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**Arson fund disbursement
to states nears \$300,000**

By Herb Hollinger

**Baptist Press
8/6/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Fourteen state Baptist conventions received nearly \$50,000 when the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee business office Aug. 2 released additional funds from the "Arson Fund" to assist African American churches victimized by arsonists.

Coupled with the initial distribution July 3 of \$246,712 to 12 state conventions, the Arson Fund gifts which have been distributed from the SBC office now total \$293,746, according to Jack Wilkerson, Executive Committee vice president for business and finance. Two state conventions -- Arizona and the Northwest (Oregon-Washington) -- received gifts during the August distribution in addition to the previous 12 of July.

The Arson Fund is primarily from an offering taken at the SBC annual meeting in New Orleans in June. That offering came at the request of then-SBC President Jim Henry, Orlando, Fla., pastor, and raised \$282,000 in pledges and cash gifts.

Disbursement of the funds follows instructions of the Inter-Agency Council's Racial Reconciliation Task Force which formulated the percentage allotment to the 14 state conventions. More than 40 African American churches, most in the Southeast, have burned in the last 18 months, primarily as the result of arsonists. SBC officials said the formula of distribution is based on an in-hand count of arson-related African American church fires in the states as a percentage of the total number of churches impacted nationally.

Wilkerson said funds from the pledges at the New Orleans meeting are continuing to arrive at the Nashville office, as well as gifts from churches throughout the SBC sent through normal channels as designated gifts.

The August distribution of \$47,034 went to: Alabama, \$3,950; Arizona, \$564; Arkansas, \$2,304; Florida, \$1,693; Georgia, \$1,128; Louisiana, \$5,126; Mississippi, \$3,950; North Carolina, \$4,515; Northwest, \$1,128; Oklahoma, \$564; South Carolina, \$9,642; Tennessee, \$4,515; Texas, \$6,819; and Virginia, \$1,128.

According to Richard Land, SBC Christian Life Commission president, the funds are sent to the state conventions which then have responsibility to determine the amount of assistance each church will need. "Baptists in Alabama know more about the needs in Alabama and Baptists in Georgia know more about the needs in Georgia," Land said.

The Inter-Agency Council, composed of the chief executives of the 19 SBC entities, created the task force to seek the eradication of racism within the convention as outlined in the Racial Reconciliation Resolution adopted by messengers to the 1995 SBC annual meeting in Atlanta.

In addition to the monies, Southern Baptist construction crews are volunteering to rebuild the burned churches. At least four state Baptist 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 state Baptist convention offices or the SBC Executive Committee, 901 Commerce St., Nashville, TN 37203.

HMB worker uncovers Mormonism in Stephen Covey's '7 Habits'

By Jon Walker

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--It may come as a surprise to many Baptists, but the popular personal training programs written and promoted by Stephen R. Covey also promote his Mormon beliefs, according to Bill Gordon, associate director of the interfaith witness department at the Home Mission Board.

In an analysis in the August issue of SBC LIFE, Gordon stated Covey's best-seller, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," is ripe with Mormon doctrine altered to appeal to a mass audience.

Gordon found "7 Habits" contains many of the same principles, anecdotes and illustrations used in one of Covey's earlier books, "The Divine Center," a book meant to promote Mormon beliefs and show any spiritual model other than the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), including evangelical Christianity, is a false "map" that limits the personal development of its followers.

"Covey explains in this book that he has discovered how to communicate Mormon truths to non-Mormons by simply changing his vocabulary," Gordon recounted. "Covey writes, 'I have found in speaking to various non-LDS groups in different cultures that we can teach and testify of many gospel principles if we are careful in selecting words which carry our meaning but come from their experience and frame of mind.'"

In "The Divine Center," Covey writes orthodox Christianity "so distorts the knowledge of who we really are, who our Father in Heaven really is, who Jesus Christ really is, and who the Holy Ghost really is, that it imposes enormous limitations on the software program of those who 'buy into it.' ... It also impels their minds to great accusation and criticism of those who are correctly programmed in these matters."

Those correctly programmed, according to Covey, are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, while evangelical Christianity "gets just about everything wrong, including God, man, man's relationship to God, the role of Christ the Savior, the purpose and meaning of life."

Gordon noted Covey calls the doctrine of the Trinity an "apostate doctrine," which has "led people to believe that we are a creation of God rather than his literal offspring."

Covey's beliefs about salvation also are uniquely Mormon, Gordon stated. Covey warns his readers against seeking "any kind of 'special' relationship" with Jesus Christ because the "Christ-only approach is inappropriate for Latter-day Saints and for this book."

Claiming eternal life is only for those who obey the gospel principles, Covey argues the grace of Christ is not efficacious "except through our obedience to gospel standards of righteousness." The evangelical doctrine of salvation by grace alone is a "false concept" and an "apostate doctrine," Covey writes in "The Divine Center."

Covey "even claims that one of Satan's lies to the world is that all God wants us to do is receive Christ Jesus through faith," Gordon noted.

Because Covey's religious beliefs are Mormon, not Christian, Gordon stated, "No doubt churches and religious organizations should seriously reconsider whether it's appropriate to use a personal growth program written by someone who believes false doctrines."

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The full text of Gordon's article is posted in SBCNet News Room.

Bulgaria seeks Baptist help with juvenile delinquents

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VARNA, Bulgaria (BP)--Bulgarian Baptists hope an invitation to help Varna police with juvenile delinquents could indicate a change in the government's anti-evangelical stance.

A high-ranking police official in Varna, one of the country's larger cities, asked Baptist leader and pastor Boshidar Igoff to meet with him recently.

The official told Igoff he was disappointed in results the police have had in dealing with juvenile delinquents. "We have done everything possible for them, but people don't believe in the government or state structures. I think the last hope of these young people is the church," he told Igoff.

"You can imagine how strange it was to hear this from the mouth of a communist!" Igoff said.

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Although Bulgaria's communist government was overthrown several years ago, as happened in other Eastern European countries, disgruntled citizens soon returned communist officials to power. The country has lagged far behind more progressive Eastern European countries like Hungary, Poland and Czech Republic in economic gains.

In recent years the government has teamed up with the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and waged a bitter media campaign against Baptists and other evangelicals. It has lumped together Baptists, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Krishna followers and Eastern religions under the category of "foreign cults."

Bulgarian Baptists now have 60 congregations and about 100 preaching points. Street evangelism is still outlawed.

An opportunity to do serious ministry with juvenile delinquents in Varna could boost evangelical work across the country, Igoff said. Now, Baptists face the challenge of finding someone competent to help train them in the practical aspects of working with juvenile delinquents.

"We have people ready to work in this, including some university-educated people, but we need help in knowing how to do this work," said Igoff. "We need somebody trained in the practical aspects of this work. We are looking for somebody with real-life experience in working with the special problems this kind of young people has," he said.

For more information, call the Foreign Mission Board at 1-800-999-3113.

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Barna reports religion change of 'gargantuan proportions'

**Baptist Press
8/6/96**

DALLAS (BP)--A new book, "The Index of Leading Spiritual Indicators," according to its author, evangelical pollster George Barna, provides statistical evidence that:

"... religion at the end of the millennium is experiencing upheavals of gargantuan proportions."

"Yet, in the midst of the information explosion and a media that meddles in every arena of endeavor known to humankind," Barna writes, "surprisingly little is known about the true nature of the shifts that are redirecting the religious frontier in America."

Among the statistics in Barna's new book, released in August by Word:

-- Two out of every three adults (67%) say they have made a "personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today." This level of commitment has shown a slight increase in the past decade, rising from the 60 percent level in the early and mid-'80s.

-- Most Americans believe that spiritual salvation is an outcome to be earned through their good character or behavior, compared to evangelical Christianity's traditional view of salvation by grace. Six of 10 people (57%) believe "if a person is generally good, or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in heaven."

-- The proportion of adults who read the Bible during the course of a week, other than when they are in church services, has declined dramatically since the early nineties. In 1992, nearly half of all adults (47%) read from the Bible during the week. That figure has plummeted to just 31 percent by 1995. One out of five adults (20%) claim the Bible is the dominant influence when they make ethical or moral decisions.

-- Even so, 73 percent of Americans believe the miracles described in the Bible really happened, while 74 percent believe that "forgiveness of sins is possible only through faith in Jesus Christ."

-- Two-thirds of the population (63%) has no idea what "John 3:16" refers to, much less has the ability to quote that verse. One-fifth of adults (24%) knew it is a verse from the Bible addressing salvation. Among born-again Christians, 50 percent were aware of this. Ten percent of adults believe that the name of Noah's wife was Joan of Arc.

Four out of five people (82%) incorrectly believe that the Bible includes the statement that "God helps those who help themselves."

-- Attendance at evangelical churches has slowed after a period of growth in the '70s and '80s. The average adult attendance at these churches is currently 101 adults. In church membership, 60 percent of adults belong to a local religious institution, completed to 80 percent during the 1950s. Weekly church attendance, however, remains at 42 percent. Adult Sunday school attendance, meanwhile, is on the decline. One out of four adults (23%) attended such classes in 1991. The proportion has dipped to one out of six (17%) in 1995.

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-- Women are twice as likely as men to attend a church service during any given week. Women also are 50 percent more likely than men to say they are "religious" and to state they are "absolutely committed" to the Christian faith.

-- Half of all pastors (49%) contend their family life has suffered significantly as a result of the pressures and demands of their ministry, yet 89 percent of pastors say they feel satisfied with their ministry.

-- Most Americans do not believe in Satan (or the devil). Six out of 10 adults (58%) believe that Satan "is not a living being but is a symbol of evil." Yet 36 percent of adults read their horoscope, a percent roughly equal among Protestants, Catholics and non-Christians.

-- Increasing numbers of churches are striving to be sensitive to the needs of "seekers" -- individuals who are not Christians but are seeking spiritual moorings and connections. Currently, 4 percent of all churches have "seeker-driven" services; 22 percent have "seeker-sensitive" services.

-- Four out of five Americans (79%) believe that Protestants and Catholics should put aside their religious differences and work together. Ten percent believe the two groups should maintain a cordial relationship but recognize their religious differences and not work together.

Like it or not, Barna writes:

"The religious climate in America these days reflects the true soul of the population: one which thirsts for experience rather than knowledge, for exposure rather than understanding, for choices rather than the simplicity and security of a limited set of alternatives."

Barna also writes: "Americans want their religious freedom and they cherish their religious life, in all of its unique forms. Religion in this country may not be what it used to be, but indisputably it remains a vital dimension of the American experience."

Americans are "questioning everything" about religion, Barna writes. "Adults and youth alike reflect astounding ignorance of basic adjectives and phrases which describe what people believe, how they behave, and why they respond to religious opportunities. What is not lost in this spiritual upheaval is the new perception of religion: a personalized, customized form of faith views which meet personal needs, minimize rules and absolutes, and which bear little resemblance to the 'pure' form of any of the world's major religions."

Barna notes his book fills in some important information not in William Bennett's "The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators."

Bennett's book, Barna writes, "would have been enhanced by incorporating more religious measures into his mix of key factors, for spirituality is indisputably a central facet of the American experience and related to the dilemma in which our nation finds itself today."

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Compiled by Art Toalston.

**Conference addresses MK needs,
leaves wake of question marks**

By Karen L. Willoughby

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HONOLULU (BP)--"I'm going to help."

With these words, black Baptist leader E.V. Hill pledged his participation in the cause for which about 600 mainlanders and missionaries gathered in Honolulu the last week of July.

"I never knew you existed," Hill preached during the closing session of the trans-denominational International MK Fellowship conference, the first mass gathering of the organization started in 1989 as a support, resource and network for the adult children of overseas missionaries.

It was shortsighted of him not to be aware of MKs, Hill said, because if he had stopped to think, he would have realized that missionaries have children.

"I have not been off the stage at the (annual meeting of the) National Baptist Convention in 46 years and I have never heard the name 'missionary kid,'" Hill said. "But I will now. I've been on the Billy Graham board for 23 years and have never heard the name 'missionary kids' -- but I will now.

"I had never considered the challenges that missionary kids face," Hill continued. "I'm going to help."

Hill's pledge was echoed by many of the participants in the week-long event that included a schedule of Bible studies, support groups, panel discussions and evening services. Hill, pastor at Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles, preached during four evening services.

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Music headliners for the extravaganza included Doug Oldham and the Ouachita Baptist University orchestra.

Southern Baptists were among the special guests: retired Foreign Mission Board executive Winston Crawley as chairman of the event, along with retired WMU leader Alma Hunt, 92-year-old MK James Fowler Jr., several emeritus missionaries and others.

IMKF's founding president Steve Solesbee announced two awards and a scholarship for MKs during the first evening service.

"We are here tonight because Mrs. (Baker James) Cauthen came to me and said, 'If you're going to work with MKs, you have to take it outside the denominations,'" Solesbee said. "In her honor IMKF has established the Eloise Glass Cauthen Award for Distinguished Missionary Service to be presented each year to one male and one female."

The awards this year were given to Ruth Bell Graham, wife of evangelist Billy Graham and daughter of Presbyterian missionaries who served in China, and to James Fowler Jr., 92, son of missionaries who helped establish Southern Baptist work in Argentina.

A scholarship fund for MKs has been established at the Mercer School of Theology, Solesbee said. It carries the name Alma Hunt MK Scholarship Award and is available to any MK.

The unique challenges and possibilities of MKs were discussed in a variety of settings during the week by leaders from several denominations and independent missions organizations, experts in the field of missionary family care, adult children of missionaries who served overseas and missionaries.

There were dialogue sessions in which MKs, often with tears, expressed their hurt and anger at being torn from what they considered their homeland -- the land in which they were reared -- and being exiled to the United States, which was to them a foreign place.

There were support groups for those who had experienced sexual or other forms of abuse while overseas, or who still were dealing with a sense of being abandoned, or who still felt like an outsider despite living for years in the United States.

There were 20 clinically-trained counselors available for private consultations.

There were rousing three-hour evening services.

And, there were problems.

Some problems were attributed to the conference being a first-time event; others, to the lack of sufficient financial support for a larger-than-life production; and others, to Solesbee -- himself an MK.

"I think there were a lot of things that were first-time glitches, but they weren't handled properly," said Karl Ragan, pastor at Waikiki Baptist Church, where the morning, afternoon and two evening sessions were held. Ragan, also an MK, said on the record what several people said off the record. They said they didn't want to be quoted because of their relationship with Solesbee or because he had paid their way to the conference.

"No one would accept any blame," Ragan said. "It was always someone else's fault. That just really wore thin and it hurt a lot of people."

Ragan said he was willing to speak for the record because of his support for the concept. He knows from personal experience there is a need for an organization for MKs in their teens and 20s to help them adjust and feel a part of the American scene, Ragan said.

When he came to the United States from Singapore, he didn't know how to play football, he didn't like hot dogs and he was uncomfortable shopping in malls, Ragan said. Instead of being sensitive to his differences, people treated him as if he had lived all his life in the States and laughed at him.

"Those aren't big things, but when you're 18, they're big," Ragan said. "I think MKs should be treated like foreign kids."

First-time glitches at the IMKF gathering included having available none of the printed materials people who attend conferences are used to receiving -- program schedule, list of conference personnel, daily updates and information.

There were logistical and financial glitches stemming in part because deposits weren't made early enough on the convention center and headquarters hotel of choice. Planners were forced to use a much larger facility for evening services and to scatter attendees at several hotels. This required the use of private buses to squire people to the evening services. This resulted in not many people stopping by the booth space set up in Pier 10 of the Aloha Tower, which frustrated booksellers.

And, of course, everyone was wanting money -- right now -- money that Solesbee had anticipated would be given during the evening offerings. It wasn't. There was a scramble.

Demands for money escalated as rumors flew that there was no money. For example, the sound technicians at Aloha Stadium wanted to be paid in advance. At the same time, at least one non-Ouachita member of the orchestra demanding he be reimbursed for bus rides and 75-cent phone calls from his room was agitated, saying \$50 was a lot of money to him.

Solesbee said he would not give in to what he termed "terrorism." His position was if one person were reimbursed for such expenses, "everyone" would want to be. He was beginning to feel hounded by people he had thought he was being very generous to -- having provided airfare, hotel and \$3 for breakfast.

People like the non-Ouachita violinist thought they had made the trip to benefit IMKF and thus all their expenses should be covered.

Perhaps the most significant glitch of the event was that no one had asked or informed Waikiki Baptist Church the church was to be the site of the opening meeting. More than 300 people were milling about the church property when pastor Ragan was contacted to unlock the building.

As the week progressed and the slip-ups mounted, Ragan said, he continually was put in the position of not being able to say no.

"As I told the trustees of IMKF, my people were not blessed by the event and wished it had never happened," Ragan said. "I believe that people were helped, but at the expense of the local people on the island, of the goodwill of our neighbors. That's a cost too great for us to have to pay.

"My concern now is that what happened to us not happen to another church," Ragan said. "Otherwise I'd not even mention it."

Tuesday night the evening services were moved from the 50,000-seat Aloha Stadium to the 400-seat church because of the problem with the sound technicians. The orchestra was given that night off, but they were there in full force for the final service on Wednesday. This not only crowded the worshipers, it added decibels to the noise volume.

Ragan had directed that windows would be closed, in consideration of people living in high-rise condos on either side of the church. But the windows were opened just as the sound of trumpets soared during practice, and the church phone lines lit up in protest.

"This concept has been put forth, the vision," Ragan said. "Steve (Solesbee) thinks, bless his heart, big -- I mean real big -- and the purpose gets lost in the production. I want this thing to succeed."

Leaders in the field of missionary family care and from several denominations and missions agencies met on the final day of the conference to talk about the future of IMKF. Across the board, everyone agreed there was a need for the organization, a need that previously has not been filled in any forum.

"Let's give thanks to the Lord for the one with the vision, and move with it," said David Coleman of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Discussion followed about the immediate need to place non-Southern Baptists on IMKF's board of directors.

"IMKF would be interested in encouraging what the mission boards already are doing but would not want to duplicate that," said Winston Crawley, chairman of the event and former area director of Southern Baptist work in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Discussion followed about publicizing the work of all the missions boards relating to MKs, including a schedule of seminars and conferences.

Mention was made of IMKF's crisis hotline, 1-800-DIALMKS, and the need for 24-hour coverage of the phones, since Solesbee has said more than 7,000 calls have been logged on it by the carrier in its five years of operation. IMKF keeps no records of the calls to ensure privacy to the caller.

Discussion followed on the IMKF vision -- to have a database of people locally available to respond when hurting MKs call, to have support groups for MKs at college campuses and to have an annual gathering for fellowship and encouragement.

MKs in the room talked about the need for an independent group, one that would be within the Christian body and yet outside of their denomination, so they could speak freely about their concerns.

Don Price, a 39-year-old MK whose parents served with Sudan Interior Mission, talked about his 20-year struggle through abandonment and identity issues.

"My whole exposure here has been one of affirmation," Price said. "This has been a week of glory."

**MKs' unique needs get hearing;
Baptists help in several ways**

By Karen L. Willoughby

HONOLULU (BP)--Mission and family care leaders from around the world gathered to discuss the needs of adult children of missionaries the last week in July in Honolulu.

They came as part of the first gathering of the International MK Fellowship, a support/resource/network group for stateside MKs. IMKF is a trans-denominational, independent organization started in 1989 by Southern Baptist MK Steve Solesbee, a Dallas businessman.

"We started working with Steve in the initial stages of the International MK Fellowship," said David Coleman, director of development of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. "Dr. (Jerry) Rankin encouraged me to be here at this event."

There is a great need for an MK fellowship, Coleman said.

"We have such a rich heritage of MKs," he said. "But we tend to lose them if they don't come back through the appointment process."

Southern Baptists have long recognized MKs had special needs, retired WMU leader Alma Hunt said.

MKs grow up in what Americans would call a foreign land and then are forced to go to what an MK would consider a foreign place, several MKs said during the week-long event. They are laughed at and teased for their "differentness" at an age when what they most want is to be like everybody else. But they're not like the other teens in the land they grew up in; they're not like the teens they look like in America.

Added to these feelings of isolation are feelings of loneliness, homesickness, loss and sometimes abandonment, the MKs added.

Healthy MKs struggle with these issues, the MKs said. The ones who suffer from the effects of abuse -- physical, mental or spiritual -- or underparenting require even more care, they added.

"I think there ought to be a lot of help given to churches to help them reach out to MKs," said Southern Baptist MK Karl Ragan, whose parents served in Singapore, India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. "When I came back, they treated me like I was born and raised here. Now if an Oriental came in, as an international student, they got all kinds of instruction on being in America. I think MKs need to be treated like they're a foreign kid. Teach them about football, how to shop, what is accepted."

Ragan's biggest complaint, like that of virtually every other MK to attend the conference, was, "They laughed at me." Good-natured teasing gone awry.

Southern Baptists provide the Margaret Fund for scholarships for MKs who want to go to college or vocational school, Hunt said. The fund was started by WMU initially as a home to which MKs could come in the early 1900s.

"After a very few years this was seen as impractical," Hunt said. "The home was sold and a fund established. As the missionary family grew and as we took on home missionaries, then the thing became so big that the (Home and) Foreign Mission Board began to supplement a larger and larger amount."

The Margaret Fund, now known as the MK SA-PS, (school allowance, post-secondary) is a line item in the Foreign Mission Board's budget, Coleman said. A list of MKs who receive this financial assistance, about 400 or 500 at any time, is mailed in the fall to MKs, college ministers, BSU directors, state missions, WMU and Brotherhood directors, missionaries in residence at colleges and others.

MKs receive an additional mailing each spring to tell them about Jericho Week and other items of interest.

One reason IMKF is a valuable resource to Southern Baptists is because there is no provision made for contact with MKs who do not go to college, Coleman said.

Support for MKs starts with the Foreign Mission Board's family ministries department, Coleman said. Rick Bates is the board's family consultant. The family ministries office provides information to missionary families as requested on parenting issues. Counseling and all other support mechanisms also emanate from the office.

Bates also has periodic dinners at colleges, sometimes hosted by a missionary in residence, to which all MKs up to age 30 who are in the area and addresses are available are invited.

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Area offices also offer support to missionary families, Coleman said. "I think the board will go out of its way to do whatever is necessary," he added. Southern Baptist policy also keeps youngsters with their parents as long as local schooling is available. Some denominations, such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance and Assemblies of God, require children in the first grade be sent to boarding school, never again to live permanently in their parents' home.

Southern Baptist MKs are very fortunate to have the Margaret Fund as a resource, said Don Price, an MK whose parents served as faith missionaries with Sudan Interior Mission. They had to raise their own support, and there never was enough for college. Price, now 39, works as a gardener in Florida.

IMKF announced during an evening service at Aloha Stadium the establishment of a scholarship fund at Mercer School of Theology in Georgia for any MK, not just for Southern Baptists.

The fund has been named the Alma Hunt MK Scholarship Award to honor the woman IMKF founder Solesbee referred to as "Lady Precious" who was president of WMU for many years.

Additional contributions to the fund are being sought.

Many denominations and especially small mission-sending boards offer MKs a week-long (or perhaps two-week) transition (also known as re-entry) seminar before going to college. Southern Baptists do so as a joint effort of WMU and the Foreign Mission Board. About 70 MKs will be attending this year's MK Re-entry Retreat in Birmingham, Ala., in mid-August.

"We don't know how many there are out there who haven't adjusted," Coleman said. "They should have someone they can trust who is independent of the sending board, so they feel comfortable in speaking freely.

"From the positive side, this has been a very good conference, in that it allowed for many people with similar concerns to focus on what we can do for MKs," Coleman continued. "It was reported that the board was against this group, but we never were. We want to participate. We want our MKs and emeritus missionaries to be involved.

"What we're trying to do is to minister to MKs, to provide support. We just need to be there for them," he continued. "What needs to happen now (with IMKF) is to broaden the scope very quickly to include other groups."

Has Southern Baptist care of its MKs improved over the years?

Missionary kid James Fowler Jr. was 15 and deaf after a childhood bout with scarlet fever when his Southern Baptist parents decided he needed an American education. They sent him alone on a freighter from Buenos Aires, Argentina, to New York City.

From there, the deaf youth made his way alone to Grand Central Station in midtown Manhattan, where he identified, located and boarded the train that was to take him to school in Georgia.

That's the way it was for MKs in 1921.

"I was so terribly excited to come to the United States, the greatest nation in the world," Fowler said during the Friday evening IMKF service. "But when I got here, there was this awful brokenhearted feeling of being treated like a subhuman."

For Fowler, it's gotten better. In 1985 he entered his first Senior Olympics and won a gold medal. He's won at least one gold medal every year since, and several years he's won several. He attributes his drive to the disciplined training he received as an MK in Argentina.

"It's the greatest blessing in all the world to be born an MK," he said. "When I die, most of my estate is going to the WMU."

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**Curiosity nudged teacher
to faith, missions work**

By Ellen Walker

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ROWLESBURG, W.Va. (BP)--Although curiosity is blamed for killing the proverbial cat, Jane Cline is an example of how God can use natural curiosity combined with the faithful witness of his people to bring a person to faith in Jesus.

Cline grew up in the small West Virginia community of Rowlesburg, married a man who became the town mayor, had five children and was a successful sixth-grade teacher until her retirement in 1988. She knew the majority, if not all, of the town's 600 to 800 residents, having taught most of them or their children.

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Yet there was a side to Cline most people did not know. Privately Cline was attempting to deal with a personal crisis in her marriage and struggling to just "get through the day." A friend recalled that when she first met her, "Jane was distant. She did not seem to want to connect with people." But God began a transformation in Cline via her instinctive curiosity and the arrival of Southern Baptists.

The process began with a small group of four or five people who met for prayer and Bible study and believed God wanted a Baptist church in Rowlesburg. In September 1981, Olen and Linda Phillips responded to a call from God to become Southern Baptist Mission Service Corps volunteers and shepherd the small congregation of then 14 people. With two children, ages 11 and 14, and only the promise of \$150 a month, the family moved into a two-room apartment and started to minister to the community.

The Phillips' daughter, Loraine, was in Cline's sixth-grade class and "immediately started to witness," Linda Phillips recalled. "She befriended kids in her class and was extra nice to others. I think Jane wondered what was in this little girl to cause her to do that."

The church was meeting in a former doctor's office. "I had to walk by there every day and it raised my curiosity," Cline recounted. She would not attend, however, because she skeptically felt a cult had invaded her small town.

As the children in the sixth-grade class began to respond enthusiastically to the witness of Loraine and the ministry of church, they began inviting their teacher to the services. "Mrs. Cline, do you go to church?" "You need to come." Although she didn't respond to the invitations, she recognizes now they were planting seeds.

The Rowlesburg Baptist Church began a building program in 1982 which aroused everyone's curiosity. This was the first public building to be built since the water plant was built 30 years previous. People watched as volunteer mission construction teams raised the building, and the process became a point of witness in that community.

"There was a lot of community interest," especially in the steeple raising, Linda Phillips said. "It created quite a stir, like a dance or main community event. There were people standing on the street watching, and when the steeple went up, everybody cried," she said.

After the completion of the building, Cline decided to visit the church. She had seen the impact of the congregation on the community, especially in its ministries to the children. "My curiosity got the best of me," she said.

As she looks back on that first Sunday, she remembers feeling comfortable. "The spirit, the love of the people, and the acceptance" attracted her and she began to see a different side of them as she got to know them better. In a few months, she knew she "wanted to be a part of what was going on there."

Cline committed her life to Jesus, was baptized, and the transformation became visible. "People could see the sixth-grade teacher had become a new person," Cline said. She and the pastor's wife became friends who began walking three miles every day. During that period, Cline would "ask question after question," Linda Phillips said. She was "thirsty and so willing to go anywhere and to do anything."

"I've seen how the Lord has worked in her as she has grown. She has progressed tremendously," said pastor Olen Phillips. "She was so hungry for a relationship with the Lord and willing to let her life be transformed." That transformation has compelled Cline to share her faith in a variety of ways, one of which is as a Mission Service Corps volunteer.

After her early retirement, Cline worked for a year in Athens, Ga., as a house supervisor in a crisis center for battered women. Following that assignment, she spent another year in Moundsville, W.Va., where she served as a church education director. She has traveled to Sumy, in the Ukraine, on a short-term mission trip, and most recently traveled to meet members of an unreached people group for who she has been praying.

At age 63, Cline's first impulse is to stay home and help with her grandchildren, but she said God may be calling her soon for another volunteer assignment. If so, she said it's "important to go while the opportunity presents itself."

**Union University art gallery
noted by Christianity Today**

By Keith Currey

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)--The Union University Art Gallery is recognized in Christianity Today as one of the nation's top 22 campus-based Christian art galleries.

The Union gallery, which aims to demonstrate the limitless creative possibilities of Christian-based art, regularly exhibits the works of well-known Christian artists from across the nation. Past exhibitors include Loren Baker, a 1993 Award of Excellence recipient from Christians in the Visual Arts, and Michael Mallard, chair of Union's department of art and first-place winner of the Billy Graham Center Museum's 1993 international competition.

"We were very pleased to learn of Union's recognition in Christianity Today," Mallard said of the magazine's July 15 list. "We try to attract the best possible artists to exhibit in our gallery while supporting art that displays a Christian worldview."

In addition to regularly scheduled artists, the gallery recently co-promoted two exhibitions with Christians in the Visual Arts, a national organization that promotes art depicting Christian themes. The university also sponsors visiting artists to present lectures in conjunction with many exhibits.

The Christianity Today list seeks to acknowledge galleries housed on college campuses that have strong regional reputations for exhibiting works with scripturally based themes.

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