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**SBC president urges leaders
to 'live the crucified life'**

By Cameron Crabtree

**Baptist Press
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MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--The "crucified life" must be a Christian's passion, regardless of profession or personal circumstances, said Southern Baptist Convention President Tom Elliff.

"God has assigned you as a leader," said Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla. "In order to carry out that assignment, you must die to self, to your own affections, your own ambitions and your own agenda."

Elliff visited Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary's Mill Valley, Calif., campus Sept. 4 to lead one of seven convocations to pray for spiritual awakening around the world.

Prayer and spiritual renewal have been emphases of Golden Gate Seminary student organizations the last two years.

"We have prayed for this occasion and we're excited by what God is doing among us," said seminary President William Crews. "The real test of what God has done here today is how we let God take this and build on it in our lives from day to day."

Ron Owen, convocation music leader, echoed Crews' sentiment: "It's one thing to know the cross in redemption, but it's another to know the cross in daily living."

Using the New Testament passage of John 12:20-26, Elliff said sacrifice, servanthood and selflessness should characterize the Christian.

"The world has had it up to here with selfish, greedy, dispassionate Christianity," Elliff said, holding his hand near the top of his head. "It's one thing for Jesus to suffer and die for our sins, but it's another thing for us to become more concerned with how to make a living telling that story than telling the story."

With the skyscrapers of San Francisco and affluent homes of southern Marin County in full view outside the chapel windows, Elliff called for full devotion to Christ: "It's the crucified and resurrected Lord that must be our life. The crucified life is not a profession, but a passion."

Henry Blackaby, author of the "Experiencing God" discipleship study, and Avery Willis, author of the "MasterLife" discipleship program, also spoke during the nearly three-hour service of prayer, preaching and praise.

Blackaby stressed the importance of the cross as the place to begin dealing appropriately with sin and personal holiness.

"The cross is a very decisive moment in a person's life," he said. "No one can stand long at the cross and ever again be indifferent to his sin."

Using the Old Testament text of Isaiah 35, Blackaby urged convocation participants to make their lives a "highway of holiness" for God.

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"The highway on which God goes into the world is a highway of holiness," he said. "If your life is not a highway of holiness, then God cannot go over it."

Lamenting the moral plight of the nation and the world, Willis called for the students and church leaders to live as "world ambassadors" for Christ.

"It's a day that we must take the gospel to this land and around the world because we are ambassadors of reconciliation," Willis said. "God had only one Son and he sent him as a missionary. Now, he has sent us as ambassadors of this message."

Noting there are more than 2,000 people groups representing 1.7 billion people who have never heard about Jesus, Willis underscored the importance of sharing news of Christ.

"There's a million people today who would make a commitment for Christ if there were a messenger to tell the good news," he predicted. "There's nothing as fun as telling the good news to someone who has never heard it."

Willis noted new doors of spiritual opportunity have been opening up around the world "in incredible ways" since 1989.

"The reason we must be world ambassadors of Christ is this is the time of God's favor," he said. "I don't know what it means for you personally to be a world ambassador for Christ, but I know you're to stand in Christ's stead, bringing all the authority and power of heaven to speak for God Almighty and to invite men and women to come to Christ."

During the prayer times interspersed throughout the service, Elliff encouraged participants to allow God to examine their hearts for feelings, attitudes or habits that should be "left at the cross." He also asked each person to consider what it would mean personally to live as a world ambassador for Christ.

"It's not the selfish person that wants to go to the cross," he said, "but the call to the cross is a call to the crucified life."

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**2,000 challenged to crucify
'agenda, affections, ambitions'**

By Dena Dyer

**Baptist Press
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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--American Christians must experience "the other side of the cross" before the United States undergoes spiritual awakening, Tom Elliff is convinced.

The first and most comforting side of the cross is the "cross of salvation" through the death of Jesus Christ, the new president of the Southern Baptist Convention said at the second in a series of convocations he initiated at Southern Baptist seminaries across the country.

The second side of the cross, Elliff said, is "after conversion," when Christians are called to be "crucified to the world."

That means nothing less than a daily "dying to self," Elliff said Sept. 3 at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"If we continue to buy what we want, drive what we want, eat what we want and live where we want, then we have not submitted to the lordship of Jesus Christ and God can't do with us and through us what he wants to do. In earlier centuries, when the world was also on the brink of moral and spiritual calamity, God stepped in and altered history. Our prayer is that will happen now in our country."

Before 7:30 a.m., 17 people slipped into Truett Auditorium to read Scripture and pray quietly. By 9 a.m., two buses and scores of cars and vans had unloaded hundreds of pastors and laypeople. An hour before the scheduled 10 a.m. start, wall-to-wall Baptists were singing hymns and praise choruses.

Two thousand people -- senior adults leaning on canes, students with backpacks, businessmen carrying briefcases, seminarians in wheelchairs, pastors, laymen, professors and state and national SBC leaders -- filled the auditorium and spilled into four overflow rooms to participate via closed-circuit television.

"There are no locked doors here today," Southwestern President Ken Hemphill announced a few minutes before 10 o'clock. "Just do your business with God and go on." But by 11 a.m., the regular chapel hour had passed and then noon came and went. Very few people left. "No one is leaving," Elliff whispered to Hemphill, "I guess God isn't through here yet."

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Still, numerous professors had returned to their rooms, finding groups of students who, instead of squeezing into the formal meeting places, had gone on to class and were on their knees praying for personal, seminary and national spiritual renewal.

Back in the seminary auditorium, when retired professor and noted Southern Baptist prayer specialist T.W. Hunt and his wife slipped in the back door, he was called to the platform to share several stories of earlier outbreaks of revival at Southwestern, instances when "we lost track of time as we prayed and were surprised when dawn came or when we missed lunch and classes."

"It was God's timing and God's will for T.W. to arrive when he did," Hemphill said afterward. "His plane didn't even land until after this was scheduled to be over, yet when he walked in we were waiting for something and didn't know what. It was nothing he did as a man -- just telling what has happened in the past -- but it was of God. It was an electric moment. I think everyone involved had a real encounter with their Lord."

The four-hour prayer meeting began with Elliff's description of Christians as "watchmen" who are to warn their contemporaries about imminent spiritual danger, but "if we run away from our responsibility, their blood will be on our hands. The enemy is swarming over the horizon and we are called to sound the alarm."

He related the call to the cross was "for us to bear the sentence of death, to stay at our place, watching and waiting no matter the personal cost. The cross stands directly in the path of every Christian, and you are going no place until you deal with it. It is inherent in the servant's position"

Henry Blackaby, director of the Home Mission Board's prayer and spiritual awakening office, then called the congregation to personal purity. "How can we remain in sin and stand before the cross? God wants our lives to be a highway of holiness over which he can send himself to a world full of brokenness."

After Jesus died, the disciples were quick to forget and quick to doubt, but "when Jesus appeared to them and told them to do whatever it took to live a life of holiness, even if it meant putting their fingers in his wounds, they understood," Blackaby said.

"The way to holiness goes back to the cross and through the cross. It is spiritually impossible for me to stand before the cross of my Lord and keep sin in my life. The picture is too large, my sin too awful, my Savior too bloodied."

Avery Willis, senior vice president for overseas operations of the Foreign Mission Board, then challenged the gathering at the world's largest seminary to consider the cost of living a meaningful Christian life.

"In light of the cross, what is God saying to you about the rest of your life? If you look at people from Jesus' viewpoint instead of a human point of view, you won't look at them the same. The blood of Jesus saved every one of us who comes to him in faith," Willis said. "God made us ambassadors to a world that doesn't know that. Through reconciliation to God at the cross, he has made us all ambassadors to the world."

Today, 30 percent of the world's population has never heard even the name of Jesus because Christians haven't been following close enough to him, Willis declared.

"We must ask, What has happened on my 'watch,' what has happened to American in our lifetime, what has happened to our world? Is there any place in the world you wouldn't follow him?" Willis asked. "It's a 911 world out there and no one is answering the phone."

Audience reaction to the challenges was overwhelmingly positive.

Like many Southwestern professors, Daryl Eldridge prayed individually and with small groups over the course of the four-hour meeting. "The Spirit rekindled in my heart a desire to come before the cross of Christ and find pleasure in him," the dean of the seminary's school of religious education said. "I think there was a real brokenness -- a time for purifying and cleansing as God spoke to us about what we needed to do before revival comes."

Repeatedly the crowd was warned the challenge was difficult.

Elliff noted there is nothing easy about prayer. "And I mean real prayer and not just making religious noises to impress other people. It's much easier to preach about praying or talk about praying or even to confess that we don't pray like we should," he said.

"If this day ends and your ministry is still more of a profession than a passion, you've not come to the cross," he pointed out. "If you are after a life of convenience instead of an opportunity to share God's love -- if you walk out of here and the needs of a lost and hurting world are not on your heart -- you haven't come to the other side of the cross."

Afterward, Elliff said what happened at Southwestern -- as moving and meaningful as it was -- is not the "bottom line." What matters is what they take back to their ministries and the changes in their lives. "There is a need for passion in serving and for holiness in the lives of Christian leaders that can come from coming to the cross," he said.

Elliff said he hopes the meetings at the seminaries will yield "streams of prayer" flowing from each of the six SBC campuses (in Fort Worth; Louisville, Ky.; New Orleans; Wake Forest, N.C.; Kansas City, Mo.; and Mill Valley, Calif.) and "converging into a mighty river of prayer that will sweep the Southern Baptist Convention and the entire country."

Hemphill, choking with emotion, publicly thanked God for "getting hold of us today and turning us every which way but loose." He said he recognized "what God did today in my own life. It was a wonderful beginning, not just to the semester at Southwestern but in each individual life committed today to God's plan in that life."

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Craig Bird also contributed to this story. (BP) photos available on SBCNet or from Southwestern's public relations office.

**Southern Baptists poised
for Hurricane Fran relief**

By Steve Barber & Amanda Phifer

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MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--As Hurricane Fran headed for the Atlantic coast of the Carolinas, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers and equipment were being readied Sept. 5 for a response in the storm's aftermath.

As of noon Eastern time, authorities had issued a hurricane warning ranging from Edisto Beach, S.C., south of Charleston, to the North Carolina-Virginia border.

State convention-owned disaster units, and the personnel to transport and operate them, have been placed on standby for a response. The states on standby are South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia and Florida.

South Carolina Baptists' readiness three mass feeding units and nine recovery units operated by trained volunteers from the state's Baptist churches and associations. Units will respond on site as needed to assist in feeding, recovery work, assistance at shelters, counseling and other needs. All assistance is provided as a ministry.

The mass feeding units are capable of serving up to 15,000 meals per day. Recovery units are available to cut up fallen trees, remove debris and temporary roof work. The units will remain on site as long as needed, with volunteers serving on a rotation basis.

Other state units and personnel have been placed on alert: Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee and the Northeast Disaster Relief Consortium.

Mickey Caison, national Disaster Relief director for the Brotherhood Commission, arrived in Columbia, S.C., the morning of Sept. 5 to join the American Red Cross administrative team and serve as Brotherhood's on-site coordinator.

"Please pray for those who live in the area that will be affected by Fran's fury," Caison said in a Sept. 4 update to key Southern Baptist leaders. "Also pray for those who will coordinate the response, for the volunteers and for others who will 'serve Christ in the crisis' as they travel and serve."

The Brotherhood Commission coordinates multi-state disaster response on behalf of all Southern Baptists.

Contributions in support of the disaster relief effort may be made to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104.

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**Prof: Opposition to gambling
is underscored in Scripture**

By C. Lacy Thompson

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--The letter appeared in a Mississippi newspaper under the heading, "Bible doesn't say gambling is a sin."

A man named Roger wrote of searching his Bible and concordance and finding nothing in the Scripture to say gambling is a sin. However, there were several references to the casting of lots. Why, even the disciples used that method to choose a successor to Judas.

That being so, how could one oppose gambling on moral grounds?

Easy, Joe Trull insists. Look again at the principles set forth in the Bible.

"Perhaps many Christians don't take gambling seriously because they cannot find a direct commandment against gambling and they read in the Bible that some leaders seemed to 'gamble' to determine God's will," notes Trull, professor of Christian ethics at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Of course, there are plenty of economic and social reasons to oppose gambling, Trull points out -- it diverts money from other legitimate businesses; it creates problem gamblers and the social costs that accompany those addictions; it negatively impacts young people; and its reality just does not live up to its promise.

However, Baptists must begin in their opposition to gambling with an examination of God's Word on the issue, Trull suggests. They must come to an understanding that the Christian way is incompatible with gambling, he says.

"Whatever else we do, Baptist people must possess a clear biblical and theological understanding of this moral issue.

"Let me say at the outset, without stuttering or stammering, that the Bible is not silent about gambling.

"While no direct command jumps out of the Bible to guide us, the moral ideals of the Scriptures clearly oppose the practice of gambling."

The Bible provides insights and principles on numerous issues not specifically addressed in Scripture, Trull says. The key is to identify the principles as they are set forth in the Bible.

For instance, the first clear biblical reference to gambling comes in Isaiah 65, in which the prophet protests against those who "forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny."

The deities mentioned in the passage -- Fortune and Destiny -- were the gods of fate and symbols of good and bad luck, Trull notes. "Israelites were trusting in chance rather than God. The prophet denounced (this) ... for biblical faith magnifies the providential care of God; the cult of luck menaces such faith."

But what about the "casting of lots" and how it relates to gambling?

Trull acknowledges the practice is cited numerous times in the Bible. But he makes three key points about it.

First, the purpose of the practice was to find God's will, except in the case when the soldiers actually were gambling for the robe of Jesus during his crucifixion. Second, the practice eventually was discarded as early Christians "turned to the spirit of truth to guide them in their decisions." Third, Trull suggests the casting of lots could represent a practice God simply allowed his people to practice for a while until fuller revelation came along.

"The casting of lots in the Bible is not a justification for modern gambling, nor does the fact that the Bible never specifically condemns gambling make it allowable or amoral," Trull notes.

"In many ways the Bible builds a powerful case against gambling."

Trull cites several key biblical principles that should guide Christians in their moral understanding of gambling:

-- Gambling questions the sovereign rule of God over our lives. "Can anyone deny that gambling majors on greed, the fast buck and materialism?" Trull asks. "Jesus calls this idolatry. Gambling encourages our preoccupation with wealth; the Bible warns that the love of money is a source of all evil. Gambling is wrong because it displaces devotion to God with trust in the false gods of chance, fate or 'Lady Luck.'"

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-- Gambling violates the central moral imperative of the Bible -- the law of love. Jesus said the greatest command is to love God and others, Trull notes. "Love imposes great demands upon us. ... Love leads us to always seek the welfare of our neighbor. ... Love meets needs; gambling exploits. Love entreats; gambling mistreats. Love strengthens; gambling weakens. Love builds up; gambling tears down. Love never fails; gambling ever fails."

-- Gambling encourages covetousness and stealing. Gambling violates both the commandment against stealing and the one against coveting, Trull insists. "In one sense, gambling is robbery by mutual consent. A group of people agree to play a game of chance in which one person takes what others have wagered without any exchange of goods or services. Is that not stealing? ...

"(Also,) the insatiable desire for money you do not have, for wealth you did not earn, leads to greedy materialism. Covetousness not only motivates gambling, but gambling itself feeds covetousness -- a vicious cycle. Jesus said, 'Beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of things possessed.'"

-- Gambling violates the biblical principles of the stewardship of possessions. Christians are called to be good stewards of all God has given them in this world and to use their resources for God's glory and human good, Trull reminds.

"Gambling is wrong because it encourages pleasure and profit at the loss and pain of other people. The evening news may tell the story of one winner, but it has not time to recount the thousands of suicides, broken homes, embezzled funds, thefts, frauds and addictions that are a part of the story of every lottery and casino. Those who suffer most from gambling are the poor."

Gambling also is poor stewardship because gamblers are losers, Trull adds. The odds of flipping "heads" on a coin 20 times in a row (one in 524,288) is better than the odds of winning the Florida lottery (one in 13,983,820), he points out.

-- Gambling depreciates the value of honest work. "The honest worker produces goods and services; the gambler, if he or she wins at all, brings home someone else's money," the New Orleans Seminary professor states. "The Bible affirms work and commends labor. ... Work is a means of sustaining life, supporting dependents, helping others in need and creatively sharing in God's activity in the world."

-- Gambling destroys Christian influence. Christians are called to abstain from evil and imitate Christ in their lives and actions, Trull states. "Christian influence should be exerted in positive ways to build up community life in which the young and weak are protected, not exploited. As salt and light, believers are to use moral persuasion and legitimate power to influence public policy for the common good. The Christian who gambles is part of the problem, rather than part of the solution."

-- Gambling corrupts the God-ordained purpose of the state. God's purpose is for the state to establish justice, Trull says. Indeed, the apostle Paul described the role of government as "God's servant for your good," the professor adds. "The apostle could not imagine God approving any state which uses a basic human weakness (gambling) as a means for collecting taxes, becomes the sponsor and promoter of a swindle which always pays back less than people have put in and becomes so entangled with the income received from the victims that it must promote gambling to keep the revenues coming in."

Trull acknowledges a person does not have to be a Christian to find good reasons to oppose gambling. The economic and social costs of the practice are staggering enough. But he also notes when the principles and values of the Bible are added to the mix, Christians should have little trouble determining what their stance on the headline issue should be.

"Seen in the light of biblical principles, gambling is personally selfish, morally irresponsible and socially destructive," Trull says. "Yes, the Bible does speak against gambling. Read the Word of God and you will discover precepts, principles (and) models ... that call every disciple of Christ to a life incompatible with gambling."

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Information in this article was drawn from an address by Trull and a chapter in his upcoming book, "Christian Ethics: Facing Tough Issues with Biblical Principles," to be released by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman & Holman Publishers.

World Changers offers singles nail-driving mission experience

By Karen L. Willoughby

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Single adults now have a missions opportunity designed especially for them.

The Brotherhood Commission's World Changers department offers pre-packaged, hands-on, week-long missions projects tailored just for the unmarried adult, according to George Siler, who led conferences about the mission opportunity during the 31st annual Single Adult Labor Day Getaway at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, Aug. 30-Sept. 1. The Labor Day conferences are sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board discipleship and family development division.

Siler, who works for the Brotherhood Commission, provided nail-driving experiences prior to evening worship services to show single adults a few construction activities they would perform if they participated in the mission experience of renovating houses or building churches. Women who could drive a nail completely into a 2x4 with four strikes of the hammer won a T-shirt. Men had to drive the nail in the plank with two strikes.

"We involve young people and adults in a missions experience that teaches them servanthood and exposes them to opportunities to further the gospel," Siler said. "The world we seek to change first is the participant's. If we can focus on the experience of the participant so they truly develop a heart for missions, then they will be able to meet the needs of the people they serve -- and change their world."

World Changers started in 1990 as a pilot project for high school students. The response and the results were so positive the program was expanded. This spring and summer, about 9,700 junior high, senior high, collegiate, single adult and senior adult participants worked within age-specific groups in 37 U.S. cities and in Nicaragua.

"In 1997 we expect to have 10,500 participants," Siler said. "These people are paying to come, but that doesn't slow them down."

Each participant must pay \$240 for a U.S. assignment. Those who went to Nicaragua each paid \$750.

"World Changers has discovered that single adults are some of our hardest workers," Siler said. "They build relationships quickly, and many of them have been looking for an opportunity to get involved in missions, so they're really eager."

Single adults have two options for 1997.

Organizers in Denver have specifically requested single adult World Changers next summer, July 5-12, to perform repairs on several houses in a low-income neighborhood. Then from July 12-19, single adults are being asked to travel to Antigua in the Caribbean where they will repair homes and churches hit by hurricane winds in 1995.

Allen Waggoner, a member at Sandia Baptist Church, Albuquerque, N.M., was one of three people from his church to participate in a World Changers project this summer in Birmingham, Ala.

"I attended this (World Changers) session last year (at the Labor Day conference) and really felt this was what God wanted me to do," Waggoner said. "I went back to my church and got two others to go. We drove 22 straight hours.

"It was a great experience," Waggoner recounted. "It was great because of the work we got to do, the people we got to work with, the people we met that we sweated side by side with -- they'll be your friends for the rest of your life."

World Changers is different from other Southern Baptist Convention mission projects in that it does all the planning, according to Siler. World Changers officials work out the lodging, food, needed building materials, schedule, leadership, personal preparation study guides and cooperative logistics.

"In one week we might renovate as many as 25 to 30 houses in a community with the help of a local agency," Siler said. "That can have a dramatic impact on the community as well as be a powerful witness for Christ."

In addition to recruiting participants, Siler prepares cities for the project.

"We partner with as many people as we can," he said. "Cities are out the money for the materials. World Changers does the labor. You can't get around manual labor in construction."

Because their labor cost ordinarily is more than half the cost of a home renovation, cities are able to repair at least twice as many homes using World Changers volunteers.

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World Changers participants must be Christians and church members who complete a six-lesson Bible study and local work project before winning final approval of their application.

"It doesn't matter what your background is, you're needed at World Changers," Siler said. "There's a lot of people out there who say that they don't know if God can use them. But we have lawyers digging ditches, teachers laying block and construction workers playing with children. If you have a will to work, you'll fit right in."

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**Singles ministry resource kit
revamps 'typical' approaches**

By Karen L. Willoughby

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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--The solution for single adult ministry is empowerment. That is the claim of a new strategy tool for single adult leaders introduced at four single adult Labor Day conferences held across the nation, Aug. 30-Sept. 1.

"This isn't just another resource on single adult ministry," Tim Cleary, single adult consultant at the Baptist Sunday School Board, said of the new resource pack produced by the BSSB discipleship and family development division. "This is a strategy tool that addresses major issues in ministering with single adults, and it provides intentional, practical solutions in those areas."

The "Single Adult Ministry Solution" resource pack contains a leader's manual; the book, "Start A Revolution: Nine World Changing Strategies for Single Adults;" and a six-cassette tape collection of interviews with some of the nation's leading single adult ministers.

"This is the first time anybody has said there's one model of single adult ministry you should be moving toward," Cleary said. "That model is empowerment."

The leader's manual describes several typical, yet ineffective, models of single adult ministries:

-- The entertainment model where the focus is social and activity-oriented. The low commitment level required of single adults makes it easy for them to join a different church that might have a "better" program.

-- The extended-youth model is centered around the leader. It also has low expectations of its single adults, a factor that leads to irresponsible or erratic member behavior.

-- The enabler model sounds effective -- caring, sympathetic, soft love and low expectations -- but instead actually keeps people in dysfunctional lifestyles because it is so accepting.

-- The umbrella model is small and unified, but does not readily admit new people.

Only the empowerment model builds growing single adult ministries, Cleary claimed.

"The empowerment model is the model Jesus used," he said. "In all areas of his life, Jesus empowered people. We give people freedom when we make them responsible.

"I think that's why we have so many vacancies in our churches and why our giving is so low," he continued. "We haven't empowered people. To empower people, we have to give them authority even if they fall flat. They'll learn by that, even."

The leader's manual outlines eight issues involved in working with single adults and offers comments by prominent single adult leaders about the topics. The issues include:

- understanding today's single adults.
- empowering single adults for Christian living.
- developing your single adult ministry leadership team.
- incorporating single adults into the body of Christ.
- organizing for effective single adult ministry.
- expanding and growing a single adult ministry.
- facing the challenge of critical issues in single adult ministry.
- discovering fresh ideas for ministry with single adults.

Cleary said "The Single Adult Ministry Solution" keys are basic, biblically rooted truths adapted from the Great Commission. They espouse empowerment, teaching, equipping, continuing, going and speaking.

"The ideas in the resource kit are all built around what you can do through your Sunday school," Cleary said. "This is teaching people how to do their work as part of the church."

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"Start A Revolution," the book in the resource kit, was written by Stephen Felts, editor of the BSSB's "Christian Single" magazine.

In the introduction of his book, Felts writes: "A crisis of leadership exists today among single adults in America. This vacuum exists not because single adults lack the desire to lead but because many simply do not know how to begin influencing their world for Christ."

"This book is trying to challenge Christian single adults about how they're living out their faith," Cleary said. "That's the battle for single adult ministers -- to lead people to Christ and build a Christian value base so they can live a successful life as a believer, lead others to Christ and build the church."

"We've got all these single adults stockpiled in the church," Cleary continued. "This material sets them free to be whatever God wants them to be. It sets them free to lead their own ministry."

The plumb line for single adult ministry is the Great Commission, Cleary said.

"What we'd like to see happen is an increase in the percentage of single adults leading in church."

The "Single Adult Ministry Solution" is available in bookstores or by calling 1-800-458-2772. The strategy tool for single adult ministry also was launched at Labor Day conferences at San Antonio, Texas; Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center; and Mississippi's Gulf Shore Baptist Assembly.

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Singles' 'Getaway' features range of backgrounds & ages

By Karen L. Willoughby

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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--An eclectic blend of musical styles greeted an equally varied blend of single adults at the 31st Labor Day Getaway at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, Aug. 30-Sept. 1.

Sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board, the Getaway drew 1,623 people from 15 states. Their ages ranged from 20 to over 60. Labor Day Getaways also were held in San Antonio, Texas; Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center; and Mississippi's Gulf Shore Assembly.

"We tried to provide something for everyone," said the BSSB's single adult event specialist David Hassell, who coordinated all four Getaways. "We've got a mix of rock 'n' rollers, kickers, rural and metropolitan singles here. It's important that we feature a varied menu of worship and teaching styles to meet the diverse needs of those different groups."

Hassell said being a single adult is not the most important aspect of attending a Labor Day conference.

"I don't play up the issue of singleness," Hassell said. "What's important to me is that these conferences are really a positive spiritual growth and enrichment experience."

For the Brotherhood Commission's World Changers ministry, the Sunday morning offering was important. World Changers offers pre-packaged week-long mission trips during which entire block of homes might be renovated. After a video clip was shown of one group's work in Alabama, an offering of \$7,001 was collected from single adults and designated for the international work of World Changers, the only Southern Baptist Convention-sponsored mission program that has a section specifically for single adult volunteers.

The three-day Labor Day Getaway was wrapped around an Olympic theme -- "The Flame Passes On" -- that related to the Sunday School Board's year-long relational evangelism theme. During the opening ceremonies Friday evening, a torch-bearing runner was followed by singles carrying banners proclaiming the various names of God.

Labor Day Getaway included morning and evening worship celebrations led by Candy Smith, single adult minister at First Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas, and the church's worship band. Brian Harbor, pastor of the Richardson church, was the keynote speaker.

Forty seminars and a special four-hour study of the "Mind of Christ" rounded out the program. There was a seminar just for men and another just for women. One seminar promoted the Sunday School Board's newest ministry tool -- "The Single Adult Ministry Solution," a three-part resource kit for single adult ministry.

The seminar, "Developing Your Private Worship," was so popular that it had to be moved to a larger room. The seminar defined worship, explained the purpose of worship and described the features of private worship. A second-hour session led participants through a private worship experience.

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"I was surprised to hear about using music in private worship," said Rex Sell of Green Valley Baptist Church, Las Vegas. He said he was going to start using music in his time alone with God. "I'm a young Christian, and I want to be as close to the Lord as I can get," he said.

Other conferences included information about dating and family relationships, total health, managing finances and discovering Christian hope in seasons of despair.

Julie Pigg of First Baptist Church, Vernon, Texas, said she came to the Labor Day Getaway to have a special time with God. It was her third time to attend.

"The Lord always works in my life at this conference," Pigg said. "This year I have a whole list of things to talk over with him. The Lord has done something really incredible already. I've been wanting to witness to others, and God has let that happen at this conference."

Brenda Woody, a member at First Southern Baptist Church, Glendale, Ariz., said she attended the Getaway because she needed to get away.

"It's a getaway but you go back exhausted," she said. "You just hear so much -- it's hard to take it all in."

Noel Dilapo, who attends Colorado Community Church in Denver, said he came to the Labor Day Getaway for fun.

"It sounded like a great way to end the summer," Dilapo said. "I needed a break. I haven't had a vacation in more than a year."

Labor Day Getaways always include plenty of free time, Hassell said. This year the afternoons were free for everything from kayaking to horseback rides.

Late-night options included storyteller/comedian Bob Stromberg, Christian music artist Tina Hutchison, Grammy Award winner Bruce Carroll and the No Mo Blues Cafe, featuring Christian blues artists Rex Carroll and Sessions Band.

Michael Flynt of Pampa, Texas, who has attended all but one of the last 25 of Glorieta's 31 Labor Day Getaways, said, "Church is like my second home, but Glorieta is special. There is just a peace I get from being here."

In 1997, the Labor Day Getaway theme will be "God is Doing a Nu Thang."

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**Seminar leader: Private worship
key element in spiritual growth**

By Karen L. Willoughby

**Baptist Press
9/5/96**

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Single adults have a choice between sustaining or shirking private worship, a seminar leader at a single adult Labor Day conference said.

"Our choice should be to make time for private worship," said Angela Hamm, a seminary student from Dallas who led a conference during Labor Day Getaway weekend held at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, Aug. 30-Sept. 1. The Labor Day singles conferences are sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board discipleship and family development division.

In discussing private worship, Hamm directed single adults to consider a conversation between Moses and God found in Exodus 3.

"Anytime we have an encounter with God, it's holy ground," Hamm said. "Worship involves the highest privilege and the most exalted of experiences. It fuels intimacy with God and heightens our commitment to God's purpose."

Hamm described worship as a preoccupation with the Lord. "Worship enlarges our horizons, overshadows our fears, changes our attitudes and refreshes our spirit. We forget the things that gnaw at us.

"At the very least," she said, "we should spend time in worship to put our life in the right perspective."

The three questions to consider in private worship, Hamm said, are: Am I coming to worship as a child of God, with a sincere heart? Am I focusing my full attention on the Lord alone so that my hungry desire is to draw near to him? Am I coming from a position of purity, having been cleansed from my daily sins?

Confession is the natural precursor to being cleansed for sins, Hamm said. "When we confess it, we agree with God we're wrong. There is nothing you have ever done that he will not forgive you for."

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By using the Word of God in worship, Hamm said she understands how she must live her life.

"Teaching -- it tells me what I need to know," she said. "Rebuking -- it tells me what I need to stop. Correction -- it tells me what I need to change. Training in righteousness -- it tells me what I need to do."

Hamm said she spends time reading the Bible in several different ways, such as reading with a goal in mind, studying one word, studying a book or section or studying a character.

The Bible gives sins to avoid, promises to claim, examples to follow and Scriptures to memorize, Hamm said.

Praying is a necessary part of worship, and keeping a spiritual journal is a helpful elective to praising God, Hamm said. Keeping spiritual journal is an effective tool to chart spiritual growth, she said.

"Decide before you begin if you want it to be a private journal, or if you want to leave it for others," she said.

Journal notes could include insights from reading the Bible and other spiritual material, specific prayers, concerns about personal behavior, that day's accomplishments, people met, things learned through life itself, feelings experienced or impressions one believes God has imparted, Hamm said.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Donors assisting library at American Baptist College," dated 9/4/96, please correct the 13th paragraph's first sentence to read:

The decision became final this year, with the SBC's last budget allocation for the college totaling \$165,000 in scholarship funds for 1996-97.

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