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BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

August 2, 1996

96-135

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**Seminaries ready to welcome
spiritual awakening meetings**

By Art Toalston

**Baptist Press
8/2/96**

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--The seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention are ready partners with SBC President Tom Elliff in a series of one-day convocations emphasizing the crucified life and prayer for spiritual awakening from Aug. 29 through Sept. 12.

That readiness, for example, is reflected by Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., since 1992.

"Upon my arrival at Southeastern," Patterson recounted, "I sensed a vast spiritual lethargy that is gripping our land. At the same time, I sensed the decadence of our whole social order and really felt that God was leading me to call our school to prayer for a Third Great Awakening in our day."

To that end: "Southeastern Seminary has recently completed the renovation of two major prayer rooms in Binkley Chapel," Patterson recounted. "One is devoted to prayer for the world and one is devoted to prayer for our own country. These prayer rooms will be the focus beginning this fall of prayer ministry sponsored by the student council and faculty of Southeastern Seminary in praying 18 hours every day for worldwide revival.

"In my own personal life," Patterson said, "I have been devoting most of my prayer time specifically to the seeking of God's face for revival on the East Coast."

The initial convocation, Aug. 29, will be at Southeastern.

From there, the convocations will be Sept. 3 at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; Sept. 4, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.; Sept. 10, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; Sept. 11, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.; and Sept. 12, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. A convocation also will be held Sept. 5 at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis, Tenn.

Each convocation will begin at 10 a.m.

Elliff, in a July 15 mailing to 40,000 Southern Baptist pastors and other leaders, issued an "urgent invitation" to the convocations. The 20th century, he noted, "is rapidly drawing to a close. Tragically, this could be the first century in our nation's history to pass without a great, sweeping move of God. Will that be the case? Many of us believe the Lord is saying 'turn to me!' He is calling us to revival: calling us to the cross; calling us to the crucified life."

The seminaries are opening their campuses to all concerned pastors and church leaders for a day "when all energies and interests will be focused on revival," Elliff wrote. He urged Southern Baptists to travel to the nearest campus "on the day most suited to your schedule." Elected SBC president at the SBC's annual meeting in New Orleans, Elliff is pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, in suburban Oklahoma City.

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R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, said of the convocations:

"I know the burden of Dr. Elliff's heart, and I share his concern that our hopes for revival be established upon clear biblical and theological principles. I am convinced that authentic revival is the gracious gift of our sovereign God, who brings revival among his people for the increase of his own glory.

"Our concern should be focused on knowing, worshiping and serving our Lord so that we will be spiritually prepared, should God bring revival," Mohler continued.

"True revival is established upon God's Word and by God's gift. The true fruits of revival should be seen in an increased love for Christ and his church, a deeper knowledge of God's Word and a closer walk with the Lord," Mohler said. "We will pray that God would prepare our hearts that we would be ready for revival."

Southwestern Seminary President Ken Hemphill noted:

"I am excited and challenged by the prospect of a spiritual awakening in our convention and in our nation. The conditions of our day and the need of the world mandates an awakening.

"I am especially excited by President Elliff's focus on prayer and awakening," Hemphill continued. "I believe it is right on target. I am delighted he chose to hold the convocations on our seminary campuses. One can only imagine the potential impact of six seminaries ablaze with revival.

"I implore Southern Baptists to pray that we will be prepared to hear God's voice, to respond through humble confession and personal repentance and to be obedient to his directives," Hemphill said.

"Personally, I have been reading through the Bible with a focus on 'the Glory of God,'" Hemphill recounted. "I long for his glory to be seen in my life, on our campus and across our convention."

Mark Coppenger, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., did a bit of storytelling to underscore the convocations' need:

"This summer, I had the chance to walk the Gettysburg battlefield in southern Pennsylvania. I was moved by the courage of both sides, but I was particularly struck by two inscriptions I found at the farthest reach of Pickett's desperate charge up Cemetery Ridge. A large, book-like marker stands at the point where the Confederate attack faltered. It reads, 'High Water Mark of the Rebellion.' Just to its left stands a sign where the Union artillery held its ground. It reads, 'Double canister at ten yards.'

"I thought immediately of the plight of our nation, the disintegration of decency, the family and our hold on basic truths. I thought, too, of the plight of the church, the disintegration of conviction and consecration. I saw the strong surge of the world, the flesh and the devil and asked myself, 'When will the rebellion reach its high water mark? When will the forces of evil be turned to retreat?'

"President Elliff has called us to days of special focus on the rebellion against God in our land and in our own hearts. And so we shall stand together on the high ground and load the double canister of plain biblical speaking and fervent prayer, even as the enemy is on our face -- all in hope that this year will indeed mark the high water point of the rebellion. We hope that many will join us on that sacred battlefield Sept. 11 at Midwestern."

To those who cannot come to the convocations, Patterson suggested they choose at least one of those days, if not all of them, "and join us in their homes, businesses or schools in prayer on those particular days beginning at 10:00 a.m. and asking the intervention of God on our nation."

"Our nation is on the verge of moral and spiritual disillusion," Patterson said. And: "... with 5 billion-plus people on the face of the globe -- heaven and hell being realities and every one of these people destined to spend eternity one place or the other depending upon their response to Jesus Christ -- we must have revival that will result in evangelism and world missions.

"Our convention has been through confrontation and upheaval for the past 15 years," Patterson continued. "Though I naturally believe that the cause was right, I also believe that mere theological orthodoxy is worthless unless it is accompanied by marvelous spiritual renewal. This is the ultimate goal that we hope and pray to achieve. I believe it can happen."

Said Hemphill: "We stand at a pivotal moment in Southern Baptist life. The Covenant for a New Century (SBC restructuring) is now in the implementation phase. We must have a fresh anointing of the Spirit giving us a renewed passion for world evangelism and the empowering to accomplish the task."

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The one-day convocations will not boast a list of speakers, Elliff stated, explaining, "We will be gathered to meet with God, not to be drawn to some noted personalities announced in advance." Prayer -- for Southern Baptists to turn to the crucified life with Jesus and for spiritual awakening -- will be emphasized, not just preaching or singing, Elliff said.

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(BP) graphic -- an information block for use in state Baptist newspapers and Baptist association and church newsletters -- is posted in SBCNet News Room and available upon request from Baptist Press' central office in Nashville, (615) 244-2355. Betty Kemp and Polly House contributed to this story.

Clinton agrees to overhaul of welfare by Congress

**Baptist Press
8/2/96**

WASHINGTON (BP)--A massive overhaul of the government's six-decade-old approach to helping the needy became a reality as Congress overwhelmingly adopted welfare reform legislation and President Clinton agreed to sign it into law.

While expressing dissatisfaction with some elements of the legislation, the president said July 31 it provides an opportunity "to transform a broken system that traps too many people in a cycle of dependence to one that emphasizes work and independence; to give people on welfare a chance to draw a paycheck, not a welfare check. ... this is the best chance we will have for a long, long time to complete the work of ending welfare as we know it"

Clinton had vetoed two earlier welfare reform proposals from the Republican-led Congress before deciding to approve this one after it came out of a Senate-House of Representatives conference committee. He did so despite the opposition of some within his administration.

The House of Representatives passed the bill July 31 by a 328-101 vote. Democrats split 98-98, while all but two Republicans voted for it.

On Aug. 1, the Senate approved the bill 78-21. All 53 Republicans supported the bill, while Democrats favored it 25-21.

The legislation includes the following provisions:

- replaces Aid to Families With Dependent Children, the guaranteed program of federal aid for poor children, with block grants to states to run their own welfare programs.
- limits lifetime welfare assistance to five years, with the provision states may exempt up to 20 percent of their caseloads for hardship reasons and set shorter time restrictions.
- requires recipients to begin working two years after going on welfare.
- prohibits cash aid and food stamps to those convicted of felony drug charges, although their families still could receive benefits.
- limits childless adults between 18 and 50 years of age to three months of food stamps every three years, unless they are working.
- blocks most legal immigrants who have not become citizens from receiving most federal aid.

The bill would reduce welfare spending by \$55 billion the next six years, largely by cuts in food stamps and aid to legal immigrants. Clinton expressed his greatest opposition to the provision on legal immigrants and said he would seek to correct that part of the reform in the future.

Officials of the National Governors' Association praised the legislation. NGA Chairman Bob Miller, governor of Nevada, said it "incorporates many of the principles and recommendations put forward by the governors in their welfare reform policy."

Liberal congressional Democrats such as Sen. Edward Kennedy, D.-Mass., and Sen. Daniel Moynhan, D.-N.Y., criticized the legislation. Some cited studies predicting the reform might push at least 1 million children into poverty.

Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, a proponent of the bill, said, "The first 100 days of the Dole administration have begun 97 days before the election."

Sen. Dan Coats, R.-Ind., said Clinton's decision to support the measure after two vetoes and with the election nearing was "not principle. It is politics, pure and simple."

While Coats called the legislation a "step in the right direction," he said it is short of the goal.

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"Many of the problems associated with welfare are problems of the heart and home," Coats said in a written statement. "The government cannot solve these problems, and it should not be in the position -- as it has been for 30 years and \$5 trillion -- of exacerbating them.

"The government should do no harm while encouraging local groups, individuals and private and religious charities to do more," Coats said.

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Compiled by Tom Strode.

**'Charitable choice' entangles
church & state, ethicists say**

**Baptist Press
8/2/96**

DALLAS (BP)--"Charitable choice" provisions in the welfare reform bill approved by Congress and endorsed by President Clinton "put the fox in religion's henhouse," according to Phil Strickland, director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Those provisions allow churches to receive direct funding for social services such as soup kitchens and emergency food pantries on their premises. And with government funds, said Strickland, come government control.

"More than anything in recent years, this raises the possibility that churches who carry out ministries with government money may have Big Brother government peering over their shoulder, regulating what they do," he said.

"Government funds will not and should not be used without strict accountability. Churches which fund ministries with government dollars will quickly find the agents of government gazing closely at what the church is doing, judging whether it meets with government approval. And if it doesn't, the federal dollars will cease.

"What will it feel like when the feds come into the church to audit its charitable activities?"

Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission President Richard D. Land, while saying such government funding should be available to religious organizations as it is to private charitable organizations, agreed with federal funding will come unacceptable government oversight and restrictions.

"The federal government does have the right to say if you are going to use federal money in a ministry, you can't evangelize in that ministry," Land said, adding, "To me that is an unacceptable price to pay for government funding. I would advise churches to not take the funding.

"If the Catholic church wants to apply for a federal grant that is being offering to private charitable organizations to help feed hungry people or provide after-school programs, I certainly think that is constitutional as long as they agree not to teach Catholic doctrine to those kids in that aftercare program," Land continued.

This is wise policy, Land said. "I don't want the government funding Mormon evangelization or Catholic evangelization any more than I think they ought to fund Baptist evangelization."

Yet Land sought to draw a clear distinction between the availability of federal funds and the wisdom of churches taking the money. "To say that any private charitable organization can have this money with federal guidelines but that religious organizations can't is discriminatory and unconstitutional."

Federal funding robs church benevolence programs of their very nature as spiritually nourishing ministries prompted by religious devotion, Strickland said.

"Being the conduit of government money to those in need will never provide the moisture for the soul that comes from church members doing ministry themselves, using the resources God has given them in their own churches," he said.

The provision also "carries the virus" of setting churches against other churches and existing human services providers as they compete for a limited number of federal dollars, Strickland said.

Furthermore, he noted, dependence upon government silences the church's prophetic voice.

"Churches are supposed to be about pleasing the Lord, helping people with the resources that God provides, and holding government accountable," Strickland said. "Churches shouldn't be about pleasing government, depending on the resources government provides, and being accountable to government.

"I would strongly advise local churches to minister to folks using their own tithes and offerings, not with government dollars. For a church to do less is to accept the forbidden fruit -- the poison apple, really -- that the serpent offers."

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Compiled from reporting by Ken Camp and Dwayne Hastings.

**Gold medalist uses faith
for self-value, not winning**

By Terri Lackey

ATLANTA (BP)--Olympic gold medalist and new Christian Sheila Taormina made the U.S. women's swim team by 3/10ths of a second during the trials in March. Any slower and she would have gone back home to Livonia, Mich. -- her Olympic dreams dashed.

Instead, Taormina, 27, and her three teammates walked away with gold medals in the 800-meter freestyle relay July 25, setting an Olympic and American record and beating out Germany and Australia in the process.

Taormina, a member of New Focus Community Church, Plymouth, Mich., does not so much credit God with giving her the strength to win the relay as she does for providing the peace to do her best and accept the results.

"Being a Christian helped me accept whatever happened," Taormina said. "God helps me value myself the same whether I win or lose."

Her faith enabled her to feel at peace, she said. So did her Southern Baptist church family, her mom, dad and seven brothers and sisters.

"A lot of people think that winning is what's important, but my church and my family didn't expect me to win a gold medal; they expected me to do my best and have contentment with the results," she said.

While she may be the second-oldest women on the U.S. swim team, Taormina is a relatively new Christian. A quality management representative for an automobile supply company near Detroit, she said she is excited at the opportunity the gold medal win will give her for sharing her faith.

"I knew I would have an opportunity to share my faith with people if I won," said Taormina, who noted she became a Christian during the year in which she was training for the Olympics.

Taormina said in September 1995 she approached her pastor, Phil Rogers, about the anxiety she was having about the upcoming Olympic trials.

"I asked him, 'Why am I worried about this? Am I hoping for something that is wrong?'"

When the conversation turned to faith, Taormina said Rogers asked her if she was a Christian. Despite the fact that she regularly attended church in Athens, Ga., home to the University of Georgia where she completed her bachelor's and master's degrees in business, Taormina said she was unsure about her faith.

She said when Rogers presented her with the plan of salvation and asked her if she would like to ask Jesus into her heart, she answered, "Well, yes, actually, I would."

It was at that point, Taormina said, she found peace about her decision to try out for the Olympics. "I felt confident then that that's what God wanted me to do" she said.

Taormina said she has retired from competitive swimming, but she will take one last important dip on Sept. 8. That is the date of her church's annual baptismal service.

"We baptize our new Christians once a year in a lake near the church," Rogers said in an Aug. 1 phone interview. "I think I'll challenge her to race me to the raft (where services are conducted). If she spots me a few seconds, I might just give her a good race."

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**Pastor remembers bomb site
from his 6 days at Olympics**

By Gomer Lesch

**Baptist Press
8/2/96**

MANITOWOC, Wis. (BP)--When Dallas Bivins, 31, pastor of Twin Cities Baptist Church, Manitowoc, Wis., was named a chaplain for Atlanta's Olympics, he didn't realize he would be witnessing at the very spot a bomb would explode a scant six hours later.

"On Friday, July 26, I moved a bench in Atlanta's Centennial Park about 20 feet to the very corner of the tower where the bomb was detonated early Saturday morning," Bivins said. "I didn't realize this until we were watching the news the following Monday night in Manitowoc, and that spot was identified."

The Wisconsin pastor spent six days as one of many volunteer chaplains of six major faiths -- Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist and Baha'i -- who brought their faith perspectives to the Summer Games' participants and spectators. Bivins had expected to be assigned one of the outlying venues several miles from Atlanta but at the last minute was able to go to the city, within one mile of the Olympic Circle.

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"I spent most of my time in street evangelism," he said. One person was saved, and "I had a lot of neat conversations."

As a conversation starter, he used a pin designed by former Olympic wrestler David Guinn. It has a rainbow of five colors, representing sin, the cleansing of the Holy Spirit, the blood of Christ, the growth of faith and the gold streets of heaven. It also has three torches, representing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the Olympics dates. Bivins was enlisted for the Olympics by Action Ministries of West Point, Ga., which Guinn heads.

"I would sit with pins all over my shirt and people would come up to me interested in trading. I would tell them I had this one pin I'm trading, and we would talk for 10 or 15 minutes. I would tell them that a trade really wasn't necessary, and that salvation is free."

Now, back in Manitowoc, he's finding the Olympic experience has opened doors. He has, for example, been invited to deliver the keynote speech to the local YMCA annual meeting.

In Atlanta, a typical day began with a devotional message and Bible study in the morning and ended with meetings at night with the 15 to 20 Action Ministries chaplain volunteers on hand. He would do street witnessing from about 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. "It was tiring, but it was also fantastic," Bivins said, still reflecting a week later the enthusiasm with which he approached the Olympic opportunity.

Bivins, a former high school football coach in the Southwest, played offensive and defensive lineman at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas. He may serve as chaplain at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, and the Summer Games in Sydney, Australia in 2000, he said. The trip to Australia will be a Bivins family team endeavor. Two-year-old Rick may not be ready for it, but Bivins' wife, Becca, 29, already has declared she's Australia-bound.

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**Reccord says Christian use
of media must be targeted**

By C.C. Risenhoover

**Baptist Press
8/2/96**

NORFOLK, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention's use of media can be maximized "if we will concentrate on the target we need to hit instead of simply shooting an arrow and drawing a target around it."

In an interview, Bob Reccord, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va., and chairman of the Implementation Task Force for the SBC "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring, said while media are the key to reaching the heart and head of America, whatever media are used must be "focused."

He also said any use of media by the SBC must include and touch the local church because "the local church is the heartbeat of our convention."

"We are standing on the precipice of the greatest days the world has ever seen," he said, "and the Lord has laid in our laps the most awesome mediums possible for conveying the gospel. We must not fumble this opportunity.

"Southern Baptists have the key to, and can be the leading influence in, taking Christ into the 21st century. But we have to think out of the box we've placed ourselves in. We have to use the best of the many methodologies and delivery systems available. We must also take the long view. And we must not major on minors and miss the ultimate issue."

Reccord said Southern Baptists are blessed with incredible resources and that restructuring -- including a new North American Mission Board, merging the Brotherhood Commission, Home Mission Board and Radio and Television Commission -- will help maximize those resources.

"To get the attention of the nation," he said, "we have to coordinate what we do, when we do it, where we do it, why we do it and how we do it. We can do that through the North American Mission Board in cooperation with, and in coordination with, state conventions, associations and local churches. By merging three separate entities into one, and by working more closely with the conventions, associations and local churches, we will be better able to convey the message of Jesus Christ in a planned, focused way.

"Our success in proclaiming the gospel depends on linking evangelistic strategy with the right delivery system, or systems. To get the job done, we may have to maximize use of many delivery systems. But it's important that we not become so fascinated with systems that we forget the message. The message must be the focus, not the messenger. We have to present Christ's message in such a way that it hits at the heart of where people are living."

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In the days ahead, Reccord said, Southern Baptists have to look at return on investment.

"We have to look at what our mission dollars are accomplishing," he said. "Maybe the primary reason we haven't been getting the answers we've wanted is because we've been asking some of the wrong questions.

"And the day's going to come when we realize we can't do all this ourselves. To win America to Christ, we're going to have to link arms with other evangelical groups."

Reccord, whose doctoral dissertation at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, was on "Equipping Metropolitan Church Leadership for Growing Evangelical Churches," said Christians can impact the entire country by focusing on major metropolitan areas.

"This doesn't mean neglecting the small towns and rural areas," he said, "but when you can penetrate major cities in a systematic way, you impact the nation. I think it's important to target specific areas, then to concentrate your resources on that area.

"I would like to see the North American Mission Board target regions of America, then pour our resources into those areas in an all-out campaign to win people to Christ. In a sense it would be like an invasion. We could soften the target area by use of media prior to the actual campaign. And, obviously, we would use media extensively throughout the campaign. Of course, I'm talking about creative, attention-getting electronic and print messages coordinated to both mobilize evangelicals and reach the lost.

"There would be a massive prayer effort and, at the proper time, preaching by several of our greatest preachers simultaneously throughout the targeted region. But use of media would definitely pave the way for all of this."

Reccord said it will be important for the NAMB to have an overall, long-term media strategy.

"Where media are concerned, there has been a change in menu," he said. "Our job is to find the right menu. We must develop a platform for media that we haven't had before.

"Consider that 80 cents of every dollar given to churches in this country is given by people over 55 years of age. This is our 'builder' generation. More than \$13 trillion is going to pass from the 'builder' generation to the 'boomer' and 'buster' generations. How does the North American Mission Board and our local churches touch these people who are receiving the greatest transfer of wealth in history? How do you communicate with the 'boomer' and 'buster' generations?

"First of all, it's important to understand all three generations. You can't use a one-size-fits-all approach.

"And use of media is critical because the 'boomers' and 'busters' are visual experience-oriented. They've never existed without media. So, if we're going to keep these people doing missions, we're going to have to use media. And it has to be more than a video sent to a pastor."

Reccord said in use of media it is important that mission dollars be put in the right place.

"It's easy to get caught up in what you're doing and lose objectivity," he said. "That's why I say we have to get out of the box we've put ourselves in and look at things from various perspectives. I know we have the ability and talent to do television spots that proclaim Christ and that are superior to those done by other religious and secular organizations. It's simply a matter of priorities.

"We also have the ability to do prime-time made-for-television movies that incorporate Christian principles. If we capture a story and do it well, people will watch."

Reccord, who in the 1980s was vice president of sales and marketing for a company to support his bivocational ministry in Michigan, said being in the business world gave him a better understanding of the man in the pew.

"It helped me think out of the box," he said. "While the message never changes, methods do. The parts are all there, but the synergy is lacking. We simply need to harness our energies and understand that Southern Baptists are but one element of what God is doing in the kingdom. Maybe God can use Southern Baptists to help focus all evangelicals on the job of waking America up to Jesus Christ.

"Certainly the opportunity is here for Southern Baptists to impact America by joining hands with others of the same heart to raise Christ to the nation."

Ordained to the ministry by Calvary Baptist Church at Evansville, Ind., Reccord's first full-time service was as minister of outreach and spiritual development at First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas. From there he went to the HMB's evangelism section as director of witness training.

"My work for the HMB opened my eyes to the field white unto harvest and put a fire in my heart," he said.

Reccord served as director of leadership training for Evangelism Explosion International prior to his bivocational ministry in Michigan. From there he went to Carmel Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C., as co-pastor and then to Bell Shoals Baptist Church, Brandon, Fla., as senior pastor. He was called to his present position in September 1992.

Born in Norfolk, Reccord's mother died when he was six months old. His father, who was in the Army and was an alcoholic, put him up for adoption.

"I think coming from a dysfunctional family has made me more compassionate toward hurting people," he said.

A one-week delay edited version of First Baptist Church of Norfolk's Sunday morning worship service is telecast by a local station every Sunday at 10 a.m. The program, called "Strength for Living," is also on cable Sunday afternoon and Sunday night.

The church has a tape ministry by the same name.

"Proper use of media will be one of the keys to success of the North American Mission Board," Reccord said. "I just hope we will all think in the long-term and not be shortsighted about the role it will play. Being shortsighted, of course, is very American.

"That's what happened in the automobile industry a few years ago. The Japanese were thinking long-term and we were looking at quarterly profits.

"I'll say this about the development of the North American Mission Board to this point. Every step of the way God has been like a mine sweeper, clearing the path. If we continue to walk obediently, with integrity, and keep a heart for the people, God will bless us in this endeavor."

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Jesus' example underscored for reaching secular adults

By Chip Alford

**Baptist Press
8/2/96**

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--When it comes to reaching secular adults, Jesus not only gave us words to follow, he literally showed what to do by his example, a Baptist Sunday School Board consultant told a group of church leaders.

"If we are going to reach secular people for Christ, the best place to start is to look at what Jesus did," David Apple, an adult consultant for the board's Bible teaching-reaching division, said at National Sunday School Leadership Training July 29-Aug. 2 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Whether it was responding to a woman caught in adultery, a sick man by the pool or a rich young ruler, "he accepted people; he was willing to approach them; he loved them," Apple said.

Another significant lesson from the ministry of Jesus, Apple said, is "he didn't always wait for people to come to him. He went to them.

"Most of us have come from a Christian culture that says we're going to stay here in church and wait for people to come to us. But I don't think that's going to happen anymore. We are going to have to go where they are."

The number of secular adults reveals an overwhelming opportunity for ministry, Apple said. In the United States alone, there are approximately 120 million people 14 and older who can be described as "secular." They can be divided into three groups:

- "ignostics," those with no Christian memory who are ignorant of Christian doctrine and lingo.
- "notional," those who think of themselves as more or less Christian because they assume their culture is more or less Christian.
- "nominal," those who are somewhat active in church but have not made a profession of faith in Christ.

One of the first steps Christians must take in reaching secular adults is understanding who and where they are. He quoted the following characteristics of secular people from the book "How to Reach Secular People" by George Hunter:

- 1) They are essentially ignorant of basic Christianity. They don't know our language.
- 2) They are seeking life BEFORE death.
- 3) They are conscious of doubt more than guilt.
- 4) They hold a negative image of the church.
- 5) They experience multiple alienations (from family, from meaning in life, etc.).

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- 6) They are basically untrusting.
- 7) They have low self-esteem.
- 8) They experience history as "out of control."
- 9) They consider personality as "out of control."
- 10) They cannot find the "door" to the church, i.e., how to get in, gain understanding and get involved.

Christians seeking to reach secular adults must help them change their negative image of the church, Apple said. They can do so by making it easier for them to attend worship and Bible study by offering optional meeting times such as Saturday night or during the week. They also can concentrate on making visitors feel welcome and comfortable and avoiding "churchy" terminology that might confuse the unchurched.

Church members also need to communicate in ways secular adults understand. "Say it in a practical way. Say it in a personal way. Say it in an up-tempo way," Apple said.

A focus on developing relationships with secular adults also is vital, he said. He noted five "relational questions" every person asks during their first contact with a group:

- 1) Do I fit in here?
- 2) Does anyone want to know me?
- 3) Am I needed?
- 4) What's the advantage (of being involved here)?
- 5) What is required of me?

Christians need to make sure they help secular adults find positive answers to these questions during their first contact with them, Apple said.

Churches interested in reaching secular adults must develop a strategy for doing so, Apple said, possibly identifying specific target groups they want to reach.

"For example, one church in Oklahoma decided they wanted to reach newlyweds, so they set up a booth at a local bridal fair. They gave out information and talked with people during the fair and they came away with more than 500 prospects. More than 200 ended up getting involved in a special Bible study they had for newlyweds and more than 100 got saved."

National Sunday School Leadership Training was sponsored by the Sunday School Board's Bible teaching-reaching division.

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Music ministers discuss how to live in harmony

By Ken Camp

**Baptist Press
8/2/96**

WACO, Texas (BP)--Even if music ministers cannot always live in perfect harmony with lay leaders and other church staff, they can learn survival skills, panelists said at the Texas Baptist Church Music Conference '96.

"Surviving Difficult Situations in Church Music" was one of nearly 100 leadership classes offered at the conference, sponsored by the Baptist General Convention of Texas' church music department, July 29-31 at Baylor University, Waco.

A.L. "Pete" Butler, dean of the church music school at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., was convener for the panel discussion that dealt with issues of forced terminations and strained relationships.

Joining Don Schlosser, music editor at the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn., on the panel were Texas Baptist ministers of music Phil Sitton of Shearer Hills Baptist Church, San Antonio; Ed Miller, First Baptist Church, Hillsboro; J.K. Weger, First Baptist Church, Paris; and Jakie Shirley, Immanuel Baptist Church, Temple.

Sitton noted when he went to Shearer Hills 25 years ago, his prayer was an urgent plea to God for permanency in ministry.

"The statistics at that time were that the average length of stay for a pastor in a Southern Baptist church was two years, and the average stay of a supporting staff member was only seven months," he said. "This was not the kind of future I wanted for my family or myself."

A clear sense of calling and an understanding of the music minister's task is to love people as they are and help them become all God created them to be are essential elements for a long tenure, Sitton said. Developing relationships, not sharpening skills and developing talents, must be the focus.

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Weger underscored that idea, noting, "I feel called to be a minister first and foremost. Music is simply the primary avenue for carrying it out."

Panelists and conference-goers offered several tips for building relationships and surviving tough times in the music ministry:

-- Do your work and more.

Treat the job description as a minimum standard. A church member is quick to forgive the mistakes of someone who prayed by his hospital bedside.

"Fewer staff members get into serious trouble doing the wrong thing than those who do nothing at all," Sitton said.

-- Be comfortable in your calling.

"There can only be one pastor," one panelist said. Each church staff member has a distinct role. Good relationships are built on mutual respect for the contributions each staff member brings to the church.

-- Remember the Golden Rule.

If someone else in the church is petty or spiteful, "don't mirror their bad behavior," one conference participant said. Even a problem pastor needs someone to minister to him.

-- Don't take sides.

"If and when factions arise in your church, remember that God has called you to minister to the entire membership, not just to those with whom you agree on a given issue," one panelist said. Don't cut off future opportunities to minister to one group in the church.

-- Don't take it personally.

It's human nature to resist change. When a music minister's innovative ideas are rejected, he shouldn't see it as a rejection of him or his ministry.

-- Wait awhile.

"Let time be your friend," one panelist advised. Time gives perspective to problems. Difficulties that seem earth-shattering today appear less important when viewed long-term.

And some problem people leave as time passes, said another panelist who urged music ministers to "wait 'em out." One conference participant said he was counting the days until a senior staff member retired.

-- Praise the Lord anyway.

Bad circumstances can help God's servants grow in grace and Christian maturity. And even when it's hard to see good coming out of a bad situation, God is still in charge. As one panelist noted, "My circumstances do not determine whether God is worthy of praise."

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**SBC LIFE associate editor
joins BSSB's Home Life**

**Baptist Press
8/2/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Jon Walker, associate editor of SBC LIFE, newsjournal of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, will become editor of the Baptist Sunday School Board's Home Life magazine Sept. 1.

"I'm looking forward to Jon taking leadership of Home Life where he will have the opportunity to help over half a million readers every month grow and develop their own personal and family life," said Gary Hauk, director of the BSSB's discipleship and family magazine department. "Jon brings a wealth of experience in journalism and public relations as well as a deep spiritual commitment to lead Home Life into its 51st year."

Walker will become the fifth editor in the magazine's history, according to Hauk, who said the periodical is celebrating its 50th anniversary in January 1997 with a special edition that will include a brief history of the magazine and editorials by former editors. Editors who have served prior to Walker are Joe Burton, George Knight, Reuben Herring and Charlie Warren. Warren is now serving as director of public relations at Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, after leaving Home Life July 31.

About his new assignment, Walker said: "I have a particular passion for this ministry because I have seen the power of God work within my own family, and I'm excited for the opportunity to lead Home Life as it celebrates 50 years of service to Southern Baptists."

Walker said a magazine such as Home Life is needed to help Christian families in the challenges of daily living.

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"We live in a world that attacks the family structure on every front -- divorce, abortion, adultery, teen pregnancy, child abuse -- the list compounds every day. Now, more than ever before, Christian families need a resource such as Home Life to support them as they battle on the front lines."

Walker joined SBC LIFE July 1994. Prior to that, he was news and information director for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., from 1992-94. He has worked as a freelance writer and producer of video programs and as an audiovisual/television production manager for the Alachua County School Board, Gainesville, Fla.

He holds a master of divinity degree from Southeastern Seminary, a master of arts in education degree and a bachelor of science degree in broadcast journalism from the University of Florida at Gainesville. He and his wife, Sherry Lynne, have a 7-month-old son, Christopher Cole. They are members of Parkway Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn.

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**New York convention names
Stringer as interim exec**

**Baptist Press
8/2/96**

EAST SYRACUSE, N.Y. (BP)--Dan C. Stringer has been elected interim executive director-treasurer of the Baptist Convention of New York, according to Terry Robertson, chairman of the convention's executive board. Stringer's term of service began Aug. 1 and will conclude Nov. 9 of this year.

The convention's executive director search committee, meanwhile, has announced it will receive resumes of nominees through Nov. 30.

Resumes may be sent to Bruce Aubrey, committee chair, Northside Baptist Church, 7965 Oswego Road, Liverpool, NY 13090. Only resumes which include a cover letter of nomination written by someone other than the nominee will be considered.

Stringer has 25 years of experience as a state convention leader: serving as executive secretary/director of the Northwest Baptist Convention, 1971-79; executive secretary of the Florida Baptist Convention, 1979-89; and interim executive director/treasurer of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, 1990-95. Prior to going to the Northwest, he served the Arizona convention as associate secretary, associate director and director of missions, secretary of stewardship and institutional and financial coordinator.

Stringer also is a former president of the Arizona convention.

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**Add Easter '97, March 30,
to SBC planning calendar**

**Baptist Press
8/2/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--There's a key omission in the Southern Baptist Convention's "1996-97 Calendar of Activities:" Easter 1997, March 30.

The calendar is a 16-month, September-December long-range planning calendar used by church leaders and produced by the SBC Executive Committee.

The omission "reflects the humanity (clerical error) of persons who process vast quantities of print material day after day," said Ernest Mosley, SBC Executive Committee executive vice president. "The omission does not represent official action of the Southern Baptist Convention," he joked, adding it is akin to the popular Easter sermon title, "What If There Were No Easter?"

"Perish the thought!" Mosley said.

"Church leaders using the planning calendar can correct the error by filling in the missing information," Mosley said. "Oh that every error were that easy to correct!"

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