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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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September 14, 1989

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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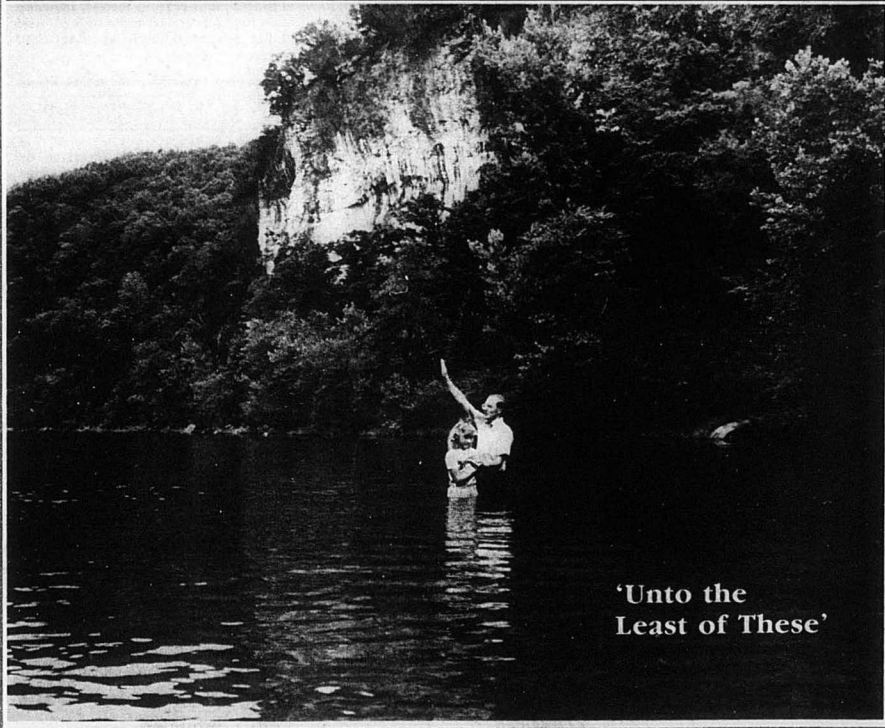
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A Change of Mind

Arkansas Baptist

September 14, 1989

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'Unto the
Least of These'

Cover Story



ABN photo / Mark Kelly

Unto the Least of These . . . 8

In the spirit of this year's state missions theme, Marshall's Searcy County Church is reaching the unreached by meeting human needs.

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IT'S UPLIFTING

A Fitting Finish

DALLAS (BP)—"Texas-Australia Partnership and the Last Crusade" was a happy ending to six years of partnership last week with Australia and Texas.

Since the effort began in 1984, more than 2,000 volunteers have traveled to Australia from about 400 Texas Baptist churches. With responses to this year's crusade still being tabulated, the previous missions have resulted in 2,659 professions of faith, 1,235 rededications, 111 baptisms and 84 commitments to special service.

Teams of pastors, church and association staff members, and lay persons went to 28 churches throughout Melbourne and surrounding areas during the most recent crusade in Victoria.

Their work was jointly coordinated by the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Baptist Union of Victoria, with the invitation for the mission partnership coming through the SBC Foreign Mission Board.

"We are not a Christian nation," the arriving 115 Texans were told by Alan Nunn, pastor of Templestowe Baptist Church and a member of the Victorian Baptist evangelism task force. "We welcome you in the name of Jesus because you can help change our nation."

The Australians saw the coming of the Texans as a catalyst that opened new doors for evangelism. "This has given us opportunity for bold inviting," said Jack Measham, pastor of churches at Lara and Teasdale in Victoria. "It encouraged us to do what we wouldn't have done otherwise, invite neighbors who are not members of the church to our meetings."

The involvement of laypeople in missions impressed the Australians. "We were encouraged to see ordinary people, not experts, active in ministry," said Ray Hutson, pastor of Castlemaine Baptist Church. "They set an example for us."

"More new churches have been started in the past four years in Victoria than any other four-year period in our history," said Phillip Bryant, church planting field worker in Victoria.

GOOD NEWS!

The Demands Of Discipleship

1 Peter 1:13-17

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor during Hitler's rule in Germany, lived in adverse circumstances. At that time in the pastor's life, the German government was hostile to Christians. The circumstances resembled the troubled times in the Roman Empire. One of the strong themes of Bonhoeffer during times of persecution was discipleship. From the times of testing, Bonhoeffer wrote *The Cost of Discipleship*. He said that a time of testing was a time to follow Jesus. No "cheap grace" would suffice.

In a letter where Peter spoke of believers' suffering, demands were made for discipleship. Let us examine the demands made to the followers of Christ.

Adopt the mind of God—"Gird up your minds" (1:13, RSV). This was a figure of speech. It referred to the long robes worn by men in Peter's day. When energetic effort was contemplated, the long robes had to be girded up. The expression conveyed the idea that one needs to act as if he meant business for the Lord.

To adopt the mind of God will mean that you will keep your mind on the Master. The

mind can easily become depressed or panic-stricken by hard times. Christians need to set their minds on God's way.

Imitate the holiness of God—"Be holy yourselves in all your conduct" (1:15, RSV). To be holy means to be set apart. The model for the Christian is God in Christ. Jesus is the pattern for living.

Holiness is not an option; it is an imperative. God demands that his people be like him.

Revere the name of God—"Conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile" (1:17, RSV). Peter encouraged the disciples to be in reverential awe of God. Becoming a Christian does not encourage presumption or moral carelessness.

God allows his followers to address him as Father. But that does not give people the right to treat him with disrespect. Reverence for God is the foundation for discipleship. It prevents us from treating his judgments lightly and saves us from godless living.

The life in Christ is a demanding one. During the worst of times, God demands the best from his followers.

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Revival in America

J. EVERETT SNEED



Interest in religion has dramatically increased in the last few years. There are many reasons for this increase, which has affected true evangelical Christianity as well as cults. We, as Baptists, need to understand as much as possible about the reasons for this increase and to utilize all proper opportunities to rightly relate people to Christ.

The secular press has written a considerable amount concerning increase in church membership. The groups which have increased most substantially can be characterized by at least one of two factors: (1) a conservative theology, or (2) a demand for commitment by their members.

Those groups which have experienced an increase in membership have usually had an increase in Sunday School attendance, an increase in finances, and an increase in church programs or activities. It is extremely gratifying that we, as Southern Baptists, have been the major recipient of this growth, although in the last two or three years our growth has not been as substantial as it had been previously.

There are a number of factors which have contributed to the openness of individuals to religion. First, there has not been a time in modern history when people were troubled by as many problems as they are today. Among the problems that confront us in America are an all time high in drug usage, youth gang activities, and the demise of the traditional home. Most people will readily confess that there is little that they personally can do about these problems. Recognition of an individual's hopelessness is one factor which makes him look beyond himself for help.

A second factor which has encouraged many to look beyond themselves is the explosive international situation. It appears that many nations act without thought or consideration for others. Still other nations appear to have designs on total world domination. In recent years the capture and holding of helpless, non-involved individuals as a ransom tool against other nations has become prevalent. In the face of these types of situations, how should our nation respond? Will any amount of armament or military activity on the part of the United States provide security? Most of us must confess our inability to answer these questions and our need for divine assistance.

Cults and non-Christian groups have also experienced considerable growth. The same factors which have provided a climate for true evangelical Christianity to flourish have apparently provided growth opportunities for these groups. It is imperative that we recognize the difference between religion and true evangelical Christianity. Religion, in its broadest sense, is man's attempt to rightly relate himself to the divine. Evangelical Christianity is man's acceptance of the salvation that has been provided by God through Christ.

An individual's desire to escape from our current world situation is not enough to relate him to God. One can be very religious and still be an alien from the Master. The apostle Paul, prior to his conversion, was extremely religious and completely sincere. Yet prior to his acceptance

of Christ he was totally without hope. It is only when one, by faith, has truly accepted Christ as Savior and Lord that he has rightly standing with God.

The current pressures which confront individuals have made and will continue to make many open to the gospel. This means that churches should increase personal witnessing activities.

It is important for churches to have a good prospect roll. Even in our current situation, many people will not respond to the claims of the gospel on the first contact. This means that a cultivation program must continue with such individuals. Every church should have a prospect file at least equal to their Sunday School enrollment.

The current openness to the gospel should encourage churches, when possible, to use radio and television as means of outreach. Many false religious groups have used this methodology to their great advantage. It is imperative to confront people with the true gospel in every way possible. The apostle Paul said, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Co. 9:22b).

There are many other outreach methods that should be utilized. Perhaps the area crusade is the most effective method possible other than personal witnessing. The upcoming Billy Graham Crusade should provide many Arkansas Baptist churches with a unique opportunity to bring individuals under the preaching of the gospel.

The revival of religion in America provides a unique opportunity for true outreach with the gospel. We, as Baptists, need to recognize our responsibility to meet the needs of lost individuals by a presentation of the abundant life which is available through Christ.

Arkansas Baptist

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Letters to the Editor

Initial Culprit

Should not those who are attempting to fire President Lloyd Elder of the Sunday School Board (Aug. 17) be concerned that the initial culprit is the academic dean at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, who evidently does not believe God communicated with man, but that man's concept of God gradually evolved ("The Development of Monotheism," Summer 1989 issue of the *Illustrator*).

More than Dr. Elder, it seems to me the editor of the *Illustrator* should be held responsible for what is published therein.—Phoebe Manly, Rogers

Don't Need Another

The SBC Peace Committee was right when in 1987 it recommended a discontinuation of organized political activity among us, whether by meetings or mailouts. The messengers to the St. Louis Convention were right in giving the report overwhelming approval.

But unfortunately, we are moving in the wrong direction. Not only has the political posturing continued in the SBC, it is now becoming entrenched at our state level as well.

An organized movement to capture control of the convention was bad enough. The "Fact Sheet" sent anonymously in reaction was no better. Airing our differences in the secular press (*Arkansas Gazette*, July 1) was inexcusable.

And now we have "A Conservative Voice in Arkansas" to fan the flames and broaden the breach.

Do our friends have the right to publish "A Conservative Voice"? Yes. Are they right in doing so? No!

The political papers on both sides of the SBC controversy have not served us well. On the state level they are just as wrong, and maybe worse.

I'm tired of publications that politicize us, polarize us, and portray us at our worst. I'm tired of our subscribing to the thinking of Pogo, the cartoon character, when he said, "We have met the enemy, and he is us!"

And I don't care if they are called conservative, liberal, moderate, centrist, or whatever—such publications are wrong, and they ought to cease.

Maybe they would, if enough of us said what we really think about them.

So I'm writing "A Conservative Voice"

to ask them to drop my name from their mailing list. And I'll do the same with any paper started in reaction to it. If enough of us will do that, maybe both sides will get the message.

"A Conservative Voice in Arkansas?" We already have one. It's called the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*—and we don't need another!—Tim Reddin, Hot Springs Village

Brothers and Sisters?

When I was married to a Baptist 52 years ago, we compromised and became Presbyterians.

Of the next 40 or so years, I served as a ruling elder for at least 30. Regardless, I finally became a Baptist. Like many denominations, the Presbyterians now feature coffee and donuts between services in lieu of Christian fellowship.

I often met my Baptist acquaintances in local cafes having breakfast, lunch or din-

ner together. It never occurred to me that it wasn't their church life that brought them together. I failed to notice that it was always the same six or eight persons or some of that small group.

In a sense, I was converting myself to the Baptist beliefs, baptism especially.

When I finally joined a Southern Baptist congregation, I looked forward to genuine fellowship with my new family of believers, my new brothers and sisters in Christ.

It didn't happen!

I visited with older members who couldn't come to church for many reasons. I helped as a retired person with Vacation Bible School. I kept looking for opportunities to perform my Christian duties.

As a Presbyterian elder, I had preached about 100 sermons. I served small congregations and for a time a larger one with a very sick pastor.

In November of 1988, my wife became very ill. She is still handicapped. My so-call-

BOB PARKER

Today's Issues

State Lottery and Youth



Before considering this issue and youth, just consider seriously and prayerfully state lottery gambling and you! Are you going to sign a petition asking for a vote on the issue? Some appeal for giving voters the right to vote on this or any other issue. On the other hand, as John Finn, director of the Arkansas Christian Civic Foundation, reminds us: "We also have the right to urge people to refuse to sign such a petition."

A big reason not to sign such is that gambling interests that profit from the sale of lottery equipment, tickets, etc., have much more money to spend in a political campaign to promote such gambling. Another reason is that it is regressive taxation, hurting especially the poor and last, but not least, having state lottery gambling would, in a subtle way, say to our youth that it's all right to gamble. The same was said to them when legal alcoholic beverage sales was voted in. Look at the tragic results in society because of that! Our whole nation is devastated by the number one

drug problem, alcohol, as a result of such reasoning. State lottery gambling will cause the gambling craze to grow as it is legitimized and given unwarranted credibility to the children and youth of our state.

There are already too many cesspools of iniquity in our society. Please do all you can to keep us, as citizens of this state, from getting into the gambling business. Gambling isn't nearly as "filthy" in appearance as other cesspools such as pornography and hard drugs, but state lottery gambling would, however, increase the number of compulsive individuals with attendant problems.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Pr. 14:34).

Please pray for God's guidance and power in defeating state lottery gambling before it gets on the ballot!

Robert A. Parker is director of the Christian Life Council.

ed brothers and sisters have been conspicuous because of the absence of the other 98 percent. What happened to that brother and sister concept?

It might be well to re-study the church of the 1st and 2nd centuries. Those early saints were operating before the church was a building erected and maintained by 500, a 1,000, or more titheers.—**M. Jacob Timm, Berryville**

Sad Situation

I am writing to encourage all Arkansas Baptists to write letters to the editor of the *Arkansas Baptist*. It is indeed a sad situation when the only letter worthy of publication in the Aug. 24, 1989 issue was a letter from a layman in North Carolina who opposes the "leadership in our Southern Baptist Convention." This leadership includes men like Jerry Vines, Charles Stanley, Adrian Rogers, Bailey Smith, etc.

For 11 consecutive years, the majority of Southern Baptist messengers have voted to continue to return the Southern Baptist Convention seminaries and agencies to a belief in biblical inerrancy. This is not to say that all Southern Baptists must believe in biblical inerrancy. However, denominational employees, who are paid by the tithes of Southern Baptists to train our future preachers and write our literature, should reflect the beliefs of the majority.

If a church finds it impossible to tolerate the beliefs of the majority, perhaps it will be necessary to consider changing to a denomination which more closely aligns with their theology. Would not this be your advice to a layman who had been fighting against his pastor and the rest of his church for 11 years, and was now beginning to withhold his tithe?—**Robin Cook, Magnolia**

[Editor's Note: Thank you for your letter responding to Robert S. Parker. Actually we

print all letters that meet our guidelines. The only event in which we would be unable to do this would be if an unusually large group of people were to write to us. In this event we would print an editor's note saying that we had printed only selected letters.

It is healthy for letters to the editor to reflect many points of view. This assists Baptists to have more of the facts and to make better decisions.]

Who is Next?

I have been a Bible-believing Southern Baptist preacher for almost 40 years, never once having any doubts or raising any question marks about the inspiration and authority of the Word of God. If the Book says it, that settles it for me.

I am greatly disturbed as I write today. My soul is very heavy and saddened as I read of the attempts of some Sunday School Board trustees to "fire" President Lloyd Elder. My Bible tells me that we as Christians are to love one another with a love that is gentle, patient, kind, and longsuffering. I certainly cannot see that kind of spirit reflected in the "worldly" approach and actions by those who desired to dismiss Elder.

I foresee major and horrendous problems ahead for all of our Southern Baptist Convention agencies and personnel if this sort of mentality prevails. It seems to me that the "go for the jugular" philosophy is in full operation in the minds of many who now serve on the boards of many of our agencies and institutions. I would like to know how these people can justify such a mean and un-Christian spirit.

My question is: "Who is going to be next?" What president, what executive, or what leader will some lynch mob bring their diatribes and charges against in future board meetings? As a loyal Southern Baptist, and a staunch supporter of the Cooperative Program, I am offended and appalled by what has transpired in the Sunday School Board meeting. My heart weeps at this bitter and contentious spirit that is so prevalent in the Southern Baptist Convention today, and I am persuaded that the Holy Spirit is grieved as well. I call on all concerned Southern Baptists to join with me in fervently praying for a revival and renewal of love and unity in our ranks.—**Don E. Wainwright, Mobile, Ala.**

Letters to the editor are invited. Letters should be typed double-space and may not contain more than 350 words. Letters must be signed and marked "for publication." A complete policy statement is available on request.

DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know



The historic moment marking the beginning of the Billy Graham Crusade is just a few days away. History's most influential evangelist will be preaching in Arkansas Sept. 17-24. Southern Baptists' most noted preacher, Billy Graham, has sustained the longest and most widespread evangelistic ministry of anyone in America. Who would not want to hear this servant of God who has maintained a standard of integrity and effectiveness that is an inspiration to every true believer?

I urge every Arkansas Baptist to throw their efforts into this unusual opportunity. Pray! Come! Bring others! Give! Sing! Obey God! Spare no effort in getting the inactive, unchurched and especially the unsaved to these services. It will be the finest opportunity for the masses of pagan materialists in our area to hear the pure gospel. Do not come as a curious onlooker, but as a spiritual prayer warrior seeking God's blessings on this evangelistic effort.

On another crucial issue, I need to speak. This is the month set aside to receive the Dixie Jackson State Mission offering. Great things are happening through our various mission programs in Arkansas. This offering helped us feed 10,000 meals during the tornado and flood in West Memphis. It has made it possible for 50 small churches to have pastors through Church Pastoral Aid. Those 50 pastors baptized 56 people in July alone. There are 57 mission congregations functioning today with 19 ministries in mobile home parks. Our five chaplains saw more than 100 people saved the first six months of this year. Our two migrant missionaries see 200 to 300 saved each year. We have helped 27 churches get started that worship in languages other than English. All of this and much more has been happening through state missions.

The Dixie Jackson offering is to state missions that the Lottie Moon offering is to foreign missions. Why not give your church the facts I've shared and then give them an opportunity to give to this offering this September? The great ministries started cannot be sustained from year to year without this support.

See you at the Billy Graham Crusade!

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

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Individuals Hold the Key

In recent days a number of individuals throughout the state have been contacted by letter, phone or personal interview regarding two possible campaigns to fund major improvements in our Arkansas Baptist family. These needs represent capital needs rather than day by day operational needs. The costs involved are of such an amount that it would take years to address them through the Cooperative Program.

What are the needs? Some are very exciting. For instance, the development of a home for unwed mothers and an adoption agency for the Family and Child Care ministry are exciting. The home has already been donated. The development of a ranch to use in the rehabilitation of youth out of drug and alcohol addiction is exciting. The ranch has already been donated. Not so exciting is the absolute necessity of some major repairs on the Children's Home they operate at Monticello, and the need for some endowment to maintain these ministries.

The almost primitive quarters that campers at Siloam Springs have used "must be upgraded. Neither campers nor counselors can be expected to continue to come for the Siloam Springs experience if improvements are not made to the cleanliness and privacy of the toilet and bath facilities," according to the users who were surveyed in a feasibility study. This is not too exciting except to the 8,000 to 10,000 people who use it each year.

Even more crucial, but not nearly so personal, is the need to replace the tabernacle. Aged timbers that have supported a roof made heavy by repeated applications of roof roofing and hot tar are giving way. Emergency, makeshift reinforcements are being used to try to assure safety for the campers.

Why two at once? The two facilities donated to Family and Child Care will

allow ministries so urgently needed that those ministries can't wait. The deteriora-

Where there may be an overlapping of contacts by the campaign workers, we can only beg for your understanding. Some can and will give to both causes. Since the campaigns are operated out of separate offices, buildings and agencies, it will be impossible to avoid some duplication on prospective donor lists. Both causes are so worthy that those who cannot assist in both campaigns will simply have to choose where their support will go. Both the Family and Child Care Board and the Executive Board will be profoundly grateful for your help.

What is the scope of these projects? The Family and Child Care projects will require \$3 million. The project to replace the tabernacle and upgrade the housing at Siloam Springs will require \$1.5 million.

Convention constitutional policy requires that any appeals made to the churches must be approved by the convention in session. Examples of these were the tremendously successful Ouachita-Southern Campaign and the BSU Third Century Campaign. These campaigns were conducted in 1972-73 and in 1978, respectively. The campaigns being anticipated by the Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care ministry and the Arkansas Baptist Assembly (Siloam Springs) are different from the previous campaigns in several ways. One, no appeal will be made to the churches. Two, funds being sought will not come from church treasuries where they would appear to compete with the Cooperative Program. These would be extra gifts separate from the regular tithes and offerings of the church members.

Three, no ready-made alumni list of former participants exists, as in the case



Siloam Springs Assembly

with the colleges and BSU campaigns. The task is made more difficult by this fact. Those aware of the ministries of Siloam Assembly and the Family and Child Care ministries will have to come forth in large numbers to see these projects through to completion.

What is the hope of completing these? The hope is to be found in individuals whom God has blessed with resources and who love to give, particularly to meet the spiritual needs of young people. There may be 40,000 to 50,000 people who have been blessed by significant experiences at Siloam Springs. Many of them feel so strongly that Siloam is a worthy cause and will share in order to secure the same ministries for those coming behind them.

For almost 100 years, Arkansas Baptists have been blessed to provide the Family and Child Care ministry. We will not fail to help them on to a more vital, expanded ministry. Since our churches, as a whole, have not increased the percent of support they give through the Cooperative Program in years, our only hope rests with the individuals who can give over and above their tithes and offerings to their churches. While some of you can't, many can. Join us in prayer that they will.—Don Moore, ABSC executive director

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ARKANSAS MISSION TRIP

Another Side of Life

by Tammi Ledbetter
Indiana Baptist

As Johnny Burnett began planning summer activities for his Russellville, Ark., youth group, he was hopeful the teenagers would have an opportunity to experience the concept of servanthood as modeled by the life of Jesus Christ.

Although Burnett had taken a group from First Baptist Church of Russellville to a northern church two years earlier, the experience of ministering to an affluent suburban neighborhood lacked the impact the Arkansas minister envisioned for the lives of the teenagers to whom he ministers.

Before scheduling a mission trip for 1989, Burnett contacted the Home Mission Board for suggestions on areas of the country that might benefit from a week of service by teenagers. He was put in touch with Indiana's East Central Association Director of Missions James Walker who noted several opportunities in his area.

After being contacted by Mike Windle, Burnett began praying about the possibility of working with Community Baptist Chapel and soon after the plans were made for the Russellville teenagers to lead Vacation Bible School at the mission in mid-July.

The week in Muncie contrasted sharply with the previous mission trip which included staying in motels throughout the week. This year the 16 teenage boys and their two adult leaders camped out on the floor of the mission and shared the use of one bathroom and shower separated from the back portion of the chapel by a curtain. The eight girls and two women sponsors slept at the BSU of Ball State University.

The VBS program for children and youth grew from 34 to 54 kids by the second day.

During the afternoon hours, the Arkansas group conducted surveys of the neighborhood to help locate projects for the church. Several of the workers spent time improving the interior appearance of the chapel with paint donated by the father of one of the teenagers.

A window unit air conditioner provided by the Arkansas church also met im-

mediate physical needs for the congregation which had endured an uncomfortable climate one Sunday after the existing unit quit working.

Burnett also responded to an appeal from Windle for tennis shoes to restock the dwindling supply at the clothes closet. During their own VBS, First Baptist Church of Russellville collected more than 100 pairs of shoes to transport with the teenagers' mission trip to Muncie.

"This trip has been good for our kids to see another side of life," Burnett said.

Indiana Baptist photo / Tammi Ledbetter



Seeking God in the inner city

"They came here expecting the chapel to be the size of one they might find in Arkansas and discovered the association's strongest church is comparable to one of our smaller congregations."

In addition to using the weeklong trip for ministry to another church, Burnett also focused on the need for his youth

group to consider their own spiritual condition while away from home.

Using the slogan "inner missions—more than just a mission trip," the youth minister led them in Bible studies dealing with a focus on servanthood.

Burnett is hopeful his youth group will maintain a vision for mission outreach that will carry over to their own community.

"Home is always the hardest place to catch a mission mindset," he admitted. "It's sad that you have to go away someplace to see the needs so that you'll come back with that attitude."

Dr. Dan Fields, a Russellville oral surgeon who accompanied the group as one of four

adult leaders, noted a benefit of traveling outside of the South for the mission outreach.

"While it could be argued that our youth could get the same experience at home at less expense, I'm convinced that when you go off to an area where you have a different culture, different food, and a different climate, you find yourself more dependent on the Lord and your fellow workers." As a result, he added, "You come back much more committed."

"Teenagers are generally more optimistic and upbeat, while adults sometimes become cynical, complacent and lazy," Fields stated. "As the teenagers return to our church fired up about the work they've done and the personal growth they've experienced, it can't help but offer inspiration to our total church family."

Just prior to their 14-hour long trek to Indiana, the local director of missions sought the help of members of the youth group for an Arkansas church of 22 members unable to staff a VBS for several years. Responding to the appeal, the teenagers helped teach 32 children who attended the VBS.

Community Baptist Chapel Pastor Mike Windle is certain his neighborhood will see the love of God through the lives of the Arkansas youth. "All of the excitement of holding a Vacation Bible School has caused the kids to come around and their parents realize that someone cares about them."

"One reason we held the VBS at the chapel was because we wanted them to see this as the church and know that we're here for them."

STATE MISSIONS

'Unto the Least of These'

by Mark Kelly

Managing Editor, Arkansas Baptist

MARSHALL—From the highway, it looks like any other small-town used car dealership. The gravel parking lot is covered with rows of cars. A line of garage doors extends out from the side of the main building.

As you pull onto the lot, you notice the unusually large crowd milling about the glassed-in showroom floor. Then you notice the sign out front doesn't say "Ford" anymore.

Inside, three dozen or so people are eating breakfast, seated at long rows of folding tables which cover half the showroom floor. A handful of folks are filling their plates from a buffet line. Several children chase each other through the rows of church pews which fill the rest of the showroom.

The dress is casual, the atmosphere gay. The buzz of conversation and bright laughter fills the room. As you step through the door, the warmth greets you: "Welcome to Searcy County Baptist Church."

Searcy County Baptist Church in Marshall is by no means a typical Southern Baptist congregation. For starters, there's no dress code. You can come as you are. (Really!) The worship service precedes Sunday morning Bible study. No collection plates will be passed. If you've got an offering, just give it to one of the leaders.

It's all designed to reach a group of people who just don't feel like they fit in at a traditional First Baptist Church.

Searcy County is full of people like that. Like most of northcentral Arkansas, the area is predominantly rural. The people are country folks, and their ways are country ways. Times are still hard, and for many of them schooling was a luxury they couldn't afford. You might get them to attend a service at the Baptist church in town, but you'd never get them to wear a necktie. Most of them would feel so out of place that they wouldn't stay long.

"People in these parts just think country, even a lot of the ones who live in town," says David Treat, a local sawmill owner and a lay leader in the Searcy County Church. "It's a social thing. Your traditional First Church will reach the town

people just fine, but not country folk."

Treat and his wife, Rena, were members of Marshall's First Baptist Church, which sponsored the Searcy County Church as a mission last year. They recall a Vacation Bible School commencement at First Church which drove home to them the need for an outreach designed just for the country folk.

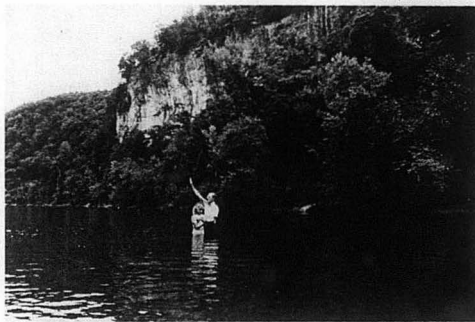
They remember one couple in particular, the parents of a child in the program, who came to the commencement service. But they hung around the back of the sanctuary

children for Sunday School.

Sunday morning started with breakfast, free of charge for all who were interested. A brief, informal worship service followed at 9:30. The short sermon allowed Royce Christmas, then pastor of First Church, to preach at the mission and return to First Church for morning worship there. Sunday School was held after worship.

"Since there isn't a dress code, and since we provide breakfast and transportation, it is easier for mothers to let their kids come to church," explains Treat. "We have tried all along to keep it informal, without a bunch of rules, to make it easy for people to come. We just go in and teach the Bible. And the people have responded."

ABN photo / Mark Kelly



Marshall's Searcy County Church baptizes in the Buffalo River.

When the first worship was held in August 1988, 37 persons attended. A year later, 137 attended the first anniversary service of the congregation, which had constituted as a church two months previously.

But the strong response has resulted from more than just the more informal approach to worship, says Nolan Brisco, a layman from Harrison who chairs North Arkansas Association's missions development program.

"This is a storybook case of starting a church by meeting people's needs," says Brisco. He points to the monthly

events sponsored by the church to reach families by touching a point of need:

— A "charm school" offered teenage girls pointers about health and beauty. A dentist talked to them about dental hygiene. A beautician showed them tips about hair and makeup. Other speakers discussed down-to-earth subjects like poise and setting a table. A final class dealt with spiritual beauty.

— "Operation Warmth" collected winter clothing through a series of boxes deposited around town. The contributions were gathered in one location, and people from the community could come in and select a coat to meet their needs. Donations were so substantial that an ongoing clothes closet ministry resulted.

— When a local man became seriously ill and was unable to work, the church held a chili supper to raise money to help the family. Other individuals and families have been assisted with rent and groceries as the needs have arisen.

The congregation tries to sponsor one unusual event each month — a hamburger

the whole time, looking like they felt very uncomfortable, almost intimidated with being there. They left very quickly as soon as the program was over.

"I knew then we needed to start a mission to reach the people of Searcy County who wouldn't respond to our program at First Church," recalls Rena Treat.

A vision began to grow: a group of five or six mission Sunday Schools scattered throughout Searcy County in rural communities like Morning Star and Duff, where once-strong churches had dwindled down or closed their doors entirely. Even though the missions might never become full-fledged churches in their own right, a gospel witness could be established by recruiting lay people to lead the efforts.

Headquarters for the effort would be the old Ford dealership in Marshall, an easily recognized location even though it had been closed for some time. Ten volunteers were recruited from among First Church's membership, just enough to handle the start-up needs. A van was donated to drive the county's dusty back roads, picking up

cookout and gospel sing during a summer month, a "Fall Festival" last autumn. They thoroughly advertise each event throughout the town and surrounding rural areas. Each week, they sponsor the "Thursday Night Family Thing," offering missions studies for the kids and gospel music singing for the adults. In cooperation with First Church, six Vacation Bible Schools held this summer in and around Marshall enrolled more than 300 children.

Associational Director of Missions L.B. Atchison says the church's lay leaders have done the right things to reach Searcy County's unchurched rural population. And they have done those things almost instinctively, without special training or even prompting about what the "right way" might be.

"When they have met a child who needed shoes, they just took him and bought shoes for him," explains Atchison, whose association includes 46 churches in four counties of northcentral Arkansas. "They didn't know they were doing Christian Social Ministries. They were just doing what they saw needed to be done."

"They're just doing it like Jesus said to do it," adds Missions Development Director Brisco. "That's why they are reaching people. That's why 30 people have made professions of faith since they started. They are not doing things perfectly, but they are doing a lot of things right."

For Conway Sawyers, director of the Missions Department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, the Searcy County story

offers a perfect illustration of the theme for this year's state missions offering.

"Sharing His Love with the Least of These," based on Matthew 25:34-40, is the theme for the 1989 Season of Prayer for State Missions and Dixie Jackson Offering. The Season of Prayer is scheduled for Sept. 17-24. The 1989 offering goal is \$550,000.

The Dixie Jackson Offering will provide 42 percent of the 1989 state missions budget. Receipts will be divided between a variety of missions projects, including new church starts, language missions, community ministries, and emergency response

"These folks are reaching people because they have said they care about people and they are proving it with ministries to the needs of people," says Sawyers. "They have limited resources and leadership, and they are working in a sparsely populated and economically depressed area. If they can do it in Searcy County, it can be done anywhere."

Sawyers says there are hundreds of communities in Arkansas where the Searcy County experience could be repeated.

"There are a lot of places with groups of folks who are not being reached by traditional church techniques," he continues. "They all need and deserve a gospel witness, but they won't be reached without special attention, without finding a new way of doing church."

"There are other churches in the state that could and ought to be doing similar things," he continues. "And if the right people caught a vision and got a burden

for lost, unchurched people, it could be multiplied all across the state."

Practically every Arkansas Baptist church could identify a segment of its community which is not being reached by traditional programs, Sawyers points out. Each congregation should assess its community's needs and take a deliberate look at what the church is doing or not doing to meet those needs, he says.

"No church should quit doing what works for them," Sawyers adds. "But in most cases, if all you are doing is a traditional program, you just aren't doing enough to reach most of the lost people in the community."

On Sunday morning, the congregation has an opportunity to testify to the power of God in their lives. Eight or 10 people stand to share their experiences. The assembly is visibly moved by one testimony in particular.

The young man tells everyone what most already know, that he had gotten into serious trouble and found himself incarcerated in the county jail. He thanks the church leaders who have taken the time to visit him in jail and expresses his gratitude that county officials are willing to let them come get him each Sunday morning and bring him to church.

All over the former-showroom-turned-sanctuary, eyes moisten as he says, "A lot of Christians never took the time to care about me. I want to thank you all for being the first ones to treat me like I was a human being."



Sharing His Love Unto the Least of These

**Season of Prayer
for State Missions**

September 17-24, 1989

1989 Dixie Jackson Offering Goal: \$550,000

Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

People

Dennis Hay recently observed 10 years of service as organist for First Church in Blytheville.

Samuel Adkins began serving Sept. 1 as pastor of West Helena Church, going there from First Church in Sheridan.

Tom Vandegriff has resigned as minister of music and youth at First Church in Mount Ida.

Tommie Reed has joined the staff of First Church in Glenwood as associate pastor with responsibilities to children, youth, and outreach.

Joe Burgess is serving Shannon Road Church in Pine Bluff as minister of music and **Penny Cantley** is serving as pianist.

Bobby Keen is serving as pastor of Bethany Church, Searcy.

Mark Duggin has resigned as pastor of Brookmoor Church in Brinkley to serve as pastor of Parkview Church in Lewisburg, Tenn.

E. Clay Polk has resigned as pastor of East Side Church, Holly Island.

Casey Catt is serving as pastor of Pine Grove Church, Pocahontas.

Steve Bricker is serving as pastor of First Church in Greenway.

Charles Karnes is serving as pastor of New Hope Church, Pollard.

Andrew Benton Setliffe Jr. of Little Rock recently was presented the Distinguished Service Award from the faculty of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for service in religious education, having served churches in Arkansas, Texas, and Georgia.

Dawn Hamilton, a senior at Ouachita Baptist University, has joined the staff of Beech Street First Church in Texarkana as minister of childhood education.

Patricia J. Frost, a missionary to Jordan, who has been furloughing in Arkansas, is now attending Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary prior to returning to her assignment in June 1990.

Doug Maggard of Vandervoort is serving as pastor of Chapel Hill Church, DeQueen.

Dale Heagwood has resigned as pastor of Grannis Church, Gillham.

Jim Newman, son of Bob and Carlene Newman of Monticello, recently was ordained to the ministry by First Church of Tillar where he serves as pastor. Alvin Hatton, his father-in-law, preached the ordination message.

Steve Smith, a junior at Northside High School in Fort Smith, was licensed to the gospel ministry Aug. 13 by Spradling Church in Fort Smith. He held a weekend revival in July at the Northeast Church in Fayetteville.

Bob Shelton, pastor of First Church in Branch, recently was presented a 1989 Chevrolet Caprice Classic in recognition of one year of service as pastor.

Anita Rushin was honored Aug. 27 by Watson Chapel Church in Pine Bluff for more than 21 years of service as church secretary. She and her husband, Ducey, are moving to Hot Springs.

Herman Lloyd Lipford of Mabelvale died Aug. 26 at age 91. He was a retired Southern Baptist minister, with 53 years of service throughout Arkansas. In addition, he had served on the board of trustees of both Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Memphis Baptist Hospital. Survivors

are his wife, Dorothy Bickness Lipford; a daughter, Mina Lynn Apple; three grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

L. H. Henry retired in August as pastor of First Church in Leslie.

Richard Brown is serving as pastor of First Church in Emmet.

Stephen Seale has resigned as pastor of Whelen Springs Church to move to Walnut Ridge where he and his wife, Delisa, will attend Southern Baptist College.

Tony Weston joined the staff of First Church in Camden Sept. 3 as minister of music and education. He and his wife, Judy, and their sons, Blake and Taylor, moved there from Jonesboro.

Lawson Hatfield is serving as interim pastor of First Church in Hot Springs.

Vance Stuart has been named as deacon emeritus of First Church in Warren.

Daniel R. Grant, president-emeritus of Ouachita Baptist University, recently was in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, to attend the annual meeting of the Commission on Human Rights of the Baptist World Alliance. Grant serves as vice-chairman of the Commission and shared presiding responsibilities with Chairman Thorwald Lorenzen of Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

ABSC photo / Glen Ennes



Jim Walters (left) was honored this year by the Music Department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, in recognition of 36 consecutive years of service as a counselor for both Young Musicians and the Music Arkansas Camp for junior and senior high youth. Peggy Pearson (right), ABSC Music Department associate, presented the award.

Charles Holcomb of Lonsdale is serving as interim pastor of Hurricane Lake Church at Benton.

J. Randall O'Brien, pastor of Calvary Church in Little Rock, is preaching in South Africa Sept. 7-21 by invitation of the Foreign Mission Board.

Jeann Pool is retiring Oct. 15 as education-financial secretary at First Church in Camden following 16 years of service.

Briefly

Hensley East End Church observed its 53rd annual homecoming Aug. 27. A potluck lunch was served at noon. The Martin Family presented special music in an afternoon service.

Walnut Valley Church at Hot Springs observed its 50th anniversary Sept. 3 with a morning worship service, noon luncheon and 1:30 p.m. program that featured former pastors as speakers.

Lunsford Church at Lake City observed its 75th anniversary Aug. 6 when former pastors and members were invited to a potluck luncheon. A special program of

gospel music was presented in the afternoon.

Philadelphia Church at Jonesboro celebrated payment of its indebtedness with a noteburning service Aug. 6. Roger Haney is pastor.

Pine Bluff Second Church will ordain Raymond Hensley to the deacon ministry Sept. 10.

Magnolia Central Church mission team worked in Boston, Mass., in July, conducting three Big A Clubs, presenting a concert on the Boston Common, and working with the First Church of Chelsea, a Boston inner-city area. Staff members Mark Overman and Phil Hardin were coordinators.

Ashdown First Church ordained Mike Beard, Mark Collier, Terry Snead, Ken Conway, and Chuck Cox to the deacon ministry Aug. 13.

Life Line Church in Little Rock ordained Alan Buckmaster, Steve Fulmer, Kelly Kemp, Lane Kinder, Steve Knight, Jack Moseley Sr., Cleveland Smith, Clay Stephens, Jeff Talley, and Dave Tapley to the deacon ministry Aug. 20.

McCrory First Church mission team was recently in Bemidji, Minn., to participate in a Home Mission Board project.

Pine Grove Church at Pocahontas held a groundbreaking service Aug. 20 for a

education building. Guest speakers were Max Gregory, director of mission for Current-Gains Association, and Lanny Younger, a former pastor.

Indian Springs Church at Bryant held a Vacation Bible School Aug. 7-11 that resulted in an enrollment of 267, a high attendance of 235, an average attendance of 212 and 12 professions of faith. Shirley Smart served as VBS director. Benny Grant is pastor.

Park Hill Church in North Little Rock held a dedication service and reception Aug. 27 for the Steve Dewbre family prior to their departure as Southern Baptist missionaries to Transkei.

Branch First Church recently closed a Vacation Bible School that had an enrollment of 215. The church observed revival and harvest months in July and August. Pastor Bob Shelton reported 49 professions of faith and 39 baptisms.

Osceola East Side Church Vacation Bible School was held Aug. 7-11 with an enrollment of 158 and an average attendance of 119. Martha Gonzalez served as director. J. Wayne Moore is pastor.

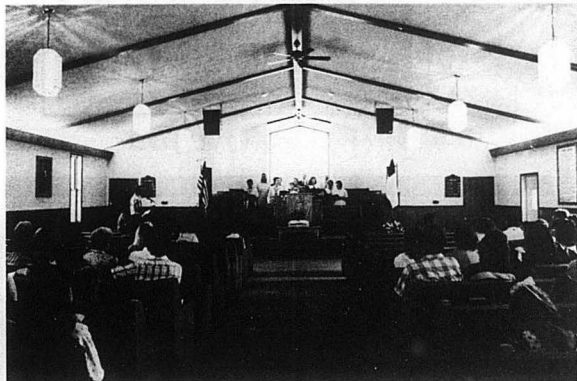
Smithville Church recently completed its third 1989 Vacation Bible School. The three schools and their enrollments were Poughkeepsie, 90; Southpoint, Ohio, 140; and Smithville, 114. VBS coordinators were Pastor Gary Wise, Maurice Sullivan, youth director, and Rita Davis, VBS director.

Woodland Heights Church in Harrison recently delivered 2,150 pounds of potatoes to Arkansas Baptist Home for Children in Monticello. The church also provided 540 pounds of potatoes for Arkansas Baptist Boys Ranch in Harrison.

Salem Church at Benton will celebrate its 25th anniversary Sept. 17. Former pastors will participate in the morning worship service which is to be followed by a noon meal and an afternoon program.

Kiehl-Brockington Chapel will be organized as **Friendship Mission** in a celebration service Sept. 17 at 10:45 a.m. North Pulaski Association churches will be sponsors with Park Hill Church in North Little Rock as primary sponsoring church. The celebration service will be held at the new mission center at 251 Indian Bay Drive, Westlake subdivision in Sherwood. Roy Thompson is church starter and pastor.

West Memphis Second Church will host a regional puppet festival Oct. 20-21 that will be led by Dale and Liz VonSeggen of Littleton, Colo. The festival will include workshops, performances, and competition, according to Pastor Tommy W. Stacy.



The Osage Church dedicated a new 4,000 square foot building on Sept. 3. The facility has a 275-seat sanctuary, four classrooms, a nursery, a church office and pastor's study. The congregation also purchased a grand piano, new pews, and sound system. The entire cost of the project was \$101,000. The morning message was preached by Pastor Harvey Maber. The afternoon dedicatory message was preached by Wesley Hodges, who grew up at the Osage Church and was licensed by the congregation.

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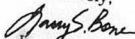
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ABSC EXECUTIVE BOARD

1990 Budget Proposed

by J. Everett Sneed

Editor, Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

The Executive Board of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention met at the Gilbreath Conference Center of the Baptist Medical Center, Little Rock, on Sept. 5. The meeting was called to order by Executive Board President Greg Kirksey, who is pastor of Hillside Church, Camden.

The proposed 1990 budget was presented by Keith Robbins, a layman from Fayetteville. The proposed budget, to be presented to the State Convention, is \$13,520,000, which represents a 4 percent increase over the 1989 budget. Arkansas will be sending 41.39 percent for SBC worldwide mission causes. It was observed that Arkansas Baptists had not reached the total proposed budget since 1981.

Associate Executive Director Jimmy Sheffield said that it appeared that Arkansas Baptists would reach, or almost reach, the 1989 budget. The Executive Board employees are to receive a four percent salary increase in 1990. Executive Director Don Moore observed that since 1985 the cost of living had increased 20.40 percent, but Executive Board employees had received only 14.8 percent increase. This means that the purchasing power of Executive Board employees has diminished significantly.

Operating Committee Chairman Jim Gattis, a Little Rock businessman, presented the Siloam Fund Raising Campaign. It was observed that the need for improvement of Siloam Springs Assembly was presented by Freddie Pike of the Sunday School Department. Initially the plans were to rebuild the tabernacle. But as individuals were contacted, it was determined that it was necessary to improve the dormitories as well.

The goal is to raise \$1.5 million. Larry Bone and Associates has been employed to lead the fund raising activities. The total cost of the fund raising effort is not to exceed \$155,000. The campaign management will receive \$46,500 for their leadership. Other expenditures will be made in telephone contacts, travel, printing, postage, promotion, and other such activities.

The Operating Committee had earlier authorized a feasibility study. Individual interviews of more than 40 people along with three focus group meetings, a telephone survey, and a direct mail survey indicated broad support but that a large group of donors would have to be found to meet the goal. Executive Director Don Moore emphasized that this is not a church

campaign but is to be conducted with individuals who have benefited or will continue to benefit from Siloam Assembly.

Program Committee Chairman Nathaniel "Sonny" Simpson presented the request to establish a department of Church Leadership Support. It is recommended that the department will start upon the retirement of Bob Parker, director of the Christian Life Council on July 1, 1990. The Christian Life Council is to be discontinued. Tommy Goode, director of Christian Social Ministries, will provide materials developed by the SBC Christian Life Commission. The offices and resources of the Christian Life Council are to be used for the new Church Leadership Support department. The new department will be designed to assist in reducing church conflict, the termination of pastors and staff, and reinforce the single staff church and bivocational ministry.

Ken Lilly, a Fort Smith physician, said that he was not opposed to the idea but felt that with tight budgets that this would be a time to cut back and to reduce expenditures. Sid Carswell, pastor of Crystal Hill Church, Little Rock, said that he felt that such a department would encourage increased giving to the Cooperative Program.

The Program Committee also recommended several name changes to be presented to the State Convention. It is recommended that the name of Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge be changed to Williams Baptist College effective Aug. 15, 1990. This will be at the time of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the institution. College President D. Jack Nicholas observed that there were several reasons for the name change. He said that the present name is inappropriate and confusing because it conveys the impression that the school is operated by the Southern Baptist Convention rather than by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. He said that the board of trustees felt that it was most appropriate to name the school after H. E. Williams, who had founded the school and had served the institution as president for 32 years.

It was also proposed that the name of Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services be changed to Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries. It was observed that the new name would more appropriately describe the services and ministries of the agency.

It was further suggested that the name of the Church Training department be changed to Discipleship Training. This change follows the action of the Southern

Baptist Convention this past June when the national program was changed to Discipleship Training.

The Program Committee requested that the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* do a one-page feature article each month on churches of various sizes that are reaching people. Program Chairman Simpson emphasized that this was simply a request for consideration.

It was also requested that both Ouachita Baptist University and Southern Baptist College consider requiring a personal evangelism course in any degree related to ministry in the churches, particularly Bible, church music and religious education.

The Executive Board employed Randy Brantley, currently minister of youth at Central Church, Jonesboro. He is to be an associate in the Evangelism Department, serving with pre-college youth. He replaces Jim Lagrone. (An article giving Brantley's background, goals and objectives will be carried in the next issue of the ABN.)

Associate Executive Director Sheffield presented Executive Board priority goals and objectives form 1991-95. The emphases are as follows: 1991 Support Missions; 1992 Strengthen Families; 1993 Grow Churches; 1994 Perform Ministries; and 1995 Reach People. Two foundational goals are to be carried through the five year period. These are an emphasis on the Cooperative Program and on prayer.

Classifieds

D.O.M. Opening—Caroline Baptist Associatio is seeking resumes from interested persons. Mail info to Search Committee, P.O. Box 204, Lonoke, AR 72806

9/14

Wanted—Lady wants female roommate, 455-4693.

9/14

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.

A SMILE OR TWO

A fellow was filling out a job application form. He was confused by the blank "Person to notify in case of accident." After a good bit of thought, he finally wrote, "The paramedics."

—*Funny Funny World*

Missionary to Recruit Pastors

RICHMOND, Va.—Southern Baptist missionary Stewart Pickle of Little Rock will travel throughout Arkansas to challenge pastors to consider becoming foreign missionaries.

Pickle and his wife, Barbara Anne, are missionaries to Ecuador. Between now and April 1990, he plans to meet with as many preachers as possible, asking them if they have ever seriously considered or prayed about an overseas ministry.

He is one of 20 furloughing missionaries serving as enlistment assistants with the Foreign Mission Board's missionary enlistment department.

Pickle's furlough address is 211 East "B" Street, North Little Rock, AR 72116; telephone 501-758-3264.



Pickle

Southern College Receives Gift

WALNUT RIDGE—Southern Baptist College has received one of the largest gifts from an individual in its history. The \$230,400 gift was from the estate of Mrs. Wellie Wilson of Pilot Point, Texas, and was in addition to a previous gift of \$80,000, according to Dr. Jack Nicholas, president of the college.

Mr. Wilson was a railroad executive and rancher, and a lifelong member of Calvary Baptist Church in Pilot Point, where he was a deacon and church treasurer. Mrs.

Wilson, a school teacher, served as church pianist for more than 30 years. Dr. Nicholas was their pastor during graduate school.

Nicholas said, "This gift puts the college in reach of its Challenge Goal of \$2 million in the 'New Horizon Campaign' which ends Dec. 31."

New Religion Chairman at OBU

ARKADELPHIA—Dr. William P. Steeger has been appointed chairman of the department of religion at Ouachita Baptist University, effective immediately, according to Dr. Ben M. Elrod, president of OBU.

In addition to his duties as chairman of the religion department at Ouachita, Elrod said Steeger would serve in the capacities of W.O. Vaught Professor of Bible, professor religion, chairman of the division of religion and philosophy, and director of the Center for Christian Ministries.

Steeger has served for the past three years as associate professor of religion at OBU. Prior to coming to Ouachita, Steeger was a Southern Baptist Convention missionary, serving from 1976-86 in Ethiopia, Seychelles and South Africa.

Steeger, 44, succeeds Dr. Marion G. "Bud" Fray who accepted a position as professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

He is a graduate of the University of Florida, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the University of Louisville.



Steeger

Root Named OBU Education Head

ARKADELPHIA—Dr. Paul R. Root of Little Rock has been named the chairman of the Department of Education at Ouachita Baptist University by recent action of the school's Board of Trustees, according to Dr. Ben M. Elrod, president of OBU.

Root will also assume the academic title of Professor of Education and serve as director of the Teacher Education Program and Acting Dean of the Graduate School.

Immediately prior to coming to his new position, Root was the Special Assistant to the Director of the Arkansas Department of Education. A native of Bald Knob, he is a graduate of Arkansas State Teachers College (now University of Central Arkansas) and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Graham Crusade Guest Artists

The Billy Graham Crusade, Sept. 17-24 at War Memorial Stadium in Little Rock, will feature a number of guests artists ministering alongside Billy Graham, George Beverly Shea, Cliff Barrows and the rest of the Crusade team. They are: 9/22, Steve Green; 9/18, Buddy Green; 9/19, Squire Parsons; 9/20, Babbie Mason; 9/21, Larnelle Harris; 9/22, Gary McSpadden; 9/23, Sandi Patty; and 9/24, Johnny Cash.

Skip Notice

The *Arkansas Baptist* will not publish a Sept. 21 edition. Sunday School lesson commentaries for Sept. 16 and Sept. 23 are contained in this issue.

GOD'S PATTERN

Northwest Arkansas Conference for Women October 5-7 (Thursday evening through noon Saturday)



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Housing Request Form Released

The form on the opposite page must be used by all those wishing to make hotel reservations through the Greater New Orleans Tourist and Convention Commission for the Southern Baptist Convention June 12-14, 1990. If you do not wish to use the housing bureau, you may contact any hotel not listed on the form. Use one form for each room requested.

Part I—Accurately fill in the requested information.

Part II—Select six hotels of your choice and place the hotel names in Part II in the order of your preference. The hotel names are listed on the adjacent index.

Part III—Fill in all information requested for the room you wish to reserve, using a separate sheet for each room. Photocopies of the form may be used.

Part IV—You may put a limit of the maximum amount you are willing to pay. This will be used by the Bureau only if none of your hotel selections are available. If there are no rooms available below your maximum, your form will be returned.

In the past, all hotels listed by the Housing Bureau have filled from forms postmarked Oct. 1. Because Oct. 1 is a Sunday, forms postmarked Oct. 1 and 2 will be treated equally. Do not send a deposit with your housing form.

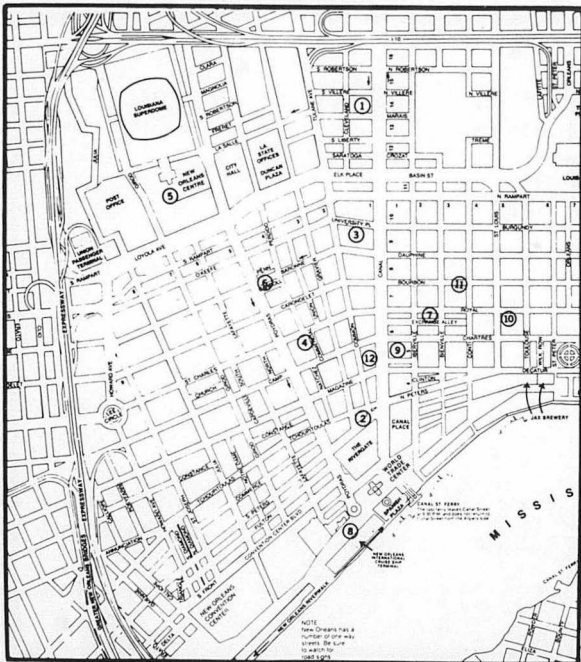
All housing forms are processed by the Greater New Orleans Tourist & Convention Commission. However, if you need further information, contact Housing Information, SBC Executive Committee, 901 Commerce Street, Room 750, Nashville, TN 37203; telephone 615-244-2355.

The Hyatt Regency will serve as the convention hotel. The Pastor's Conference and SBC sessions will be held at the Louisiana Superdome. The Woman's Missionary Union will meet at the New Orleans Hilton.

HOTEL LIST

MAP NUMBER	HOTELS	RATES	
		Single	Double
1.	Clarion Hotel	65.00	77.00
2.	Doubletree Hotel	84.00	84.00
3.	Fairmont Hotel	90.00	90.00
4.	Hotel Inter Continental	85.00	85.00
5.	Hyatt Regency	90.00	90.00
6.	Le Pavillion	69.00	69.00
7.	Monteleone	75.00	85.00
8.	New Orleans Hilton	105.00	115.00
9.	New Orleans Marriott	81.00	101.00
10.	Omni Royal Orleans Hotel	85.00	95.00
11.	Royal Sonesta	85.00	85.00
12.	Sheraton New Orleans	89.00	89.00

DOWNTOWN MAP



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- COMPLETE EACH PART BELOW IN DETAIL FOR CORRECT AND RAPID PROCESSING
- SHOULD MORE THAN ONE** (1) ROOM BE NEEDED. PLEASE USE A SECOND FORM
- ALL** CONFIRMATIONS WILL BE SENT TO INDIVIDUAL INDICATED IN PART I

PART I**INSTRUCTIONS:** COMPLETE REQUESTED DATA USING ABBREVIATION AS NECESSARY.

(FIRST NAME)	(LAST)
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(STREET ADDRESS OR P.O. BOX NUMBER)

(CITY)	(STATE)	(ZIP — U.S.A.)
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(Area Code)	(PHONE NUMBER)
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(NAME OF PERSON REQUESTING ROOMS) NOTE: This person must be one of the individuals who will be occupying the room.

IF NECESSARY PHOTO-
 COPIES OF THIS FORM MAY
 BE USED TO MAKE ADDI-
 TIONAL RESERVATIONS

MAIL FORM OCTOBER 1 OR 2
 1989 THOSE POSTMARKED
 AFTER THIS DATE WILL NOT BE
 PROCESSED

PART II**INSTRUCTIONS:** SELECT SIX HOTELS/MOTELS OF YOUR CHOICE.

FIRST CHOICE _____

SECOND CHOICE _____

THIRD CHOICE _____

FOURTH CHOICE _____

FIFTH CHOICE _____

SIXTH CHOICE _____

PART III**INSTRUCTIONS:** 1. SELECT TYPE ROOM DESIRED WITH ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DATES.
2. **PRINT** OR **TYPE** NAMES OF ALL PERSONS OCCUPYING EACH ROOM.

Arrival Date _____ Departure Date _____

Check type of room desired:

_____ Single (1 bd/1 pr) _____ Triple (2 bd/3 pr)

_____ Double (1 bd/2 pr) _____ Quad (2 bd/4 pr)

_____ Twin (2 bd/2 pr) _____ Other (specify) _____

Name of all persons occupying the room, including the individual in PART I

1		3	
2		4	

PART IV**INSTRUCTIONS:** DO YOU WISH TO SET A MAXIMUM ON THE COST OF YOUR ROOM IF NONE OF YOUR CHOICES ARE AVAILABLE?
IF SO, ENTER THE AMOUNT - \$ _____

IMPORTANT: No phone orders will be accepted. Make a photocopy of your order for your files. Housing Bureau processes reservations in order of date mailed. Confirmations will come directly from your hotel. DO NOT SEND DEPOSITS WITH RESERVATIONS. Changes in reservations should be made by directly contacting the confirming hotel.

DO NOT MAIL FORMS POSTMARKED BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 1989

1990 NEW ORLEANS REVIVALS

Recruitment Started

by Joe Westbury
SBC Home Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—Letters to pastors of 500 strongly evangelistic churches have been mailed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to recruit trainers for a 1990 evangelistic emphasis in New Orleans.

A one-day neighborhood visitation has been scheduled Saturday, June 9, prior to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 12-14 in the Louisiana Superdome.

Howard Ramsey, director of the board's personal evangelism department, said the letters seek to enlist 250 pastors to conduct one-day soul-winning workshops in area churches.

The pastors will be paired with a like number of congregations being recruited by the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

The Home Mission Board will not issue a broad appeal for volunteers as it did for a similar effort in Las Vegas in 1989. As pastors are enlisted, they will be urged to bring as many volunteers from their community as possible.

However, any pastors or lay individuals who desire to participate in the emphasis can contact Ramsey, who will assign them to witnessing teams being coordinated with the Louisiana convention.

Ramsey said pastors selected for the mailing represent a broad spectrum of Southern Baptist congregations. "We were looking

for churches of all sizes, rural and urban, who are making serious inroads in evangelizing their communities. Size alone was not a determining factor."

The Home Mission Board and Louisiana convention, working cooperatively, have set a date of Feb. 1, 1990, to have the 250 churches paired with the pastor/trainers.

The evangelistic thrust will be the second consecutive year Southern Baptists have set aside a day for door-to-door witnessing in conjunction with a convention session.

In Las Vegas in June, 2,025 volunteers knocked on 120,000 doors to register 471 professions of faith. Another 5,000 individuals were identified as prospects for the city's Southern Baptist churches and missions, Ramsey said.

Rather than repeating the one-city approach, Louisiana Baptists have opted to disperse volunteers throughout a 13-association area from Baton Rouge to New Orleans.

The area comprises the major population center of the state with more than 2.5 million residents, said Charles Harvey, Louisiana's director of evangelism.

"This has the potential for being the greatest one-day soul-winning effort we've ever had in the greater New Orleans area. I believe it will far exceed the turnout we had for the 1986 Good News America revivals," he added.

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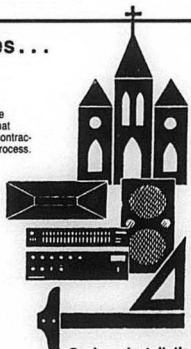
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A Change of Mind

by Thomas E. Miller Jr.
SBC Annuity Board

DALLAS (BP)—Paul W. Powell, 55, pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church of Tyler, Texas, has reversed himself and accepted election as president of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Trustees were informed of Powell's decision Aug. 30, and he resigned his 17-year pastorate Sept. 3.

Powell will join the Annuity Board as president-elect Oct. 16 and become president March 1, 1990, succeeding Darold H. Morgan, who is retiring after 18 years.

A five-year trustee of the Annuity Board, Powell unanimously was elected by his fellow trustees July 25 after nomination by an eight-member search committee. As late



Powell

as July 24, Powell had said he would not accept the post, but the search committee secured his permission to let the full board vote on the recommendation.

On Aug. 13, Powell told his congregation he would remain as pastor. The church members gave him a standing ovation.

The search committee met in Nashville Aug. 21 to chart its future course. George H. Balentine Jr., a South Carolina industrialist and committee chairman, said: "We had a session of prayer for God to give leadership. I felt like, then, something was going to happen. We scheduled another meeting for Sept. 21 in Dallas."

Thursday night, Aug. 24, Powell called Balentine to say: "I can find no peace in the answer I gave you. If you still want me, I will come."

Balentine called each member of the search committee and each member talked personally with Powell during the next several days. Their response was unanimous and affirming of the original vote of the board, he said.

In a joint letter to the trustees, Aug. 30, B.J. Martin, chairman of the board, and Balentine wrote, "Previously scheduled absences from his pulpit, a mission trip in Central America, a rallying, loving, caring congregation, and persistent media attention, greatly complicated the process of decision making."

In an interview, Balentine said: "I suppose, some people find God's way an unusual way. We didn't beg Paul. We didn't hound him. We prayed, listened, voted, and then waited for God to make clear to Paul what he had made clear to us—Paul is the man to serve as president."

The search committee considered 41 candidates before settling on Powell to head the \$2.6 billion pension and insurance agency, Balentine added.

Powell said of his resolve to accept: "I feel a sense of compulsion. It's that simple."

The pastor said neither he nor his wife, Cathy, had gained any peace with the earlier decision. He said, "I simply had to admit that the committee recommendation and the board's decision was right. Now we're going to do the right thing and go forward."

"I love my people and they love me, but we all love God best, and we all want what God wants."

Powell is a graduate of Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. He served two terms as president of the Baptists General Convention of Texas. He has authored 16 books, one of which was translated into four languages.

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SOUTHEASTERN SEMINARY

Responding to Criticism

by **Marv Knox**
Baptist Press

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary faculty and trustees will hold a joint workshop this fall, seeking to alleviate the school's accreditation woes.

Meanwhile, the faculty has called for a moratorium on selecting new teachers until the faculty-selection procedure is "modified to conform" to accreditation standards.

The proposals are included in documents filed this summer with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, one of two accrediting agencies examining the Wake Forest, N.C., school.

The other accrediting agency, the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, has asked Southeastern to "show cause... why it should not be placed on probation."

Controversy engulfed the seminary almost two years ago, when a new majori-

ty took control of its trustee board, saying they intended to turn the school in a more conservative direction.

Subsequently, at least 18 faculty and administrators—including the president and faculty dean—have resigned or retired. Former President W. Randall Lolley and some others who left said they could not live with a new faculty-selection process, which they said ensured that only biblical inerrantists could be hired.

Enrollment has fallen about 43 percent, from 1,046 students in the fall of 1987 to perhaps 600 this fall.

Both accrediting agencies launched their investigations more than a year ago. Both have issued reports critical of the seminary. The American Association of University Professors also has censured the seminary.

In March, Southeastern trustees ratified their responses to the agencies. Trustees also approved a process for developing an "institutional response" requested by the Southern Association. That response was

drafted this summer by Southeastern President Lewis A. Drummond.

A faculty committee wrote its response and submitted it to the Southern Association, as well as the administration and trustees.

Drummond Has Malignant Tumor

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—Lewis A. Drummond, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., is recovering well after doctors found cancer in his colon in late August, a seminary official reported.

Doctors believe the tumor is confined and has not spread, Fletcher added, noting Drummond has begun chemotherapy and radiation treatment and is responding well to his medication.

A decision concerning whether to remove the tumor will be made later in the fall semester, Fletcher said.

Drummond was released from the hospital Friday, Sept. 1, and returned to his office Tuesday, Sept. 5.

Southern Baptist College Annual Bible Conference

Oct. 9-11, 1989

Dr. Ronnie Floyd
Pastor, FBC Springdale

Music Provided By
John Dresbach

Schedule

Monday	1:30 p.m.
	6:30 p.m.
Tuesday	8:30 a.m.
	1:00 p.m.
	6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	10:00 a.m.



Ronnie Floyd



Don Moore



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Jack Kwok



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For more information contact Rodney Reeves at 501-886-6741, ext. 156.

Convention Uniform

God Promises to Bless

by D.C. McAtee, First Church,
Forrest City

Basic passage: Ezekiel 24:17,20-31

Focal passage: Ezekiel 24:31

Central truth: God, our Shepherd, has promised blessings to his flock.

This passage deals with shepherds and sheep. The first 10 verses have to do with denunciations of the false shepherds of Israel. They were caring for their own selfish interests—feeding and clothing themselves—but not watching over the needs of the flock as they should. Consequently, the sheep were scattered over the whole earth. That same type of selfishness still reveals itself today as we see corruption among those who have the rule over others.

In verse 17 God promises to judge between cattle and cattle and between rams and goats. Some think "sheep" is a better interpretation than "cattle" since "shepherd" is used. Ministers are primarily shepherds of God's flock, but all Christians are responsible to help care for others. The fat sheep were the rich, who were taking advantage of poor or lean sheep. In the Old Testament and in Jesus' teachings there are strong warnings to the rich about oppressing the poor.

In verse 22 God promises that he will save his flock, and they will no longer be plundered. Some relief was given to the Israelites after the Babylonian captivity, but we feel that the final fulfillment of this prophecy is in the future. However, God will not only save his people, but he will also judge those who have done evil.

God makes many promises to his flock in verses 23-31. (1) He will be their shepherd and feed them. (2) He will rid the land of wild beasts so they will be safe. (3) There shall be showers of blessings. (4) The crops will be bountiful and the people safe. (5) They will no longer be plundered, nor be victims of famine, nor bear the scorn of the heathen. (6) They will know that the Lord is their God, and they are the sheep of his pasture.

God has promised to bless us if we obey his commands and seek to do his will. The expression "I want to do my own thing" reveals a selfishness that often is—or may be—apart from what God wants us to do. Like Israel, we forfeit blessings when we are disobedient, but we enjoy his blessings when we obey him.

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Life and Work

The Lure of Alcohol

by David Moore, Immanuel Church,
Pine Bluff

Basic passage: Proverbs 20:1; 21:17;
23:19-21,29-35

Focal passage: Proverbs 20:1; 21:17;
23:21,31-32

Central truth: We must avoid the lure of alcohol.

Someone has said that our national industry is alcohol. A young man stopped in a bar one day and had "one too many." He got in his pickup truck and was so intoxicated that he started up the wrong way on a major highway. When he ran into a church bus and killed almost 30 people, the Kentucky legislature responded by considering a new law about gas tanks on church buses.

The problem was not the tank on the bus—it was the "tank" in the man! Like millions before him, he had sought refuge in the bottom of a bottle. As so often happens, other innocent lives are indiscriminately affected.

This lesson deals with the abuse of alcohol. The TEV puts it well: "It's stupid to get drunk" (Pr. 20:1). As a drug, alcohol suppresses the central nervous system. Former inhibitions are suppressed so that the quiet man becomes loud. The sweet woman becomes caustic.

While our society seems to say that alcohol equals success, the wise author of Proverbs reminds us that such is not the case (Pr. 21:17). You do not have to drink to be successful.

My father was a car/truck dealer. I have seen him many times at dealer meetings as he refused the liquor being served (paid for by your car payments). It did not hurt his business.

Yet alcohol has ruined many businessmen, housewives, politicians, athletes, families, and . . . The list goes on and on. All too often, the drunkard is reduced to nothing (Pr. 23:21).

So let us listen and be wise. The Bible's truth is for our instruction. The one who escapes into too much drink is trying to cover up his self-pity, insecurity, and emotional pain. The lure of alcohol is real (Pr. 23:31), and many today are seduced by it.

We are reminded that sin is pleasure for a season, and our writer speaks to that issue as well. Alcohol abuse affects you the next morning—you feel like you have been bitten by a poisonous snake (Pr. 23:32).

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Bible Book

God Provides

by Robert O. Pruett, University
Church, Fayetteville

Basic passage: Numbers 22:1 to 36:13

Focal passage: Numbers 27:1-23

Central truth: God provides for all his people, men and women, and gives leaders that will lead his people.

In the background passage for today's lesson we find God asking for another census to be taken. Time was drawing near when the people once again would be at the brink of entering into the Promised Land. The census confirmed that all the previous generation had died except Caleb and Joshua. Moses was now ready to begin the process of numbering the people into their tribes and begin the process of assigning the people the land by tribe size.

With the knowledge of what happened in the life of women in the Jewish family in later years, the next portion is both surprising and refreshing. Five daughters approached Moses with a question concerning the land arrangement. Their father had died naturally in the wilderness and left no male heir. No law was present to handle this circumstance. The daughters wanted the land left with them to carry on the family lineage. Moses approached God for the resolution and God provided. The women's right of inheritance was given. God is no respecter of persons, all are his children. He will not allow one of his to be put down in life because of sex, race, income, or anything else. The placing of one in a lower standing is completely of man and never of God.

The time had come for the people to go into the Promised Land. Moses was told by God once again that he would not be able to lead the people into the Promised Land, but would only be able to see the Promised Land (Nu. 20:3-12).

Moses was resolved to God's ultimate authority over him and once again showed his love for the people of Israel by wanting God to appoint a new leader to take the people across and help them in their future battles.

God provided Joshua to move from Moses follower to the leader of the people. Joshua would get his word from God from Eleazar, the new high priest who had replaced Aaron.

In a God-directed ceremony, Moses passed the leadership of the people of God to Joshua confirming, him as God's man.

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Convention Uniform

God's Goodness

by D.C. McAtee, First Church,
Forrest City

Basic passage: Ezekiel 37:3-14

Focal passage: Ezekiel 37:14

Central truth: God can give new spiritual life to those who are dead in their sins.

This is one of the most thrilling chapters in the Bible. It gives hope where there is despair; offers life where there is death; promises a future that is better than the present. Most of us can endure great hardship if we think there is a better day ahead.

Prophecy is bringing the Word of God to bear upon the problems of men. To the captives in Babylon, it looked as if their nation was completely dead, never to be revived. The opening verses of Ezekiel 37 tell us that Ezekiel was taken by the hand of the Lord to a valley of dry bones. Whether real or in a vision, the message is the same. In verse 3 Ezekiel is asked, "Can these bones live?" Being a true prophet of God and knowing that in him all things are possible, he answered, "O Lord God, thou knowest." In verse 4, "Again God said unto me Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." What a command! But Ezekiel obeyed, and the bones came together—sinew, flesh and skin came together—and breath into their bodies. Dry bones were restored to life again!

But the message of hope is in verses 12-14 when they were told that God would resurrect his people from the grave of their shattered hopes, put his spirit in them, and they shall live. "I shall place you in your own land: than shall ye know that I the Lord have spoke it, and performed it," saith the Lord. Knowing that they had no military resources that could deliver them, they were assured that their God, unlike the pagan gods, was the only true God, and they never went back into idolatry.

Ezekiel and others called of God have the responsibility of passing God's message on to the people. When God speaks to our hearts today, we had better listen, whether it is through his Word, a Christian friend, prayer, Christian literature, or some divine providence. When our lives seem to fall apart, God can give us new spiritual life and make us a blessing to others. When he works a miracle in our lives, like the Israelites in Babylon, we need to be aware that it was from God and be grateful.

Life and Work

Taming The Tongue

by David Moore, Immanuel Church,
Pine Bluff

Basic passage: Proverbs 18:20-21;
12:6,17-19; 15:1,4; 16:27-28; 26:23-26

Focal passage: Proverbs 18:20-21;
12:18; 15:1,4; 26:24-26

Central truth: We are responsible for using our words wisely.

The Bible has much to say about the tongue. The reason is simple. Our words are like arrows. As soon as they leave our mouths, they can never be taken back. We cannot "strike them from the record" when they have left our lips.

That is why the wise man realizes that he has to live with the consequences of his words. His words can help others or hurt others, and he is responsible for the results of his words. Did they help or hurt?

"Sticks and stones can break my bones," but words can hurt me too! To think that others ignore our words or pay no attention to our cutting remarks is to misunderstand the consequences of what we say. It is better to put the "mind in gear" and the spirit in gear before any words are spoken.

The simplest application is in the home. Words can encourage a mate or destroy a relationship. Words can criticize and belittle a child, or words can build up his self-esteem. Many parents make the sad mistake of not recognizing how harsh words to their child are crushing the inner spirit of that child.

A marriage cannot long endure caustic, bitter, sarcastic words. A good relationship requires a careful choice of words. I have seen people who have blossomed like flowers when they were surrounded by encouraging words in a home. Words of love can make or break a person's spirit.

The same is true in relationships outside the home. The wise man is quick to remind us that gossip is sin. Words that criticize and harm others come from the spirit of a wicked man or woman. These words are quick to break up friendships.

Yet insincere, dishonest words are no better. They come from a hypocritical, hateful heart. Insincere words of flattery are lies, and we must avoid incorrect use of words.

Before you send out any more "arrows," ask yourself if these words will hurt or help. Will they build up or tear down? It might help you to know whether it is wise to say them!

Bible Book

God's Instructions

by Robert O. Pruett, University
Church, Fayetteville

Basic passage: Numbers 22:1to 36:13

Focal passage: Numbers 33:51-56;
35:10-27

Central truth: God provides his followers a plan for a life blessed of God if we will follow his directions.

The background passage today gives us a glimpse of the future of Israel. In chapter 31 we find Israel taking revenge on the Midianites for what they had tried, and with a degree of success, had accomplished in Israel's camp. Remember the seductive powers of the women of King Balak. The people of Israel were told to totally destroy the people of Midian and all their possessions. When the battle was over the people of Israel brought back possessions and even some of the women. These women caused 24,000 Israelites to be killed by God for sexual sins and offering sacrifices to Baal.

God's orders to Israel were to take the land before them. They were to take the land and do away with all the people, possessions, idols and places of worship found in the land. Moses and Eleazar helped them through the Midian crises by giving direction from God on what could be saved and what could not, but now God was saying if you do not do what I say the remnants of what you leave will be a continual trouble to Israel. History proves this correct. The downfall of both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms came from not following God's instructions.

Man cannot follow God and expect to hang on to the world around him. God was saying I will provide. Man was saying we will let the world provide. God says rid yourself of the temptations to put something before me. Man says I can serve God and mammon. Israel tried and failed and so does man today.

The final portion of the study in Numbers and this unit shows once again a just and caring God. In a world where revenge by a wronged person's family was the law, God provided a place of refuge for those fleeing from their accusers. God set up six cities to provide a haven to those being pursued. This was a city where a person who was being pursued could seek rest until a fair trial could be conducted. May we realize we have a fair God seeking to give us rest in him.

McGinnis Resigns, Visa Problems

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (BP)—Mike McGinnis, whose letter questioning a fellow missionary's beliefs set off a denominational flap last year, has resigned as a Southern Baptist missionary.

The resignations of McGinnis, 37, and his wife, Sondra, both of Birmingham, Ala., will take effect Sept. 30, according to Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials.

The couple was appointed in 1987 and assigned to Venezuela, where he was to have worked as a church starter. But they were unable to obtain work visas from the Venezuelan government after finishing a year of Spanish language training in Costa Rica.

The McGinnises were offered the option of transferring to any of four other countries by the Foreign Mission Board. They declined, citing a specific call from God to work in Venezuela.

From their current home in Chattanooga, Tenn., the couple plans to travel and train Christian leaders in Venezuela and possibly other South American countries

with Ambassadors for Christ International, a non-denominational agency based in Atlanta. A spokesperson for the agency confirmed McGinnis likely will be joining a team of 15 American missionaries who conduct leadership training seminars for overseas Christians.

McGinnis' letter eventually led to the Foreign Mission Board's dismissal of the Michael Willet, who was attending language school with McGinnis.

Melady Appointed To Vatican

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Senate has confirmed Thomas P. Melady, a former diplomat and an active Catholic layman, as U.S. ambassador to the Vatican.

Melady, president of the Connecticut Public Expenditure Council, is the third person to hold the post since the United States restored formal diplomatic ties to the Holy See in 1984. He succeeds Frank Shakespeare.

During the Nixon administration, Melady was ambassador to Burundi and Uganda. He also has been president of

Sacred Heart University in Bridgeport, Conn., and assistant secretary for post-secondary education in the U.S. Education Department.

Melady, 62, belongs to the Knights of Malta, a Catholic chivalric order with fewer than 2,000 members in the United States. He also is a board member of the Puebla Institute, a lay Catholic organization that monitors international human rights.

Several religious and church-state organizations, including the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, opposed the appointment of a new ambassador to the Vatican.

In a statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which held a hearing on Melady's nomination, the Baptist Joint Committee said: "This action violates perhaps the most fundamental guarantee of the establishment clause — that government cannot act in a way that prefers one religion over another."

"As a result of this 'unholy alliance' between church and state, the Roman Catholic Church will enjoy a preferred position in this administration while other churches and religious organizations are made the objects of official governmental discrimination."

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WORLD

MOZAMBIQUE

Trying to Help

by Craig Bird
SBC Foreign Mission Board

MAPUTO, Mozambique (BP)—Things are better—and worse—in Mozambique.

Two years ago most shops in Maputo, the capital of this southeast African country, were closed because of economic difficulties. Now they are open and offering a growing range of merchandise.

Automobiles, once scarce and hobbled by strict rationing of gasoline, now roam the wide streets in increasing numbers—even producing a 5 p.m. "rush minute" on weekdays.

Western aid, shunned for years by the government is now welcomed—and courted—by President Joaquim Chissano.

But evidence of an improved economy stops at the city limits, because of the shadowy rebel group which calls itself Renamo.

Renamo's scorched-earth policy, bent on demonstrating the inability of Frelimo, the ruling party, to govern, has turned what once was one of Africa's most fertile agricultural breadbaskets into a land of starvation and ruin.

Every month thousands of rural residents give up their struggle to plant and flee to the larger cities or across the borders of neighboring countries.

Each person who quits the land increases Mozambique's dependency on foreign aid to stave off famine. And as tens of thousands of refugees crowd the cities, strain increases on overburdened and aging municipal systems to provide clean water, health care, schools and police service.

"I think the situation in the rural areas is worse now than it was when the world first started noticing the plight of all the starving people here," says Jim Brock, a Southern Baptist missionary who lives in Maputo. "Only now there are even fewer people risking their lives in an effort to raise crops.

"In the past six months it seems like almost all the vacant space in Maputo has been filled with the huts of families who have fled the rural areas."

Aid donors now know the needs and are ready to assist, but even relief trucks and planes are fair game for Renamo gunners.

However, a seed project funded by Southern Baptists and carried out by Mozambique Baptists is still operating. Baptist leader Bento Matusse hopes the project, which provides planting seeds and hoes to rural people, can be enlarged. Matusse is president of the Baptist Convention of Mozambique and pastor of First Baptist

Church in Maputo.

"People come into the cities but there is no land," Matusse explains. "Agriculture is the best solution to hunger, but the bandits (Renamo) burn and rob so people don't have any clothes or housing. In this situation we ask anyone anywhere who can help to do anything they can."

But Mozambicans don't sit and wait for outside aid to rescue them. Women's groups at First Baptist Church in Maputo, led by Mara Matusse, the pastor's wife, operate a clothes distribution program. Many of the clothes come from friends in the United States. They also teach sewing, mending and cooking classes for refugees.

"Many of these women can't get the foods they are used to so we have to show them how to give their family good nutrition with what they can get in Maputo," Mrs. Matusse points out.

Church members divide and sack the seeds into packets. Young men of the church have risked their lives to distribute the seeds and hoes in outlying areas.

Despite—or because of—the unrelenting economic strain and human hemorrhage of war, the people of Mozambique are responsive to the Christian gospel, Baptists report. In 1975 Baptists numbered less than 500 members in four churches. By January 1989, membership totaled 5,492 in 15 churches and 58 missions.

Brock is quick to note two significant details related to the numbers. "First is that Mozambicans are very strict in their interpretation of 'membership,'" he says. "Every church has many, many more regular attenders than members.

"Second, all the growth has been in urban areas, and in Africa the rural population is almost always more open to Christianity than the people in the cities. So when the fighting ends and we can move freely, there will really be an explosion."

"One of the most exciting things is that no one has to convince these people to be concerned about the lost," he observes. "They decided 10 years ago to reach out and expand and even though they have struggled financially, they are reaching out."

"Just about every time someone comes to Maputo from another city upcountry, they bring word of new missions being started, and First Baptist in Maputo has 13 missions itself."

So as cars and merchandise fill the streets and stores the major cities, rural refugees fill the open spaces. The economy struggles to right itself from the wrongs of war.

And Baptists try to help Mozambique get better.