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Terminally ill need care, not
assisted suicide, panel told

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
5/1/96

WASHINGTON (BP)--Terminally ill Americans need adequate care as they approach death rather than a right to physician-assisted suicide, a congressional subcommittee was told in an April 29 hearing.

In the same hearing, some witnesses predicted legalizing assisted suicide will result in the involuntary deaths of many who are not terminally ill.

Witnesses both opposed to and in favor of physician-assisted suicide testified at the hearing before the Constitution Subcommittee of the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee. Rep. Charles Canady, R.-Fla., chairman of the subcommittee, scheduled the hearing in response to recent rulings in federal appeals courts in California and New York striking down laws banning assisted suicide.

The current debate needs to be moved from "its very narrow focus on the question of the legalization of physician-assisted suicide to the much broader issue that concerns the American public -- the need to provide good care of the dying," said Kathleen Foley, chief of the pain service at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Overwhelming evidence shows physicians are not trained to treat pain, Foley said. "Providing care for the dying" is not occurring, she said.

"In my clinical practice, I have been asked by suffering patients to aid them in death because of severe pain," Foley said. "I have had the opportunity to see these requests for aid in death fade with adequate pain control, psychological support, provision of family support and with the promise that their symptoms would be controlled throughout the dying process."

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Terminally ill patients need and desire a "system of medical care that will tend to their needs -- the needs of the ill and their family -- more than whatever economic or institutional imperative may be at hand," said Carlos Gomez, assistant professor at the University of Virginia School of Medicine and medical director of the school's hospice. "It is, unfortunately, a system of care which we American physicians have been slow to understand and, moreover, have at times resisted outright.

"That we have not yet obtained this sort of system is not, in any way, to sanction the alternative now before this committee, the American courts and the American people," Gomez said.

"It is, in fact, my most deeply held belief that were we to pursue assisted suicide and euthanasia as our response to the terminally ill, we would soon find ourselves -- ourselves, my fellow physicians and allied health-care workers -- quite literally putting to death hundreds of thousands of others under the guise of mercy and autonomy. If the experience of other countries and other cultures with this allegedly benign practice is any guide -- and I have no reason to invoke American exceptionalism in this regard -- we will be engaged in a poorly disguised expedience of eliminating the 'least desirable' among us."

Some witnesses cited the experience of The Netherlands, where assisted suicide and euthanasia are accepted practices, as evidence of such abuse. According to statistics from 1990, about 50 percent of deaths caused by physicians are done without the patient's permission.

In a study of euthanasia in Dutch hospitals, an investigator concluded "the families, the doctors and the nurses were involved in pressuring patients to request euthanasia," said Herbert Hendin, executive director of the American Suicide Foundation.

"The public has the illusion that legalizing assisted suicide and euthanasia will give them greater autonomy," he said, adding, however, the opposite is true. The doctor "can suggest it, not give patients obvious alternatives, ignore patients' ambivalence and even put to death patients who have not requested it."

In The Netherlands, societal sanction "has encouraged patients and doctors to see assisted suicide and euthanasia -- intended as an unfortunate necessity in exceptional cases -- as almost a routine way of dealing with serious or terminal illness," Hendin said.

U.S. court decisions equating disabled people with those who are terminally ill have caused the disabled to begin "to feel that we are riding on the Titanic," said Diane Coleman, executive director of the Progress Center for Independent Living.

"Assisted-suicide enthusiasts have reinforced public prejudice and fear regarding disability," said Coleman, who has been disabled since birth and testified from a wheelchair. These enthusiasts are "willing to risk the lives of the disabled, not terminally ill to secure the right to die for the terminally ill," she said.

Six of the 15 witnesses at the hearing supported assisted suicide. None did so with more passion than controversial Episcopal Bishop John Spong.

The "right to participate in the management of one's own death" is a new, inalienable right, said Spong, whose support of the ordination of homosexuals also has stirred controversy. He said he hopes "this Congress will grant this right to the American people."

Samuel Klagsbrun, a proponent of assisted suicide and executive medical director of Four Winds Hospitals in New York, offered four criteria for preventing abuses: 1) The patient and doctor must have known each other for a long time; 2) the doctor must be certain pain control has been adequately attempted; 3) the request for death cannot be an expression of a treatable depression; and 4) the physician should have an internal struggle which causes him never to be comfortable with this decision.

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Barbara Lee, chief petitioner of Oregon's Death With Dignity Act, and Charles Baron, professor at Boston College School of Law, both said a doctor should not be the one to introduce the idea of assisted suicide to the patient. Both support the legalization of assisted suicide.

Canady, however, said he has a problem with calling assisted suicide a fundamental right and not allowing a doctor to tell patients about it.

Whether it is declared a fundamental right or not, it is a medical procedure, said Yale Kamisar, professor at the University of Michigan Law School, questioning how a doctor could not bring it up.

There is no basis for limiting assisted suicide to the terminally ill, said Kamisar, an opponent of the practice.

The line should be drawn not between the terminally ill and others but between "withholding treatment and actively carrying out physician-assisted suicide," he said. "Either people have the right to determine when and how they die or they don't."

Charles Krauthammer, a columnist and physician, criticized not only assisted suicide but the manner in which it is being legalized.

"The question I believe is, 'Have these judges learned nothing from Roe v. Wade?' The United States is the only country in the Western world that has legalized abortion not by popular vote or legislative action but by judicial fiat," Krauthammer said.

"Having disenfranchised a democratic people on one of the fundamental moral issues of our time, the courts are now intent, it seems, on doing it again. Not a single country in the world, save Holland, permits doctors to help patients kill themselves. Now judges have decreed that America is such a country, will be such a country, indeed that the constitution demands that America be such a country."

In the end, he does not expect Americans or their legislatures to "hold the line against physician-assisted suicide," said Krauthammer, who is disabled and testified from a wheelchair. "But I would rather see the ban overturned by popular will after vigorous debate than by judicial fiat."

A Southern Baptist specialist in medical ethics also expressed doubts about preventing assisted suicide's legalization but encouraged Christians to become involved.

"I'm not optimistic that we can turn back the assisted-dying juggernaut," Ben Mitchell told Baptist Press. "But evangelicals and others are not powerless. There are some things we can and should do now, whether or not legalized assisted suicide and euthanasia become realities in America."

Mitchell, consultant on biomedical and life issues for the Christian Life Commission, made these recommendations for Christians:

- Preach and teach what the Bible says about the sanctity of human life and the prohibition against murder.

- Cite the lessons learned from Nazi Germany and The Netherlands.

- Reject euphemisms and call assisted suicide what it is -- "medicalized murder."

- Provide spiritual and emotional care for the terminally ill.

- Support the health-care community in making pain control a priority.

"Churches cannot treat pain; that's the domain of medicine," Mitchell said.

"But Christians and believing churches can relieve suffering."

Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde, R.-Ill., and Rep. Barney Frank, D.-Mass., were the only subcommittee members beside Canady to participate in the hearing. Hyde and Canady expressed strong opposition to assisted suicide.

If it is legalized, he could see "pressures to get rid of (vulnerable) people that will make Hitler look like a piker," Hyde said.

SBC Cooperative Program shows increase in April

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program gifts for the month of April were up 3.66 percent over a year ago, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

The total for April, \$13,117,325, was \$463,400 more than the \$12,653,924 for April 1995. For the SBC fiscal year to date, October through April, the 1995-96 total of \$86,089,231 compares to the 1994-95 total of \$86,330,877, a .28 percent or \$241,645 decrease.

In designated gifts, the April 1996 total of \$9,449,413 was 10.51 percent below April 1995 of \$10,559,299 but for the year to date designated gifts still were nearly \$4 million ahead of the previous year. Year-to-date totals, \$96,536,903, compared to the previous year to date, \$92,554,642, for an increase of \$3,982,261 or 4.3 percent.

For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the \$13.1 million for April was \$1.3 million more than the required monthly budget of \$11.8, or 11.14 percent above. For the seven months of the SBC fiscal year, the \$86 million in CP receipts is \$3.5 million above the budget amount required at this date of \$82.6 million, or a 4.2 percent increase.

The SBC Cooperative Program total includes receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions and fellowships for distribution according to the 1995-96 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions, world hunger and other special gifts.

State and regional conventions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining funds to the Executive Committee for national and international ministries. The percentage of distribution is at the discretion of each state or regional convention.

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Coppenger: Women as pastors
not permitted by Scripture

By James A. Smith Sr.

Baptist Press
5/1/96

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--The Bible clearly prohibits women from serving in the role of pastor, said Midwestern Seminary President Mark T. Coppenger, warning, "You crash and burn when you defy the clear teaching of the Word of God."

Coppenger, preaching from 1 Timothy 2:11-15 at an April 11 chapel service, compared himself with the person standing in the road warning travelers away from a road with a bridge out of service.

Having read the passage, Coppenger raised his Bible and asked with mocked incredulity, "What is this? I'll tell you what this is, this is God's inerrant Word. This is perfect, perfect, perfect holy Scripture. Now I may not understand it, but I do understand this: It is perfect and it cannot be improved upon one syllable because it comes from God.

"You can approach this (passage) by saying, 'This is a difficulty and I've got to somehow clean up after it,' or you can say, 'Praise the Lord. I don't totally understand it ... but that's no limit on it.'"

The chapel service was scheduled as a panel discussion on the topic of women in ministry. Public notice was made on campus about the panel discussion and in advance of the event through Midwestern's library on SBCNet, the Southern Baptist forum on CompuServe.

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At the request of Midwestern's Student Body Association president, Coppenger agreed a few days before the scheduled panel to give half of the chapel hour to the SBA for a student election forum. Chris Morris, SBA president, had originally requested the panel discussion on women in ministry in a conversation with Coppenger following a panel discussion earlier this year on the topic of divorce and remarriage. Coppenger granted the SBA request and decided to address the topic himself in the remaining time.

"I didn't seek the conflict but believe the invitation of the student leader was divinely engineered," Coppenger said in an interview. "It provided the opportunity to show the leadership of Midwestern Seminary on this issue in no uncertain terms. The national office of Baptist Women in Ministry has recently relocated to CBF-supported Central Baptist Seminary here in Kansas City and I welcome the clear distinction between our institutions."

Coppenger expressed regret that a female student chose to drop his evangelism class following the chapel message which, otherwise, received sustained applause at its conclusion. The student "expressed dismay at my anger," Coppenger reported. "I told her it seemed to me that Scripture-twisting and rampant feminism were just cause for passion if anything is."

In his chapel message, Coppenger expressed concern about the advocacy of women as pastors, saying, "This is one of the raging, raging heresies and confusions of the day and it's eating up churches. It's astonishing to me how people who should know better roll over and buy this kind of stuff. I beg you, don't touch it with a stick.

"Now I'm not saying that everybody who toys with this idea is utterly apostate," Coppenger later added. "But I'm saying that they are playing with a very dangerous approach to understanding Scripture and the church."

Using his own wife, Sharon, as an example, Coppenger rejected the notion that women have lowered their expectations by not seeking professional or pastoral roles.

"There are those who say that Sharon has been cheated because she has been denied the opportunity to be a pastor," Coppenger said. "I say that is utterly wrongheaded and non-biblical -- there is glorious service for women."

Calling Sharon a "heroine of mine," Coppenger noted the contributions she has made to their family as mother and wife and through churches with missions, evangelism and discipleship programs. "Equality in value, but not in identity of role," Coppenger said.

Coppenger also rejected modern-day commentators who have suggested the 1 Timothy passage is no longer relevant because it was based on the culture of the first century and that the Apostle Paul's biases contradict Jesus' teachings.

Citing such comments in The Interpreter's Bible commentary, Coppenger said, "I read this and I say, 'Anathema! Ichabod! The glory has departed!'

"Paul and Jesus do not contradict. Paul and Jesus both speak the Word of God. It's Scripture," Coppenger insisted.

Paul gave three reasons, according to Coppenger, women should not have teaching authority over men: It's an affront to the creation order, to home and family, and to women themselves.

Noting Paul's illustration from creation clearly undercuts the argument of cultural relativity, Coppenger said, "If somebody presumes to say that it's simply situational and ignores the tie to Genesis, that ... is hermeneutically, utterly irresponsible.

"This ascent of woman as pastor is a threat to the order of the home," Coppenger continued, noting the apostle's words addressing women who were repudiating child-bearing. "Paul is concerned that there not be a wedge formed in the church ... that breaks up the home."

Paul also rejects women as pastors because it is "an affront to herself," according to Coppenger. "Eve suffered from the fall as well. In a sense she confounded herself."

Women pastors also are "an affront to holy Scripture," Coppenger said. Experienced-based and culture-based Christians; as opposed to "Word-based Christians," are susceptible to rejecting the biblical prohibitions on women as pastors, according to Coppenger.

Although "there are churches and denominations that embrace that kind of easy, breezy, whichever-way-the-wind-blows approach," Coppenger said Southern Baptists have traditionally opposed women as pastors, citing A.T. Robertson, John A. Broadus and B.H. Carroll.

"Folks, those are your roots," Coppenger said. "I affirm those roots."

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Martin F. King contributed to this story.

**FMB's new web site
offers varied options**

By Marty Croll

**Baptist Press
5/1/96**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The World Wide Web user who surfs into the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's new "home page" will soon see options to apply for career mission service or give money to specific mission needs -- and accomplish a myriad of tasks in between.

The board gave life to its web site home page April 22 at 7:30 a.m. As it becomes more developed during the next several months, the site will offer users new and practical ways to interact with the board, said Bruce Van Horn, the board's marketing database administrator who developed it.

As quickly as a user calls up the page, it presents an opportunity to sign into a guest book or fill out a mailing list profile. Van Horn will use that information to feed users a diet of on-line data such as news releases and prayer requests tailor-fit to their interests.

Board President Jerry Rankin characterized the web site as another way the board will offer "communication and awareness that enable Southern Baptists to be on mission with God."

The page is accessible by addressing: "http://www.imb.org." Van Horn has designed the site to allow users to access information as they choose, and to challenge them to personal involvement in foreign missions through praying, giving, going and learning.

Through the "prayer" option, users are able to access requests related to several topics. If their computer has audio capability, users can click and hear the board's PrayerLine prayer request. Or they can click for text only.

By June, Van Horn expects the "giving" portion of the site will be able to immediately process credit card gifts to fill strategic needs displayed on the screen and not related to the board's primary sources of funding.

Also through that option, a series of menu options shows how Southern Baptists support foreign missions financially. It profiles the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions and the Southern Baptist Convention unified giving plan, the Cooperative Program.

Under "learning" options, users are able to access up-to-date news accounts such as stories about the recent evacuation of missionaries from besieged Liberia, and certain less-dated information from The Commission, the board's magazine.

"Going" options display opportunities on the foreign field and will allow those who feel called to overseas mission ministries make initial contact with the board and fill out preliminary applications -- on-line.

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(BP) graphic mailed May 1 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Color graphic posted in SBCNet news room.

**New foreign board unit
to tackle diversity**

By Marty Croll

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A former mission worker in Africa will lead a new public relations unit of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board designed to meet needs resulting from the denomination's growing diversity.

Wendy Norvelle, 42, became associate vice president of public relations in the office of public relations and development May 1.

"The international outreach efforts of Southern Baptists have grown dramatically in the past few years," said board President Jerry Rankin. "Telling the story of what God is doing through our missionaries has become a big challenge, given the changing complexion of our churches and the number of organizations (besides the board) that also seek support from Southern Baptists."

In her new role, Norvelle will oversee the functions of public affairs, customer service, the global desk and African American church relations. David Button, the board's vice president of public relations and development, sees her as an "up-front, out-there" figure representing the board.

From 1975-77, Norvelle worked as a journeyman alongside missionaries in the southern African nation of Zimbabwe. Since 1980 she has worked in several positions at the board, the last three years as director of the international service department for non-career overseas personnel.

"Southern Baptists are becoming a more diverse people every day, and we need people who can present the board and its work in ways they can appreciate -- who can help them understand what we are trying to do," Button said. "Wendy has been on the mission field and understands our work from that perspective, plus she has an understanding of Southern Baptists today."

Including African American relations in the function of public relations is a strong, positive statement, said its director, David Cornelius. "We have heard and want to continue hearing concerns from black Southern Baptists relative to involvement through the Foreign Mission Board," he said. "This change says we want many more God-called foreign missionaries from black churches to move into places of service through the board."

Cornelius, 51, was a foreign missionary to Nigeria for nine years. At the board, he has worked nearly four years to communicate opportunities for overseas service to African American Southern Baptists -- and to nurture them toward appointment.

"This shift will actually put us in a better position to get our message across that we will be inclusive of the African American community," Cornelius said.

In a related development, Bill Morgan will join the public relations and development office as assistant vice president to Button. A missionary to Brazil for 18 years, Morgan will develop ways to make Foreign Mission Board work more personal to Southern Baptists.

Morgan, 60, came to work at the board's Richmond, Va., offices in 1985 and has most recently directed the Creative Access Network, charting new courses for churches to use in relating to Foreign Mission Board missionaries. "The approach he has developed needs to impact the way we relate to all of the churches," Button said.

Norvelle, originally from Floyd, N.M., graduated from Eastern New Mexico University. Morgan, a native of Drew, Miss., graduated from Mississippi College in Clinton. Cornelius, from Texarkana, Texas, graduated from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas. All of them received graduate degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

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(BP) photos (mugshots) mailed May 1 to state Baptist newspapers by the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Ex-gang members recount lives touched by love

By Bryan McAnally

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Not long ago, Chris Roberts and Ken Richardson would just as soon kill each other than sit in the same room. Roberts, a member of the Blood gang, and Richardson, a member of the Crip gang, were rivals. And when Bloods mix with Crips, it's often a recipe for death.

But the two teens joined ex-tough Terrance Timms, 17, Laron Thomas, 16, and Darian Shanahan, assistant youth minister for Charity Church in Fort Worth, to demonstrate God's ability to change lives and mend relationships at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary April 30.

Charlotte Sullivan, adjunct teacher of communication arts at the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary, invited the four to her class to illustrate the differences in gang members' belief systems, orientations and methods.

"People in our city can tell if we feel comfortable when they come into our churches," Sullivan said. "The gang lifestyle may be rough, but having them here keeps us in the real world. This is grassroots evangelism -- taking the message where it needs to be heard."

The four youth testified to the lives they led as gang-bangers. Each recounted tales of earning as much as \$3,000 a day selling crack cocaine, smoking marijuana on a daily basis, having relationships with up to a dozen women at a time and being willing to fight -- and kill -- if they felt disrespected or saw their rival's colors.

Richardson, 17, said he had five cousins killed in gang-related fights. "I was in line to die," he said.

Roberts, 19, had been imprisoned on double capital murder charges, facing 99 years in prison without parole. "I would have been sent up if the cops weren't able to find out who did it. They knew I was in the crowd, and that was enough."

Timms, a self-described "thugster," told of fighting three times a week, stealing cars, womanizing and imprisonment. "If I hadn't fought in two days, I'd get mad that I hadn't fought and I'd go find a fight," he said.

Thomas said as a member of the Beaty Street Bloods, violence not only was common, it was a way of life. "It was all a matter of respect. If you back down to somebody else, you're a punk, and everybody will know it."

Even Shanahan recounted a past checkered with elements of gang life. "I was a drug addict, an alcohol addict, a sex addict. I walked the streets and I'd fight anybody. I had money and a successful business of my own, but because of my addictions I lost them all."

But his life was turned around two years ago when he walked through the doors of a church and was showered with the love of God. And the same love has given new life to the four teens: Roberts and Richardson hugged and joked together, while Shanahan said Timms and Richardson are the "Amos and Andy" of his youth group.

They've come a long way from their gang days -- a way of life popular among many urban American youth.

"People join because it's their common sense," Shanahan said. "If your experience in life is filled with parents who smoke crack and brothers who fight, then it is common to you. And it only makes sense to join a group where those events are normal."

Youth also join because of the bonds they build with fellow members, he said. "If you've ever been on a team of any kind, you know the strength in having somebody on your side."

Another reason youth join gangs is because of boredom, he added. "Even if a parent loves their child with their whole heart, if they aren't giving their children something productive to do, that child may end up in a gang."

And life in a gang means a life of "selling dope, smoking weed, hanging out and violence," Shanahan pointed out while the four teens nodded in agreement.

He then offered three steps to bring gang members out of the violent lifestyle of the street and into the loving lifestyle of a personal relationship with God:

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-- "First and foremost, we have to have our foundation in Christ. Everything we do, we should do it in Christ's power. We will fail if we do it on our own, because they will see us not as messengers of God but as people with no clue."

-- "Second, we need to give them positive things to do. Sometimes it's silly, but give them an alternative. We just had over 100 youth at a roller skating rink skating like little kids. They loved it, though, because so many of them had missed out on their childhoods and needed to recapture it."

-- "Third, we need to saturate them with the love of God. If they come to us in anger, in violence, we return to them in God's love. They will see that we think they are special and that God thinks they are special."

The worst thing a church can do is to turn their back on a youth because he runs with a gang, Shanahan noted.

Roberts said he was ready to leave the gang a year before he did and went to a church because he felt a calling on his life. It was the only place he thought would give him a chance to escape. But they shut the door in his face because he was dressed in blue and knew he was in a gang.

"I promised I would never go into a church again," he said. "The only reason I ever did is because my mama threw me in the car and made me go. When I was there that time, I saw God's love and I understood what God wanted from my life."

Roberts since has answered the call on his life and become a licensed minister.

For Timms, leaving the gang life behind has been a slow process. "I just got out of jail three months ago because I messed up. But Darian was there with love. Even when my dad wasn't there, my minister was."

Thomas said his departure from the Bloods was met with support from a surprising source: the gang leader.

"When I told them I was leaving to follow Christ, the leader told me it was the right thing to do. He wanted me to leave so his little brother would see that the gang life isn't the way. He just told me that when I was gone, not to talk bad about the gangs. He just asked that I'd pray for them," he said.

"God gave me a second chance," Richardson said. "I got out of prison and saw that I had to change my life around. I met people who shared the love of God with me and I've never been the same, and I praise God for it."

Shanahan cautioned the seminary class not to be judgmental when they minister to gang members. "There will be a lot of backsliding because they are being pulled from both sides.

"We just need to show them love. If you have a gang-banger who shows up once a year and sells drugs the other 11 months, just love him with the love of God when he comes for his annual visit. That plants the seed of Christ in him and some day it will bloom."

"I'm still learning," Timms said. "I got beat up by nine guys because I told them I was following Jesus Christ. It's tough, but God is the way."

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City of St. Louis to subpoena
church records only as last resort

Baptist Press
5/1/96

ST. LOUIS (BP)--The city of St. Louis has agreed to issue subpoenas of church records only as a last resort in seeking to establish the residency of city employees. A group of St. Louis pastors had protested the practice in a letter to Mayor Freeman Bosley Jr.

City employees are required to live in the city, and Bosley has sought to enforce the rule. The seven pastors objected on the grounds the subpoenas were a violation of churches' rights under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Rudy Pulido, pastor of Southwest Baptist Church, St. Louis, said the pastors met April 2 with city counselor Tyrone A. Taborn to discuss subpoenas of church records.

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In an April 8 letter, Taborn said he did not consider such an action a violation of a city employee's constitutional right of freedom of religion. But he agreed his office would not make a habit of issuing such subpoenas.

"I am sorry for any distress this action has caused you and your colleagues," Taborn wrote. "You can be assured that, in the future, the City Counselor's Office will use church records as evidence only as a last resort."

Taborn pledged to Pulido that before requesting records from any church, his office will contact attorneys Cynthia S. Holmes and Leonard J. Frankel, representing the pastors.

"If your attorneys consider the use of church records in that particular case as an unconstitutional infringement, the City Counselor's Office and your attorneys will jointly seek a ruling in the court on this issue before this office will formally request the church records," Taborn wrote.

Pulido said he was pleased with the city's willingness to consult with the churches. "I think we've received at least the city's cooperation -- that if they're going to do this in the future they'll work with us."

He added the City Counselor's Office called the week after Taborn's letter because it was thinking about issuing subpoenas of records from parochial schools and wondered if that could be unconstitutional. "We said we didn't know but that we would be cautious," Pulido said.

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Obsolete film projectors needed
for Third World missions effort

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
5/1/96

DALLAS (BP)--Film projectors gathering dust in church closets could improve the quality of life in developing countries and provide an avenue for Christian witness, according to a Baptist layman in Waco, Texas.

As vice president of Amigos Internacionales, Bob Sloan is soliciting outdated audiovisual equipment to help build media libraries in Third World countries. And as vice president for Texas Baptist Men's educational fellowship, he hopes to enlist Baptist teachers as volunteer trainers in educational technology around the globe.

Amigos Internacionales is a nonprofit agency devoted to Third World development. Housed at First Baptist Church of Woodway, Waco, the organization works closely with TBM in international ministries.

Video, CD-ROM and computer-generated graphics are making 16 mm film obsolete in the United States, Sloan said. But the old-fashioned projectors are cutting-edge technology in developing nations.

Sloan, a 38-year veteran in educational technology, began collecting discontinued films and outmoded equipment about 18 months ago from public school service centers. Already, he has secured more than \$1.5 million worth of resources.

"We have about 12,000 prints ranging from 'Elementary Bicycle Safety' to 'Blood Plasma in the 4th Dimension,'" he said.

Sloan retired as associate director of the Region 12 Center in Waco, serving public schools throughout central Texas. He is a past president of the Texas Association of Educational Technology and has served as an officer of a comparable national organization.

"Through Bob's contacts, we have film coming in from all over the United States," said Jim Wren, president of Amigos Internacionales. Like Sloan, Wren also is a TBM vice president.

In addition to donations from schools and educational service centers, several companies also have given training films to the project.

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Already, the laymen have sent projection equipment to the Ukraine and Zambia, and they are helping to establish a 3,000-item media library in Haiti. On April 24, Wren and Sloan were bound for Belize, where they were providing media resources for the national library and an English as a Second Language program within the federal prison system. They also are exploring future opportunities in Guatemala and India.

"Through Texas Baptist Men, we would like to put together a cadre of teachers who could do in-service training in these countries as the libraries are set up," Sloan said.

A prison literacy missions team could begin working in Belize in July, and teachers could be part of a TBM mission trip to the Ukraine this fall, said George E. "Andy" Andreason of McGregor, TBM president.

Volunteers can contact Texas Baptist Men at (214) 828-5357. Churches wishing to donate audiovisual equipment or films may call TBM or send them directly to Amigos Internacionales at 9001 Oakdale, Waco, TX 76712.

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Texas Baptists to provide
refuge to fired ministers

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press
5/1/96

DALLAS (BP)--Texas Baptists are preparing a place of refuge for ministers fired by their churches.

The state's first Refuge House for ministers and their families is being built at Big Country Encampment in Lueders, said Dick Maples, minister/church relations coordinator for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The BGCT has provided a grant to help fund the project, and volunteers are renovating a dormitory into a home for displaced pastors and their families.

The project is the first of what Maples believes will be many Refuge Houses provided by churches and institutions across the state in response to a growing crisis.

Nationwide, about 125 ministers a month are fired by the churches they serve, according to Baptist Sunday School Board statistics.

Maples said the BGCT has been working for about two years developing ministries to address the problem. In addition, Maples and representatives of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth are in discussion regarding the development of future refuge churches and houses for displaced ministers.

A recent study by Leadership magazine found 23 percent of all active ministers have experienced forced termination at least once in their ministry. The average tenure of pastors at any one church is about three years and five months.

"It has been said that most secular employers treat their employees with more dignity than some Baptist churches," Maples said.

Less than 10 percent of all forced terminations are due to moral failure of ministers.

"The number one reason for forced terminations," said Maples, "is ongoing, unresolved conflict within the church. Usually the conflict precedes the coming of the new minister. After he arrives, church members turn their anger from each other onto the pastor. Once he is terminated, the unresolved conflict continues, and about every three years, the church cycles out another pastor."

Other reasons include:

- an entrenched power group within the church that insists on determining the life and future of the congregation.

- ministers' leadership style.

"A dominating, autocratic leadership style almost always results in conflict because Baptists do not respond well to that kind of role," Maples said.

- conflicting visions for the church between the pastor and members often result in forced terminations.

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"Poor communication, poor leadership style, absence of good people skills and lack of skills in conflict mediation are all key factors in forced terminations," Maples said.

"Many ministers and their families are so wounded that they are not ready to fill a ministerial role on a church staff. They need a quiet place where they and their families can go and be alone with the Lord and have a caring family around them."

New BGCT ministries designed to alleviate conflict and forced terminations include specially trained intentional interim pastors who help heal wounds and prepare congregations for success with the coming of their next minister.

Since the BGCT launched its minister/church relations office a year ago, 14 intentional interims have been certified and 36 others are completing their field work and will receive certification this fall.

Also, 19 people have been trained in conflict mediation, while 300 have been trained as mentors.

When a minister is forced to resign or is involuntarily terminated, it is often difficult to find housing and employment to sustain himself and his family, Maples said.

Usually he is expected to vacate the parsonage at the earliest possible date. Being terminated as a minister in a Baptist church is more traumatic than simply losing one's job in secular employment.

The minister not only loses his livelihood, but he loses the church family to sustain and support him. The ones who have been his family suddenly isolate him.

It usually takes from 18 months to four years to re-enter the ministry. Pastor search committees tend to question the capability and trustworthiness of a minister who's been forced out. Many take the attitude that if he's fired by his former church, there must be something wrong with him.

Interestingly, as many as one-third never re-enter the ministry and are lost for the cause of Christ. When one does re-enter, it's nearly always at a smaller church with a smaller salary.

Also, the minister who's been fired usually finds it difficult to secure secular employment for several reasons. One reason is his lack of specialized training.

Another is prejudice against hiring a minister. Sometimes it's bias against the Christian faith and ministers.

From the practical standpoint, Maples said, employers realize that if a minister is truly called, he will re-enter the ministry at the first opportunity.

Several Texas Baptist congregations already are considering becoming churches of refuge, to love and care for displaced ministers and their families. A Church of Refuge would provide free housing for up to six months, would provide the minister with a position on the church staff and, if possible, pay a stipend of \$100 a week until he can get on his feet, Maples said.

Also, the coordinator of the BGCT ministers counseling service, Glenn Booth, and the minister/church relations coordinator would provide counseling and/or continuing professional education to better prepare the displaced minister for future service.

Baptist Encampments have responded to the crisis. Big Country Encampment, in addition to providing the space for the first Refuge House, furnish utilities and provide half-time employment for the displaced minister and his family until he can get a new start.

Congregations interested in becoming Churches of Refuge are encouraged to contact Baptist General Convention of Texas, Minister/Church Relations, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, TX 75246-1798; phone, (214) 828-5169.

Terminated ministers may contact their associational director of missions or Maples at (214) 828-5169 for information concerning the new ministry.

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(BP) photos available upon request by calling (214) 828-5230.

**Jimmy Draper launches tour
of state Baptist conventions**

By Julie Nall

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--Naming Missouri as a "Camelot" to him, Baptist Sunday School Board President James T. Draper Jr. commenced a tour to all 35 state Baptist convention offices April 29 at the Baptist Building in Jefferson City.

He referred to the time when he was pastor of Red Bridge Baptist Church in Kansas City, and he said Missouri was a welcome start for his travels that will take him across the United States in the next few years. He plans to meet with state convention leaders in their work places, rather than in Nashville or at a conference center. His purpose is to strengthen the relationships that often are diluted by changes in Baptist life.

"It suddenly dawned on me several months ago that while I know the leaders of the state conventions, I've never been in their offices," Draper said. "Change is taking place. It's inevitable for all of us. The strongest thing is our relationships, and we don't want to see them weaken in any way."

Following a building-wide reception for Draper, he met in a question-and-answer setting with several state leaders who communicate directly with the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Draper noted changes such as a new "LeaderCare" program which networks resources to minister to pastors and other church staff who face burnout, termination or other problems in their churches. Another program is planned for women ministers in churches, a group he said has been neglected to the point of an "epidemic concern for Southern Baptists."

"We've got to help pastors and others understand their roles," he said. "Most pastors think they're supposed to be kings or doormats, and they're not supposed to be either. Servant leadership is the way of Jesus."

Draper's discussion also touched on future possibilities for SBCNet, the Internet and Baptist Book Stores. He also referred to internal structural changes at the BSSB, as well as changes initiated by Southern Baptist Convention restructuring.

"We're not going to change from our Baptist guidelines," Draper said. "Everything we produce has to meet the Baptist Faith and Message." He acknowledged internal restructuring had caused some confusion and dismay for state leadership. He said he did not apologize for the change but did regret the inconvenience.

Draper said he plans to visit 16 state convention offices in 1996. Donald Wideman, executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention, said he thinks the tour, which Draper initiated, is "a good opportunity to foster relationships between our people and the Baptist Sunday School Board."

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**Stephens named publisher
for BSSB's Broadman & Holman**

**Baptist Press
5/1/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Longtime Nashville publishing executive Kenneth H. Stephens has been named director and publisher of the Baptist Sunday School Board's trade publishing division, according to BSSB President James T. Draper, Jr.

Stephens, 45, vice president for key account sales with Nelson/Word Publishing Group of Nashville, will assume the post in May. He will lead the board's trade publishing arm, Broadman & Holman, which publishes books, Bibles, audiovisuals and church supplies. He also will serve on the board's seven-member executive management group.

"Ken has a deep understanding of what Baptists are about and a strong business knowledge of how to run a publishing operation," Draper said. "He has outstanding experience in managing both sales and product development. He is a lifetime Southern Baptist, a former missionary and a leader in the Christian publishing field."

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Stephens joined Thomas Nelson, Inc., in 1982 as regional sales representative and became key accounts manager in 1989. In 1991, he was named vice president and editorial director before being promoted to publisher in 1994. In 1995, he became senior vice president and assumed his present position earlier this year.

"I am delighted to have this opportunity to serve the Sunday School Board and Southern Baptists," Stephens said. "Broadman & Holman has made excellent progress in recent years. I look forward to leading our efforts to even greater growth and ministry in the future."

Before joining Thomas Nelson (now Nelson/Word) in 1982, Stephens served as a Southern Baptist foreign missionary in the Dominican Republic from 1975-81 and as marketing director for Editorial Caribe, a Spanish-language publisher from 1981-82.

He holds the bachelor of arts degree from Mars Hill (N.C.) College. He also has attended Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., and Florida International University in Miami.

He and his wife, Nancy, are the parents of one daughter.

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(BP) photo posted in the SBCNet News Room.

Whoooo! Clower shares
ministry of clean humor

By Millie Gill

Baptist Press
5/1/96

SPRINGDALE, Ark. (BP)--Jerry Clower, a popular country humorist, is quick to praise East Fork Baptist Church in Amite County, Miss., for the role it played in his Christian conversion.

Clower, who enthusiastically entertained 2,000 senior adults at Arkansas Baptists' 1996 Golden Age Evangelism Conference, said he was saved at age 13 in a revival meeting. "I thank God for my religious heritage," he declared. "East Fork Church, founded in 1810, always held summer revivals that began following the fourth Sunday in July and it was at the 1939 revival I became a Christian.

"I became even more grateful for my heritage when I was asked to research its history on the occasion of the church's 150th anniversary," Clower continued. "It was at this time I read about my forefathers being posted as guards to keep the Indians from interrupting services. This is the background that allowed me to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Clower, who serves as a deacon in the 100-member church, recalled that his wife, Homerline, was saved and baptized on the same day he was. "Since the first time I saw this blonde-haired girl there has never been another woman in my life. God has blessed me with a deeply committed wife and devoted mother to our four children, Ray, Amy, Sue and Katy."

The entertainer, who continues to live within a mile of where he was born, remembers his childhood days with fondness. Reared in a single-parent home, Clower said the influence of his Christian mother still plays a vital role in life. "I thank God for my mamma who taught me high moral standards, right from wrong and that you gave a hard day's work for a full day's pay," he said. "I am afraid in today's society our moral standards are so low that animals care more for their young'uns than the human race does."

Clower is grateful not only for his religious heritage but also for his country. Serving with the U.S. Navy in World War II aboard the USS Bennington, he earned three battle stars and a presidential citation.

"I love this country because I know what it took to keep it free," he declared. "It was there I learned about God's provision of guardian angels for those who love and serve him."

Following his military service, Clower determined he would gain a college education and work as a 4-H Club leader because of the influence a 4-H leader had on his life while growing up. He first attended a junior college in Summit, Miss., then transferred to Mississippi State University in Starkville.

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Although he had never played football prior to enrolling at Mississippi State, he became the team's left tackle and gained a football scholarship. Following his graduation with a degree in agriculture, Clower served for two years as an assistant county agent, working with 4-H clubs.

During that time, Clower was asked to become a fertilizer salesman by Owen Cooper, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. "I told Mr. Cooper of my commitment to work as a 4-H leader and that I wasn't interested in selling chemicals," Clower recounted. "However, Cooper convinced me I could move to Yazoo City and do both, which I did for 17 years."

An entertainment career opened for the God-fearing humorist as a result of a chemical meeting in Lubbock, Texas. "I had been asked to share updated chemical information with a group of salesmen there," Clower recalled. "While speaking, I realized I must try a new approach because the whole lot of them were about to go to sleep.

"I soon had their interests as I began relating humorous events which had occurred in Mississippi between me and some of my friends." MCA Records contacted Clower after a Lubbock farm director taped this session and submitted it to the recording company.

Clower's first record, released 30 days later, became the first of his 29 hits. Encouraged by record officials to add risque language to his act, Clower said, "I told the company I was a Christian who never had or never would use that kind of language and therefore the language would stay the same if they wanted me to continue recording for them." The only Grande Old Opry member with so many gold recordings, he also is the author of four books.

In addition to maintaining his clean, positive humor, Clower has included serious Christian segments on each of his records. He said another record company recently invited him to combine his Christian segments on one record. Clower said he has agreed to the request because he feels the greatest thing he can do in life is to be a witness for Christ in any way he can.

"I am an heir to a mansion, a robe and a crown and you are, too," he told Arkansas Baptist senior adults. "There are enough of you in this auditorium to turn the state of Arkansas upside down for him if you will only tell others of his saving grace."

Urging fellow Christians to quit worrying and learn to lean on God, Clower concluded, "I am so appreciative of what God has done for me that wherever I am I let the blood of Calvary speak for me. You, too, should let his blood speak for you rather than tarnishing your witness with personal worries."

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Ed Young: Disciplined lives
needed amidst U.S. antagonism

By Dena Dyer

Baptist Press
5/1/96

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The United States is a non-Christian culture militantly antagonistic toward God, Christ, church and Christianity, said Ed Young Sr., pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, during a April 24 chapel message at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Young encouraged the seminarians to survive in such a culture by living disciplined lives.

"To make a difference, we must be disciplined servant leaders," he said. "We must say 'yes' to righteousness, 'no' to sin and 'I will' to what we ought to do."

Citing Hebrews 12:1-2, Young said living a disciplined lifestyle requires four things:

-- laying aside every encumbrance. "We must put aside the worldly weights that hold us back," Young said. "A lot of people go into the ministry with preconceived notions and expectations. But God calls us to go wherever he leads us -- not to a geographical area that we specify."

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-- putting aside the sins that entangle. "The sins that entangle ministers are often the lusts of the flesh," he said. "They will disenfranchise us and entrap us, preventing us from being used mightily of God."

-- running the race with endurance. "You are trained for a race when you leave this institution, but you must endure," Young cautioned. "Be a plodder, like the turtle was in his race with the hare. Go for the long haul."

-- fixing your eyes on Jesus. "The man or the woman who every day fixes his or her eyes on Jesus by having a quality quiet time will be used of God," Young said. "And fixing our eyes on Jesus means that we must also get back to a sense of awe and wonder when we worship God. That is something we have lost today, especially in our Southern Baptist churches."

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Pat Cole to join
Western Recorder

Baptist Press
5/1/96

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Pat Cole, director of news and information at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary since 1987, will join the Western Recorder staff June 4 as partnership editions editor and special projects coordinator for the Kentucky Baptist newsjournal.

Cole, 37, will manage the editing and production of four monthly newspapers the Western Recorder produces in partnership with other state Baptist conventions. The Recorder currently has publishing partnerships with the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Witness, the New England Baptist, the Hawaii Baptist and the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist.

In addition, he will coordinate a variety of special projects on the Recorder's behalf, with particular emphasis on serving the churches, agencies and institutions of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Cole partially will assume responsibilities currently held by Melanie Childers, who has announced plans to leave the Western Recorder staff in August. Childers has served as partnership editions editor and staff writer. Childers joined the Recorder staff in 1992 as a part-time staff writer, a role that later developed into a full-time position. She is leaving the Recorder to accept an appointment in the chaplain residency program at Carolinas Medical Center, Charlotte, N.C.

"Melanie has done an outstanding job and has helped us pioneer the work in partnership publishing," said the Recorder's interim editor, Mark Wingfield. "She has made an invaluable contribution to the Recorder and four other Baptist newspapers by her effective ministry.

"At the same time, Pat Cole brings a wealth of experience and skills that should allow us to build upon the good foundation Melanie has laid," he said. "Pat also will help us bring together a number of special projects that will strengthen the Recorder's ministry."

The partnership publishing effort was the brainchild of Wingfield and Marv Knox, former Western Recorder editor.

Cole has won numerous awards for news writing, feature writing and publication management. Before moving to Southern Seminary's staff in 1987, he was a general assignment reporter for the Elizabethton Star in his hometown of Elizabethton, Tenn.

From 1984-86, while attending Southern Seminary, Cole was a staff writer for the Recorder.

He holds the bachelor of science degree in mass communications from East Tennessee State University, the master of divinity degree in denominational ministry from Southern Seminary and is a candidate for the master of arts degree in marketing from Webster University, St. Louis.

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