

(BP)

-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Art Toalston, Editor
Fax (615) 782-8736
CompuServe ID # 70420,17

December 5, 1996

96-211

VIRGINIA--Analysis: Silent night of the martyrs: time to break the silence; graphic.
VIRGINIA--Multiplying disciples key to Zimbabwe church growth.
CALIFORNIA--Rick Warren declines NAMB presidency bid.
TENNESSEE--Southern Baptist Foundation board approves new charter.
FLORIDA--Top ranked FSU Gators' coach: God comes first.
TEXAS--Mississippi church's Christmas program to be telecast on ABC.
TEXAS--FamilyNet sets 100 consecutive hours of Christmas programs.
MISSOURI--At Christmas 1904, Wales was in revival.
SAN ANTONIO--His brutal past now key to his evangelistic zeal.
TENNESSEE--Franklin Graham is first 'guest' in model-home format magazine.
ILLINOIS--Sunday school class hits cyberspace.

ANALYSIS

**Silent night of the martyrs:
time to break the silence**

By Erich Bridges

**Baptist Press
12/5/96**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--All was calm one night just after Christmas 1993, until armed men came to a Baptist family's home in the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan.

Vladimir Limorev, a 34-year-old ethnic Russian Baptist, was taken outside, beaten and shot. His wife, Helena, fled for help. When she returned with the authorities, she found her house on fire and nine people dead: her husband and four children (ages 2, 4, 6 and 9), her mother, a visiting woman and her daughter, and a neighbor who had tried to protect the family. Nothing was reported stolen.

Asked after the joint funeral service how she could cope with such a tragedy, Mrs. Limorev, pregnant with her fifth child, said simply: "The Lord has given me power to overcome."

Who murdered the Limorevs and their friends? It's true that many Tajiks despise the ethnic Russians living among them because of Russia's long, brutal domination of Tajikistan. But the Tajiks also are heavily Muslim, and some Muslims violently oppose any Christians who attempt to evangelize non-Russians in Tajikistan.

"There is no doubt these particular murders were committed for religious motives," reported Boris Perchatkin to a U.S. congressional commission several months later. Perchatkin is a former Soviet political prisoner and president of an institute that speaks out for persecuted Christians in the former Soviet Union. He named 34 Christians severely beaten or martyred for their faith in the region during the previous two years.

"If earlier the most active of Christians were sent to prison, now they are robbed, tortured, crippled and killed," he said. "But in the pages of the Western press there is not one word."

One reason for that silence -- besides ignorance or indifference -- is the sheer frequency of such attacks, according to mission researcher David Barrett, who collects information on Christian martyrs worldwide.

"In India this is happening all the time," Barrett reports. "Usually it starts as a Hindu-Muslim riot over some trivial thing like a Muslim insulting a Hindu or killing a cow. Then at some stage somebody says, 'It's the Christians; kill the Christians!' And so the mob rushes to the nearest church, drags the pastor out, kills him with his family, and burns the place down. There are so many such cases that the press doesn't bother to deal with it as a news item."

Such killings in India also illustrate the most common setting for modern martyrdoms: societies in turmoil.

"Wherever there's civil unrest -- like Sarajevo, Rwanda, Somalia -- the people who've got a grudge against Christians can take it out on them without being noticed," Barrett explains.

--more--

Barrett estimates an average of 160,000 Christians are killed for their faith every year. His definition of martyrs: "believers in Christ who lose their lives prematurely in a situation of witness as a result of human hostility."

In 1995 alone, 150 foreign missionaries were murdered while at their task, according to mission agency reports. "These are people whose names we know," says Barrett.

But for every killing of a Western missionary or a high-profile Christian leader that captures international attention, a thousand anonymous Christians die virtually unnoticed -- except by God. Villagers stoned or burned by their neighbors for proclaiming Christ. Muslim converts to Christianity killed in secret by their own families.

The stated motive of their executioners doesn't necessarily define whether they are martyrs or not. "Idi Amin in Uganda murdered 500,000 Christians, but he said it was for political reasons," Barrett recalls. "Tell that to the pastors who were burned alive."

Fifty million believers may have died for their faith in Christ over the 20 centuries since the first Christmas, Barrett estimates. By the early fifth century, the church historian Jerome already had counted nearly 2 million Christian martyrs. Though it may seem rare or extreme to American Christians, it is neither abnormal nor unusual for the faithful to face death. Jesus called the persecuted blessed; he knew many of his disciples would drink the cup of suffering he drank.

"It's part of the story of the church of Christ, though it's a part that is often denied," Barrett says. "But the evidence of the centuries is that evangelization proceeds very fast when there are Christians prepared to die for their faith." Their blood is the seed of the church.

Remember that when you sing "Silent Night" this Christmas season. Remember the martyrs. Pray for them. And do not be silent.

--30--

(BP) graphic (horizontal) and outline mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press and posted on SBCNet News Room.

Adapted from December 1996 issue of The Commission, the Foreign Mission Board's monthly magazine.

Multiplying disciples key to Zimbabwe church growth

By Mark Kelly

**Baptist Press
12/5/96**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--John and Florence Griggs can look back on their careers with a satisfaction few people ever know.

As Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries, the couple -- now on their final furlough before retirement in 1997 -- devoted 33 years to developing churches in Masvingo, a city of 30,000 in southeastern Zimbabwe. They saw 20,000 people baptized and 361 new churches started. They helped train more than 200 pastors to be multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ.

In 1963 The Griggses left a pastorate in rural Kentucky for what was then Southern Rhodesia, a colony of England about to wage a 15-year war for independence. They started like many missionaries do: preaching the gospel, baptizing the few converts that came along and putting up church buildings.

Then a young Christian, Aaron Simon Mbulu, lost his job, and John and Florence invited him to live with them. Through that relationship, God began to teach them a truth that revolutionized their lives and set the stage for a powerful movement of God's spirit in that region of Zimbabwe.

"I used to teach that if you trust Jesus as Savior, you'll get to heaven," John says. "I came to realize that's not true. You have to make him Lord."

Aaron Simon began helping John and Florence improve their skills in the Shona language, and they in turn taught him the Scriptures. They ate together and prayed together, and everywhere John went, Aaron went too.

Through his relationship with Aaron Simon, John began to understand Jesus' relationship with his disciples. He realized God's kingdom grows only as one committed believer nurtures another one to maturity.

"A lot of Christian leaders don't do a lot with discipleship because it's costly," John says. "It's like raising a baby. When it wakes up in the night, you have to take care of it.

"We realized we had to do what Jesus did with his disciples -- live with them. There's no easy way around it. The cost of discipleship is spending time with the people you are discipling."

--more--

The lesson about discipleship came just in time. A year after John and Florence began their work in Masvingo, Southern Rhodesia declared its independence from England and the country dissolved into war. Fighting in the countryside meant the couple couldn't venture far from home.

Instead of traveling out into the bush to visit churches, John and Florence began a ministry of relationships with believers in their home. John met with a group of lay pastors on Mondays. He and Florence each started study groups, one for men, another for women. They instilled in their students the importance of multiplying the kingdom in other hearts.

"A disciple isn't a convert," John explains. "A convert, we dip 'em and drop 'em, and that's it. But a disciple is someone you lead to the Lord and teach him to reproduce his spiritual life in someone else. It starts a multiplication process."

And multiply it did. When John and Florence arrived in Masvingo, they began working with four Baptist churches in the area, which were baptizing a handful of people each year. Once they began concentrating on "discipling disciple-makers," the numbers of new churches and baptized believers turned sharply upward. By the time they returned to the United States in March 1996, 365 Baptist churches were starting about 40 new churches and baptizing more than 2,000 people a year.

"God is moving in Masvingo, and he's doing it on the back of discipleship," John says. He and Florence don't doubt God will continue to move, even though they've left. Like Jesus -- they left the ministry in the hands of faithful people.

"I always tried to model what our leaders needed to do, then let them do it," John says. "After Jesus showed his disciples how to do it, he went back to heaven.

"I was just a temporary scaffolding around those churches. Eventually the ministry was going to be in their hands and they were going to have to do it themselves anyway."

-30--

**Rick Warren declines
NAMB presidency bid**

By Mark A. Wyatt

**Baptist Press
12/5/96**

LAKE FOREST, Calif. (BP)--Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in Lake Forest, Calif., has withdrawn from consideration to become the first president of the Southern Baptist Convention's new North American Mission Board.

Warren gave his decision to NAMB incorporators, the 13-member group responsible for nominating a president for the new agency, in a letter dated Dec. 1.

"Although I consider this position to be the most strategic one in the SBC, God has not released me from my call to Saddleback Church, so I cannot accept your nomination," Warren wrote.

C.B. Hogue, chairman of the incorporators group, told The California Southern Baptist, California convention newspaper, he received Warren's letter by fax Dec. 2 but he declined to discuss the contents. Hogue acknowledged the committee has held "initial, exploratory conversations" with several people, and Warren "was talked to a second time in the process."

Regarding Warren's decision to remove himself from consideration, Hogue said the Lake Forest pastor apparently "felt he did not want to go further in the process."

Hogue said the incorporators group now will resume "examining other candidates who are within the process." However, he declined to specify how many other prospective nominees are under consideration. No date has been set for the incorporators to resume their selection process, Hogue said.

Meanwhile, trustees scheduled for election to the new NAMB board, who actually will elect the agency's first president, will meet for the first time Feb. 7 in Dallas to get acquainted, although they can take no action until after the June convention.

The NAMB, created from the merger of three current SBC agencies, will coordinate all evangelism and church-starting efforts of the 16 million-member Southern Baptist Convention. The merger will bring together the resources of the Home Mission Board, Radio and Television Commission and Brotherhood Commission, while reducing the combined staff.

Warren founded Saddleback Valley Community Church in Mission Viejo, Calif., with one family in 1980. The church has grown to be one of the largest in the country with 13,000 attending weekly worship services.

--more--

In his Dec. 1 letter to the 13-member committee, Warren cited three reasons for his decision. In addition to his continued "calling" as pastor of Saddleback Church, he said, "I believe I can best help NAMB's task of planting churches by continuing to experiment with new approaches at Saddleback." Innovative churches can serve as the SBC's "research and development department," field-testing new evangelism and ministry concepts, he said.

Thirdly, he said, "the demands of the new NAMB president would severely limit the amount of time that I could invest in actually training pastors." In the past decade, more than 30,000 pastors and church leaders from 63 denominations and 42 countries have been trained in the principles employed at Saddleback.

"Just as I am convinced that I am not the man for this job, I am certain that God has just the right man in waiting," he added. "He will be a man of vision, willing to take risks and make bold decisions, and able to work with all types of churches. He must be purpose-driven, not political-driven or tradition-driven. I will continue to pray that God will guide your committee in this awesome responsibility."

The name most frequently mentioned for the NAMB position is Norfolk, Va., pastor Bob Reccord, who heads the Implementation Task Force steering the SBC's restructuring plan.

--30--

Southern Baptist Foundation board approves new charter

By Herb Hollinger

**Baptist Press
12/5/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The 35-member board of trustees of the Southern Baptist Foundation met for the last time as a separate agency of the SBC and approved the new charter of the Foundation which makes it a corporation of the SBC Executive Committee.

Another part of the restructuring process of the SBC approved in 1995 reducing the number of agencies from 19 to 12, the Foundation will have a seven member board at the conclusion of the SBC annual meeting June 19, 1997 in Dallas. The new Foundation corporation will have one member, the Executive Committee of the SBC, which will elect the seven member board.

Meeting at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville Dec. 3-4, the 35-member Foundation board approved the new charter without dissent in a voice vote.

Concerns raised earlier about the independence of the Foundation and control by the Executive Committee were apparently resolved in the negotiations this year between officials of the Foundation, Executive Committee and the Implementation Task Force. The ITF is a committee set up by the Executive Committee to help implement the restructuring with the affected SBC agencies.

"The Foundation is appreciative of the Implementation Task Force who listened to the concerns raised by the Foundation and various clients, and produced a governance structure that will work," Hollis E. Johnson III, told the Foundation board in his report. Johnson, honored at the meeting for 20 years of service, is the president of the Foundation.

"The Foundation is extremely grateful to those institutions which continued to use the investment management and trust services provided," Johnson said. The Foundation will continue to operate as a separate institution under the amended charter, Johnson told the trustees at the annual meeting.

"Southern Baptist Foundation looks forward to the future with a new structure and a renewed resolve to be the best provider of trust and investment management services possible," Johnson added. "There is comfort in knowing that almighty God, the Creator of all that is managed, is still in control."

Johnson said the change should not affect the quality and range of services provided by the Foundation to clients, many of which are state convention foundations. The same staff, including Johnson, will manage the Foundation's work.

Total assets increase during the year to a record \$183,877,757 but the increase was less than one percent. It was an increase accomplished during a year of "great uncertainty to clients," Johnson said. The Foundation has 1,250 accounts.

Income produced by assets increased 1.7 percent to a record \$11,764,597 during a year of "generally declining interest rates, a basically constant asset base, and a continuing shift of some assets to lower yielding equities," according to Johnson.

Johnson cited three priorities for the coming year: (1) implement the transition smoothly for both staff and clients; (2) implement the (Foundation's) strategic plan, and (3) address the trends in the industry.

--more--

Action in a Texas lawsuit against charitable organizations serving as trustees for charitable remainder trusts involving a number of Southern Baptist agencies, including the Foundation, was averted with the passage of a federal law guaranteeing charitable organizations the right to serve as trustees. However, Johnson said, inevitably "regulation is coming for us (charitable organizations)."

Interestingly, the trustee board's action came at the 50th anniversary of the Foundation as a SBC agency. Authorized by the SBC in 1946 and chartered in Tennessee in 1947, the Foundation's history was recalled during the meeting. Christine M. Bess, the first full-time staff member and the longest with 35 years of service, recounted the early years; William C. Crook, a former chairman of the trustee board, spoke of the intervening years, and Johnson concluded with a look at the last decade of the agency.

The agency has had only six executives during its 50 years and 16 full-time employees. Currently it has eight employees.

In other action by the trustees:

-- re-elected the trustees' officers: Leonard M. Brannan, Chattanooga, Tenn., chairman; M. Terry Turner, Brentwood, Tenn., vice chairman; and Roy L. DePue, Nashville, recording secretary. Trustees also re-elected a 10-member executive committee to direct the agency in its closing months.

-- honored Johnson with a resolution of appreciation for his 20 years of service, a plaque and a special golf club.

-- honored Betty J. Libby, corporate secretary, for 23 years of service and her retirement Dec. 31, 1996.

-- concurred with action of the SBC Executive Committee in September which affirmed plans by the SBC Inter-Agency Council to support Christian schools and home schools in addition to the weekday education program assignment of the Sunday School Board.

--30--

Top ranked FSU Gators' coach: God comes first

By Laura Johnston

**Baptist Press
12/5/96**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (BP)--Billy Graham and Bobby Bowden both use football stadiums to get their jobs done. Graham leads revivals and Bowden hopes to lead the Florida State Seminoles to the national championship. The Gators currently are ranked number one in the country.

Both men have worked together during revival crusades in the past. "Not many men have had the impact on my life like he has," Bowden said of Graham. "You can't go on one of his revivals without it affecting you somehow." Bowden often was asked to give his testimony during a Billy Graham revival.

So many people have been affected by the gospel message, that Graham's revivals typically are held in stadiums to accommodate large crowds. "The only places he can use are stadiums," Bowden said. "He has changed the world to a certain extent."

Bowden wanted to invite Graham to Florida State University to help change lives there. The evangelist was asked to speak to the football team at the university where Bowden coaches. Bowden has been a football coach at the university for 21 years. He and his wife, Julia Ann, are members of First Baptist Church in Tallahassee.

Even though the Seminoles are undefeated this year, including a victory over arch rival and then number one Florida, times have not always been so carefree. But those are the times when Bowden's faith becomes crucial. "It gives me strength when things are going bad," he said. "I realize that whatever happens, I'm taken care of."

That was just the assurance Bowden needed when he was coaching at a university in West Virginia and almost lost his job after a losing season. "It helps to get through that knowing that you are a lot better off." Even at Florida State, there have been some tough years, although the team has been fortunate for the last 10 years, Bowden said.

When things are going bad during a game, Bowden often will stop for a team prayer. "We have a team prayer before and after each game," he added.

In his career as a coach, Bowden, 66, has tried to keep his faith first during his jobs at both the college and junior college level. "I put God first in anything I do," he said.

Bowden signed a five-year contract with Florida State University recently and plans to continue coaching there until retirement. However, if God calls him to another place, he'll go, Bowden said.

"I will coach until I feel like I shouldn't be doing it anymore," he said. "I don't make any decisions without praying."

--more--

Spending time with God is a top priority for Bowden. His day begins at 5:30 a.m. with breakfast and a devotion. He then watches some team films and heads to the office for a staff meeting at 8:30 a.m. Much of the late morning and early afternoon is spent watching films and making television appearances.

Field practice usually lasts about two and a half hours, but Bowden's day doesn't end there. He often takes more film footage home or plans the next day's practice drills.

But the long hours don't bother Bowden, who knew as a teen-ager that he wanted a job in coaching. "I played on the football and track teams and was on the 'B' team in basketball, but I liked it so much that I wanted to be a coach," he said.

The affection for football didn't stop with just Bowden. Most of his six children also are football fanatics.

Two of his daughters, both of whom were football cheerleaders, married football players from Bowden's team. A son-in-law and son coach together at Auburn University in Alabama and another son is an assistant coach at Florida State University in Tallahassee.

"But you have to keep priorities, you can't let football get bigger than your family or soul."

Bowden was raised in a Christian family in Birmingham, Ala., and met his wife at church. The couple has been married for 48 years and they have six children and 18 grandchildren.

--30--

Johnston is a writer for the Florida Baptist Witness.

Mississippi church's Christmas program to be telecast on ABC

By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press
12/5/96

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--On Christmas Eve a one-hour music special from First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss., will be broadcast by the ABC Television Network following its regularly scheduled program "Nightline."

Called "A Christmas Celebration," the program is being produced by the SBC Radio and Television Commission in cooperation with First Baptist Church of Jackson.

"A Christmas Celebration" features a 400-voice choir and a 50-piece orchestra under the direction of Larry Black, the church's minister of music. The annual event attracts thousands of people to multiple performances during the Christmas season.

"From Dec. 13 through Dec. 15 we will be taping several live performances of the church's annual 'Carols by Candlelight,' which, after editing, will be the program presented on ABC," said Bob Thornton, vice president of television services at the RTVC. "The church's production staff and equipment are being used for the taping. We'll be editing the ABC version at our facility in Fort Worth beginning Dec. 16."

The program's producer is Bernie Hargis, an award-winning producer for the RTVC.

In 1995 First Baptist of Jackson worked in cooperation with the RTVC to produce an Easter program for ABC. Hargis also produced that program.

"Pam Warren (the church's media director) and the media volunteers did such a splendid job of showcasing the church's choir and orchestra that we wanted them to work with us in producing the Christmas special for ABC this year," he said. "The church has one of the premier music programs in the country, along with a wonderful television ministry."

Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist of Jackson, is preacher for both the radio and TV versions of "The Baptist Hour," which is produced weekly by the RTVC.

"Over the years we have worked in cooperation with many of our Southern Baptist churches in producing Christmas programs broadcast nationally by a major network," said Jack Johnson, president of the RTVC. "These programs provide a wonderful opportunity for witness."

The historic First Baptist Church of Jackson has more than 6,000 members. Founded in 1838, it is located near the state capitol. During the Civil War the church building was used as a hospital for both Confederate and Union soldiers.

One of the largest churches in Mississippi, First Baptist has 110 Sunday school departments. The church's Family Life Center includes a gymnasium, running track, racquetball courts and a crafts room.

The church's ministries include professionally trained counselors who undergird families and help children deal with the trauma of parental divorce. Other ministries reach out to those affected by alcohol and drug addiction, abusive relationships and AIDS.

--30--

FamilyNet sets 100 consecutive hours of Christmas programs

By C.C. Risenhoover

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--FamilyNet is providing 100 consecutive hours of Christmas programs to its affiliates beginning Dec. 22 at 2 a.m. (ET).

FamilyNet, with more than 100 affiliates nationwide, is the broadcast television service of the SBC Radio and Television Commission (RTVC).

"We have put together what we think is an excellent package of programming for family viewing during the Christmas season," said Jack Johnson, president of the RTVC. "Obviously, many affiliates will not carry 100 consecutive hours of FamilyNet programs, but they will be able to tape any and all programs for broadcast when they have time available. Viewers will need to check local listings for the time specific programs will be aired in their area."

All times listed are Eastern zone.

One of many featured programs will be "Carols By Candlelight," a special 60-minute "Baptist Hour" presentation from First Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss. It will air Dec. 22 at 8 p.m.

"COPE," the daily one-hour program produced by the RTVC and hosted by Karen Hayter, will air two programs during the holiday time period. Guest for the Dec. 24 program that will be aired at 11 a.m. will be Willard Harley, who will discuss "Conflict and Marriage." On the Dec. 27 program, which will be aired at 2 a.m. and 11 a.m., Paul Warren will discuss "Children and Holidays."

"A Country Crossroads Christmas," produced by the RTVC, will air Dec. 24 at 6 p.m., Dec. 27 at midnight and Dec. 28 at 5 p.m. The program features Christmas country videos from artists John Berry, Trisha Yearwood, John Anderson, Kathy Mattea and Sammy Kershaw. Regulars Bill Mack, Lesley Hamer and Jerry Clower will host the program. "Country Crossroads" is produced weekly by the RTVC.

"The Greatest Gift," a 60-minute Christmas praise program produced by the RTVC, is also a part of the 100 consecutive hours of Christmas programs. Featuring The Imperials, Walt Mills, Anthony Burger, the Spencer Family and others, it airs Dec. 24 at 9 a.m., Dec. 25 at 7 p.m. and Dec. 26 at 1 a.m.

"Home Life," the daily 30-minute program produced by the RTVC and hosted by Ralph Baker and Vicki Hutson, will provide two special programs during the period. The first features Alex Macdougall, producer of the "Angel Tree" Christmas album, which was released by Star Song. It features a choir of children with incarcerated parents. The program also features Ann Hibbard, author of "Family Celebrations for Christmas." It will air Dec. 23 at 9 a.m. and 9:30 p.m., and Dec. 24 at 1:30 a.m.

The other "Home Life" program features Dave Lambert, author of "Celebrating Christmas As If It Mattered," and Ruth Ann Winans, creator of "Mom's Family Preserves." It will air Dec. 25 at 1:30 a.m.

Other programs include "Brachs Kids Holiday Parade," hosted by contemporary Christian music artist Gary Chapman and Benjamin Salisbury from the television sitcom "The Nanny." The two-hour program will air Dec. 23 at 7 a.m. and Dec. 24 at 3 p.m.

"Choirs of Christmas," a 60-minute special featuring some of the finest choirs from around the country will air Dec. 23 at noon and Dec. 25 at 8 p.m.

The 30-minute "Central Message Christmas Special" from Central Baptist Church of Hixson, Tenn. will air Dec. 23 at 3:30 a.m. and a 60-minute "Christmas Special" from First Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas will air Dec. 25 at 6 p.m.

"Christmas Colours," a 60-minute concert from Germany will air Dec. 24 at 10 a.m. and Dec. 26 at midnight.

Quentin Road Baptist Church Of Chicago produced two programs that will be aired during the 100 hours. They are a 30-minute "Christmas Special" scheduled for Dec. 22 at 1:30 p.m. and "Christmas From The Heart," a 60-minute program scheduled for Dec. 25 at 10 p.m.

"The Singing Christmas Tree," a 90-minute musical from Bellevue Baptist Church of Cordova, Tenn., will be aired Dec. 25 at 3 p.m.

"Twin Living Christmas Tree," a 60-minute musical presentation from First Baptist Church of North Spartanburg, S.C., will be aired Dec. 23 at 11 p.m. and Dec. 25 at 3 a.m. and noon.

"Winning Walk," a weekly program produced by Second Baptist Church in Houston, will air two Christmas specials on FamilyNet; a 60-minute version scheduled for Dec. 23 at 2 a.m. and Dec. 26 at 3 a.m., and a 30-minute program scheduled for Dec. 22 at 12:30 p.m.

Viewers should check local listings for a complete schedule of Christmas programs carried by their FamilyNet affiliate.

**At Christmas 1904,
Wales was in revival**

By David Smith

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--As Christmas neared in 1904, the small Celtic country of Wales was in the middle of the last great revival it has experienced.

Jails in mining communities throughout the country were emptied, leaving police without much to do.

Shops did little business because people were focused on revival. Businessmen still made money, though, because people were so convicted of sin they were paying old and forgotten debts, insisting that interest be included.

Stories of dramatic Damascus-road salvation experiences filled the land.

One mining supervisor, who for weeks had heard accounts of the revival, waited alone for two hours in a tunnel until a Christian worker came by.

"I want to be saved," the supervisor said. The two knelt in the dirt of the mine and the supervisor's name was added to the Book of Life.

Many coarse, hard-living miners repented and were converted. Their lives were so changed that it was not uncommon for horses that pulled the carts to cease working. The miners had cleaned up their language -- and the animals, accustomed to curses, didn't understand the miners' new commands.

One London newspaper reporter, sent to Wales to debunk the so-called insanity of the masses, arrived and heard repeated reports about changed lives. He went to a crowded service where Evan Roberts, the 26-year-old preacher who had prayed for 13 years for revival, spoke briefly. The reporter finally found a seat in the balcony.

During the meeting -- as usual dominated by prayer, singing and testimonies -- people came under extreme conviction because of the presence of the Holy Spirit and they cried out to the Lord. In the middle of the service, the reporter cried from the balcony, "I am a lost sinner. I need Christ. Pray for me."

"The article was written, but (the reporter) was fired for it," according to a report by Roberts' contemporary, I.V. Nephraish, included in a book on the revival, "Glory Filled the Land," edited by Richard Owen Roberts.

The Welsh revival began in November 1904 and lasted until the summer of 1905. As many as 152,000 people came to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. That was about 8 percent of the 1.7 million people who lived in Wales at the time.

As Christmas nears this year, what needs to be done to prepare this country for a revival similar to what Wales experienced in 1904-05?

According to 2 Chronicles 7:14, humility is God's first requirement, said Roberts, of Wheaton, Ill., who often speaks at revival conferences with Henry Blackaby, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's prayer and spiritual awakening office.

"A major step forward would be for the church to cease pretending that it is doing well and admit that it is doing worse than it has ever done in modern history," says Roberts, who spoke at a revival conference in Wales in November. "So far things are not so bad that most denominations and even local churches think that a new program or another committee is bound to turn the tide.

"When we reach the point that we stop all sham and pretense and in brokenness and contrition cry out to God, then the hopes begin to brighten. But so far that's not really happening in this country."

Jim Elliff, who also spoke at the recent Welsh conference, says a revival today needs to be Word-driven, with heavy emphasis on law and gospel, including the great doctrines of the Bible that have been historically preached.

"For instance, many great revivals were spawned by the preaching of a series on regeneration," says Elliff, director of the Center for Biblical Revival at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City. "That's not at all what people are preaching today.

"The Great Awakening's principal message was regeneration or the new birth and that the fruit of that life in the believer indicates whether the person is a Christian or not.

"They believed regeneration really changed the man. Preachers in the Southern Baptist Convention must realize that they are serving a predominantly unregenerate denomination."

Both Elliff and Roberts agree the small amount of preaching was a deficiency in the 1904 Welsh revival, unlike other revivals in their history.

--more--

As many as 16 genuine, life-changing revivals flourished in Wales for 300 years prior to 1904. But since 1905 the Lord has not visited Wales with revival, and revival historians now regard much of that country as now spiritually dead.

Nephraish, in his 1955 recollections of the Welsh revival, concluded his account by writing, "Lord, do it again."

Roberts says a harbinger of good news is that Christians all over the United States are seriously praying for revival.

"My observation is that leaders in the church can get people to do just about anything under the sun, moral or immoral, but they can't get them to pray in a sustained way," Roberts says. "So when you have sustained praying, it appears to be God's doing."

--30--

Smith is a writer in Little Rock, Ark., and member of First Baptist Church there.

His brutal past now key to his evangelistic zeal

By Ken Walker

**Baptist Press
12/5/96**

SAN ANTONIO (BP)--Although just 16 the first time he entered a church, Ken Freeman had endured enough abuse to last a lifetime.

Raised by an alcoholic mother and nine stepfathers, his mother once held a butcher knife to his throat. Calling him a "mistake," she sneered he would never make anything out of his life.

Later that year one of his stepfathers beat him until he bled. Swallowing a bottle of aspirins, he hoped to never wake up.

When he did, the pain increased. The humiliation included once waiting for three days for his mother to sober up. Then he told her one of her boyfriends had sexually abused him and his sister.

Another time he came home to find his mother passed out. Grabbing the same butcher knife she threatened him with, he ran it up and down her body. He wanted to kill her, he said, but for some reason he didn't.

After bouncing through 30 different states and two dozen schools, he wound up living with a stepfather in Corpus Christi, Texas.

A friend there kept inviting him to a revival, he said, but the only reason he went was to grab some pizza at a youth party before leaving.

After learning pizza wouldn't be served until after the service, he reluctantly went into the sanctuary. He didn't understand words like "convicted" or "sanctified," he said, but the evangelist's message touched his heart.

"For the first time in my life I listened," he said. "I was tough. I shoplifted and stole just to survive. I was so tough my mom would hit me in the face with her fist and I wouldn't cry."

This night he did. As the evangelist warned that hell awaits those who reject Christ, Freeman thought about his past. He realized hell was his ultimate destination. Suddenly tears flowed from his eyes.

Although he felt mad enough to hit the speaker, he found himself walking to the altar at the end of the sermon.

"Are you a sinner?" the evangelist asked.

"Sir, I don't know what I am," he replied. "I'm just tired of hurting. You said Jesus could love me. Do you mean that?"

After the man nodded, they knelt and prayed.

"I don't remember everything I said," Freeman recalled. "But I asked him to forgive me and thanked him for loving me. I didn't understand it and I still don't. But I got flat saved and turned on to God."

Although 28 years have passed since then, the San Antonio-based evangelist remains eager to tell others how Jesus changed his life. A former youth and music minister, Freeman began traveling full time in 1984 to share that message.

He doesn't look like an ordinary evangelist, often dressing in leather pants decorated with white cows. He also shuns socks and has a cross shaved in the back of his head.

Outrageous as his appearance seems to some, approximately 85,000 people have accepted Christ as their Savior at his crusades, revivals and school assemblies.

--more--

"I'm a magnet to a lot of hurting people," said Freeman, adding he wouldn't change his past because God has used it so mightily. "I have people come up to me who say, 'I don't know why I'm telling you this but I feel like you'll understand.'

"I can go into a place and connect with a lot of people who have been divorced, molested or been through rejection. Fear, doubt, loneliness ... I've been through them all."

And to an extent, it isn't over. Despite witnessing to her, his mother never accepted Christ before her death. He hasn't seen his father or other relatives in more than 40 years.

His background helps the member of Alamo City Christian Fellowship (SBC) relate to those from broken homes. At one school, when Freeman asked how many of the 300 students came from divorced homes, 175 raised their hands. Then half of them spontaneously began weeping.

Too many children are growing up without good role models, he said, leaving them fearful and wondering what kind of future they face.

Even those raised in church often don't have parents who love Jesus, he said; their parents talk about him publicly but in private they fight or exhibit other bad habits.

"I think the number one problem kids have is relationships," said the father of two sons. "A lot of their relationships are based on dress, physical appearance or ability.

"Many don't have good relationships with other people because they don't have a good relationship with God. They treat him like they do their father or brother -- there's no trust or faith there. Kids have been dumped on and lied to; they don't know who to trust."

A Southern Baptist youth minister whose church has hosted the unique speaker frequently during the past six years said Freeman has universal appeal.

"He's very transparent and real," said John Cope of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark. "He's fresh, he's radical and unpredictable. But he has a heart for God and seeing people saved."

That reach extends beyond youth groups. Last year, First Baptist's senior pastor, Ronnie Floyd, scheduled him for a church-wide revival. Cope said 85 people were saved that week, including two dozen teens at the church's school.

Freeman, who is working on a book and a new album of praise music, believes the body of Christ needs to quit clinging to tradition so it can better reach the unsaved.

"We've almost told people you have to look a certain way to go to church," he said. "We've turned Easter into a beauty pageant. You have to have a new tie, a new dress or a new suit. But if we're going to reach the X generation, we must have pure and simple motives. We need to reach people, teach them and meet their needs."

--30--

**Franklin Graham is first 'guest'
in model-home format magazine**

By Charles Willis

**Baptist Press
12/5/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A profile of Franklin Graham, heir apparent to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, is the lead article for the first issue of "The Minister's Family," a magazine published by the Baptist Sunday School Board's pastor-staff leadership department.

Designed in the format of a "model home," as editor Matt Tullos describes it, "The Minister's Family" has sections headed "The Guest Room," "The Master Suite," "The Family Room," "The Kitchen" and "The Kid's Room," including pages for preteens and teenagers. A section called "The Back Porch" wraps up the issue and gives a glimpse of the next issue.

Dena Dyer, a minister's wife and writer, tells the story of Franklin Graham, "The Ultimate Preacher's Kid," from youthful prankster to rebellious young adult to evangelistic preacher.

Of his colorful earlier years and his subsequent total commitment to God, Graham tells readers, "What is important about my story is important about every person's story: God has a plan for each of his children and he will bring that plan to successful completion."

Tullos said the new quarterly magazine, which begins publication with the January-February-March 1997 issue, is designed to encourage, inspire, inform and enrich the lives of ministers and their families.

"We'd like to be a source of inspiration, release, humor and kindredship," he said.

On "The Front Porch" of the first issue is James T. Draper Jr., BSSB president, discussing the best reward God can give a pastor.

--more--

Other features include interviews with pastor Adrian Rogers on his home and advice for young ministers, Lanier Worldwide CEO Wes Cantrell on growing up in a preacher's home and Bernadine Cantrell, a writer and wife of Wes Cantrell, on the art of listening.

Articles on romance, dirty laundry, surviving the financial squeeze, secrets for surviving in a minister's home, tips for raising children and life-changing statements from a youth minister are included. A recipe for a Sunday lunch is offered in "The Kitchen."

"The Minister's Family," at \$3.95 quarterly, may be ordered through the Sunday School Board's toll-free number, 1-800-458-2772.

--30--

**Sunday school class
hits cyberspace**

By Tim Ellsworth

**Baptist Press
12/5/96**

COLLINSVILLE, Ill. (BP)--When Kim Martin's young adult Sunday school class members headed to college this fall, she didn't let that interfere with her teaching. Since they couldn't be at church every Sunday, Martin took Sunday school to them -- via the Internet.

Martin, a member of Meadow Heights Baptist Church, Collinsville, said she got the idea early this fall while trying to collect everyone's college addresses. Although many students didn't know their mailing address, Martin said they told her, "But we know what our e-mail address will be. We'd love to get mail."

So, Martin obliged with what has become known as "Church on the Net." Every week, Martin sends an e-mail letter to class members with a Bible trivia question, announcements, a lesson for the week and other miscellaneous information. "To them, it's the same as getting a letter from home," Martin said.

The students then respond to everyone in the class with their answers to the trivia question, and sometimes prayer requests.

"I've been impressed with what good Bible students they are," Martin said. "The trivia questions are usually pretty hard. I'm impressed with how much research they do for these trivia questions."

Martin even has some other church members who participate in the "Church on the Net," even though they aren't members of her class.

"I never expected it to grow like this," she said. "We never really thought that much about the Internet being this untapped market out there."

Her class members are thrilled with the idea.

"I really enjoy Church on the Net," said Erin Miller, a sophomore at Greenville College, via an e-mail letter to the state convention newspaper, the Illinois Baptist. "Even on a Christian college campus, it is difficult to find a church home where I feel comfortable in Sunday school. While I still go to church, it is a pleasant reminder in the middle of the week that people at home still think of me and care about me."

Scott Allen, a student at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, said, "I enjoy the weekly reminder of God's Word here in e-mail. I am on e-mail everyday as a way to keep in touch with friends and to just post announcements."

Mary Skrha is one of those who participates, even though she isn't enrolled in Martin's class. "The thing I enjoy about 'Church on the Net' is that it's nice to keep in touch with other Christians. It is great knowing there are other Christians on the net that will share an article, a poem, Bible verse, or thought.

"The business world is very self-involved, so it is nice to be able to take a few minutes throughout the day to focus on God."

April Frank, a student at Union University, said, "I think this 'Church on the Net' thing is very helpful. It keeps me in touch with the things going on at my church and in touch with the wonderful people in our Sunday school class. I look forward to coming in the computer lab and seeing what insightful things everyone has to say. It is also a very good prayer chain."

--30--

HOUSE MAIL

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS

901 Commerce #750

Nashville, TN 37234

F
I
R
S
T

C
L
A
S
S

Slayden Yarbrough
Historical Commission