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March 31, 1988

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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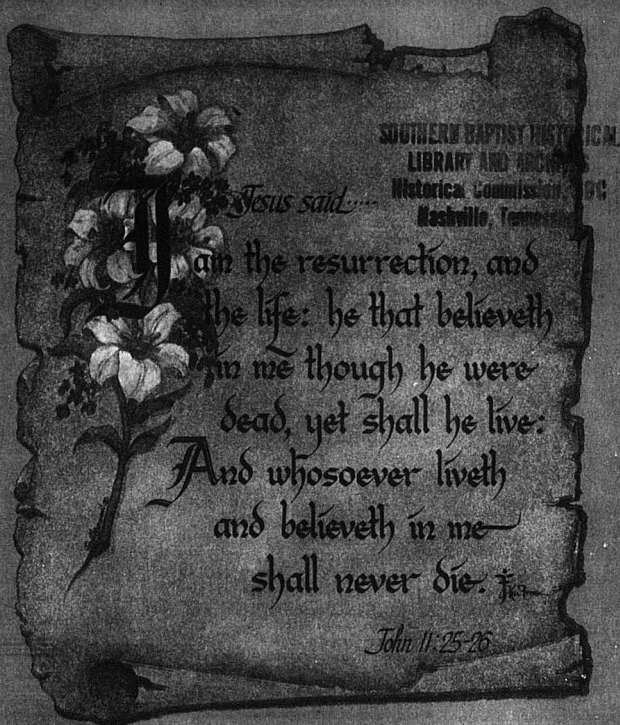


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He Is Alive!

Arkansas Baptist

March 31, 1988



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Jesus said....

I am the resurrection, and
the life: he that believeth
in me though he were
dead, yet shall he live:
And whosoever liveth
and believeth in me
shall never die. *John*

John 11: 25-26



Ken and Gail Brown

"He is alive!" That joyous shout emboldened the hearts of Jesus' followers. This week's "Editor's Page" expounds on the heart of the gospel.

Features

- Illusion Or Reality? 10
- Celebrating 80 Years 12

Editor's Page 3

Speak Up

- You'll Be Glad To Know 4
- Ingathering 4
- New Staff Orientation 4
- Letters to the Editor 5

Faith At Work

- Saw Logs, Build Churches . . 6

Local & State

- Arkansas All Over 8-9
- Evans Celebrates 25th 9
- What Will It Cost? 11

Nation

- Trustees Affirm Dilday 13
- Revolution! 14
- Course Correction 16
- WMU An Agency? 16
- Decisions Cloud Future 18
- National Agenda 19

Lessons 21-22

World

- 'No Official Atheism' 23
- BWA Leader Killed 23
- Panama, Honduras 24

IT'S UPLIFTING

'The Lord Is With Thee'

HOUSTON (BP)—Death seemed only five years away for an 11-year-old boy with a brain tumor. But doctors removed the tumor while thousands prayed, and now his future looks bright.

David Fairchild, son of Southern Baptist foreign missionaries Ray and Sharon Fairchild of Houston, left Methodist Hospital in Houston and went home to a victory party. He and his parents and brothers, Michael and Stephen, plan to return to Brazil in early April.

David was diagnosed in late February as having a brain tumor. Doctors at Methodist Hospital suspected the tumor was astrocytoma. "David stands a 50 percent chance of living five years," a doctor explained.

"We hit rock bottom," his father said. His family members describe the time that followed as the roughest of their lives.

"If David just has a few years to live, then we'll find some way to make his life fruit-

ful in the years ahead," Fairchild said.

That night alone, "I bargained with the Lord," Mrs. Fairchild said. "My emotions were playing havoc with me." She read Hebrews 4, and it seemed Christ was beside her. Finally she was "able to turn David over to the Lord and accept whatever the Father had coming," she recalled. She dropped into a peaceful sleep.

Days later, doctors had good news. A pathology report on the tumor, which had been removed in an eight-hour operation, revealed David did not have terminal cancer, but instead had a rare, often harmless, tumor. "There's a 70 to 75 percent chance that this tumor will not return," doctors said. He won't need chemotherapy or radiation treatment.

A banner over David's hospital bed before and after surgery read: "Be strong and of good courage; be not dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. Joshua 1:9" Doctors were amazed at the turnaround in David's case. "God got all the credit," Mrs. Fairchild said.

GOOD NEWS!

A Perspective On Suffering

2 Corinthians 1:1-10; 4:17-18; 12:1-10

Paul began this letter with a resume of his suffering. He said that he had been comforted by God; and because of the experience, he could in turn comfort other sufferers. He applied this to all of us. In chapter 4, he concluded that these brief sufferings actually serve in preparing us for an eternal glory.

Chapter 12 is Paul's famous "thorn in the flesh" passage. The word "thorn" originally meant "stake." This might suggest excruciating pain. It would seem Paul's affliction was debilitating. Notice that he did not refer to it as a "cross to bear." He referred to the source as Satan and said that a messenger (same word as "angel") of Satan was sent to buffet (hit with the fist) him. Paul was expressing his suffering in personal terms. In chapter 10 he wrote about special weapons for peculiar warfare. J. B. Lightfoot offered a suggestion full of insight: The stake (thorn) remains unidentified so that each generation can identify with it.

He asked three times (2 Co. 12:8). Perhaps this has divine complete significance. Perhaps he was following the pattern of Jesus in Gethsemane when he fac-

ed his "cup." Perhaps he simply had three attacks. (The verb tense is aorist, an act viewed as a whole.)

God answered (2 Co. 12:9). The tense of the verb indicates that God spoke with finality, and Paul remained with the affliction. God's answer was not a flat no. He had a better way. "My grace is sufficient for thee" (v. 9). We must trust God to make no mistakes. The circumstances we see are temporal. God has the eternal view. Mr. Carroll, who had made a monumental gift to Baylor, later lost most of his wealth. When asked if he wished he had that gift back, he replied, "No, if I had not given it when I did, it would have been lost with all the rest." God makes no mistakes.

When I am weak, then I am strong (2 Co. 12:10). Paul's reason for glorying was not to magnify weakness but to magnify Christ. The Greek word for rests means "tabernacled." Jesus pitches his tent on our weak spots. His presence is our strength. We might think that Paul would say that when he is weak Christ is strong, but the conclusion (the last statement of v. 10) is that Paul became strong. He was not resigning himself to an unwelcomed and unwanted fate.

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The Heart of the Gospel

J. EVERETT SNEED

The cross and the resurrection are the heart of the gospel. Without these two marvelous events, all mankind would be totally without hope. Other doctrines are extremely important, but the resurrection is absolutely essential. Jesus himself summarized the importance of his resurrection as he said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (Jn. 11:25-26).

This great summary statement was made by Jesus to Martha, one of his closest friends, after the death of her brother Lazarus. The two sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, had sent word to Jesus of the grave illness of their brother. When Jesus received the message he was more than a day's journey from Bethany. It also is apparent that Lazarus was already dead by the time Christ had received the message.

Jesus delayed his return two full days before beginning his journey to Bethany. By the time of Jesus arrival, Lazarus had been dead four full days. Mary and Martha were well-acquainted with Jesus' ability to heal the sick. But now they felt that all hope was gone.

As Jesus discussed the event with Martha, she declared her belief in the life to come as would any good orthodox Jew of the time. But Jesus immediately added a new dimension to this belief as he said, "I am the resurrection and the life." It is essential that we grasp as much of the meaning of this statement as possible.

First, Christ's declaration has meaning for individuals who are living. Everyone without Christ is dead in sin. Christ promises that he can resurrect a person who is dead in sin.

Second, Jesus was thinking of the life to come. He brings into the life of an individual the certainty that death is not the end of things. But the question arises, "Can we be certain that Christ conquered death?" Certain skeptics have labored hard in an effort to discount the resurrection. But Christians can know that Christ conquered death.

First, the Bible declares it, and for those of us who are believers this is adequate.

Second, there is irrefutable documentary evidence. There were a host of eye witnesses, ranging from relatives and close friends to a group of more than 500. The



10 or more appearances of Christ have never been refuted.

Third, the dramatic change in the lives of the disciples validates the absolute truthfulness of the resurrection. Immediately after the death and burial of Jesus, the disciples were bewildered and embarrassed. They were hiding themselves from the Jews. But on Resurrection Sunday, in the face of accumulating evidence, a gradual change came over them. At first, they were skeptical. But then they lost all their timidity and became a militant, aggressive, dynamic company who defied their enemies and proclaimed their faith with all boldness. Such an event as this is unparalleled in history.

The resurrection of Christ is intertwined with many other significant doctrines.

It clearly demonstrates Christ's deity and proves all the claims that Jesus made regarding himself. As Paul said, "He was declared to be the son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead" (Ro. 1:4).

It also demonstrates Christ's ability to complete redemption. Jesus died to save people from their sins. If he had remained permanently in the grave, he could not have redeemed the world. Christians would have had no message. But with the death and resurrection, redemption is complete.

Finally, Christ's resurrection demonstrates the existence of future life. The Scripture teaches that Christians will be the same in eternity as Jesus was after the resurrection. An examination of the resurrected Christ will reveal the manner of Christians heavenly existence. Several things are apparent: he was a substantive being, possessing a body of flesh and bones, and he was easily recognized by his friends and followers. So we, too, will have a body and will know others in heaven.

Perhaps the greatest blessing of our bodily existence in heaven will be the termination of earthly problems. The writer of Revelation tells us, "And God shall wipe all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rv. 21:4).

The words of Christ prior to his resurrection now have added meaning as we look back on the historical event. The resurrection enables us to shout with the song writer, "He arose! He arose! Hallelujah, Christ arose!" Above all, it should renew our fervor in carrying the message of God's redeeming love.

Arkansas Baptist NEWSMAGAZINE

VOLUME 86 NUMBER 13

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DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know

In our recent WMU Annual Meeting I was asked to do the Bible studies on Hebrews 13:7,8. It reads, in the Williams translation, "You must not forget your former leaders, for it was they who brought you the message of God. Consider how they closed their lives, imitate their faith."

History records that it was a small group of "poor sisters" in Northeast Arkansas who urged and persuaded an old Baptist preacher from Missouri to come down and help them in the work of establishing a church in Arkansas. From their determined and feeble efforts has come the largest religious group in our state, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. We are one out of five of all of our population. Add the two Missionary Baptist Conventions and the National (black) Baptist Convention, and you have as much as one-third of our citizenry listed as Baptists. Scripture tells us to remember our former leaders and imitate their faith. With the challenges we face today, we need another generation of "poor sisters and brothers" who will not accept things as they are, but will work to greater expand the kingdom of God in Arkansas and around the world.

One hundred years ago another small group of Arkansas Baptist women joined with others to say, "We can't accept things as they are." Missionaries must be supported. Prayer must be offered. More must be enlisted to help spread the gospel to "every creature." At this meeting the WMU was organized and for 100 years the women of WMU have been leading our churches to know, pray, give and go that others may know. How indebted we are to those heroes of compassion and faith. We are instructed to "imitate their faith."

Will you join me in respectful recognition and appreciation for our former leaders? Then, will you join me in pledging our prayerful cooperation and support of our present WMU leadership? In our state office, as well as in most of our churches, no one works harder than WMU ladies to further the cause of spreading the gospel. They need and deserve our finest support. Everyone gains when the hands of missions are strengthened and when the spirit of missions is fostered.

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

INGATHERING: *First of a four-part series*

Reclaiming Inactive Church Members

by Bob Holley
ABSC Church Training Department

"Every church has it. No church wants it. All churches can do something about it." This was the introduction to an article in the *Arkansas Gazette* regarding a recent Ingathering seminar attended by pastors and staff members from 90 Arkansas Baptist churches. The statement refers to the problem and the challenge of the inactive church member. It is a challenge we are becoming keenly aware of as a denomination.

We have long maintained that we lose half the people we reach for membership in our churches. Part of these (29.4 percent) we lose to the ranks of the nonresident members. They move away to another community or city and never unite with another Southern Baptist church. In Arkansas 157,640 of our total membership is nonresident, or 33 percent. This is 3.6 percent above the SBC average. This is equal to the total combined membership of nine of our pioneer state conventions.

The other group of dropouts is the inactive,

resident members. These are the resident members who, by their own choice, have dropped out of active participation in the life of their church. Because churches do not report "inactive resident members" on the Annual Uniform Church Letter, a research project was necessary to determine the extent of this problem. A recent research project by the SBC Research and Statistics Services revealed that 20.5 percent of the members in the average church are inactive, resident members. This means they have not participated in any aspect of their church's ministry during the past 12 months (some denominations use 6 months as their criteria).

Assuming that this research is accurate, Arkansas Baptists have 97,081 inactive resident members, based on the statistics from last year's Uniform Church Letter. These are members who have been visited, cultivated, witnessed to and won to Christ and to church membership. These are members who, for a variety of reasons, have dropped out of the active fellowship and ministry of their churches.

Ingathering is a strategy designed to help churches reclaim many of these members. The resources for conducting Ingathering were designed by the Church Training Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board. The strategy involves equipping a select group of church members with listening-caring skills and involving them in visits in an effort to cultivate and reclaim the inactive member. In addition to identifying and reclaiming inactive members, a church involved in Ingathering can identify members on the way to becoming inactive and be alert to cries for help. According to Henry Webb, author of the Ingathering materials, "The major fringe benefit of Ingathering is that it helps church members provide more adequate care for the potentially inactive member and thereby helps prevent dropouts".

What if we were able to reclaim only one out of 10 of our 97,081 inactive resident members in Arkansas? Think of the potential! We will examine this potential in the next of this series of articles.

APRIL 11-12

New Staff Orientation

Pastors and staff members who have come to serve Arkansas Baptist churches during the last year will want to plan to attend the New Pastor-Staff Orientation April 11-12 at the Baptist Building in Little Rock.

This annual event is designed to acquaint newcomers to the state with the programs and personnel the Arkansas Baptist State Convention has available to assist with their ministry.

All pastors and staff members and their

wives who have taken the field since April 1, 1987, are invited to attend this very helpful introduction to the work of the state convention.

Partial expenses will be provided by the state convention to assist churches in sending their new pastors and staff members. Persons planning to attend should contact the state convention offices.

For more information, contact Glen Ennes, chairman of the New Pastor-Staff Orientation, at 376-4791.

Letters to the Editor

What's Going On?

I teach Sunday School and have supported Baptist efforts for 40 years. The recent Letter to the Editor concerning the SBC made me wonder what's going on? I detected a real fear the writer expressed in not signing their name.

It seems we get more information from the daily newspaper about our denominational problems than from this magazine.

We don't intend to let anyone or any group take away the freedom of expression that we Baptists have always enjoyed.

For the first time ever, we will be in San Antonio in June to stand up for our beliefs.—W.H. Peel, Stephens

Actions Louder

I am writing this letter in regard to Mr. Treadway's letter, "New Translation." Mr. Treadway and I, no doubt, agree on the biblical mandate of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20. I believe that every born-again child of Jesus Christ should heed the great task of soul-winning.

In John 3:16, we have the greatest gift given, by the greatest gift-giver, but let's not bring the convention standards down to the world's standards. We need to evangelize the city of Las Vegas but not promote the sin of the city; and, that is exactly what we would be doing by renting their hotel rooms and eating at their restaurants. Christ himself witnessed to the ones that no one thought worthy of saving, but he did not promote their sin. In spreading the gospel of Christ, we have to be very careful, especially in this day and time.

Mr. Treadway, in his article, mentioned the "hypocrite." A hypocrite is a person who "practices hypocrisy," or one who prays on Sunday and cheats customers on Monday. The Scriptures not only teach the Great Commission, it also teaches "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." It's true, it is very difficult for a person to go to the supermarket or service station and not have the breweries and other sponsors pushing their own personal sin. I, as a Southern Baptist pastor, feel it is all together different when we have a choice, apart from the world's demand, to have our convention in an area where it could better satisfy our needs. If not, then we need to step back and take a closer look at the direction in which this convention needs to go.

Along with Mr. Treadway, I think we

need to evangelize the world for Christ, not support or promote the devices of Satan. I feel this is exactly what we will be doing by having our convention in Las Vegas.—Roger Duffel, Luxora

Help Our Unbelief

Jesus did not condemn the Pharisee for his strict adherence to Scripture. Jesus himself obviously believed the Old Testament as fact, not fables. Until modern times, inerrancy and infallibility (the two words are interchangeable) of the Scriptures was unquestioned. To be a Baptist meant belief that "The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of himself to man. . . . has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error. . ." (1925 SBC statement of faith). This is our heritage. Freedom and doctrinal diversity are allowed within this scriptural framework, only.

Just as the Bible calls an atheist a fool (meaning rebel, for not believing natural evidence), neither does its author see a need to tell the obvious: that if Jesus Christ could be born of a virgin, be sinless and perfect in order to be accepted by God as a propitiation for man's sin, that God could author a perfect book (or books) without error. Do we need a footnote to inform us of the obvious?

The Pharisee was condemned, not so much for what he did, but for not doing enough, for ignoring weightier truth and its application and for using his position in the synagogue for personal gain. Hardly a correct correlation to call pharisaical one who defends the traditional Christian faith endorsed by Christ and the church for almost 2,000 years. Is it not our duty to be salt and preserve its purity for posterity? We are to occupy until he comes. Do not occupation forces fight to uphold the word of their commander-in-chief?

When he asked, "Has God said. . .," the enemy planted seeds of doubt which resulted in departure from total acceptance of God's Word. The road to unbelief, a great falling away, and ultimately apostasy starts with that question. Lord, please help our unbelief.—Mrs. W.C. Carpenter, Magnolia

Examine, Intercede

According to the requirements of a letter to the editor of this newsmagazine, a letter must not defame the character of a

person. I was surprised that the editor of this paper chose not to follow those guidelines in his own editorial, "Principles To Follow," March 10, 1988.

In reference to Brother Jimmy Swaggart and other TV preachers, these terms were used: religious hucksters, scoundrel, outrageous charismatic "religious TV personality," and so-called "Christian" TV personality. Most of their activities were described as immoral, unethical, and unchristian.

In addition to questioning the validity of their salvation experience, there was questioning that any of these individuals are God-called. These two questions can only be answered by the individuals involved, whether they be on TV or in the local pulpit. I don't believe another Christian should use this forum (newsmagazine) to give us his personal conclusions on these two important matters.

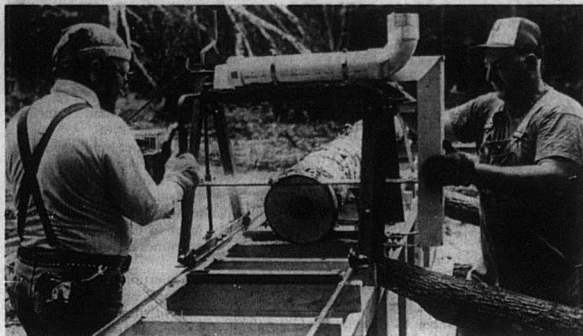
Every Christian, whether a leader or not, can fall. Our proper response to the falling of a fellow Christian is spelled out for us in Galatians 6:1-5. No, it does not say to be condemning and critical of that person. It says we are to help restore them, to bring them back to a right relationship with the Lord. It was obvious in the editorial that the spiritual restoration of the lives of these leaders was not deemed that important. The underlying concern in the editorial seemed to be money. It's time we understand that our enemy is not parachurch organizations or TV preachers. Our enemy is Satan, who wants to destroy all of us.

We as Christians need to do two things. We need to examine ourselves. The recent public repentance of Jimmy Swaggart should serve as an example to us. We also need to intercede for other Christians, especially those in leadership positions in the Lord's work.—Mrs. Vicki Bean, Atkins

(Editor's note: Thank you for your opinion of my editorial of March 10. Your statement that I questioned the salvation of Swaggart and others is incorrect. I do agree that we should accept the repentance of any individual who is sincere. According to officials of Swaggart's own church, he has been repeatedly involved with prostitutes and immediately repents when he is caught. A person who repents just because his or her sin has been discovered is not truly repenting to God.—JES)

Letters to the editor must not contain more than 350 words and must not defame the character of persons. Letters must be marked "for publication."

SWBTS photo



Volunteer sawmill cuts logs to help build new churches.

Saw Logs, Build Churches

by Elizabeth Watson

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

BEMIDJI, Minn. (BP)—If you hear that pastor Ed Hart is sawing logs at church, don't think he's sleeping on the job.

Hart runs a volunteer sawmill to provide lumber for the construction of new church buildings in Minnesota and Wisconsin. When not splitting logs, Hart is "rightly dividing the word of God" as pastor of Ridgewood Baptist Church in Bemidji, Minn.

Hart already has helped build a parsonage and two churches. With the sawmill, he will cut building costs from \$50 to \$27 per square foot. He hopes to upgrade the sawmill and cut church-building costs to \$12 per square foot.

"God has given me the vision of one Southern Baptist church in each of the 20 counties in the western half of Northwood Baptist Association," Hart said. "But the only way we're going to be able to build those churches is through programs like this that make church buildings affordable."

New Baptist churches in the North Central United States must choose between a pastor and a church building, Hart said, noting, "They can't afford both."

The sawmill helps resolve the problem. And Hart hopes his church will be able to upgrade the simple mill located on 10 acres of woodland south of town.

"Right now all we've got is the work shed, our saw, kiln and plans for a bunkhouse which will house 15 to 20 volunteer workers," Hart said. "We bought a truck, but we still need a tractor, and we really need better saw equipment. The single-saw mill just doesn't produce

enough.

"We're kind of on our own in this venture. The (Southern Baptist) Home Mission Board doesn't have a department that covers sawmills."

A self-professed pioneer type, Hart admits he loves the challenge. "Life would be boring if I didn't try to do something no one else had done before," he explained.

Challenges abound in the Minnesota/Wisconsin convention. The nearest church to Ridgewood Baptist is 75 miles east. The second-nearest church is 100 miles in the other direction.

"They think we're a cult in Minnesota," Hart said. "One time we took a busload of church members to a town near the Canadian border to do some mission work, and the local newspaper ran a headline on the front page the next day which read, 'Southern Cult Comes To Town.'"

Hart's goal is to prove to Minnesotans that Southern Baptists are a mainline, normal group. He works toward his goal by creating high visibility for Baptists in his community. He serves on the local United Way board and on the committee for federal food and housing programs. He regularly sends news releases to area newspapers with information about church activities, Baptist General Convention of Texas volunteers helping out with building projects, revivals and the like.

Building churches is another way of creating visibility. And Hart dreams of forming a Southern Baptist Convention "cooperative" to buy building materials for churches in bulk.

"A trainload of doorknobs is cheaper per unit," Hart said.

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Psychology For Christian Life

4

JOHN EWING HARRIS
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LOCAL & STATE

Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

People

Loy Garner has retired from the ministry after 37 years, most of them spent in Arkansas. He and his wife, Elizabeth, are members of First Church, Siloam Springs. Their retirement address is: Rt. 2, Box 380, Gentry, AR 72761.

Robert Hartmann is now serving as associate pastor of Bella Vista Church. Hartman is a graduate of Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tenn., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He and his wife, Leesa, have two children, Stephen and Deborah.

Glenn Lenox of El Dorado has made the academic honors list for the fall 1987 semester at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville, Ky.

Brad Justice is now serving as pastor of Hatfield First Church, where he had been serving as interim pastor since June 1987. Justice formerly was employed by the National Guard in Mena. He and his wife, Vicki, have three sons.

Robbie Jackson has resigned as minister of music and youth of Atkins Church to become pastor of the East Mount Zion Church in Clarksville.

Joyce Gershner will be serving in the youth/interim music position at Mena First Church.

Keith Byrd is serving as pastor of Tomahawk Church in St. Joe.

Mark Strebeck has accepted a call to service as minister of music and youth at First Church of Clinton. He is coming from Wisconsin, where he has been involved in music and youth ministry. He is a graduate of Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas.

George Fink has resigned as pastor of Morton Church in McCrory to pastor in Kennett, Mo.

Jack Bean is serving as interim pastor of Blaney Hill Church in Conway.

Bill Garrett has resigned as pastor of Brumley Chapel in Conway.

David McGowin has resigned as pastor of Woodland Heights Church in Conway to accept a pastorate in Hanceville, Ala.

Harold B. Ray, director of missions for Mount Zion Association, was named "Director of Missions of the Year" during the state directors of missions retreat Feb. 24-26. Ray served as the group's president during the last year.

Elvis Smith has accepted a call to serve as pastor of Keo Church.

James Byrum is serving as pastor of Immanuel Church, Carlisle.

Russell Howard has accepted a call to serve as pastor of Hurricane Lake Church, Benton. A native of Owensville, Howard comes from Valley View Church in Tulsa, Okla. He is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Melanie, have one daughter, Sarah Melissa.

Mark Short Sr., of Paris, Texas, died Feb. 24. An evangelistic singer for 65 years, he led the music in more than 2,000 revivals in Southern Baptist churches. He is survived by three sons, Mark Short Jr., executive director, Louisiana Baptist Convention; retired Army Colonel F.W. Short of Colorado Springs, Colo.; and retired Army Lieutenant Colonel J.W. Short of Paris, Texas; nine grand children and 10 great-grandchildren.

Willis Moore began Feb. 21 serving as minister of youth at Windsor Park Church, Fort Smith. He and his wife, LeeAnn, came from Travis Church in Corpus Christi, Texas. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Seminary.

John W. Harris has resigned as pastor of Auld's Church in Portland.

Tom Smith, pastor of First Church, Bentonville, was among eight selected as "Outstanding Young Arkansans" by the Arkansas Jaycees and Little Rock Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Mike Taylor has been called as part-time youth/childrens director of First Church, Corning. He is a student at Mid-America Seminary in Memphis, Tenn. He and his wife, Barbara, have two daughters, Sharon and Brittany.

Thomas W. Nowlin has accepted a call to serve as pastor of First Church, Marvell. He is a graduate of Charleston Baptist College in Charleston, S.C., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He and his wife, Sharon, have two children, Justin, eight, and Kristen, 5. D.C. McAttee had been serving the church as interim pastor.



Teams from 10 Arkansas churches participated in the High School Baptist Young Men basketball tournament held March 11-12 at Park Hill Church, North Little Rock, and Immanuel Church, Little Rock. Windsor Park Church, Fort Smith, won the tournament with a victory over West Memphis First Church. Monticello First won the consolation bracket by beating Levy Church, North Little Rock.

Briefly

Lone Rock Church in Norfolk ordained four men to the deacon ministry on Feb. 7. They were: Doug Huskey, Maurice Payne, Lynn Rand, and Milo Wilbur. Paul Huskey is pastor.

Second Church of Arkadelphia celebrated the completion of their new education building with a dedication service on March 27.

Rolling Hills Church in Fayetteville ordained Henrietta Holcomb and Cotton Presley to serve as deacons on March 6.

Beck Spur Church in Forrest City will have its 47th homecoming and will also dedicate its new 13,000 square foot family life center on April 3. W.O. Vaught, pastor emeritus of Immanuel Church, Little Rock, will be the speaker for the 11 a.m. service. Joe Craft is pastor.

First Church of Hot Springs will present its third annual "Living Cross" featuring the dramatic musical "I Am." Over 50 singers and a professional orchestra will be featured. Performances are Friday, April 1 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, April 3 at 7:30 p.m.

Lakeside Church in Hot Springs is sponsoring a Minirth-Meier "Burnout and Emotional Renewal" Seminar on Friday, April 22 from 7-9 p.m. and Saturday, April 23 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Calvary Church, Little Rock, and Forest Tower Church, Little Rock, were assisted in worship services March 13 by ventriloquist/musician Lee Pitts. She also performed at UALR on March 14. A student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, she is a member of Sagamore Hill Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

Wynne Church reported more than 300 professions of faith in a Paul Jackson crusade the week of March 13. The congregation also heard a report March 20 from an 11-member mission team which assisted with construction for the Martin Coronado Baptist Church in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Don Dunavant is pastor.

Woodland Heights Church in Harrison has voted to sponsor the Elixir Church, which has purchased seven acres of property on Highway 7 North. Joe Hogan is pastor of the sponsoring church.

East Side Church in Fort Smith will host a Bible Conference April 3-6 led by Curtis Vaughan, retired professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. W. Trueman Moore is pastor.

Colt Church welcomed Carl Baldwin to the gospel ministry on Sunday, March 20.

Evans Celebrates 25th Anniversary

Van Evans, minister of administration at El Dorado First Church, celebrated 25 years of service to that congregation March 17. He was recognized during a morning worship service and presented a gift of a Seth Thomas clock by the congregation.

A graduate of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Evans joined the First Church staff as minister of education in 1963 under the leadership of the late Don Harbuck. During his tenure, he also served five years as interim minister of music. He assumed the administrative title in 1984.

Evans worked in the oil industry prior to acknowledging a call to ministry. His first ministry position was with Monticello First Church. He has served churches in Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. At one point, he served as minister of education for First Church, Gulfport, Miss., which was then under the leadership of Landrum P. Leavell, now president of New Orleans Seminary.

Evans and his wife, Lenora, are the parents of four grown children. They have six grandchildren.

No Issue April 7

The *Arkansas Baptist* will not be published the week of April 7, one of four such weeks each year. Two weeks' of Sunday School lesson commentaries are printed this week in "Lessons for Living."

Easter Cover

The cover of this week's *Arkansas Baptist* was created by Ken and Gail Brown of Hugo, Okla. This husband and wife team has more than 10 million copies of their watercolors and calligraphy in print. The Browns' designs are distributed by the Dallas-based Home Interiors, as well as many Christian bookstores.

Readers of the *Arkansas Baptist* may receive, free of charge, three full-color samples of the Browns work and a small brochure showing other designs. Requests should be addressed to Gail and Ken Brown, Box 637A, Hugo, OK 74743. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.



A banquet and worship celebration was held March 11 at Little Rock's First Baptist Church in honor of Ervin Keatley, who will retire April 15 after 15 years as music secretary for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Above, Skip Wofford, music minister at Booneville First Church, bands Keatley a token of esteem from his friends across the state. The Arkansas Music Men and Singing Women and the First Church choir performed during the worship celebration.



Quality
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Illusion Or Reality?

Arkansan's Illusions Point Others To Christ

by J. Everett Sneed

Editor, Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Illusionist Randal Eller, a member of Second Church, Little Rock, does a variety of emphases in his magic shows. His performances have stressed peace, where the emphasis is on the illusion of power. Another presentation stresses the difference between the illusion and the reality of alcohol and drug abuse. He also has another show in which he stresses sexual morality versus sexual promiscuity. Eller will make any kind of Christian emphasis that a church, school or club desires.

Eller has performed many times in both schools and churches. Recent performances have been in several of the North Little Rock schools, as well as numerous churches in the central Arkansas area. He says, "The whole idea is to establish a rapport with young people so that they will have respect for me when I talk to them about serious matters. If a speaker gains respect, his message will receive a much better hearing."

Eller does illusions for all age groups. He has performed for day care centers and for the American Association of Retired Persons. His favorite emphasis is "Jesus Christ the Answer."

Eller recalls watching his first magic show with his mother at age eight on television. The performers did a common illusion known as the "substitution trunk." One person is handcuffed and put in a box, and the box is padlocked. The other performer will stand on the box and hold a curtain and count to three. When the curtain falls, the two performers will have exchanged places.

Eller said, "I remember turning to my mother and saying, 'Either these people have real magic or they are aligned with the devil.'"

He recalls that he didn't understand the illusion at all. He was fascinated with the illusion, so he purchased a few tricks as a young person but never did anything substantial with them. He used the illusions only for his own entertainment.

In college, Eller saw Lou Leventhal, who performed at his college BSU. He was impressed with the performance and how Leventhal used it to communicate the gospel. He recalls that BSU had the biggest impact on his life of any event prior to his marriage. After completing college at Henderson State University in Arkadelphia, Eller became a Student-To-Student worker at the University of Arkansas at Monticello. He came with a group to Little Rock and saw Pete Petty demonstrate clowning and some illusions. This was when Eller became seriously interested in using illusions to communicate the message of Christ.

After returning to Monticello, he found a magic shop and purchased more equipment. Eller doesn't try to make his shows really mystical. He feels that he is more of a comedian than a magician. He said, "Although I use humor effectively in my

show, I could never be a stand up comic. The magic props give me the material I need for humor."

After serving at Monticello, Eller entered seminary. He recalls that ever since college he had felt called to go to seminary. While both in college and seminary, he had served churches as a youth worker or a music director. He said, "I knew that I was to be in ministry. I just didn't know how."

While at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Eller was in the master of divinity program but after a year realized that this

was not God's calling for his life. After a year, he returned to Arkansas. Soon after, he married Tammy Carter, whom he had been dating for several years.

Eller has now been in full-time illusion work for approximately five months. A typical show

would feature several of his favorite illusions. One is a dove act for which he received an award from the Little Rock Magic Circle. In this act, the birds appear and disappear. It concludes with the doves changing into a rabbit. When he is performing a major show, he takes the white rabbit and turns it into his assistant. Both his wife and his sister have served as assistants.

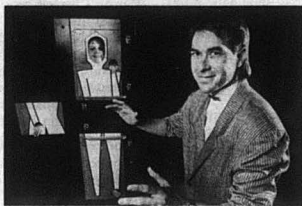
Another of Eller's favorite illusions is to place his assistant in a vertical box with her feet and hands showing. Two blades are inserted into the box to separate the box into three sections. The center section is slid all the way to the right or left leaving a clear gap in the center. The assistant continues to talk and to move her hands and fingers.

Eller also performs the guillotine trick in which the blade is passed through the neck of a volunteer from the audience. He notes that this trick usually captures the attention of the audience.

Often Eller closes his presentation with an invitation. He feels that an invitation can spring naturally from the presentation of illusions.

Eller notes that even people who are in the illusion business can be fooled by another illusionist. For this reason, he emphasizes the difference between illusion and reality.

Eller is pleased to come to a church of any size. Of course, certain charges must be made to cover expenses, depending on the type of show that is desired. However, it is Eller's goal to be able to work with a church of any size, regardless of its budget.



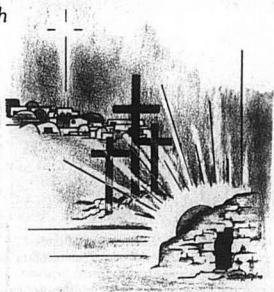
Christian Illusionist Randal Eller

Camden First Baptist Church
Sanctuary Choir presents:

*Beholding
Christ...
The Lamb
of God*

March 31, April 1, and April 3

7:30 p.m. nightly



What Will It Cost?

by Mark Kelly

Managing Editor, Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Tragedy compounds tragedy.

It should be enough that many of the world's 5.2 billion people have never heard the name of Jesus. But, on top of that, "untold millions" of Southern Baptists have never understood the dimensions of the need or heard of the Southern Baptist plan to reach those lost billions.

"Every church is a world outreach center and is responsible for the evangelization of the world," said Bill O'Brien, executive vice-president of the SBC Foreign Mission Board. "Thank goodness, we're not alone, but millions have never heard what it means to be the church."

O'Brien delivered a keynote address during the Friday evening session of the Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union Annual Meeting March 18-19 at Immanuel Church in Little Rock. He painted a clear picture of the challenge of winning the world to Christ.

Classifieds

Buses—New and used Champion buses. Call American Transcoach, Inc., 1-800-367-4845 3/31

For Sale—1983 Blue Bird Mini Bird, 26-passenger bus, 31,000 miles, \$9,000. Call First Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ark., 501-442-2387. 3/31

Church Organist Needed—Levy Baptist Church needs an organist. Salary commensurate with experience. Two weeks paid vacation. Contact the church office at 753-7347. 4/14

Stained Glass—Stained glass repairs and restorations. Quality old-fashioned service since 1960. Cathedral Glass, Box 3111, Fort Smith, AR 72913; 501-785-1279. 4/14

Camp Facility Available—Located on lower south fork of Little Red River, a part of Greer's Ferry Lake, at Clinton, Ark. Accommodations for 125 people. Call 224-1890 for more information. 3/31

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.

The world population of 5.2 billion will increase by 1 billion in the next 12 years, O'Brien observed. Mexico City, with a population of 28 million, will be but one of 1,000 metropolitan areas which have never heard the name of Jesus.

And, although Southern Baptist missionaries will be working in 125 countries by the end of the century, the denomination will have to "dream six impossible dreams before breakfast" if it is to have any hope of reaching the world for Christ, O'Brien said.

Calling WMU a "persistent conscience" for Southern Baptists, O'Brien urged the

congregation to pray that they would be "driven by a passion" for winning the world to Christ, the passion which "birthed" WMU 100 years ago. He challenged them to remain committed to the servanthood which has always characterized Woman's Missionary Union.

"For God's sake and that of a lost world, kneel tall and help those of us who get caught up in lesser things to understand the servant lifestyle," O'Brien continued. "We should much rather lay down our lives on the altar for the cause of missions than to lay them down on lesser altars for lesser things."

"Billions have never heard of Jesus yet," O'Brien concluded. "What will it cost us to reach them? Let me ask you, Southern Baptists, what will it cost us if we don't?"



When Arkansas Baptist women adjourned the Friday evening session of the WMU Annual Meeting, they convened in the fellowship hall of Immanuel Church, Little Rock, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Arkansas WMU. Among those whose autographs were eagerly sought was Miss Nancy Cooper, WMU secretary from 1949 to 1974.

State Building Conference

April 28, 1988

Markham Street Church, Little Rock



Charles Businaro
Church Architecture Dept.
Sunday School Board
Nashville, Tenn.

For additional information, contact
Ed Hinkson, ABSC Sunday School Dept., 376-4791

Celebrating 80 Years

by Mark Wingfield

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

FORT WORTH, Texas—The world's largest theological school celebrated its 80th anniversary this month.

Other theological schools are older. Some are considered more prestigious. But in sheer numerical impact, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary stands alone.

B.H. Carroll, a Southern Baptist preacher and educator, founded the seminary March 14, 1908, to train preachers for the expanding southwestern United States. Carroll envisioned combining practical theology with uncompromising academics.

That proved to be a winning combination. Southwestern opened its door just 80 years ago to a larger enrollment than many other seminaries have even today. Beginning with those first 190 students, Southwestern has trained nearly 50,000 Christian ministers.

Southwestern Seminary is neither a university nor a Bible college. It is a graduate theological school, training more than 5,000 men and women each year for various Christian ministries.

Southwestern provides leadership for the backbone of the American religious structure—the local church. Southern Baptist churches throughout the United States are led by Southwestern graduates as pastors, musicians, ministers of education, children's workers and youth ministers.

And Southwestern has also educated nearly 50 percent of all seminary-trained missionaries currently under appointment



Southwestern's 200-acre campus

by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Nearly one-third of Southwestern's current students have volunteered for either foreign or home missions.

No other school of any denomination trains more Christian ministers today than Southwestern Seminary. Therefore, the conservative, biblical theology taught at Southwestern makes a greater impact on world religion than the curriculum of any other single educational institution.

Carroll founded Southwestern with the Bible as the primary textbook. He was widely known for his exhaustive course in "English Bible."

Upon his deathbed, Carroll admonished L.R. Scarborough, his assistant and future successor, to "keep the seminary lashed to the cross" of Jesus Christ. Since Carroll's death, his five successors have attempted to do just that.

Scarborough, E.D. Head, J. Howard Williams, Robert Naylor and Russell Dilday—who is celebrating his 10th an-

niversary this year—all came to Southwestern with strong commitments to the Bible, aware of the needs of the local church and desiring to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth.

The foundation Carroll laid at Southwestern has weathered severe storms in the past 80 years—from financial struggles of the early days to theological disputes of the current decade.

Through these 80 years, Southwestern has made major contributions to theological education, according to John Newport, vice-president for academic affairs and provost. Southwestern's unique strengths are in evangelism, missions, Christian ethics and religious education, he said.

Southwestern's World Mission and Evangelism Center combines more than 50 missions courses and nearly 20 evangelism courses with continuous opportunities for practical experience. This spring 200 students will hold revival meetings in churches across the United States and in the annual Spring Evangelism Practicum.

T.B. Maston, professor of Christian ethics emeritus, defined studies in ethics at Southwestern. Today, a faculty of four full-time professors continues the tradition Maston began 50 years ago.

In 1917 Southwestern became the first school to award a degree in religious education. Today Southwestern enrolls 1,700 students in its school of religious education each year.

Southwestern is also noted by secular and church musicians alike for the high standards of its school of church music.

In addition to these distinctives, Southwestern operates three off-campus centers of students who cannot leave their church positions to move to Fort Worth. Monday and Tuesday classes are offered in Shawnee, Okla., Houston, and San Antonio, Texas.

Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary is Southwestern's Spanish-language component in San Antonio. This school provides theological education for the leadership of Spanish-speaking churches in the United States and abroad.

To meet the needs of ministers after seminary graduation, Southwestern offers approximately 80 continuing education conferences and workshops each year.

Other highlights of Southwestern's curriculum include specialized studies in social work, marriage and family counseling, gerontology, archaeology, communications and recreation.

Although originally supported solely by Texas Baptists, Southwestern became an institution of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925. Today Southwestern is one of six national seminaries supported by Southern Baptists.

**BACKYARD
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MISSION**



Purpose: To train local church Backyard Bible Club/Mission VBS teams to plan and conduct these projects utilizing the Southern Baptist curriculum.

Target audiences: youth mission teams, youth choir/mission teams, summer missionaries, church Backyard Bible Club teams, any activity of the local church which will include use of the SBC materials.

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Youth Mission VBS Department Leaders

(adults as leaders)

Children Backyard Bible Club/Mission VBS Department Leaders

(adults and youth as leaders)

Preschool Backyard Bible Club/Mission VBS Department Leaders

(adults and youth as leaders)

State Clinic

May 7, 1988

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Levy Baptist Church

3501 Pike Ave.
North Little Rock

Trustees Affirm Dilday

by Mark Wingfield

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees affirmed Russell Dilday on his 10th anniversary as seminary president during their spring meeting March 14-16.

The board also adopted a positive response to the Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee and approved a \$19.7 million budget.

Trustee Wayne Allen of Carrollton, Texas, presented the motion affirming Dilday in the last minutes of the board meeting. Allen called for an expression of "appreciation for 10 years of leadership." He did not ask for a vote of confidence, he told the *Baptist Standard*, Texas Baptists' newsjournal, because the president "didn't need one."

The board unanimously adopted Allen's motion on a voice vote, with applause from some trustees. The night before at a banquet for trustees, administrators and faculty, Dilday received an extended standing ovation after a program about his 10th anniversary.

Rumors had circulated for several weeks before the meeting that trustees would reprimand Dilday for his public comments on the ongoing theological/political conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention. But no confrontation occurred.

"People expecting us to have difficulty are in error," trustee Chairman Ken Lilly told the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram*.

Trustee James T. Draper Jr. of Euless, Texas, presented the report of a trustee subcommittee assigned last fall to formulate a response to the Peace Committee. The Peace Committee's statement, approved by messengers to the SBC annual meeting last summer, called on seminary trustees to "determine the theological positions" of administration and faculty members in light of the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message Statement.

"The response of our faculty and administration has been remarkable," Draper reported to the board. "I don't know how it could have been any better."

Southwestern's faculty has shown a "tremendously strong commitment" to the kind of teaching that has characterized the school in the past, Draper said.

"The administration has been very meticulous in dealing with concerns that have been expressed," he said, explaining that only "four or five" questions had ever been raised about Southwestern. All of those concerns have been answered adequately, he added. "I feel like we've been met with great cooperation and a good spirit," Draper said.

The formal statement adopted by trustees

notes Southwestern had been dealing responsibly with the inerrancy question as early as 1978. "Southwestern has in the past and will continue to require all administration and faculty to sign and agree to teach in accordance with the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message Statement. Our administration and faculty support this position," the statement says.

The statement also notes that Southwestern's faculty has committed "to avoid using unfair caricatures and cynicism in teaching, lectures and addresses" and to provide balance in "alternative positions, textbooks and lecturers."

According to the statement, a teacher's freedom is limited by "the pre-eminence of Christ, the authoritative nature of the Scriptures and the distinct purpose for which the seminary exists."

Six Alumni Honored

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Six men who have contributed to Southern Baptist life will be honored as 1988 Distinguished Alumni of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary June 15.

Award winners are Presnall Wood, Buckner Fanning, Tal Bonham, Don Orr, James Leitch, and Howard E. Butt. They will be guests of honor at Southwestern's annual alumni reunion during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June.

Wood is editor of the *Baptist Standard*, weekly newsjournal for Baptists in Texas. Fanning is pastor of Trinity Baptist Church

in San Antonio, Texas. Bonham is executive director-treasurer of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

Orr is a retired missionary to Colombia. He and his wife, Violet, were the first music missionaries appointed by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Leitch retired last year as director of Southwestern's physical plant, where he influenced hundreds of students working under his supervision for 34 years.

Butt is a lay preacher and chairman of the board of a national organization promoting lay renewal.

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DeGray State Park Lodge April 29-30, 1988
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Glynn Hill
BSSB



Barbara Freese
BSSB

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1:30-9:00 p.m.
Saturday, April 30, 1988
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Revolution!

Chaney Calls For Revolution 'From The Inside'

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)—America needs leaders for a "spiritual revolution," Charles L. Chaney told students at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

"We desperately need people who, wherever they go and whoever they meet, they're building little fires that burn for God and truth and right in the souls of the people they come into contact with," said Chaney, who is dean of the Redford School of Theology at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., and was recently elected special assistant to the president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

He spoke to students about revolution, the kind that changes people on the inside.

One kind of revolutionary is a person who believes everything that society and culture has built up must be torn down, he said.

In the 1960s, "there were a lot of people running around saying, 'Let's tear down the structures that exist.' And usually they had fantastic programs for tearing things down and very few programs for building things back up," Chaney said.

The other kind of revolutionary is a person who believes that "if you really want to change your culture, if you really want to change your society, something has to be done on the inside of men. Men and women must be changed from the inside," he explained.

"I am that kind of revolutionary," Chaney said.

Reading from the New Testament book of Acts, Chaney discussed the last time Jesus spoke to his disciples before his

ascension into heaven.

"What Jesus had to say to those gathered disciples... were words of revolution," he said. "He suggested that there are some things that must be true of us if we're going to be that kind of people."

First, Chaney said, Jesus implied that if Christians are to be the kind of people who change their society, their culture and their world, they must be controlled by an entirely different priority than that which controls non-believers.

Jesus was talking to people whose priority was, "When will the kingdom be restored to Israel?" Chaney noted.

Jesus indicated his disciples needed to stop speculating about the future and demonstrate his love in the present.

"It's very easy for us to give ourselves to other priorities," Chaney acknowledged. "But the priority of the church of Jesus Christ is to be eyewitnesses of what Jesus has done and is doing in our lives. We never will be the kind of people who turn the world around if we do not give ourselves to that priority."

Secondly, Chaney said, Jesus suggested that "if we're going to be revolutionary, we need to have a new kind of power."

The question the disciples asked Jesus, about restoring the kingdom to Israel, was a question about political and military power, he said. They wanted to return to the days of King David, when Israel was a free and powerful nation.

But Jesus warned them against trying to restore the past and encouraged them to focus on transforming the present, Chaney said.

He related he was a pastor and student in Chicago in the 1960s. During that time, he said, "I had many friends on the liberal end of the political spectrum who were saying, 'If we can, we'll get political power, and we will change this country.'"

They were frustrated, he said.

Now, he noted: "The pendulum has switched, and there are people on the other side—on the right politically—who are saying, 'If we can get political power, we can change this country.'"

"I want to say, with all my heart and soul, that what we need is not political power. What we need is spiritual power."

Third, Chaney said, Jesus indicated his disciples needed a new hope and a new prospect: "They had been taught all their lives that someday the Messiah would come, and when he came, things would be different. . . . They had come to believe that Jesus was indeed the Messiah."

"When he started ascending into heaven, some of them started to say, 'Lord, don't leave! Come back!' Two men appeared and said to them, 'You go back and do what he's told you to do.'"

The message of the two men was an encouragement to the disciples to live in the light of a new hope, he said.

Jesus' words to his disciples at that time hint at one final suggestion for people who want to change their world, Chaney added: "If we're going to be revolutionaries, we're going to have to experience and realize a new kind of presence, his presence, in our lives. Incarnation means that if he was going to be in one place, he couldn't be in another at the same time. He was saying, 'It's to your advantage that I go away so I can be with you in a new way.'"

"Jesus Christ is with us. Many of us live day by day as if we're all by ourselves. . . . but he is with us. When we realize that, it transforms us."

Plant Churches, Reach People

ATLANTA (BP)—While 1987 saw the smallest increase in churches in nine years among Southern Baptists, church planting still is a priority, according to David Benham, of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

For Benham, the reasons Southern Baptists come down hard on the side of church planting are simple. First, "evangelism and ministry are local church enterprises," he said. "To increase the amount of effective evangelism means

more churches."

Second, "new churches add new people more effectively than older churches," he continued. "If we add a new church, they will add new members more quickly than an older church. They have more reasons, and are more anxious, to do so. That's a normal pattern," he said.

And Southern Baptists are falling behind in their efforts to start new churches in un-churched or under-churched areas of the country, Benham noted.

In the late 1800s, one church existed per 4,000 population. Today, only one

church exists per 6,200. "We have not kept up with our growing population," he said.

One reason is that in recent years more people are emigrating to the U.S. who do not have a Christian background. But that's not the only reason. "In our older churches, we're not reaching outside the faith community," he said.

For Benham, it is within a new church community, with its zeal for members and the excitement of growing something new, where "reaching outside" often takes place.

In looking to the future, Benham hopes Southern Baptists also will look to the past.

"The greatest advances in Southern Baptist history occurred in the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of this century when we had lay ministers establishing new churches," he said.

"They were planted by the farmer-preacher, the preacher-blacksmith. It wasn't until later that we began to depend on the professional. If we're going to touch the areas we need to touch today, it will be through lay people."

People who make a commitment and nurture a new church into existence, he said, share in the excitement of watching it grow.

HOW DO CHURCHES GROW?

If the Home Mission Board is to reach its Bold Mission Thrust goal of 50,000 congregations by the year 2000, Southern Baptists must do more than "swap members." They must reach out with the gospel to nonbelievers.

Starting new churches—where the people are—can help Southern Baptists win our nation.

As a Southern Baptist committed to Bold Mission Thrust, will you:

- help provide a church for a deaf couple in Baton Rouge?
- make sure an international student in Denver has a place to worship?
- guarantee a choice of worship places for an inquiring man in Utah?
- help assure a church where a Minnesota youth who accepts Christ can be nurtured?
- help provide a variety of Southern Baptist churches so that everyone can worship as led?

A Church *for* Everyone

Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
National Goal: \$37.5 million



FULLER CALLS FOR

Course Correction

by Stan Hasty

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Southern Baptist Convention needs an alteration in the course that over the last decade has led to a conservative resurgence, the chairman of the SBC Peace Committee said.

Charles G. Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., told participants at an annual SBC Christian Life Commission seminar in Washington: "In my opinion, Southern Baptists have needed to alter some of our drifting courses in recent years. It is also my opinion that while some corrections to those courses have taken place, space has been made for some people who mistake recklessness for courage, anger for zeal and retribution for integrity. No Christian, regardless his theology, has a carte blanche privilege to foster and perpetuate division and hostility among God's people.

"In Southern Baptist life, we need now... to alter our course again."

The Virginia pastor who has led the 22-member Peace Committee since its inception in 1985, said further: "We need people as committed to an agenda of peace in the family as others have been committed to their recent agendas and their counter-agendas. I am not calling for peace at any price, but there has never been peace without some price."

A good beginning point, he added, is for Southern Baptists to "stop living by labels" and instead "start getting to know each other personally. We don't know each other. We are strangers."

Fuller's statement on the division within the denomination came in the context of a sermon titled, "Know Your Opposition." The premise of the sermon was that Satan is Southern Baptists' "mutual enemy."

"Nothing quite so unites a divided people or arouses an apathetic people," he said, "than when they realize they have a mutual enemy. Make no mistake about it: Southern Baptists have that mutual enemy. Baptist Democrats, Baptist Republicans, Baptist conservatives, Baptist moderates have a cunning adversary with a subtle agenda which we need to learn how to address."

"Our adversary seeks to traumatize our fellowship."

The same adversary also "seeks to politicize our evangelism," he said. Declaring himself as "thoroughly... a political and a theological conservative," Fuller added: "But I have learned that there are some whose politics I share who do not share my kind of Christianity. There are people in politics who are my kind of Americans

but they are not my kind of Christians.

"All too many evangelicals... have come onto the scene equating the enlisting of citizenship for their favorite conservative social cause... and equate that enlistment with that of evangelizing the nation. The only way we are going to evangelize our society is the same way you evangelize anyone anywhere in this world... They are led to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior."

Referring to recent revelations of sexual immorality and financial wrongdoing by some televangelists, Fuller said the devil also "seeks to scandalize our gospel."

He added: "The shattering events of the last 12 to 14 months have certainly provided the stage, the actors and the plots to make an utter comedy of the gospel in the minds of both those who are cynical and in those who are fragile. Satan does not have to worry about an army in which some of its professed officers and leaders are forever shooting themselves in the

foot."

At the same time, Fuller said, all Christians are targets of the same temptations. "The thing that I must be careful about... more than anything else is that I do not render the gospel I preach unbelievable because I have lived it into unbelievability," he said.

Another of Satan's strategies is in seeking "to trivialize our churchmanship," Fuller said.

"A health, wealth and success theology plays into the hands of such self-centeredness we have no mind left for evangelism, missions, sacrifice and compassion," he added. "A church which comes into your living room in living color does not require that you hurt with those who hurt... weep with those who weep... witness to your next-door neighbor. It just simply requires that you send in the contribution, and you do not even have to do battle with injustice in your own community."

Still other demonic strategies are to "secularize our methods... neutralize our morals... (and) paganize our environment," Fuller said.

Make WMU An Agency?

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union should be given agency status and a board of trustees elected by the Southern Baptist Convention, according to a leader in the denomination's conservative movement.

Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas, told students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary operation of the WMU within the SBC without agency status is "discriminatory toward women."

The WMU, with offices in Birmingham, Ala., is celebrating its centennial anniversary as an auxiliary to the SBC. It receives no funding through the convention's Cooperative Program unified budget.

"I, for one, would advocate that we make them a full-scale agency, and that we give them a board of trustees and that board of

trustees function exactly like the boards of all the other (SBC) institutions and agencies," Patterson said.

Patterson's comments came in response to a question about his position on a "marriage proposal" between the WMU and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. In January, HMB President Larry Lewis proposed that the agencies work in such close partnership that their relationship would be like a marriage.

Patterson said he is not an "advocate" of a merger between WMU and the HMB, but he added he would not be opposed to it if "that's the turn it should take." He noted a possible reorganization of the WMU is not "an area I've done any study in."

Patterson also fielded several questions regarding his stance on women in ministry.

Asked whether a person could be a biblical inerrantist and believe women can be pastors, Patterson

acknowledged some inerrantists believe the Bible permits women to be pastors. The question of inerrancy deals with the "theology of the Bible" while the issue of women as pastors falls within the category of interpretation of the Bible, he said.

Patterson said he believes the Bible forbids women from serving in the "pastoral ministry." The pastoral ministry involves those who are "charged with the oversight of the church" and who function as the "primary" teacher in the church, he said.

While noting Southern Baptists churches have the right to call women as pastors, he defended the Home Mission Board's decision to refuse church pastoral assistance funds to churches that call women as pastors.

Patterson said he not only agreed with the policy from a theological standpoint, but he also surmised that most Southern Baptists do not favor women pastors.

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BROADMAN

A SMILE OR TWO

General Oglethorpe once said to John Wesley, "I never forgive, and I never forget."
To which Wesley responded, "Tien, sir. I hope you never sin."

Some people don't have many faults, but they manage to make the most of them.

Bear Bryant, the legendary football coach, once was asked to explain his successful
record. His response was, "It's the itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny things that beat you."

EQUAL ACCESS

Decisions Cloud Future

by Stan Haste

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (BP)—Two recent federal court decisions have shown that implementation of the Equal Access Act of 1984—a law that gives high school religious clubs the same right to meet on school property enjoyed by other non-academic, extracurricular groups—will not come without legal and practical complications.

Neither court—one in Nebraska, the other in Washington state—struck down the historic law as a violation of the federal Constitution. But both ruled against groups of students whose requests for permission to hold prayer meetings and Bible studies inside public high schools were denied by local school officials.

In the Nebraska dispute, U.S. District Judge C. Arlen Beam in February upheld the refusal of the principal of Westside High School in Omaha and the local superintendent of schools to grant permission to a group of evangelical students to form a religious club and meet on campus. The students took the school officials to

court, contending the latter had violated the Equal Access Act and denied them their rights of free exercise of religion and freedom of speech.

Beam agreed with the basic position of school officials that no "limited open forum" had been created at Westside High, in spite of the fact permission had been granted to 10 other "noncurriculum related" student groups, including a chess club and photography club.

Beam justified his finding that the religious club alone was not related to the curriculum on the basis of testimony by the school's principal that all 10 approved groups were so related. Further, the judge noted, the principal had testified "that he would consider going away with all clubs at (Westside High School), if necessary, to ensure that a closed forum . . . could be maintained," thereby avoiding all problems associated with establishing a "limited open forum."

Beam concluded: "The purpose articulated by (school) administrators for refusing to permit the plaintiffs' club to meet involves the school's goal of preserv-

ing a balanced view when political, religious and economic information is dispensed within (school) facilities. The court finds this to be a legitimate educational concern which reasonably justifies (Westside High School's) actions in this case."

In the second case, decided last December, District Judge Walter T. McGovern ruled against four Renton, Wash., students at Lindbergh High School who likewise were denied permission to meet under terms of the Equal Access Act. At Lindbergh High, 15 groups—including a bowling club, ski club, and chess club—had been given permission to organize and meet on school property.

McGovern, like Beam, held school officials at Lindbergh High had not created a "limited open forum" that would have triggered the Equal Access Act. Even more important to his ruling, however, was a prohibition in the Washington state constitution stating, "No public money or property shall be appropriated for or applied to any religious worship, exercise, instruction or the support of any religious establishment."

He also cited another provision in the state constitution stating, "All schools maintained or supported wholly or in part by the public funds shall be forever free from sectarian control or influence."

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Dave and Sandy, his wife, worked as a team on staff with Campus Crusade for Christ from 1963-1984, the last five years being in the Family Ministry department. Dave will be covering 6 major topics essential to being a successful family shepherd. These topics are: Father Power; Love Unchained; The Master Plan; Honoring Your Wife; 3-D Sex; Mission Control; Child Security and Child Management. The conference features a comprehensive playbook that emphasizes application and serves as a teaching manual to equip men to teach others.

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National Agenda

Citizenship Seminar Addresses Range Of Issues

by Stan Hasty

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (BP)—A parade of speakers from all along the theological and political spectrums assessed and proposed solutions for many of the nation's problems during the annual Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission seminar in Washington.

CLC Executive Director N. Larry Baker told more than 250 participants the seminar on Christian citizenship was convened "because we take our roles as citizens of this nation... (and) our roles as citizens of God's kingdom seriously."

Biblical faith, Baker said, "calls changed people to change the world in and through the structures of government... to establish that which is right in the republic and boldly to challenge that which is wrong... to act constructively and wisely, consistently and urgently upon the basis of accurately informed consciences... to exert a Christian influence within the nation through individual commitment and to personal involvement in citizen action... (and) to place on the national agenda issues which others would prefer to avoid."

Kansas State University history Professor Robert D. Linder warned of the pitfalls of embracing a civil religion that mixes piety and patriotism until the two cannot be distinguished.

"The main danger of civil religion in America today is that it identifies God with the national destiny and, in essence, reduces the universal God of the Bible to the tribal god of a particular nation.

"Civil religionists often appropriate God for national ends and purposes, and increasingly in recent times they have not asked God to judge the nation, but to bless its agenda."

Another speaker, Vernon C. Grounds, called for a rejection of dispensational premillennialism's emphasis on the end of time to the exclusion of concern for the here and now. Grounds, a Conservative Baptist who is president of Evangelicals for Social Action, said popular eschatologists such as Hal Lindsey are actually "pessimists, determinists and fatalists" who believe it a "sheer waste of time" to engage in social action.

Such a view betrays a basic misunderstanding of the nature of biblical prophecy, Grounds said. Old Testament prophets were not "secular soothsayers" but were called "to tell forth God's truth," including God's "ethical demands," he said.

A pair of members of Congress—Rep. Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., and Delegate Walter E. Fauntroy, D-D.C.—addressed ethical standards for public officials and national budget priorities.

Gingrich said discussions of ethics and elected officials should include the difference between sainthood and corruption:

"You are never going to have an ethical House (of Representatives) if your standard is sainthood and above. You can have an ethical House if your standard is corruption and below."

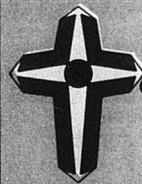
Gingrich attributed contemporary ethical confusion in large measure to rapid change and situation ethics. "The values of the permissive society and the collapse of absolutes, I think, led to a decay of behavior that will haunt us for at least two more generations," he said. "Once a society gets into this kind of a morass, it doesn't get out of it quickly."

Speaking on national budget priorities, Fauntroy said the country is faced with the challenge of changing public policies that have caused enormous foreign trade and domestic budget deficits. "If we don't do something about... that package of public policies," he said, "the future of our nation's young will be that of living on a vast plantation called America, owned by foreign investors and high as a kite on drugs."

Another speaker personalized the human face of hunger, homelessness, and other needs, saying poverty touches one of every four U.S. children.

Ginny Britt, executive director of Crisis Control Ministry in Winston-Salem, N.C., said Americans have become immune to statistics about human needs. But in her work, she added: "Every figure translates into a face and every face haunts you. Percentages take human form as someone's brother or mother or child."

Other speakers included biblical scholar William E. Hull, anti-pornography activist Jerry R. Kirk, ethicist Roger Shinn, appeals court judge Jean Galloway Bissell, columnist and commentator Cal Thomas, hunger expert Ross Coggins, and SBC Peace Committee Chairman Charles Fuller (see related article on p. 16).



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Gregory To Nominate Smith

AUSTIN, Texas (BP)—Ralph Smith, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, for the past 27 years, has become the second Texas pastor to agree to be nominated for president of the SBC Pastors' Conference this June in San Antonio, Texas.

Smith told the Florida *Baptist Witness*, newsjournal of the Florida Baptist Convention, he agreed last November to a request that fellow Texan Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, be allowed to nominate him.

A third likely nominee, Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., told the *Witness* he has not yet decided whether he will allow his nomination.

Elliff, the brother-in-law of former Southern Baptist Convention President Bailey Smith and Smith's successor in the Del City pastorate, is the only one of the three possible nominees who is scheduled to speak during the 1988 Pastors' Conference. He preaches immediately prior to the election of officers.

According to Stan Coffey, pastor of San

Jacinto Baptist Church in Amarillo, Texas, and this year's Pastors' Conference president, Elliff was the choice of "conservative" leaders who met privately in Atlanta in mid-February. The group also tapped Jacksonville, Fla., pastor Jerry Vines as their preference for SBC president.

Pastors' Groups Still Estranged

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)—Despite a SBC Peace Committee recommendation that the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference and SBC Forum "explore the possibility of 'getting together'" rather than have separate sessions, the two pre-convention meetings will remain estranged, at least in 1988.

George Steincross, chairman of the Forum steering committee, said efforts by Forum leaders to explore ways of reuniting the two groups have been unsuccessful.

Pastors' Conference President Stan Coffey told Baptist Press: "The chairman of the Forum and I have exchanged some letters. . . . We are agreed on the fact it would be good to get back together, but we are not agreed on how to accomplish that."

Coffey told Baptist Press he has invited the Forum to "come back" to the Pastors' Conference, "but they have placed conditions on their coming back. Their conditions involve their group electing officers and our group electing officers and then the officers jointly planning a program. I think if that is done, then all you will have is two groups meeting together under one roof. We really won't have unity, just two groups meeting under one roof."

Editor Elected

LUTHERVILLE, Md. (BP)—The general mission board of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware has elected Robert E. Allen editor of the *Baptist True Union*, the convention's newsjournal.

A native of Marion, Ill., Allen, 32, is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He held internships at the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* and the *Kentucky Western Recorder*. He edited *The Towers*, campus newspaper at Southern, one year and worked one year as news director for the seminary.

He is married to the former Vicki Johnston of Little Rock, Ark. They have one son.

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Advanced and Base Conference

LESSONS FOR LIVING

Convention Uniform

Alive!

by Marvin E. James, Second Church, Clarksville

Basic passage: Matthew 27:62-28:10

Focal passage: Matthew 28:1-10

Central truth: When Christ took up his life again, we also received life.

Did Christ rise again? This is the very heart and center of Christian faith. This truth involves the person, character, and deity of the Messiah. I Corinthians 15 affirms the important place the resurrection of Jesus Christ holds in our faith and hope.

The day after the crucifixion, the chief priests and Pharisees betrayed their fear that something miraculous might happen. Unknowingly, they gave important testimony to the cornerstone of the whole Christian religion. From the lips of Christ's bitter enemies comes total assurance of the reality of his death. God made use of their precautions for his own ends.

If that sabbath had been a disturbed and anxious day for the enemies of our Lord, what must it have been for his disciples? Some of them had watched the agony of the cross. Now Jesus was dead and buried in Joseph's tomb. That sad sabbath was clouded by their grief and fear.

When the women went to the tomb on the first day of the week to anoint the body of Jesus, an earthquake occurred. The stone was rolled back, the guards became unconscious, and an angel appeared. The angel's summons to the women was a sweet invitation to view the place where his dear body lay. Notice however, they were not to linger with the past. We are not to linger on the cross either, but to pass on to the new life. Instead, we are to do as the angel told them to do. Proclaim the wonderful news that Jesus lives. What a great joy they must have felt, and yet their fear was also great, for they did not understand what had happened. They ran to tell the disciples, for the news they carried was so wonderful, they could not wait to share it with the disciples.

Did Christ rise again? Yes! He triumphed over death. Living witnesses saw and touched him. The disciples were transformed because of it. The Scriptures testify to the resurrection. The church is alive and growing because he lives. The Christian witness in the world is a strong affirmation to the presence of the living Lord. Victory over death. He is alive, and because he lives, we also live.

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Life and Work

Resurrection and Salvation

by Hilton Lane, Fairfield Bay Church, Fairfield Bay

Basic passage: Romans 1:1-17; 10:8-10

Focal passage: Romans 1:1-7, 15-17; 10:8-10

Central truth: Salvation comes through repentance, faith in Christ, and confession.

Salvation and the resurrection of Jesus are tied together in the same bundle. In fact there is no salvation apart from the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Delete the resurrection of Jesus from the Scripture and there is no good news.

It was the resurrected Christ that breathed new life into a lost cause that first Easter morning. Shattered, dormant faith was revived during a single meeting with the resurrected Lord. Peter's cowardly denial was changed into bold preaching after he met the living Christ.

In Romans 1:1-7, Paul refers to himself as a slave, as a called apostle and as a preacher of the gospel. In Romans 1:15-17, the Pauline doctrine of righteousness is best understood in the light of the Old Testament. Old Testament righteousness is a distinctive religious concept. Its basic meaning is conforming to and being measured by God's standard. The gospel reveals the righteousness of God through faith in Christ. Righteousness in Jesus Christ is from beginning to end, a matter of faith.

While salvation is validated by the resurrection, it must be received personally. Romans 10:8-10 declares that salvation is offered to all on the same terms. Israel had misunderstood the nature of God's righteousness. The faith method is intended for all and the gospel must be proclaimed to all. While repentance is mentioned elsewhere, only confession and belief is discussed here. Confession with the mouth is external and belief in the heart is internal. This belief has a definite object—Jesus Christ. It also produces righteousness. 'Heart' is descriptive of a person's whole nature. Salvation involves repentance toward sin—a changed attitude. The full scope of sin's devastation must be acknowledged. It includes faith toward Christ—an act of believing. There must be a total reliance upon Christ's ability to save. It also calls for a verbal confession that one is accepting Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.

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Bible Book

Resurrection Experience

by A. Timothy Hight, First Church, Lepanto

Basic passage: Luke 24:1-9, 13-15, 27-31

Focal passage: Luke 24:1-9, 27-32

Central truth: The resurrection is central to a genuine and fruitful Christian experience.

There are many realities that set Christianity apart from the other world religions. The most significant, however, is the fact that the tomb of Jesus Christ is empty. This event is crucial to our Christian faith. In explaining resurrection, Paul wrote, "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Co. 15:14).

As we examine these passages, we are immediately aware of the unique experience of these disciples who were involved in the first resurrection events. For the women who went to the tomb early Sunday morning, it was an experience of Christ's promise.

The angel called to their attention that Jesus had earlier said he would be crucified and then rise again (v. 7). Verse 8 relates that the women immediately "remembered" the promise of these words. These devout ladies had for many years know experientially of the trustworthiness of their God. They had witnessed firsthand the fulfillment of God's supreme promise in the birth of the Messiah. Now, their faith in Jesus, God's Son, was affirmed and strengthened by the Messiah's foremost demonstration of his deity. He had earlier charged his followers, "You believe in God, believe also in Me" (Jo. 14:1). The resurrection proved that he too was completely trustworthy.

For the disciples on the road to Emmaus the post-resurrection encounter was an experience of Christ's person. The Scripture says that as Jesus taught them the Word and dined with them, "their eyes were opened, and they knew him" (v. 31). This intimate fellowship caused their hearts to "burn" within them.

How wonderful it is to know that we, each day, can enjoy these same experiences as the first disciples! The Old and New Testaments are filled with the promises of God to his children. Daily, as we walk with him, these promises are fulfilled by his marvelous grace. And daily, our Lord Jesus awaits for an intimate visit with his disciples.

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Convention Uniform

Continuing Commission

by Marvin E. James, Second Church, Clarksville

Basic passage: Matthew 6:24-34; 28:16-20

Focal passage: Matthew 28:18-20

Central truth: The Lord's Commission is not to be taken lightly.

Every believer must decide which master he will serve, self or Christ. The one who turns in love to Jesus, vowing to follow his leadership, can have perfect peace in the knowledge that Jesus will supply all his needs. First of all, however, must be the decision to seek his will for life. God's commands are always dependent upon man's obedience. We are not to fret about the future, for doesn't he who made the world hold us in his hands?

The disciples met the risen Christ on the mountain in Galilee, evidently the same mountain he had told them about the night before he suffered (26:32). Here, the Lord Messiah gave them a command, a world wide commission, while declaring his own authority in heaven and on earth. As the obedient Lamb, he humbled himself even to death on the cross. Now as the exalted one, he has been raised to the place of pre-eminence over all things (Ph. 2:9-11). He now possesses in all its fullness, lordship over all the universe. In the name of the One who gave the order to "Go," we are to evangelize the world. This word is to every believer. No one may countermand it. No one may change it. The commission is mandatory, never optional. We are to make disciples of all people, all races, all socio-economic groups, to everyone who will hear and believe. The church today has the same command to never choose, but to tell the good news to all.

After that they were to baptize these disciples into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Then they were to instruct the converted, baptized believers in all that Jesus had taught and commanded them. This command was to his servants of all ages, to take up the work.

Then Jesus promised his presence in the Holy Spirit would always be with those who faithfully carry out his orders and precepts. If we are disobedient, we have no right to expect his leadership and blessings, but if we are obedient, we can know for sure our Lord is with us wherever we are communicating a life of fellowship, of consecration, and divine fullness and strength.

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Life and Work

No Excuse

by Hilton Lane, Fairfield Bay Church, Fairfield Bay

Basic passage: Romans 1:13-3:20

Focal passage: Romans 1:18-20; 2:1-4, 11-13

Central truth: God's sufficient revelation of himself makes all people responsible.

Paul addresses the age-old question, "Will God hold accountable people who have never heard of him?" Romans 1:18-20 focuses upon a person's knowledge of God. God's anger is directed against all sin (v. 18). The consequences of sin catch up with the sinner in this life and beyond.

The one exception is when that sin is covered by Christ through repentance and faith. Wrath comes after God has done everything possible (Ro. 1:24, 26, 28). God then turns people over to their deliberate choices.

God has revealed himself to his creation in all that he does (Ro. 1:19). Only the human soul has the capacity to see divine power in creation.

The reality of the visible things demonstrates the reality of the invisible things (Ro. 1:20). None are left without some disclosure of God. There is the suggestion that all are judged according to the light received.

Romans 2:1-4 deals with the judgment of God. In judging others we bring judgment upon ourselves (Ro. 2:1). The ability to judge others is an argument that one must answer to judgment. God's judgment is true and people cannot escape judgment by becoming a judge (Ro. 2:2, 3).

God's patience and mercy is designed to lead us to repentance (Ro. 2:4). God is forgiving but not indulgent. It is perilous to misunderstand God's patience as indifference to sin.

Romans 2:11-13 declares God's justice. All people are important before God. There is no partiality. Jew and Gentile alike must stand at the foot of the cross. Salvation is provided for all alike. Judgment is also dispensed to all.

If God expects people to know him, we can be assured that he has given us the means to know him. We have seen a great light. That light is evidenced in God's creation. It is clearly made known through the Scriptures. It is ultimately seen in the light of the world—Jesus Christ. God is ultimate justice. People are without excuse.

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Bible Book

God Protects The Obedient

by A. Timothy Hight, First Church, Lepanto

Basic passage: Matthew 2:7-8, 12-16, 19-23

Focal passage: Matthew 2:7-8, 19-23

Central truth: An obedient child of God will experience God's protection and provision.

These events following Christ's birth give a tremendous demonstration of the way in which God accomplishes his plan. Jesus had been in the world only a short time when the forces of evil began to seek to thwart God's purpose. Because the wise men, Mary and Joseph were obedient to the will of God (vv. 12, 14, 21), his purpose was undaunted.

One should notice right away the futility of Herod's attempt to get in God's way. No matter how great the outside power or influence, it cannot keep God's plan from being carried out in our lives. Psalm 2 tells us that God "laughs" at the enemies who take counsel against him.

As God seeks to reveal and accomplish his will in our lives, only our disobedience can stand in the way. That which took place in the lives of the Israelites at Kadesh-barnea is a perfect example (Nu. 13:1-14:39). God had planned for these Hebrews a promised land flowing with milk and honey, but their refusal to do as he instructed caused them to die while wandering in the wilderness. One wonders how many of God's chosen today forfeit a promised land for a dry wilderness because of their disobedience.

As Joseph, Mary, and the Magi willingly obeyed God's instructions, he gave to them supreme protection from Satan's power and provisions necessary for the task. This did not mean that they were free from problems, but that the presence of the Almighty encircled their lives. They experienced the same confidence of Paul: "But my God shall supply all your need" (Ro. 8:28), and the assurance of David: "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil" (Ps. 121:7).

Indeed, God has a specific plan that encompasses every aspect of life for each child of his (Je. 29:11). It is often said that the key to knowing God's will is being willing to do it. Our willingness to obey demonstrates our trust in the Father, and our commitment to his plan for our lives; nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

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'No Official Atheism'

Soviet Baptists Urge Church-State Reforms

by Art Toalston
SBC Foreign Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Soviet law governing church-state relations may undergo its first revision since 1929.

Alexei Bichkov, who represents more than 500,000 Baptists in the Soviet Union, said he was one of about 10 religious leaders who met with Ministry of Religious Affairs officials in January about the possible revision.

Baptists will ask the government to stop sponsoring atheism, Bichkov said. "Atheism ought to be the same voluntary organization like religion—self-supported, self-governed."

Officials encouraged the religious leaders "to express ourselves (to the) maximum about what we need in new legislation," Bichkov said.

Bichkov is general secretary of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the Soviet Union. He visited the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board after the March executive committee meeting of the Baptist World Alliance in Washington.

Baptists also will ask for a "declaration of freedom of conscience" that is "very short, very dynamic, very concrete," Bichkov said. And they will suggest that religious groups formulate bylaws appropriate to their traditions.

Baptists will request removal of prohibitions against religious education work with youth and children and against church-organized ministry in hospitals and homes for the aged and disabled. Baptists want to establish their own "mercy action groups," Bichkov said.

The idea of revising church-state law still faces strong opposition from atheists, Bichkov said, adding that "it may be one, two years" before any changes are enacted.

Bichkov also was one of three religious leaders named by Soviet officials to their delegation for this year's session of the United Nations' Commission on Human Rights. A mid-February meeting of the delegation gave him another chance to express Baptist concerns, he said.

In a written statement for a press conference after the meeting, Bichkov expressed hope that Baptists "as well as other churches and religious organizations will occupy their due place in our society, particularly in affairs of charity, in virtue and in the general social life of the country."

This year's celebration of the 1,000th anniversary of Christianity in the Soviet Union has grown beyond a Russian Or-

thodox celebration to a national event, Bichkov noted.

The All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists has penned a special message for churches highlighting the "spiritual contribution" of Christianity to Russian music, art and literature.

The arts often reflected a "spirit of meaning of God, meaning of life, meaning of Christ" that has provided "a first point of contact for many non-believers." Strong religious images are found, for example, in the writings of Leo Tolstoy, a humanist from a Russian Orthodox background, and Feodor Dostoevski, a Russian Orthodox believer.

Bichkov said he still senses a "deeply hidden interest in Jesus Christ" among Soviet writers, poets and composers. One noted author, a Muslim, recently penned a moving description of Christ, Bichkov reported. Asked why, the writer said Mohammed was a great man who advanced his ideology while Christ used only his love for people.

During his trip to the United States, Bichkov also thanked the Baptist World Alliance executive committee for the 100,000 Bibles the BWA is sending to the Soviet Union this year in a joint project with the United Bible Societies.

Half the Bibles already are being distributed, he reported. He also said the Norwegian Bible Society and other Scandinavian groups are shipping 150,000 three-volume Bible and commentary sets into the Soviet Union.

BWA Leader Killed

by John Wilkes
Baptist World Alliance

LODI, Calif. (BP)—Gerhard Claas, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, was killed March 21 in a car-truck crash near Lodi, Calif., about 50 miles east of San Francisco.

Seriously injured in the accident were Mervyn Betts, a retired American Baptist executive minister from San Francisco, and his wife, Nora.

Betts was reported to be in critical condition March 22, and Mrs. Betts was in moderate condition in a Stockton hospital.

Claas, 59, who had been chief administrative officer of the Washington-based BWA since 1980, was in California on a series of fund-raising meetings among BWA supporters in both American Baptist and Southern Baptist churches. He had spoken in the San Francisco Bay area during the week, including Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

At the time of the crash, Claas and the Bettses were en route to Stockton for a luncheon meeting. Betts was driving when the accident occurred shortly before noon.

Claas, a citizen of the Federal Republic of Germany, was general secretary of the Union of Evangelical Free-Churches (Baptist and Brethren) in the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Baptist Federation, one of the six world



Claas

BWA regional fellowships, before moving to the United States in 1980 to assume leadership of the BWA, which has 143 member bodies with a membership of more than 35 million.

He was born in Wetter, Germany, Aug. 31, 1928. He attended public schools there and graduated from the School of Higher Commercial Studies in Hagen. He took

theological studies at the Union's seminary in Hamburg and at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, where he was in the first class admitted when the institution opened in 1949.

Claas was married to the former Ingrid Saffran. They were parents of three children.

A memorial service will be held at the McLean (Virginia) Baptist Church, where Claas and his wife were members, at 2 p.m., Tuesday, April 19.

In a letter to the Baptists of the world, BWA President Noel Vose said, "Gerhard Claas was an evangelist who practiced daily the presence of God... (he was) not only a great leader but a spiritual believer with a deep sense of compassion for the oppressed and needy."

Vose also announced that remembrance gifts may be made to the Gerhard Claas Memorial Fund for the Baptist World Alliance, 6733 Curran St., McLean, Va. 22101.

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WORLD

Panama, Honduras Update

by Erich Bridges

SBC Foreign Mission Board

BALBOA, Panama (BP)—U.S. authorities have warned American citizens in Panama, including missionaries, to carefully limit their movements as the country plunges deeper into chaos.

The advice came as an attempted coup March 16 against military leader Manuel Antonio Noriega failed and the largest and bloodiest demonstrations yet against his rule filled the streets.

Southern Baptist missionaries and their families are staying close to home, and they have little communication with each other for the moment.

"We've tried to lay low," said missionary Kathy Eudy, who lives in Balboa on the edge of Panama City. "Yesterday (March 16) was really, really bad."

Early in the day Mrs. Eudy and her husband, Garry, both of Birmingham, Ala., took visiting friends to the airport, anxious to get them out of the country before conditions got worse. "When we got back from the airport, we got barricaded out of Balboa, and we had to jump some railroad tracks to come home. From certain points in Balboa you could see down into the city. There were a lot of fires and demonstrations, a lot of people involved in those."

When they ventured back out that afternoon, Eudy barely escaped being shot near a demonstration. The incident occurred at Balboa High School, where Mrs. Eudy works with students and was talking to the principal.

"Garry went with me, and he was outside of the school in his car waiting for me," she said. "I had been in there 40 or 45 minutes when we heard shooting and looked out the window, and there were men running from the (national guards). They came running onto the high school grounds. These men that the guards were chasing and shooting at came running toward Garry's car. He had the window open and heard the shots, so he got out of there."

Eudy was able to drive around to the back of the school and get his wife, and the two returned home. Shooting continued through the night. "Up until yesterday we were pretty safe. But now (the violence) seems more wide-scale than it had been," she said.

The 22 Southern Baptist missionaries in the country reportedly have enough food for now, and more food is available in Panama City. The problem is getting money to buy it. The dollar shortage continues to worsen because of U.S. economic actions to pressure Panama, and grocery stores are accepting only cash.

"Because the people are hungry and they don't have money, you have to exercise more caution because they might rob you," Mrs. Eudy said. "They're going to do whatever possible to feed their kids."

Store looting already has begun, but not house-to-house looting, as far as the Eudys can tell. "It hasn't gotten to that yet," she said. "But that's why I wouldn't want my kids to go out today. I wouldn't leave my house right now, because I don't want to leave it empty."

All schools were closed March 17, but the streets were quieter as the military reasserted control. Electricity and water remained off in much of Panama because of worker strikes and protests, although the government assigned soldiers to restore most public services. Telephone service, local or international, was occasional at best.

Despite their own potential problems, missionaries and Baptists want to help others without food. They are trying to scrape together \$22,000 to help people who have received no paychecks or who cannot get money from banks. The money would be used to buy and distribute food through churches to needy families. Participating families would receive vouchers for one \$20 food packet each week until the end of the emergency.

"They're doing some food distribution already through the Panama City Baptist Association. But it's rather limited because of the funds they have on hand," said Joe Bruce, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board director for Middle America and the Caribbean.

"I think the missionaries' main concern is what they can do to minister to these folks who are going to be without food if this thing extends for a long time," he said.

In Honduras, meanwhile, much of the country remained quiet following the March 16 incursion of Nicaraguan forces into an isolated southeastern border region of the country. No Southern Baptist missionaries live in the area, although two Mexican Baptist missionaries work in the same province where the fighting is said to be going on.

Southern Baptist mission Chairman Carl Rees in Tegucigalpa, the capital, said missionaries farther south "feel no pressure at this point. . . . They see no activity, nothing out of the ordinary."

Rees said neither the attack nor the airlift of 3,000 American troops into the country has caused much of a stir in Tegucigalpa. "We really have heard nothing other than what we read in the paper. It doesn't seem to be affecting life at all. . . . We're all fine." Thirty Southern Baptist missionaries are currently in Honduras.