamondhead area under the sponsorship of **Hot Springs Grand Avenue Church**. There were 47 in attendance at the morning service with 36 present in the evening service. The new mission had a total offering of \$501.50 and adopted a \$38,152 budget with 22 percent designated to missions. Garland County Association, Gene Ellis, director of missions, is helping to sponsor the mission financially with at least 11 of the churches committed to give financial support each month. Billy D. Nail is mission pastor.

Pine Bluff Immanuel Church seven-member mission team left July 24 for an 11-day trip to Belo Jardim, a village in northeastern Brazil where they are assisting with visitation, construction, leadership conferences, and the teaching of children. Pastor David Moore is assisting the local pastor with visitation and is preaching an evangelistic meeting.

Kingston First Southern Church observed Pastor Appreciation Day July 17, honoring Pastor Nicholas Hartness. He was presented a love offering from the congregation, which he has served for almost three years.

Bentonville First Church youth returned Aug. 2 from a mission trip to Grand Rapids, Mich., where they assisted the Benjamin Avenue Church with canvassing and mission Bible schools, as well as presented musicals and puppet shows.

Chapel Hill Church in Jacksonville concluded a vacation Bible school July 15 that resulted in five professions of faith, two of which were baptized by Pastor Kenneth Williams. Sixteen youth and 14 adults attended Siloam Springs Assembly, where five made professions. Interim pastor John Ashcraft baptized three of these.

Siloam Springs First Church youth were on a mission trip to California July 14-27, assisting with work in Modesto, Petaluma, Los Angeles, and Carlsbad.

Black Rock First Church will celebrate 100 years of service Aug. 28 with activities which will include lunch at noon and an afternoon program that will feature former pastors and special music.

Texarkana Calvary Church mission team will be in New Salem, N.D., Aug. 5-13 to work with the Word of Life Church. The group was commissioned for service at the church's morning worship service July 31.

Jonesboro First Church recently held its first vacation Bible school with an enrollment of 59 and an average attendance of 35. Offerings for the Cooperative Program amounted to \$50.

Springdale First Church recently concluded its summer backyard Bible clubs in which 738 were enrolled and 42 professions of faith were made.

Jonesboro Central Church recently concluded its 1988 vacation Bible school in which 520 were enrolled with an average attendance of 466. The Pastor's Memorization Award was presented to 92 children; 42 received awards for memorizing the books of the Bible; and 25 were recognized for the speed with which they recited the books of the Bible. There were six professions of faith.

Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock concluded its vacation Bible school with an enrollment of 182; average attendance of 160; and 16 professions of faith. An offering of \$175 was sent to Congo Road Mission, Benton, for its building fund.

Augusta First Church has a youth mission team in Denver, Colo., July 29-Aug. 5 to lead a mission vacation Bible school.

Pleasant Grove Church at McCrory will observe its 128th anniversary Aug. 7.



First Church, Flippin, recently held a noteburning service to celebrate the early retirement of a 10-year note on the church's education building. Pictured (left to right) are building committee members Randy Hopper, Pastor Steve Martin, Bert Benton, and Ray Canary. Not pictured are committee members Raymond Williams and Becky Sanders.

Cry, 'Freedom!'

by Mark Kelly

Managing Editor, Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Everyone knows the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. John Morgan knows why.

Morgan, pastor of Sagemont Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, led four Financial Freedom seminars in Arkansas recently. He told seminar participants that the chasm between rich and poor continues to widen because the rich understand the American economic system—and the poor do not.

Because they understand the system, America's wealthy can use it to enrich themselves, and the effect compounds like interest. But the average family is trapped by lifestyle: trying to live like the wealthy without the means to support it. And the spiral of personal debt leads most into financial bondage.

During his two-hour presentations, Morgan tried to show Christian families the first steps to escaping from financial bondage and finding the freedom God intended them to have.

"Our problem today is that we drive Chevrolets and pay for Cadillacs, and that's what you do when you finance a car for 48 months," Morgan explained. "We're buying merchandise on credit cards at 20 percent interest when the prime rate is only 9.5. We're paying like rich persons and living like paupers."

Morgan finds two basic problems in Christian family finances.

First, many have never learned to be content with the necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter. Confused by worldly standards regarding material possessions,

Christians often have a skewed understanding of what is necessary and what is luxury, Morgan said.

"You can get a meal for 50 cents or \$30," Morgan said. "You can buy a suit of clothes for \$5 or \$300. You can get shelter for \$100 a month or thousands of dollars a month. How do you know what you need?"

The answer, he said, is that God knows a person's need far better than he or she does, just as a parent knows better than a child what the child needs. And, just as a parent to a child, God will provide far better for his children than they would provide for themselves. But first, individuals must look to God for guidance.

The second problem Morgan sees in family finances is a lack of discipline.

He criticized persons who go to a store "just to look around" and wind up making purchases on impulse. He said such people should leave checkbook, cash, and cards at home when they go out. Better still, he said, is to not go to a store until you are ready to buy, and then only to compare prices. "Make a list of what you need, and then buy only that," he said. "That's discipline. You've got to learn to say no."

Financial bondage extends beyond the family to the church, Morgan noted. He pointed out that Southern Baptist churches owed \$2 billion to financial institutions in 1988, double what they owed in 1977.

"At 10 percent interest, that's \$200 million dollars of God's money paid out in interest to secular financial institutions," he said. "You compare that to our world missions budget and tell me how we're going to take the gospel to the whole world."

ABN photo / Millie Gill



"Something is out of balance. Our priorities are messed up," Morgan asserted. "The Bible says that every person in Christ is a new creature. I submit that the Christian's finances ought to be different from the world's. If the Bible says God will supply our needs, we need to find out how."

During the seminars, Morgan talked to participants about investments and interest, the role of money in the Christian life, and steps for getting out of debt. He drew his material from a longer, more in-depth seminar which he has presented to almost 1 million people.

Sponsored by the Stewardship/Annuity Department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, the regional seminars were held at Rogers First Church, Harrison First Church, Pine Bluff Matthews Memorial Church, and West Memphis First Church.

Nelson Wilhelm Celebrates 20th

First Church, Waldron, honored their pastor, Nelson Wilhelm, on July 17 for 20 years of service to the congregation.

The all-day celebration included a luncheon and afternoon testimonial service. Michael Gray, minister to students at Ferguson Road Church, Dallas, Texas, brought the morning message. Billy Maxey, pastor of the Boles Church, preached during the evening service. Both Gray and Maxey made commitments to gospel ministry under Wilhelm's leadership.

Other special guests for the day included Buckner Association Director of Missions Johnnie Darr and Wilhelm's father, Paul Wilhelm, and his wife and son.

The church presented Wilhelm with a plaque and a letter of appreciation, as well as a monetary gift. The letter noted that the congregation has recorded 747 additions, including 321 professions of faith, during Wilhelm's tenure. The church also sponsored two missions during that time which have been organized into churches: Waldron Southside Church and the Boles Church. The church also has built an auditorium and educational space and acquired a parsonage, all virtually debt-free.

Wilhelm has pastored the church since July 7, 1968. It was his first pastorate upon graduation from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Wilhelm has been a member of the ABCS Executive Board and currently serves on the board of the *Arkansas Baptist*.



Growing In Giving

by Millie Gill

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

As Southern Baptists and Arkansas Baptists face Cooperative Program gifts not keeping up with current inflation, Pleasant Grove Church near Harrisburg is one whose records reveal a continuous growth in Cooperative Program and missions giving.

Though sometimes members had to pick cotton, sell quilts or give a day's wages, records reveal that gifts have increased from \$1.25 to more than \$21,880 annually in its 125 years of ministry.

Mrs. Curry Coker revealed these historical facts when the congregation observed its anniversary July 16-17.

The church, organized Jan. 10, 1863, with 10 charter members and a quarter time pastor, today has 522 members led by full-time pastor Gary Brown.

A member of Trinity Association since 1938, the church was organized as a part of Mount Zion Association.

Currently members meet in a \$300,000 debt free brick facility, housing both a sanctuary and educational building with fellowship hall and kitchen. Charter members met in Claunch's Chapel Methodist Church (now known as Willis Cemetery Chapel) for a number of years,

later meeting in a log structure with split log pews and a one-room frame building with wooden benches.

Records show that Christian education has been provided through Sunday School and Church Training; the first vacation Bible school was in 1960; that since 1949 the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* has been in the budget; and that revivals have contributed to growth.

Ordained as preachers by the church have been Eral Teague, Maurice Hitt, and Anthony Clem.

Strong biblical principals have been guidelines with early minutes revealing members had been excluded for such things as dancing.

Pleasant Grove continues in its Bible teaching. This fact was emphasized by Eric Curtis, a member of one year, who shared his salvation experience there. He said, "I know God moved me to the Bible Belt from Chicago so that I could become a member of a church which has faithfully served him for 125 years."

Other anniversary program participants included Brown, James Guthrie and Greg Cantrell, former pastors; Jimmie Garner, director of missions; Johnny Green, evangelist; Sammie Prince and Brian Payne, musicians.



Eric Curtis

Boyce Opens

Registration for Term I of Boyce Bible School in Little Rock is open. Classes will begin Aug. 19 and run through Oct. 8, 1988.

The following courses will meet on Friday during Term I: Church Administration (07050), led by Jimmie Sheffield, 6-7:55 p.m.; Retelling the Bible Stories (06400), taught by W.T. Holland, 6-7:55 p.m.; New Testament Survey (05619A), led by J. Everett Sneed, 8:20-10:15 p.m.

Saturday classes will be: History of Southern Baptists (06240), taught by Michael Anders, 7:45-9:40 a.m.; The Pastor's Role in the Church Educational Program (08400), led by Jim Berryman, 10:15 a.m.—12:10 p.m.; Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (06300), taught by Maurice Hurley, 12:50-2:45 p.m.

Persons interested in registration should contact Lehman Webb at P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; telephone 376-4791.

A SMILE OR TWO

Once a man walked out during the pulpit message. After the service, the pastor asked the man's wife, "Was he ill?" She said, "No, he always walks in his sleep."

One man fell asleep during the services. The pastor said to his wife, "Wake him." She replied, "You wake him. You put him to sleep."

ABN photo / Millie Gill



Retirees—The Arkansas Fellowship of Retired Workers met July 21 at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock, electing as 1988-89 officers (left to right) Ed Berry of Benton, second vice-president; Betty Tyler of Little Rock, secretary; D.C. McAttee of Forrest City, president; and John Maddox of Maumelle, first vice-president. Program personalities for the day were Ervin Keathley, Ralph Douglas, Kent Farris, the ukulele band from Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock, Louis Criswell, Archie McMillan, Earl Humble, Clyde Spurgin, Maddox, Dillard Miller, and Don Moore, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

HUNGER

Gifts Rise Sharply

Despite Generally Stagnant Offerings

NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptist gifts to their denomination's program of worldwide hunger ministries rose sharply during the first six months of 1988, compared to receipts for the same periods in 1986 and 1987.

The Foreign Mission Board reported gifts to hunger relief and development abroad during the first half of 1988 were 35 percent ahead of the six-month total for 1987 and 5 percent ahead of 1986.

Through June, the Foreign Mission Board had received \$3,524,367, compared to 2,612,285 for 1987 and \$3,364,060 for 1986. Receipts for the first half of 1985 were \$5,519,454.

In contrast, gifts through June to domestic hunger through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board were 3 percent behind 1987 and 7 percent ahead of 1986. Through June, the Home Mission Board received \$552,129, compared to

\$570,363 for 1987, \$513,025 for 1986 and \$484,813 for 1985.

In 1985, Southern Baptists contributed a record \$11.8 million for combined hunger ministries abroad and at home, shattering the previous record of \$7.2 million in 1984. Hunger giving in 1986 dropped to \$9 million and leveled off in 1987 at \$8.9 million.

"The overall increase in hunger giving on the eve of the 10th anniversary of World Hunger Day on the denomination's calendar in October is unexpected and promising," said Robert Parham, interim executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"This increase counters the present stagnant level of giving across the convention," he added. "Such support signals that the hunger issue remains a priority and that Southern Baptists affirm the integrity of the hunger ministries of our mission boards."

UNANIMOUSLY

Indiana Elects Coppenger

Mark Coppenger, pastor of First Church, El Dorado, was unanimously elected executive director-treasurer of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana when its Executive Board met in regular session July 25. He will assume his new responsibilities in Indianapolis on Sept. 1.

Coppenger was the unanimous choice of the SCBI Executive Committee for recommendation to the full board.

Coppenger, 40, is a native of Lebanon, Tenn. He earned degrees from Ouachita Baptist University, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He and his wife, the former Sharon South, are parents of three children, Caleb, 11; Jedidiah, eight; and Chesed, four.



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August 30 pm, 31	First Church, Fordyce
September 1 am/pm	Second Church, Hot Springs
September 12 am/pm	First Church, Forrest City
September 13 pm, 14	First Church, Paragould
September 15 am/pm	Markham Street Church, Little Rock
September 26 am/pm	East Side Church, Fort Smith
September 27 pm, 28	First Church, Rogers
September 29 am/pm	First Church, Mountain Home

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Classifieds

Wanted—Secretary. 17½ hours per week, \$5.00 per hour. Forty-Seventh Street Baptist Church, 753-4827. 8/4

Staff Position Open—Minister of Music and Education, First Baptist Church, Clarksville, Ark. Resumes and inquiries may be sent to: Search Committee, P.O. Box 525, Clarksville, AR 72830. 8/11

For Sale—Solid oak church pews. Twenty 15-foot pews in excellent condition. Contact Winfield United Methodist Church, 1601 S. Louisiana, Little Rock, AR 72205; 375-1266. 8/4

Classified ads must be submitted in writing to the ABN office no less than 10 days prior to the date of publication desired. A check or money order in the proper amount, figured at 85 cents per word, must be included. Multiple insertions of the same ad must be paid for in advance. The ABN reserves the right to reject any ad because of unsuitable subject matter. Classified ads will be inserted on a space-available basis. No endorsement by the ABN is implied.



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Convention Uniform

Making Our Own God

by Randal Everett, First Church, Benton

Basic passage: Exodus 32:1-10

Focal passage: Exodus 32:1-10

Central truth: Idolatry is the creation of a god we can manipulate.

Yahweh was far too demanding for the Hebrews. His ways seemed so difficult. Why didn't he raise up an army to deliver Israel instead of a series of prolonged plagues? Now it was taking forever to get to the promised land. Instead of going straight to Canaan, Moses led them southward to Sinai.

The last they had seen of Moses was when he went up on the mountain. Perhaps he had been killed in the midst of the fire and smoke, and the thunder and lightning. The Hebrews needed a god now... one they could see... one they could manipulate.

Melting down the golden rings the Hebrews had taken from Egypt, those sons of Israel made a molten calf and said, "This is your god... one who brought you out of the land of Egypt."

The next day they offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. Afterward the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

What a god! He made no demands. There were no absolute commandments to be obeyed. He winked at gluttony and sin. Worship was a party. There was not problem with guilt because the folks felt good about themselves. After all, they did offer sacrifices.

Appropriately, there was no call to ministry, or self-denial, or service to others. Following worship, they rose up to play.

As you might guess, Yahweh was furious. He told Moses to quickly go down to those obstinate people who have corrupted themselves. They were giving credit to the golden calf for redeeming them from Egypt. The Lord said, "I will destroy them." He would have except for the intercession of Moses.

Well, so much for the Hebrews. We must hurry to church to worship. The singing was outstanding. We gave the choir a standing ovation. The preacher's sermon was so entertaining. He really made me feel good about myself. I must admit it was worth the 20 bucks I put in the offering plate. However, it's getting late. We must get home before the game begins.

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Life and Work

Trusting God

by Tom Harris, Park Place Church, Hot Springs

Basic passage: Ezra 7:6-10; 8:21-23,31

Focal passage: Ezra 7:6,9-10; 8:21-23,31

Central truth: The people of God will learn to trust God by being students of God's law.

Perhaps the book of Ezra can be described as the second Exodus. God's people were held captive in a foreign land and then they journeyed to the land of Israel. Ezra would have the role that Moses had in that he led the journey out of captivity.

I. Ezra, the man of God, the teacher of God's law. When we study Ezra 7:6-10 we quickly see the tremendous character of this man of God. (1) He was from the right blood kin. Verse 5 tracks his ancestors all the way back to Aaron the chief priest. (2) He was a dedicated man. Verse 10 is illustrative of a man sold out to God. Ezra prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord. The NEB says "he devoted himself." As a leader from Babylon to Jerusalem Ezra would be study from that he knew God's mind about their journey. Verse 10 says Ezra also would practice what he knew by obeying God's law. His dedication as a leader was also to be a teacher of God's of God's law (v. 10).

II. Ezra, the man of God, trusting God. Chapter 8:21-23 also shows the outcome of his study of God's law. Evidently he had boasted to Artaxerxes that if they were allowed to journey back to Israel God would protect them all the way. Now notice, Ezra and his people were not trained soldiers. Notice they were accompanied, by many women and children. Notice they had much gold and silver of great worth to take back. And notice Ezra says in verse 22 there was an enemy in the way. Though Ezra was a man of God who trusted God, verse 21 says he humbled himself to pray for divine protection. He mirrors Moses the great man of prayer here. Verses 23b and 32 shows the fruit of trust in prayer. God heard their prayers and his hand of protection kept them from the enemy in the way.

We as Christians will always have an "enemy in the way." The apostles Paul and Peter knew that truth. The Christian will learn to trust though he walks through the valley of the shadow of death. Trust comes to the Christian as it did with Ezra as one dedicates himself to God's law.

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Bible Book

Jesus Meets Challenges

by David McLemore, Second Church, Russellville

Basic passage: Matthew 21:23 to 22:46

Focal passage: Matthew 21:28-32, 42-46; 22:35-40

Central truth: Who I am should be overshadowed by who he is.

While growing up in a small community in south Arkansas, I came to realize that the only ones that were affected by name calling were those who were threatened. However, the offender had to find that place that was most effective with his opponent. Those who were certain of themselves were not threatened by being called "boy" or "sissy."

Jesus' authority is earned and not granted. When there is granted authority, it can be removed by the grantor. The authority then becomes the grantor's only. When the religious leaders of the day challenged his authority, he was not threatened. The reason for the lack of a threat is because Jesus has earned his authority. It is not just given to him but he is the final authority.

With his answer to their question comes a remarkable challenge to their authority (Mt. 21:28-32). They answer correctly and judge themselves. They were right, words without action is dead. They knew, as we do, that talk is cheap. Repenting and following God is the most important thing we do. These leaders talked about following without ever seeking to follow.

The three parables Jesus tells are designed to answer their accusation of his authority with a strong plea for them to know that they were not right with God. They, like everyone, must be forgiven through confessing. If they choose not to be broken but to remain their own authority then they will be judged by the stone. Jesus answers the lawyer with the same unthreatened authority. He says that there is a priority in the commands. The greatest two are listed (Mt. 22:35-40).

Now all this together has a very important meaning. Jesus teaches that when I love God first and my neighbor as myself I am right with God (Mt. 22:40). These verses also teach that I am responsible for being forgiven and serving him. If I have any authority then I don't have to demand it. Jesus came not to assert his authority, he only lived out his submission to God and that was his authority.

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DENTAL MISSION

Exhausting, Exhilarating

by Jacquelyn Huffman

Missouri World & Way

FARMINGTON, Mo. (BP)—On her third mission trip to Brazil, Beth Patterson finally learned the reason a dental patient kept trying to lift her sleeve as she worked. The dark-skinned Brazilian wondered if the American dentist's arms were as white as her face and hands.

Patterson first became interested in volunteer mission work while attending dental school at Washington University in St. Louis. She heard about work as a dental volunteer when two fellow students went to Haiti under the direction of Perry Short, a St. Louis-area retired dentist who frequently is involved in volunteer mission work.

Short was a classmate of Patterson's father, and when the elder Patterson was in St. Louis, they discussed volunteer missions. She subsequently joined a mission as a volunteer to the Bahamas, where she worked for a church in Nassau in 1978 while still in dental school.

After completing school, Patterson became a dentist for the Elks Mobile Unit, working with mentally and physically handicapped children and adults. The area in which she works covers nearly 40 counties in southeastern Missouri. With a home base in Farmington, Mo., the unit moves from county to county, staying at one place as long as interest and population requires.

Patterson, a member of First Baptist Church in Farmington, said she decided to do dentistry for the handicapped because "it was just the right set of circumstances. When I was in dental school, a part of the training requirement was to spend a month in community service. This was the field I chose. I liked it, so when this job became available after graduation, I took it."

Patterson's first volunteer mission trip after graduation was in September 1985. Her father, J.D. Patterson, learned of an Arkansas-Brazil partnership mission program called the Amazonas-Arkansas Exchange. Shortened to AmAr, the acronym means "love" in Portuguese.

The Pattersons, accompanied by a musician, worked with Luther Williams, a Southern Baptist missionary in Manaus. When they arrived at Manaus, they board-

ed a 37-foot boat for a 15-day trip on the Amazon.

"We go up river until we spot horses," she explained. "We then anchor and Luther goes ashore. He introduces the team and asks if anyone needs any teeth pulled.

"If we have been there before, everyone wants teeth pulled. The nationals have very poor dental health, but if a governmental dentist removes teeth, he uses no anesthetic. If we are new in the area, someone eventually volunteers to have a tooth removed. Once the word gets out that it doesn't hurt, because we use anesthetic, we are swamped by the end of the day."

On the trips, she cares for the children, and her father cares for the adults. During the day, Williams interprets for the Pattersons as they extract teeth.

After supper, the team holds a two-hour evangelistic service. The musician provides music, and the missionary preaches. At the end of the service, the team retires to the boat. The pilot moves the boat up the river the next morning, and they repeat the

schedule.

She returned to the same area in 1987 and again this year, continuing the volunteer work.

Each time the team leaves Amazonas, they feel they are ready to return as soon as they have had a good bath and a short rest out of the heat and humidity. They have seen results from their crusades, but not always while they are in Amazonas.

In 1985, they saw no results, but when they returned in 1987, they found one man had accepted Christ as a direct result of the 1985 crusade. This year, four people professed faith in Christ while the team was there.

Although the mission trips have been physically exhausting, Patterson noted they have been spiritually exhilarating. She described the people as very poor but also very giving and loving.

"It makes me aware of how much others do without," she reflected. "I have been reminded that I have so much compared to most people in the world and that medical and dental care are so accessible in the United States."

Although she is "thankful to come home because of things we take for granted like running water and flush toilets," she quickly added, "I want to go back."

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Willett Dismissed

by Bob Stanley
SBC Foreign Mission Board

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—Affirming a staff recommendation, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board voted without dissent July 21 to terminate the service of Michael E. Willett, missionary to Venezuela.

Board President R. Keith Parks said he recommended the missionary's dismissal because of Willett's "doctrinal ambiguity."

The dismissal was effective immediately, but Willett will continue to receive his salary and benefits through the end of the year unless he secures employment earlier. The vote to dismiss Willett was taken during a business session near the end of a four-day dialogue meeting at Gloriaeta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Don Kammerdiener, board vice president for the Americas, told trustees the process that was followed in reviewing Willett's doctrinal beliefs is the same as has been used in such instances for many years. Both he and Parks said the action is not related in any way to the increased number of "conservative" trustees now on the board.

Willett, of Liberty, Mo., was appointed in April 1987 to teach at a seminary in Venezuela. He would have completed his language study in Costa Rica Aug. 11.

William C. Link, pastor emeritus of Willett's home church, Second Baptist in Liberty, sat in on a meeting of the Americas committee where the procedure followed in Willett's dismissal was reviewed. He said

he had baptized Willett, known him all of his life and "radically disagreed" with the board's decision.

As the matter came to the board, which must approve appointment or termination of missionary service, Parks and Kammerdiener walked the trustees through the process they had followed in investigating the situation.

Parks said he told Willett at a July 11 meeting in Atlanta that he hoped Willett was still in a process of developing his theology and that when he comes to a point where he can affirm accepted Southern Baptist beliefs, "we would look with favor on his re-evaluation."

In making its decision, Parks added, the board was not evaluating Willett's suitability to teach in a U.S. seminary but only his ability to work effectively in an overseas mission seminary.

Willett, a doctoral graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., had taught there during parts of 1983 and 1984 while working toward his doctorate. He was an instructor at William Jewell College in Liberty during 1985 and an adjunct professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., during 1986.

In his review with the board, Kammerdiener said six questions had been raised in the case:

— Did Willett have a fair hearing? "Our last step," he said, "was the Atlanta meeting (July 11). Once again we heard the same ambiguity which has been felt at each level of the interviews."

— Have Willett's written documents been properly considered? Kammerdiener said no question about the missionary's statements surfaced at the time of his appointment. When the administrators met with Willett in Atlanta, he asked permission to read a four-page statement. He had

read about two pages when questions arose about his beliefs in some of Jesus' miracles. Finally, Willett said he saw no point in continuing to review the rest of the statement.

— Is Kammerdiener, who does not hold an earned doctorate, theologically competent to understand what is being said? If one who is not a highly educated theologian cannot understand, Kammerdiener asked, how could Willett be effective as a seminary teacher working with students with far less theological training?

— What is the relationship between the incident and an article on women in ministry written by Willett for *SBC Today*? Kammerdiener said the article was not the major factor.

— Is the real motivation to protect a questionable decision by an area director? "If the area director had not requested Michael's resignation," said Kammerdiener, "I would have done so."

— Is Kammerdiener recommending something he doesn't really believe in order to win favor with "conservatives" on the board? Kammerdiener said that, aside from a phone call from one board member, he had had no contact with board members during the investigation.

Team Baptizes 80 Prisoners

BANGKOK, Thailand (BP)—Eighty prisoners were baptized amid the lily pads of a deep canal at Bangkok Maximum Security Prison recently, a result of work by a team from two Baptist congregations in Bangkok, Thailand.

Pastors and members of English-speaking Calvary Baptist Church and its sister Thai congregation, Antioch Baptist Church, led the services at Bangkok and Lard Yao prisons in Bangkok. Southern Baptist mission personnel participated.

Converts who were baptized came from Thai, Chinese and Burmese backgrounds. They attend weekly cell groups and monthly worship services conducted in various languages by fellow Christian prisoners and members of the prison ministry team.

At Bangkok, as many as 300 prisoners attend monthly services. Southern Baptist missionary Jim Bryant of Harrison, Ark., leads the Burmese group through a translator.

Many released prisoners either continue their relationship with Calvary or restore their relationship with home congregations.

The work in both prisons began in 1971 after Southern Baptist missionary Jack Martin of St. Louis started teaching English to a man in nearby Rayong prison. The prison teams started visiting only foreign prisoners, but the ministry spread to include Thais.

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WORLD

Arkansans Appointed

Two couples with Arkansas connections were among 34 named missionaries by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board July 20 at Gloria (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Donald D. and Angelyn Finley will live in South Brazil, where he will be working with students and youth.

Born in St. Louis, Mo., Finley is a graduate of Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, Mo., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. He has been associate student director at Ouachita Baptist University.

Born in Clarksville, Mrs. Finley, the former Angelyn Coston, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Coston of Hot Springs. She is a graduate of Dakota State College, Madison, S.D., and also attended Ouachita Baptist University. She has been a Home Mission Board summer missionary in Arkansas.

The Finleys have two children, Kristin Nicole and Lauren Elizabeth.

Michael D. and Leanne Sharp will live in Venezuela, where he will be teaching sacred music in a seminary.

Born in Louisiana, Sharp is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Sharp of Smackover, which he considers his hometown. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, Mrs. Sharp, the former Leanne Mullins, is the daughter of retired Southern Baptist missionaries. She is a graduate of Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Sharps have two children: Bethany Lauren and Brittany Michelle.

Lotz Confirmed As BWA Exec

NASSAU, Bahamas (BWA)—The Baptist World Alliance General Council has elected Denton Lotz as general secretary-treasurer.

Lotz, acting in the post since March 22, was confirmed during the annual sessions of the General Council meeting on Paradise Island in the Bahamas.

The council also accepted four new affiliate bodies within the Baptist World Alliance, heard a progress report on the 16th Baptist World Congress scheduled in 1990 and declined to act upon a proposal to change its current structures.

A total of 416 Baptists from 44 nations, one of the largest representations ever to attend such a meeting, participated in committee, commission and council sessions.

The BWA sessions coincided with the national independence day celebrations of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

A memorial service honoring the late Gerhard Claas followed, taking on special significance through the presence of his wife, Irmgard Claas, and daughter, Regina Claas.

The council elected Lotz to succeed Claas, who died in an automobile accident earlier this year. The council members voted unanimously that Lotz become general secretary-treasurer for the two unexpired years of Claas' current term.

Missionary Notes

John and Connie Anthony, Baptist representatives to Israel, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: 2871 Stanton Ave., Fayetteville, AR 72701). He is a native of Hope. The former Connie Goble, she grew up in Mount Ida. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1973.

James and Gena Hampton have arrived in the States for furlough (address: 717 N. Hughes, Little Rock, AR 72207). He serves as administrative associate to the area director for Eastern and Southern Africa. He was born in New Blaine and lived in Paris and Mena while growing up. The former Gena Ledbetter, she was born in Harrison. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1956.

Robert and Janice Mooney, missionaries to Zambia, report a change of address (P.O. Box 20499, Kitwe, Zambia). He was born in Marvell. She is the former Janice Anglin of Louisiana. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1987.

Keith Burgett, journeyman to Peru, has completed his two-year term of service as an elementary/secondary teacher in Cajamarca and returned to the States (address: Rt. 6, Box 264, Malvern, AR 72104). He considers Huntington his hometown. Before he was employed by the Foreign Mission Board in July 1986, he was a teacher at Malvern Junior High School.

Bryant Pearson, journeyman to Uganda, has completed his two-year term of service as a student worker in Kampala, and returned to the States (address: 509 S. Independence, Russellville, AR 72801), his hometown. Before he was employed by the Foreign Mission Board in July 1986, he was graduated from Arkansas State University.

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