

Historical Commission, SBC

Nashville, Tennessee

NATIONAL OFFICE:

SBC Executive Committee

901 Commerce #750

Nashville, Tennessee 37203

(615) 244-2355

Herb Hollinger, Vice President

Fax (615) 742-8915

CompuServe ID# 70420,17

(BP)**-- BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

BUREAUSATLANTA *Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522*DALLAS *Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232*NASHVILLE *127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300*RICHMOND *Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151*WASHINGTON *Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223*

July 3, 1996

96-114

TENNESSEE--12 states get arson fund disbursement of \$246,712.

TENNESSEE--S. African: America on verge of racial, spiritual healing.

INDIANA--First-Person: Like being slapped in the face: '2 black churches burned here.'

TENNESSEE--Transition group says NAMB process on track.

GEORGIA--Key mission credit card to aid U.S. volunteers.

PARIS--'Heart language' Scripture comes at key time, Berber says.

NORTH CAROLINA--Southeastern to establish extension center in Tampa.

TENNESSEE--Senior Adult Convention packet typo gives planners red faces.

NORTH CAROLINA--Seniors: Put missions service in retirement plans, he says.

NORTH CAROLINA--Senior adults must sort aging myths from truth.

NEW ORLEANS--His battle against drug abuse underscored by 'walk of hope.'

INDIANA--Home missionary takes literacy missions to work; photo.

INDIANA--Church presents gospel with country music beat; photo.

PERU--First-Person: ...the God of all comfort ministered on your behalf.

KENTUCKY--Laugh, pray, keep going author encourages women.

12 states get arson fund
disbursement of \$246,712

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
7/3/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Twelve state conventions received \$246,712 from the Southern Baptist Convention's "Arson Fund" to assist African American churches victimized by arson, according to the SBC Executive Committee's business and finance office July 3.

The disbursement of monies, primarily from the offering taken at the SBC annual meeting in New Orleans June 11-13, followed instructions of the Inter-Agency Council's Racial Reconciliation Task Force which formulated the percentage allotment to the 12 states. The offering taken at the New Orleans meeting, at the request of then-SBC President Jim Henry, Orlando, Fla. pastor, raised \$282,000 in pledges and cash gifts.

Jack Wilkerson, Executive Committee vice president for business and finance, said the July 3 disbursement is primarily the New Orleans offering funds, including \$50,000 cash each from the Georgia, Florida and Alabama state convention which had been pledged in New Orleans. An additional pledge, \$15,000 from Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, Tenn., in suburban Memphis, also has been received and was included in the July 3 disbursement, Wilkerson said.

The 12 states receiving the gifts, the percentage ratio established by the task force, and the actual July 3 disbursements: Alabama, 9.7 percent, \$23,931; Arkansas, 2.8, \$6,907; Florida, 4.2, \$10,361; Georgia, 1.4, \$3,453; Louisiana, 11.1, \$27,385; Mississippi, 9.7, \$23,931; North Carolina, 9.7, \$23,931; Oklahoma, 1.4, \$3,453; South Carolina, 20.8, \$51,316; Tennessee, 11.1, \$27,385; Texas, 15.3, \$37,747; and Virginia, 2.8, \$6,907.

--more--

Wilkerson said all the monies received by the Executive Committee for the "Arson Fund" are directed to the state conventions according to the task force formula. He said gifts continue to arrive at the Nashville office, including a \$10 check from a man who does not attend a church but who wanted to participate. Another check for \$25 arrived from a woman, 93 years old, who said her church had elected not to participate but she wanted to be a part of helping the churches, Wilkerson said.

"This outpouring of support is a clear indication that Southern Baptists' adoption of a resolution calling for racial reconciliation last year was not just idle talk," said Richard Land, president of the SBC Christian Life Commission. "Southern Baptists continue to be horrified and outraged at these church burnings. By their giving, Baptists are sending a message to those perpetuating these crimes that their attempts to foment racism are backfiring; their displays of hatred are instead spawning more signs of racial reconciliation."

More than 40 primarily African American churches in the Southeast have burned in the last 18 months, most as the result of an arsonist.

Land said the task force developed the formula of distribution based on an in-hand count of arson-related African American church fires in the state as a percentage of the total number of churches impacted nationally.

Those reports, Land said, indicate South Carolina, followed by Texas, has had the largest number of fires.

"Once the money reaches the state Baptist convention offices, it will be their responsibility to determine the amount of assistance each church will need," Land said. "Baptists in Alabama know more about the needs in Alabama and Baptists in Georgia know more about the needs in Georgia," Land said in noting the reason the funds are channeled through the state conventions.

"We will sweep out the fund every month," Land said. "We want to get the money out of Nashville and back to the state where it can help."

The task force was formed earlier this year by the Inter-Agency Council, composed of the chief executive officers of the 19 SBC entities, to seek the eradication of racism within the convention as outlined in the Racial Reconciliation Resolution adopted by messengers to the 1995 SBC meeting in Atlanta.

The task force said each state convention office will disburse the funds according to three criteria:

- churches must be African American.
- the state convention office is asked to give an accounting of the dispersal on a quarterly basis to the SBC Executive Committee which will then give a comprehensive report to the task force.
- the state conventions are further requested to work closely with Willie McPherson, director of black church extension at the SBC Home Mission Board, as they determine how these funds should be best dispersed in their states.

Following the SBC meeting last month in New Orleans, newly elected President Tom Elliff, Del City, Okla., pastor, announced his support of the SBC "Arson Fund." He said Southern Baptists are "committed to helping our brothers and sisters in Christ to rebuild amidst these tragic events. Greater than any hatred which fosters such reprehensible acts is the love that Southern Baptists find in their hearts for these churches that have been burned."

In addition, Southern Baptist construction crews are volunteering to immediately begin rebuilding the burned churches. Presently, four Baptist state conventions have sent crews to churches in need and the SBC Brotherhood Commission is attempting to contact each of the fire-damaged congregations to assess the level of need.

Donations to the SBC "Arson Fund" may be sent directly to Baptist state convention offices or the SBC Executive Committee, 901 Commerce St., Nashville, TN 37203.

**S. African: America on verge
of racial, spiritual healing** By Joyce Sweeney Martin

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (BP)--Despite more than 40 recent arsons of predominantly black churches, America may be at the verge of racial and spiritual reconciliation, said a South African peacemaker and religious leader.

"The climate is ripe in the United States for racial reconciliation," said Michael Cassidy, founder of African Enterprise. Established 35 years ago, African Enterprise is a Christian interdenominational, interracial ministry of evangelism and reconciliation.

Against the backdrop of long-entrenched racial polarization in South Africa and the recent burnings of African American church buildings in the United States, Cassidy spoke June 26 to organizers of Reconciliation '97, an international gathering of Christians in Coventry, England, Sept. 1-7, 1997.

"Something is just on the verge of happening. The devil has overreached himself with the burning of those churches. It may well be a 'kairos moment' in which God will work mightily," said Cassidy, an Anglican who was also in America to speak at two recent Promise Keepers rallies.

He suggested three steps toward reconciliation:

1) Recognize and acknowledge alienation exists. "The average white in the United States is unaware of the depth of pain in the black soul." Just as in his native South Africa, Anglo Americans have failed to grasp what it is to be robbed of one's human dignity, he said.

2) Engage in mutual education. Listen to and learn from each other. "Whites are blind to blacks' pain, while blacks continue to say, 'What's the problem with whites? Why don't they understand us?'"

In America, "a mighty act of listening needs to take place," he said. Congress can try to curb racism, but "all the trump cards are in the hands of the church."

Cautioning the audience against underestimating the power of prayer, Cassidy recounted South Africans prayed around the clock for two years before the 1994 elections. "There is nowhere in the world where politicians are prayed for night and day like in South Africa."

Cassidy said Christians in America should build an interracial network for prayer and building right relationships.

3) Adopt a partnership rather than an adversarial approach. "Focus on the problem, not on each other."

As a model, Cassidy told of how African Enterprise set up six retreat weekends for key "second-tier" leaders from South Africa's opposing political parties prior to the 1994 elections.

As blacks and whites alike shared their fears and pains, each understood how they had contributed to the pain of the other, he said. Only then could forgiveness begin, he said.

Cassidy encouraged every white church in America to start serious dialogue with a neighboring black church. "Go on a retreat together. Share your stories, your pain, your fears, your background; shatter stereotypes and myths," he said. "Nothing happens until people meet face to face."

Reconciliation '97 will bring together Christians from around the world who "have a heart for reconciliation," said conference organizer Reid Hardin. The international event will include forums dealing with racial, gender, generational, religious, class, economic and other divisions, said Hardin, coordinator for renewal and reconciliation for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. "We want to get people together to tell their stories."

Cassidy's book, "A Witness For Ever," recounts the behind-the-scenes efforts of South African Christians to avert expected civil war as the April 1994 elections approached. A solution was reached just six days before the election and the peaceful elections were hailed by secular media around the nation as "a miracle," he said.

FIRST-PERSON

Like being slapped in the face:

'2 black churches burned here' By Deborah P. Brunt

YORKTOWN, Ind. (BP)--It hits home when it hits home. At 6:30 one morning recently, our phone rang. In answer to my sleepy "Hello," a friend in Alcorn County, Miss., said, "Two black churches burned here last night."

Early investigations revealed the fires were almost surely set intentionally, with the destroyed buildings lying only four miles apart and the blazes reported within 17 minutes of each other.

Hanging up the phone, I sat on my bed, feeling I'd been slapped in the face. Although I'm not now on the scene, I lived in Alcorn County most of my life before moving to Indiana two summers ago. Hearing someone had set fire to two houses of worship in my neck of north Mississippi was like hearing that someone had broken into my house. No, I can't share the grief, the outrage, the sense of violation the members of Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist and Central Grove Baptist churches must feel. But I am stung by the two key aspects of these crimes.

First, the victims were black. News reports shout that more than 30 fires still under investigation have gutted black churches across the South in the last year and a half. All these apparent arsons serve to worsen the race relations stigma already attached to us southerners.

People who haven't been there believe small-town Mississippi to be what they've seen in TV shows and movies -- a haven for bigots run by three or four heavyweights who hold every elected office in town and use their power to snuff out blacks and anyone else who gets in their way.

I know better. Yes, prejudice has deep roots among us. Yes, we still have a long way to go before blacks and whites are embracing one another without reserve. But, with few exceptions, we're a far cry from what the media paints us.

I was in elementary school the one time I said the "n" word. As it happened, I said the word in front of my father. Daddy was not normally the family disciplinarian. Many times, Mama got frustrated because she was trying to correct us children about something and Daddy was bent double laughing about what we'd done.

But Daddy didn't laugh that day. As angry as I've ever seen him, he exploded, "Don't you ever say that word again! Don't you ever say any word that puts down people of another race!"

I never did. The force of my daddy's words blasted almost every shred of racial prejudice right out of me. Yet today, my father and I and all southerners are lumped with those few who torch churches to express racial hatred, to create racial tension, or both.

Second -- and somehow generally forgotten -- the victims were churches. In the last 18 months, not only have black churches burned, so have an almost equal number of white churches.

Meanwhile, the media fails to point out that every intentionally set church fire is an attack against Christians.

In fact, like some rape victims, Christians have been told, "It's probably your fault, anyway."

One pastor (yes, I said pastor) quoted in the June 18 issue of USA Today said, "There's only a slippery slope between conservative religious persons and these that are actually doing the burning."

That amounts to double-barreled persecution. Yet Central Grove's pastor, Perry Carroll, was right when he said, "No matter what they do to the building, the churches that were established in Jesus' name will always stand." And no matter what they say, I might add, the true church -- made up of blacks and whites and every other race -- will stand.

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus put it this way: "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

--30--

Brunt is a freelance writer in Yorktown, Ind.

**Transition group says
NAMB process on track**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--One of the key components of the restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, the creation of the North American Mission Board, is on track, according to officials of the Implementation Task Force.

A group of ITF members dealing with the particulars of the NAMB organization met in Nashville, Tenn., July 1 to concentrate efforts and to stay on track with the transition plan for the first 90-120 days, according to Bob Reccord, ITF chairman and pastor of First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va.

"In addition, the group laid plans to begin coordinating the interaction and transition especially between the Radio and Television Commission, the Brotherhood Commission and the Home Mission Board," Reccord said. The merger of those three agencies will form the NAMB, the key part of the restructuring of the SBC given final approval in June by messengers to the New Orleans annual meeting. The "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring will reduce the number of SBC agencies and boards from 19 to 12, with the new structure to be in place by June 1997.

"We are beginning to calendar the events that will help facilitate a smooth and effective transition," Reccord said.

At the July 1 meeting, Reccord said the group got an update and was thoroughly briefed on the Coopers & Lybrand report segment that has been activated to date. The group also held discussions about the future additional steps Coopers & Lybrand will take in continuing a focus on the major issues involved in the restructuring.

Coopers & Lybrand is the Atlanta consulting firm hired by the ITF to assist it in the implementation of the restructuring.

Reccord said the ITF continues to work with the agencies which are being merged or dissolved "to establish the best and most effective timeline."

In addition to the RTVC, Brotherhood and Home Mission Board, other affected agencies include the Education Commission, Stewardship Commission, Historical Commission, Southern Baptist Foundation.

--30--

**KeyMission credit card
to aid U.S. volunteers**

By Sarah Zimmerman

**Baptist Press
7/3/96**

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)--Home missions volunteers will get a financial boost when Southern Baptists use a new KeyMission credit card designed to generate money for the Baptist Volunteer Mission Fund.

Volunteers do not receive a salary, but they often need assistance with expenses such as transportation and housing. Money also is periodically needed for volunteer projects such as construction materials. Bob Banks, retired Home Mission Board executive vice president, said the Baptist Volunteer Mission Fund will make it financially possible for more people to volunteer and for more projects to be completed.

Cliff Farmer, a volunteer in Squaw Valley, Calif., and a founder of the Baptist Volunteer Mission Fund, created the KeyMission credit card concept.

The credit card is a MasterCard with a percentage of every purchase made benefiting the Baptist Volunteer Mission Fund. Banks said he expects the fund to receive at least \$30 a year from each card. State conventions which help market the card will receive a portion of the money to support volunteer work in their state.

Acknowledging many Southern Baptists already have credit cards, Banks said he hopes they will switch to the KeyMission card because "it's a card that gives to missions."

--more--

The Southern Baptist Foundation will receive money coming to the Baptist Volunteer Mission Fund. The money will be distributed by the BVMF board of directors to participating state conventions and to volunteer efforts requested by the Home Mission Board.

BVMF directors currently include Banks, Irene and Phil Bennett from Augusta, Ga.; Tom Logue from Little Rock, Ark.; Glen Marshall from Ellijay, Ga.; and Fred Roach from Texas.

KeyMission card holders will earn points toward air travel certificates for each dollar charged, and the card can be used to withdraw cash at automated teller machines. The card also can be used to place long distance phone calls at 12.9 cents per minute any day, any time of day, from home or while traveling. A percentage of all telephone charges are contributed to the BVMF. The card has no annual fee and competitive annual percentage rates.

For a credit card application, write Banks at P.O. Box 768773, Roswell, GA 30076.

--30--

(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist papers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline on SBCNet.

'Heart language' Scripture
comes at key time, Berber says By Robin Martin

Baptist Press
7/3/96

PARIS (BP)--After years of having to search the New Testament in languages not their own, Algerian Berbers can now understand its truths in their own tongue.

And the development couldn't be more timely, said a Berber Christian.

A new translation released the last week of May gives Algerian Berbers the New Testament in the mother tongue of the people, said Mokran, the Berber Christian who coordinated the translation. (Mokran requested that his real name not be used.)

The Berber-language New Testament touches the heart, he said.

The new release is the culmination of a five-year project to render an easily understood translation in the "heart" language of the Algerian Berbers, Mokran said.

Berbers -- or Imazighen, which means "free men" -- are a people group that has traditionally practiced folk Islam, incorporating witchcraft and the veneration of saints. Algerian Berbers are one of the people groups of the "Last Frontier," those ethnic people groups with little or no access to the gospel. Southern Baptists have prayed for their evangelization since 1989.

"If we look at the past years, there never has been as much interest in the gospel as now," Mokran said. Because of "the political situation, the economic situation, the problems with the Muslim fundamentalists -- many people have come to question their values in being Muslims."

Fewer than one-tenth of 1 percent of Algerian Berbers have turned from Islam to follow Christ. But Mokran said the Berber New Testament comes at a time of great openness among his people. Living in the midst of the uncertainties of civil war, Algerian Berber Christians are finding hope in Christ, Mokran said. He sees it as a time of opportunity.

"There are many people praying and we believe that's the reason that we're seeing many results," Mokran said.

The first printing totaled 5,000 New Testaments. A second edition will be bilingual, in Berber and French, the language of business in Algeria. The Berber Association in France published the Algerian Berber New Testament. Southern Baptists joined with other Christian groups in funding the project.

A Southern Baptist who works with Algerian Berbers estimates there are between 5 million and 10 million Berbers in Algeria, though the government claims there are only about 2 million. More than half a million Algerian Berbers reside in France.

--more--

France is the publication and release base for the New Testament because present legal restrictions and the difficult conditions wrought by war in Algeria make printing it there impossible. Distribution of the New Testament in Algeria remains a problem, Mokran said.

More than 50,000 Algerians have been killed in the north African country since civil war broke out in 1992.

One of the most violent factions of Islamic extremists, the Armed Islamic Group, kidnapped seven French monks in March and killed them the last week of May, the same week the New Testament was published. The monks had remained in Algeria despite warnings from the French government to leave. The Armed Islamic Group wants to topple the Algerian government and install strict Islamic law.

After the murders, there was a great outcry from both Muslims and Christians in France and Algeria. Missionaries traditionally have been well-respected in Algeria, said the Southern Baptist worker.

"There was a period where there were a lot of missionaries in Algeria but nobody saw a lot of fruit," Mokran said. "Today there practically aren't any missionaries and there is fruit.

"We have the privilege to enter into a land that's been already worked."

"A strength of the budding Algerian Berber church is that it's an indigenous church with its own forms of worship, expression and songs," said the Southern Baptist worker. "It's not considered as an imported religion, but as something fundamental to which Berbers can adhere," Mokran added.

"I have a vision to see many people not just get converted but to also take responsibility to become involved in the project of evangelism," Mokran said. "I think we have the opportunity to evangelize our generation."

"When this happens," the Southern Baptist worker added, "Algerian Berbers, as their name implies, truly will be free men."

--30--

Southeastern to establish
extension center in Tampa

By Lee Weeks

Baptist Press
7/3/96

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary is expanding its off-campus program for the fifth time in the last three years with the establishment of an extension center in Florida.

Beginning Aug. 19, the seminary will offer courses at the new Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary Tampa Bay Area Extension Center, seminary President Paige Patterson announced July 2.

The extension center will hold classes at the Idlewild Baptist Church, 1515 West Bearss Ave., Tampa.

"The purpose of this center is to provide accredited, quality theological studies in an off-campus setting for individuals who have been called by God into Christian service, but are unable to come to our main campus in Wake Forest, N.C. to prepare for that calling," Patterson said.

Southeastern's newest extension center joins four other programs currently being offered at First Baptist Church, Snellville, Ga.; Abilene Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga.; Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C.; and First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va.

"This is a critical day of intense spiritual warfare," Patterson said. "At stake in the struggle are the eternal destinies of millions. We are responsible to share with them the gospel of our Lord. That is why Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Idlewild Baptist Church are making this opportunity available."

Ken Whitten, senior pastor of Idlewild Baptist, echoed Patterson's sentiments.

"In a day where God has called the church to be an equipping station for believers, it seems like a great marriage for Southeastern and Idlewild Baptist Church to be combining ministries for discipleship in the kingdom," Whitten said.

--more--

Prospective students for the new extension center must have earned an undergraduate degree to be eligible for admission to the seminary program. Students may take up to four courses per semester in the master of arts or master of divinity degree programs.

Courses will be offered on Mondays from 10:45 a.m.-1 p.m. and 1:45 p.m.-5 p.m. Classes will be held on Monday and Thursday evenings as well. Southeastern professors will teach the courses at the extension center.

Paul Enns will serve as local director of the extension center program as well as an adjunctive professor for Southeastern.

Students pursuing a degree through Southeastern's Tampa Bay Area Extension Center may complete up to two-thirds of their curriculum at Idlewild Baptist Church. The remaining course work, however, must be completed on the seminary's main campus in Wake Forest, N.C.

Patterson said he is grateful to Idlewild and pastor Whitten for making their facilities available.

Representatives from Southeastern, including Patterson, dean of faculty Russ Bush and other administrators will host an information banquet for prospective students at Idlewild Baptist Church on Tuesday, July 23 from 7-8:30 p.m.

For more information about Southeastern's newest extension center or the information banquet call (919) 556-3101, ext. 215.

--30--

Senior Adult Convention packet
typo gives planners red faces

Baptist Press
7/3/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A one-digit error in a phone number has given red faces to planners of the 1997 Senior Adult Convention.

More than 90,000 information packets for the April 28-30 Senior Adult Convention were supposed to include a 1-800 number for GrayLine Tours of Nashville -- 1-800-251-1864, according to John Kramp, associate director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division.

But when senior adults dialed the 1-800 number listed in the packet, they got a big surprise, Kramp said. Rather than receiving information about the "Homes of the Country Stars Tour," they heard a recorded message on a "phone sex" line.

"We didn't know there was a problem until a nice senior adult man called and told us something was wrong with our phone number," Kramp said. "I called the number and nearly died."

In response, the discipleship division, which is sponsoring the Nashville convention, is sending the correct number to all 90,000 churches who received the original packet. Although division officials say they regret the incident, they acknowledge if it had happened to anyone else, they would have been "rolling on the floor laughing."

"We're taking lots of grief about this right now," Kramp said. "Everyone's got a wisecrack about our 1-800 number." To help senior adults avoid any confusion, Kramp offers this advice: "If you dial a number and get a breathy female voice, hang up immediately. You definitely will not get information about Porter Wagoner's home if you stay on the line."

In addition to Grayline Tours' toll free-number, 1-800-251-1864, registration and other questions about the convention, senior adults or church leaders can be phoned to 1-800-254-2022.

--30--

**Seniors: Put missions service
in retirement plans, he urges** **By Linda Lawson**

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Today's Southern Baptist senior adults could be the greatest volunteer missions force the denomination has ever had.

The problem?

Too many people are failing to prepare adequately for retirement. Some lack a clear vision of what they want to accomplish in their later years. Some have not prepared financially to have the resources for such things as volunteer mission service. Others have not made adequate emotional or spiritual preparation, according to Jim Burton, director of men's ministries at the Southern Baptist Convention's Brotherhood Commission.

Burton led a conference, "Retirement by Design with Missions in Mind," during Jericho: A Southern Baptist Missions Festival, June 29-July 5 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center. Seminar content will be offered later this year in an eight-hour format through the Brotherhood Commission and state convention Brotherhood departments.

Senior adults' primary assets for mission service are a lifetime of experience and more available time, Burton said.

Average retirees inherit about 2,350 hours of free time per year they formerly spent working at their careers, he noted.

"Are you going to be constructive with your free time or let it control you?" Burton asked.

To evaluate the structure of their lives and their use of time, he urged seniors to fill out a schedule showing what they do during waking hours for one week.

"If you don't have enough structure, you may find yourself wasting time," Burton said. "Map it out and you may find you're not prepared for retirement in terms of having a vision for what God can do in your life."

Burton said seniors are using time effectively when their schedules include volunteer work, church activities, leisure and time for learning new things or returning to long-forgotten interests.

"Re-creation may include rediscovering something you had an interest in earlier in life," he said.

Emphasizing the importance of leisure, Burton said it needs to be structured into a person's life. "Leisure can have intrinsic value if it's structured."

Retirement years include many lifestyle choices that must be planned in advance and which cannot be made in isolation, he said. These include:

- where to live;
- what to live in;
- work opportunities;
- recreation activities;
- volunteer and ministry activities.

Burton cited a couple who spent one year as volunteer missionaries. They returned home, took early retirement from their careers and now serve as career missionaries in another country.

Their decision impacted their own lives, those of their aging parents and their young adult children, he noted.

In addition to relationships, Burton acknowledged, "A lot of what we can do in retirement comes down to what we can afford."

To maintain one's standard of living, a retired person needs 70 percent of the income he or she earned while working, Burton said. He urged participants to contact employers to learn details about their retirement plans and to check with Social Security every two or three years to be sure their records are accurate and to learn what they can expect to receive in retirement.

Several conference participants said they had discovered in contacting Social Security their records were inaccurate.

--more--

Finally, Burton urged persons planning for retirement to learn all they can about volunteer missions opportunities such as Mission Service Corps for home missions and International Service Corps for foreign missions. Other options include Tent Makers, Campers on Mission, serving as adult sponsors for World Changers, working on construction projects through state convention groups and opportunities through Baptist vocational fellowships for educators, medical personnel, veterinarians, persons involved in creative arts and many others.

"I'm afraid a lot of our folks don't know all the possibilities that exist," Burton said. "If they're prepared financially, they are able to go to the mission field, probably as volunteers."

He urged senior adults not to limit their opportunities or to feel their only options are serving with other seniors.

"We're finding senior adults can do about anything other age groups can do," he said. "Seniors are telling us, 'Don't separate us out.' And younger adults said, 'Don't separate us from the older ones.'"

--30--

Senior adults must sort
aging myths from truth

Baptist Press
7/3/96

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--As people plan for retirement, they can make serious mistakes if they fail to sort out truths and myths about aging, Jim Burton told participants in a seminar, "Retirement by Design with Missions in Mind."

Burton, director of men's ministries for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, listed 10 myths about aging during the conference held at Jericho: A Southern Baptist Missions Festival, June 29-July 5 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Center. The myths are included in materials prepared by Cary S. Kart for an eight-hour seminar on retirement planning to be conducted later this year through the Brotherhood Commission and state convention Brotherhood departments.

Myths include:

- Senility inevitably accompanies old age.
- Most old people are isolated from their families.
- The majority of old people are in poor health.
- Older people are more likely than younger people to be victimized by crime.
- The majority of older people live in poverty.
- Older people tend to become more religious as they age.
- Older workers are less productive than younger ones.
- Old people who retire usually suffer a decline in health and an early death.
- Most old people have no interest in, or capacity for, sexual relations.
- Most old people end up in nursing homes and other long-term care institutions.

--30--

His battle against drug abuse
underscored by 'walk of hope'

Baptist Press
7/3/96

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--In the nation's war on drugs, Southern Baptist Ted Stone is contributing a "walk of hope" across America.

Stone began his 3,500-mile drug abuse-battling hike March 14 from the steps of the U.S. Capitol. During the seven-month trek, slated to reach Los Angeles in October, Stone plans to average 125 miles a week, speaking along the route to school, church, civic, military and prison groups about drug abuse and its solutions.

Stone, a motivational speaker and member of Grace Baptist Church, Durham, N.C., gave the closing benediction at the 1996 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference in New Orleans June 10.

--more--

"To change a person's lifestyle, faith-based treatment is best," says Stone, a former addict who spent four years in prison for committing drug-related robberies. "While the secular world has offered temporary relief to those with drug problems, the real hope for permanent cure lies with a Christ-based treatment program."

Stone has spoken dozens of times before groups of people since he left Washington but has also had what he calls "hand-to-hand contact (with people), talking and passing out flyers with suggestions on what we can do to turn the drug problem around." His walk has continued despite a bout with the flu, Virginia state police-forced detours and the death of his 13-year-old dog, Scruffy.

Stone has conducted a personal crusade against drug abuse for 18 years, sharing his personal story of what he calls "his miraculous redemption through the grace of God" from drug abuse.

He's using the walk to continue advocating faith-based recovery centers, which he emphasized last year with two 500-mile hikes across North Carolina. He has been the chief advocate among North Carolina Baptists since 1987 for direct involvement in drug-abuse treatment ministries. As a result of his efforts, a Baptist-operated drug treatment center, Damascus Home, opened two years ago at Creedmoor, N.C., and he serves on its board of directors.

Stone says faith-based recovery centers are "something we should do all over the SBC. Since our denomination is the largest Protestant denomination, we ought to be on the front lines in offering Christ-centered treatment to people with drug problems."

Stone outlined two major purposes for his walk across the nation.

"First, we're trying to bring hope to America that we can, as a nation, actually win the war on drug abuse," he says, "and to offer some proposed solutions. Secondly, we want to bring hope to people who have drug-related problems, and families (of addicts), that these people can actually get well."

Stone notes: "Treatment programs err when they teach the individual that he's addicted for life. The word, 'recovering,' is a prophecy of doom to the person fighting back from drug abuse. I'm living proof that a person, by the grace of God, can actually get well."

"I went through a period of recovering, for a while, but I'm recovered. And that same hope can belong to anyone who has a drug problem as long as they have a mind left to make the choice to come back."

Stone contends Christians "should be on the front line in this crucial struggle. ... It has been easier for leaders to embrace more romantic and popular tasks. It is time for us to join Jesus in the dark alleys ministering to those considered by many as unlovable."

Stone earned degrees from Wake Forest and North Carolina Central Universities and also attended Duke and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. A member of the North Carolina Mental Health Commission, he serves on Southeastern's Board of Visitors.

While Stone walks, Michael Yarborough, also a member of the Durham church, follows him in a 1995 Dodge. Yarborough handles speaking arrangements for the cross-country walk.

The contact phone number for Stone is (919) 477-1581.

--30--

Based on reporting by Michael Chute. Art Toalston contributed to this article.

Home missionary takes
literacy missions to work

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
7/3/96

COLUMBUS, Ind. (BP)--Afternoons are relatively quiet at the Chinese restaurant in the Wal-Mart shopping center. The lunch crowd is gone, and the dinner rush hasn't started. It's the perfect time for an English lesson.

--more--

At a table by the rest rooms, Jan Cundiff uses flash cards to help the owner's wife pronounce and understand English words. "Beautiful!" Cundiff exclaims when Bao Qing Lin correctly matches a word with an image.

While the home missionary has taught English to internationals in other settings, Cundiff says taking lessons to the work place has proven beneficial.

"I knew they would not leave the restaurant to come to a church" for lessons, Cundiff says. When people come to the United States from other countries, they typically "don't want to ask for help and they don't know who to trust."

Now Cundiff receives Christmas gifts and Mother's Day cards from former students. "They're so appreciative once they learn they have nothing to fear."

Cundiff gives her students a New Testament in Chinese and English and weaves the gospel presentation into her lessons. While teaching English in Indiana and on volunteer trips to China, Cundiff finds opportunities to share her faith. "They want to know what I believe, and I have opportunities to answer their questions from my personal point of view." One former student asked, "Would you set my feet on the path of being a Christian?"

Communicating with people from other cultures is a gift from God, Cundiff says. "It's what God has given me to do and be responsible for. What little I give to him he multiplies."

--30--

(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Outline on SBCNet.

EDITORS' NOTE: The following story can be used with the Baptist Press story, "Country or contemporary, this church puts it to use," dated 7/1/96.

Church presents gospel
with country music beat

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
7/3/96

NASHVILLE, Ind. (BP)--With a name like Nashville, the town seemed destined to have a church with a fiddle in the band.

Like the Tennessee city with the same name, this Indiana town has country music stage shows, recording studios and rows of gift shops. When it comes to religious life, however, the two Nashvilles are worlds apart. Nashville, Tenn., is headquarters for several Southern Baptist agencies and home to an array of Southern Baptist churches. Nashville, Ind., on the other hand, has one Southern Baptist congregation -- the Brown County Country Music Church.

The two-year-old church that uses a cowboy hat to collect the offering is thriving, but leaders are quick to emphasize their priorities.

"It's not that we worship country music, and we're not here to entertain," said pastor Allan Straub. His wife, Charlotte, got to the bottom line: "People are coming here who won't go to other churches, and they're getting saved."

Stuart Cundiff, director of missions for South Central Baptist Association, said he tried several times to start traditional churches in Nashville. A small group met for Bible study in an apartment complex for three years, but nothing developed into a church until Charlie and Roxeanne Waggoner sang for the association's annual meeting. In them Cundiff found music leaders for a church with country music.

Cundiff took advantage of the town's name to find a sponsoring church -- Holiday Heights Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn.

After posting publicity flyers all over town, Brown County Country Music Church held its first worship service on Easter 1994. That Sunday 45 people attended, and 80 were there for the church's second anniversary.

Worship services include prayer requests and of course a sermon, but music is the main draw. Music leadership has grown from the Waggoners to a seven-piece band.

--more--

Waggoner defines the music as "country-style gospel music." Rather than "Your Cheatin' Heart" with Christian lyrics, it's "The Old Rugged Cross" with a country beat.

Glenda Spencer, one of the church's original members, said, "This type of music is just fitting for this part of the country."

Since residents are used to staged performances, Roxeanne Waggoner said they have to keep the worship service from becoming a musical act. "This is not a show. It's church."

The church meets in the restaurant at Ski World, an entertainment center featuring stage shows, water slides in the summer and skiing on manmade snow in the winter. To prepare the restaurant for worship, church members take down decorations such as Santa Claus pictures at Christmas and skeletons at Halloween. They move ashtrays and bring in sound equipment, Bibles and hymnals.

Sunday services have to be over by 11 a.m. so the restaurant staff can prepare for the lunch crowd. Discipleship programs are held on Thursday nights at the senior citizens' center.

In addition to country-style music, the church has a reputation for being a caring congregation. They recently celebrated with a former chain smoker who had been without a cigarette for days, grieved with a woman whose good friend died, offered housing to people without electricity during a snow storm, paid for a new roof for another church and sponsored a mission.

They wouldn't think of telling people: "Here's a quarter, find someone who cares."

--30--

(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Outline on SBCNet.

EDITORS' NOTE: Lynn Davidson, Southern Baptist missionary to Peru, was killed in an airline crash Feb. 29. She is survived by her husband, Dennis, and daughters Charis, Joy Cassia and Rannon.

FIRST-PERSON

'... the God of all comfort
ministered on your behalf'

By Dennis Davidson

Baptist Press
7/3/96

AREQUIPA, Peru (BP)--On Feb. 29, at approximately 8:25 p.m., Faucett Airline flight 251 crashed and exploded in flames three miles from the airport in Arequipa, Peru, killing all 123 people aboard. That same night, my heart also exploded with the devastating reality of that tragedy.

I remember running down a windy single-lane dirt road pleading with our sovereign Lord that Lynn would have survived. Walking around the horror, I asked the military guards about the possibility of survivors, and seeing the shaking heads, the agony and irrevocable reality of "no survivor" detonated into my world.

It felt as if someone had slammed a knife into my heart, turned it and then, torturously, I continued to live. So began my journey into the stark reality of the death of your lifetime mate, with whom God has made you, and is making you, one.

Crying in anguish of soul throughout the night, I awaited the dawn when I would be responsible to share the death of their beloved mother with our three children. With all the courage, love, compassion and determination given me at that time, I gathered them in front of me on the sofa and told them of the plane crash that had robbed them of the most important person in their young lives.

When the lament and wailing went beyond my ability to continue to cope with any longer, the Lord heard my desperate cry and brought a lessening of the overwhelming intensity erupting from the depths of our beings. He mercifully would continue to divide these waves, as grief dashed into us again and again each succeeding day -- or who could face such pain and desolation in life?

--more--

Yet God is not a God who leaves his children alone during their raging trials. When they cannot carry on, he carries them through the days. Even though the intense suffering drives away the sense of his presence, there is no doubt of his watchcare.

God began to demonstrate his compassion and comfort in ways the children and I had never experienced. When tempted to think this distress was beyond our strength and ability to endure, he came to our rescue with his strength and ability that passed all previous understanding. God had moved thousands of his people to come before the throne of grace on our behalf.

We went from an unbearable pain, sorrow and sleepless nights of crying, to peace amidst the flood. From an inability to face a heartbreaking reality, to a refuge within "the shelter of his wings." From the world falling out from under us, to being supported in the palm of his hand. From the dungeon of fear of the rampaging storm to his stronghold of faith, that he would not give us more than we, with him, could bear. From an inability to even read and comprehend his Word, to receiving personal words from his Word.

What was the difference? Your prayers. The Lord of heaven and earth reached out and touched you, and in compassion your heart cried out, and knees were bowed to the praise of His eternal glory, and your petitions and intercession for us in the time of our desperate need came before his throne. Then the God of all comfort ministered on your behalf to us, doing what only God can. His promised lovingkindness forged an eye in the overwhelming storm for us. He again proved himself the faithful God.

We still have not passed out of the valley of the shadow of death, but our Lord is walking with us, ministering, supporting and guiding in some of the myriad of his ways. Though the shadow still darkens our daily life, we are slowly moving along, and by faith in him who is faithful, will one day pass further out of the high wall of the ravine that blocks that radiance of the Son so that we can experience for longer and longer periods the eternal weight of glory Jesus shines forth.

--30--

The Davidsons are on furlough, residing at 621 Lee Court, Camden, SC 29020.

Laugh, pray, keep going
author encourages women

By Suzanne Darland

Baptist Press
7/3/96

ELIZABETHTOWN, Ky. (BP)--Author Mamie McCullough said she's tired of hearing church people complaining after she asks, "How are you?" Christians should "tell the truth in advance," she said.

"The Greek word for greeting is joy. We've read the whole Bible. We know how it's going to turn out," McCullough told 375 women at a conference held by the DaySpring women's movement in Elizabethtown, Ky.

McCullough encouraged women to live positively in an often-negative world. She used banners and signs with such messages as "Better or bitter, the difference is 'I'" and "Pain is inevitable, misery a choice."

Christians must take God's Word seriously, she said, believing they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them and that if they call on God he will answer with great and mighty things.

"I'm not Pollyanna," she told the June 8 gathering at Severns Valley Baptist Church. "It's just that if you look up, that's where you're going, and if you look down, that's where you're going."

McCullough, who has written several books on positive living, including "Get It Together and Remember Where You Put It," encouraged the women to laugh more, calling laughter "the best internal jogging you'll ever have."

She also urged them to pray more and make a conscious decision to keep going no matter what.

--more--

"You have to bathe your mind mentally every day," she said.

Vowing one time to think positively or reading a self-help book without referring to it again is like saying, "I took a bath yesterday, and it didn't last," she explained.

McCullough, who wears a rhinestone "YES" lapel pin, speaks from experience. Born one of nine children to a Georgia sharecropper, she lived in a house without running water and window panes after her father died.

She went to college and married at age 32, but when her husband died suddenly of a heart attack she was left with three children under age 6.

"God's never taken his hand off my life," she declared. "He said, 'I will never leave you comfortless.' He didn't say comfortable."

Self-esteem and fatigue are women's two biggest problems, and they go hand-in-hand, she said.

Fatigue is easier to conquer if women will eat healthily, exercise and put a priority on getting enough rest, she said.

Self-esteem is often tied to abuse, she said. "Don't stay hurt and angry," she admonished. "Get help from the Bible, friends, counseling. Move toward healing."

McCullough is currently writing a book about her own childhood experiences with abuse, tentatively titled "I'm Not Waving ... I'm Drowning!"

She encouraged women to choose to reject negative thoughts and take one step at a time toward the future.

"Fret not" appears 365 times in the Bible, she said. "That's one for every day."

On the other hand, worrying works, she said, jokingly. "Everything I've ever worried about has never happened."

Pity parties have two faults, she added: "First, no one comes, and second, they don't serve refreshments."

McCullough also prodded mothers to spend time with their children. Young ones are more likely to remember afternoons spent making mud pies than that the kitchen floor shone, she said.

Other people's children also need encouraging, as do grocery baggers and best friends, she said. "Everyone needs validating."

God is a God for all seasons, she said. In the winter, God prepares the foundation when there is no harvest. In the spring, much work is required planting, hoeing and nurturing, but there is still no harvest.

The summer brings growth, activity and minimal harvest, but in autumn the plentiful harvest is out of proportion to the minimal work done.

"People quit along the way because they don't know what season they're in," she said. "God has the right timing and season for you."

--30--

Darland is a correspondent for the Western Recorder, Kentucky Baptists' newsjournal.

HOUSE MAIL

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, TN 37234

F
I
R
S
T

C
L
A
S
S

Southern Baptist Library
and Archives