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Gov's Confederate flag stance
stirs debate in South Carolina By Daniel W. Guido

Baptist Press
12/10/96

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--South Carolina Gov. David M. Beasley, a Southern Baptist, has urged his state to lift up racial reconciliation while lowering the Confederate flag.

Beasley's unexpected foray into the issue has prompted clergy from various Christian denominations to rally around the governor by announcing plans to issue an endorsement Dec. 12 of his call to lower the flag from above the state capitol.

The governor's pastor, John Richard "Dick" Lincoln of Shandon Baptist Church in Columbia, said he would join in signing and presenting the clergy resolution.

Meanwhile, the Baptist Courier, the state convention's newsjournal, has carried pro and con "guest viewpoint" columns concerning the governor's stance.

The pastor of a church in Florence voiced support for lowering the flag in the Courier's Dec. 5 issue, while an active Columbia layman -- and lifelong Southern Baptist and South Carolina native -- defended the statehouse practice in the Dec. 12 issue.

Beasley referred to his Christianity several times during his first statewide TV address Nov. 26, delivered in the wake of a unrelated series of race-related hate crimes in the state, including Ku Klux Klan shootings of blacks outside a rural nightclub and a white couple's conviction for tying a black child to a tree, choking him and firing a shotgun past his head.

Beasley told South Carolinians his speech was the "single most important 15 minutes I've ever spent with you."

In his address, he rekindled the flag controversy -- reversing his own previous position.

"The Bible tells us to love our neighbors as ourselves," Beasley reminded. "It is time for the races to compromise on the Confederate flag to show Judeo-Christian love that will bring the races closer together and teach our children that we can live together in mutual respect," he said.

The governor asked state residents to pray whether the Confederate flag should continue flying above the state capitol.

"Do we want our children to be debating the Confederate flag in 10 years? If we stay on the present course, such will be their fate. And the debate will not subside, but intensify. I don't want that for my children or yours," Beasley said.

Saying he had reached his decision to call for the flag's lowering after "much prayer," Beasley said the flag is too often used by hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan as an official state endorsement of their hatred of minorities.

The governor ended his first major statewide TV address by evoking God's blessings for "you and your family" and for his state.

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Beasley cannot simply order the capitol janitor to lower the flag and fly it elsewhere, but must have the legislature's consent. The flag was lofted above the statehouse in 1962 by a resolution of the South Carolina General Assembly to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the Civil War.

Beasley's proposed 1997 "Heritage Act" would relocate the flag to Confederate monuments in front of and behind the capitol. Similar legislation was passed by the state senate in 1994 but died in the house when the legislative season ended before the bill could be debated.

The act also would officially protect the names of all streets, monuments and public squares in the state bearing the names of Confederate leaders.

Some 70,000 South Carolinians fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War; 20,000 were killed.

Although several past and present state politicians, including many of the state's former governors -- including those of the opposite political party -- and most of its congressional delegation have come out in support of the Republican governor's stand, polls of South Carolinians show a solid 40 percent favor flying the flag, with 20 percent opposed and 20 percent undecided or not caring whether the flag continues to fly.

Some South Carolinians contend the real reason the state voted to fly the flag three decades ago was to publicly display opposition to the civil rights initiatives undertaken by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

Those claiming the racial reason cite the fact that the legislature purposely left out a date when the flag should come down following the centennial observance.

At age 39, Beasley is one of the youngest governors in the nation. He was the youngest person elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives at age 20 while a law student at the University of South Carolina. He also was the youngest state house majority whip and the youngest speaker pro tempore in the country.

His youth doesn't hamper his thought process, said Beasley's pastor, Lincoln.

"I really appreciate David's desire to achieve racial reconciliation in this matter," Lincoln said. "I'm asking my congregation to pray their way through this issue and sincerely seek the mind of God."

Lincoln said he is not sure where the majority of his congregation stand on the issue. "I haven't done any polling, but instead have asked everyone to search their own conscience."

The matter has become "the topic of discussion in these parts," Lincoln said. "It seems everywhere you go, people are discussing this. Everyone has an opinion, including those who simply say they don't care whether it flies or not."

Beasley and his wife, Mary Wood, attend Shandon Baptist Church with their two daughters, Mary Hunter and Sarah Catherine, and their son, David Jr.

Lincoln recalled baptizing Beasley 10 years ago, when the young then-state legislator began coming to his church while he was in town for legislative sessions.

"He began by coming to Columbia on Sundays so he could catch Sunday night services. Then he heard about Wednesday night services, so he began coming to those. Not long after, he began arriving on Saturdays to come Sunday mornings.

"He heard me mention Tuesday night events one time and began showing up regularly for them also," Lincoln said. "After church, he would routinely come by and ask me questions he had from his Bible reading or about the sermon. He put a lot of thought into his decision for Christ."

Don Kirkland, editor of the Baptist Courier, said he realizes some of the journal's readers would say the flag issue is political, not religious, and should be ignored by the state paper. But Kirkland said he believes "you cannot put up a wall between all political and spiritual issues."

In addition to the pro and con guest viewpoints, Kirkland has received letters to the editor about the issue, which are evenly split. He said he plans to publish the letters through the Dec. 19 issue.

Although he, like Beasley, had ancestors who fought for the South from South Carolina, Kirkland said he supports the governor's compromise and hopes it will be passed.

"It is time to resolve this and move on: Whenever an issue divides Christians, it should be resolved," Kirkland said.

Christopher Sullivan, the Columbia layman who authored the guest viewpoint column opposing Beasley's initiative, contended:

-- The Confederate flag "is a symbol of the heroic sacrifice of our forebears who were steadfast in their belief that the principles of self-government and personal liberty were worthy of the last defense."

-- A great revival spread through the Confederate army, whose members had been given Bibles at Jefferson Davis' order, and later throughout the South.

-- "Our state is plagued by abortion, legalized gambling and the moral decay of communities. Our leaders, religious and secular, should be determined to cure these ills, not to stir old emotions everyone else thought were resolved. Unlike other denominations, our convention dare not be distracted by chasing political rabbits at the expense of winning souls."

David Barrett, the other guest viewpoint writer, however, wrote, "Whatever flies over our statehouse should represent us all. ... For the sake of many thousands of our black brothers and sisters in Christ who are terribly offended by this symbol, let's take it down. The sooner the better."

Citing the apostle Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 10 to be more concerned with one's relationship to a neighbor than insisting on a particular "right," Barrett wrote, "I have to ask myself, 'Am I more concerned with my 'right' to fly this flag over the seat of our state government, or with my relationship to other human beings created in the image of Christ?'"

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Art Toalston contributed to this story.

**Xers seek relationships
with meaning, pastor says**

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
12/10/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--When it comes to building relationships, Generation X is a paradox, Rick Howerton believes.

"They fear close relationships, yet that's the kind of intimacy they desire most," said Howerton, pastor of Living Hope Baptist Church, Bowling Green, Ky., and a 10-year veteran of student ministry. He addressed state student workers during National Student Ministry's annual planning meetings Dec. 3-6 at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn.

Currently between 13 and 31 years of age, the often-maligned Generation Xers are sometimes called "slackers" or "busters." And although they may have trouble building intimate relationships, they are "turned off by superficiality," Howerton said.

"They want something with authenticity and depth. They aren't going to play the game.

"You can be brutally blunt and open with them because their comfort zone is unending. ... They just have to perceive from you that, 'We're in this together.'"

Xers are looking for "interdependent" relationships, Howerton said, explaining the term with the following illustration:

"A dependent person says, 'Feed me. Feed me.' An independent person says, 'I can feed myself.' But an interdependent person says, 'You feed me and I'll feed you.' That describes Xers perfectly. They want involvement from both sides."

The good news for student ministers, Howerton said, is that what Xers want most -- intimacy, authenticity and interaction -- are exactly what they can get through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The challenge for ministers is sharing that "good news" in a language and format Xers can appreciate and understand.

That's no easy task, Howerton acknowledged. As a first step, he suggested learning more about the characteristics of Xers, such as:

-- A media-saturated generation, they are desensitized to illicit sex and violence.

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- A high percentage come from broken homes and live in blended families.
- Fifty percent will see their parents divorce.
- Cynics, they view the world as tainted and ugly.
- They don't expect to do better than their parents financially.
- Most don't believe in absolute truth.

In ministering to Xers, Howerton encouraged student workers to:

- 1) Create an environment in which Xers will feel connected and empowered to serve.
- 2) Develop mentoring relationships with Xers.
- 3) Realize the importance of small groups for developing intimacy.
- 4) Remember that Xers like interactive and experiential worship.
- 5) Model authentic leadership.

"Process evangelism" is usually the most effective way to reach Xers, he said, explaining it will likely take time to win them to Christ.

"This generation needs to know that people care about them. It may take years to develop a relationship with them so that they'll really listen to you."

Howerton shared with student workers a ministry structure he believes is effective in reaching Xers. It involves a student minister who oversees a team of "coaches" who, in turn, are responsible for no more than five small group leaders. Those leaders are then put in charge of groups of no less than four and no more than 12 students.

While reaching Xers represents a difficult challenge, Howerton said he believes they are a group that is "more prepared to change the world for Christ than any generation that has been around in a long, long time."

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Midwestern's WISDOM program
prepares wives for ministry

By Joni B. Hannigan

Baptist Press
12/10/96

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--The effectiveness of married seminarians in future ministry is enhanced when both spouses cooperate in fulfilling God's call on their lives. A revamped program at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary takes into account the difference a wife can make by helping her husband enjoy a successful ministry.

Known as WISDOM, the program offers wives of seminary students academic and preparatory training that will benefit their ministry in local churches, home and foreign mission fields, or denominational settings.

"At Midwestern Seminary, we believe that when God calls a man into full-time ministry, he also calls his wife," said Sharon Coppenger, director of WISDOM and wife of seminary President Mark Coppenger. She said she believes a ministry couple is not only "one in marriage," but also must be "one in ministry."

The inspiration for the program's name is drawn from the model wife described in Proverbs 31 and the need for wisdom from God cited in verse 26. As an acrostic, WISDOM stands for "Wives In Seminary Developing Our Ministries."

For several years the Kansas City, Mo., seminary offered academic courses for wives through the Complimentary Education Program. After examining the focus of CEP and listening to the desires of student wives for a program that would equip them in ministry alongside their husbands, academic dean Lamar Cooper enlisted Coppenger and the wives of seminary vice presidents to redesign CEP.

Throughout last spring the new leadership team discussed proposed changes and spent summer months planning curriculum and securing faculty. Four courses are offered each term with scheduling options that include morning, evening and late-night classes. Offering child care for the morning and evening classes permits more wives to be involved.

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WISDOM was designed with the dual purpose of establishing practical training for wives, while also helping them feel a part of the total seminary environment, Cooper said. "It takes a tremendous sacrifice for the family to be here and remain a family unit," he acknowledged. By enrolling in WISDOM courses, Cooper believes seminary couples will realize immediate benefits as well as long-term gain.

"We want to help wives in their role to interface with the community," Cooper said, "and for each of them to learn how to serve with her husband as a support and an integral part of his ministry."

He added the program is "a safeguard that wives don't get taken for granted," regularly reminding students who are married not to make this mistake.

Cooper's wife, Barbara, appreciates the struggles of wives who are new to ministry, having served as a support to her husband in nearly 20 years of pastoral ministry following seminary studies.

"We want wives to have some of the tools to help them face the struggles of life in the ministry. If they don't get them now, it's harder to do once they leave this special atmosphere of seminary life."

She said she believes it is preferable for the wife of a minister to avoid working full time in order to give her time to raising children, caring for the home and developing ministry opportunities. "That's not always possible in our economy," she admitted, while urging churches to set salaries of pastors at a level that recognizes the contribution of a wife to her husband's ministry.

"Most young pastor's wives are not accustomed to having to do as much entertaining, teaching in Sunday school, working with GAs, and feeling that you have to do it all," Cooper warned. "A lot of times people in churches aren't very understanding that you're young and have a bunch of little kids and don't have time for all that's expected." The WISDOM classes, she said, will help wives prioritize their time and energies for future ministry.

The newly focused program debuted this fall with course offerings that included MasterLife, Precept Bible study, Baptist heritage, minister's family and deaf interpretation. Enrollment tripled that of the earlier CEP offerings, with 64 student wives taking various courses.

Gwen Bell heard about the WISDOM program before arriving from St. Louis with her family in July. They considered it a factor in choosing Midwestern for ministerial studies. She said she enjoys the fellowship and moral support offered for her role as a minister's wife. Her husband, Carl, a first-year student in the correlated master of divinity program, said he's already reaped benefits by being able to discuss church issues with his wife.

"Many wives don't have a clue about what their husbands are studying," Carl Bell said. "It's bridged our world."

Elsie Hatch found it imperative to learn more about Baptists when she and her husband, Donald, came from Oklahoma last year. "I didn't grow up Baptist," Hatch said, admitting, "I was kind of scared when Donald said he wanted to be a preacher."

Raised as a Methodist, Hatch said she's appreciated learning more about Baptist beliefs through a WISDOM class and likes the new focus of the program. "It makes a big difference. You're not just a spouse, but there is something for both of you in the ministry."

Donald Hatch, a second-year seminarian in the master of divinity program, said he supports the program wholeheartedly. "When I do assume a role as pastor, I'm not the only one who will be asked what and why we believe."

With 13 hours of basic requirements, wives enrolled in WISDOM courses receive instruction about Baptist beliefs and heritage; the relationship of homemaking, child rearing, family traditions and finances for the minister's family; how to minister in various church roles such as service with children, women's groups, mission organizations and prayer ministries; and developing hospitality skills in the minister's home.

Discipleship training through MasterLife is one of the core requirements. Coppenger sees the yearlong course as providing the basics of a Christian walk essential to spiritual growth.

Through an eight-week course called Ministering Wife, students first study God's plan for marriage and then address practical concerns such as calling, priorities, lifestyle, sharing one's faith and handling relationships with church and staff members. Participation in at least one of the fall Hester Student Wives' Conferences also is required.

Three hours of elective courses can be drawn from a fall workshop, one of the Precept Bible study courses, Old and New Testament overview courses, a class on Women in Ministry which highlights godly women of the Bible and church history, a study of spiritual gifts, as well as training in deaf interpretation and piano.

Fees for courses are set at only \$10 each in addition to textbook expenses. After successfully completing 16 credit hours of work, student wives are awarded a certificate of ministry from the seminary with advanced certification noted for those completing 20 hours or more.

"As ministry wives, we are to be godly examples," Coppenger said. "This is a vital role ordained by God. WISDOM encourages that role."

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EDITORS' NOTE: In December 1994, Craig Bird was in the massive refugee camp in Goma, Zaire, as part of Southern Baptist relief and medical work with orphans. His work as a missionary journalist carried him to more than 25 African countries where hardship and brutality bump up against extraordinary Christian faith. This Christmas he and his wife, Melissa, are in Texas, where he now is director of public relations at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

FIRST-PERSON

African refugees take stage
in 'other' holiday pageant

By Craig Bird

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The next-to-last act of the "rest of the (Christmas) story" is now playing in central Africa. And in multiple venues around the world. But it's not the Matthew/Luke story line where all is light and peace and exchanging gifts.

You'll find their script in the Book of Revelation.

By the tens, and perhaps hundreds, of thousands Hutu refugees follow not a brilliant star of hope, but a rapidly dimming spark of survival -- the hope of rest and food and water and medicine at the end of footpaths wandering over mountains and through jungles.

Certainly they are not kings -- or even warlords. Hutu warlords eat well and deal death to those who fall under their guns. They don't observe the self-imposed limits of King Herod. Why stop with killing male children, 2 years old and under? Kill all your enemies, young and old, male and female, innocent or adversary.

But what have the emaciated, dull-eyed Africans staggering into camps in Rwanda (or those dying on their feet before they get there) to do with Christmas? Perhaps you've glimpsed some of them on television or in photos buried deep in the newspaper. How much more festive to concentrate on the advertising inserts and television jingles.

Watching the local evening news recently, there was no mention of Rwanda or Zaire. Or any place else in the world where suffering and survival are paramount. Americans prefer singing and sales. There was, however, a lengthy feature on acquiring the perfect gift for your pet.

People, learning Melissa and I have been missionaries in Africa for almost a decade, often ask what we think about Christmas celebrations in our home country. But most don't really want to know.

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We do appreciate the lights and colorful displays. We sing, perhaps too loudly to be polite -- and with heartfelt emotion -- our gratitude for the incarnation when God became human and broke into history as a helpless baby. We know the silent and holy night in our hearts. We are grateful to be able to share the holiday with parents, family and friends.

But we are always painfully aware that the Christmas story is not completed when the kings pack up their camels and leave, the shepherds return to their fields and Mary's boy-child snuggles into her arms and sleeps. And our concerns should extend far beyond finding the proper sweater for our terrier.

Revelation 12 shows us why Christmas resulted in more than the Prince of Peace coming into the world. It shows how the Prince of Darkness reacted -- and still is reacting. That passage describes the mother of God crying out in pain as she gives birth. Meanwhile, an enormous red dragon stands in front of her, intending to devour her child the moment he is born. But he fails.

What we usually -- rightfully and joyously -- celebrate as "Christmas" is summed up quickly in Rev. 12:5-6 (NIV): "She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne." That's it.

From the heavenly perspective, Christmas was and is the pivotal battle in the spiritual warfare for our souls. Satan and his forces have been hurled from heaven.

Rev. 12:12 is the rest of the Christmas story. "Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth, and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury because he knows his time is short."

So, in 1996, Satan celebrates Christmas in fury with genocide in Zaire; raises toasts to the Christians being martyred for their devotion to that Jesus child; smiles at America's homeless sleeping in alleys as holiday lights reflect on their faces; embraces the corrupt officials, the drug dealers, the child abuser; warms in the flames of racial hatred; and rejoices when Christians live as if the Christmas story ended with Mary wrapping newborn Jesus and laying him in a cattle feed trough. Or perhaps -- at most -- extending it to include the flight into Egypt.

When we go that far, we see that the furtive journey established perfectly the context of Revelation 12. Jesus, born in the Middle East where religious hatred has been perfected, becomes a refugee in Africa, where some estimates say one in five people are displaced. He shares the Satanic oppression of his people from the first.

Melissa and I are glad it's Christmas. We look forward to giving and receiving presents and thanking God for emptying himself in Bethlehem and steadfastly setting his face toward the cross.

But instead of always saying, "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year," we often join our hearts with our suffering brothers and sisters in Africa and around the world and pray the words from Revelation that makes the complete Christmas story enduring. "Merry Christmas but, even so, come, Lord Jesus." Then all God's children can enjoy the holiday.

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(BP) photo posted in BP Photos Library in SBCNet.

FIRST-PERSON
Churches' prayer, giving
are crucial, he attests

By Wes Hook Jr.

Baptist Press
12/10/96

PHOENIX (BP)--South Africans call them "street kids" -- boys who live on the streets of downtown Johannesburg. A missionary journeyman with no medical experience spends the night stitching knife wounds, distributing sandwiches and acting as Christ would to these boys.

A Southern Baptist missionary visits a Baptist pastor at a church in Alexandra Township near Johannesburg. The missionary's car is hijacked at gunpoint after he parks beside the church building. A mission volunteer is also in the car. It is the volunteer's first day in the country:

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Another missionary leads a Bible study and crafts class for several South African women. Years of racial oppression have all but destroyed any sense of dignity, self-respect and creative ability. One woman is not even able to choose what color fabric to use on the Bible cover she is making. Before apartheid (racial discrimination and separation) laws were abolished in 1990, she was told how and where to live. In this class, she is learning she has dignity in Christ.

A South African Baptist pastor phones a Southern Baptist missionary. He tells the missionary that thieves entered the church property and broke into his home. "The burglars had guns. They hit us and took valuable things from our house. Please pray for us," says the pastor. Two days later, the pastor attends his seminary classes, thankful to be in school. Perhaps he is thankful because many do not survive such traumatic events.

A Baptist church in Munsieville Township begins a class in witnessing to others about Christ. More than half the church's adults attend. Later, trainers and "rookie" trainees visit with a family around a kitchen table. Within minutes, four people are simultaneously sharing Christ in three languages. It is the first time anyone from a church visits the family in a country where about 80 percent of the population claims to be Christian.

Missionary-sending churches must be told how their prayer and financial support are making a difference for the sake of the gospel in South Africa and other parts of the world where missionaries and representatives serve.

Southern Baptists' gifts through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering support missionaries such as these. This offering is the largest financial source for Southern Baptist international outreach.

It helps when missionaries share specific, personal glimpses of their lives with churches while on home assignment.

Our fellow missionaries to South Africa could share similar experiences. The Lord has called his best "ordinary parents, sons and daughters" among Southern Baptists to serve in South Africa. I know. I serve with them.

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Hook, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionary to South Africa, is currently on home assignment as missionary-in-residence at Grand Canyon University, Phoenix.

L.A. church develops missionaries
for assignments at home, abroad

By Joe Conway

Baptist Press
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LOS ANGELES (BP)--The Church on Brady takes a no-nonsense approach to missions. Basically, if you're a Christian, you're involved in world evangelization.

"The people God wants to use are in every church. Equipping and training the people God has given you is critical to the mission of the church," Carol Davis, director of ministries for Brady, said.

There is no other option for the dynamic congregation of 850 in east Los Angeles which sends out full-time and short-term missionaries by the score. Twenty-four adult members are currently in full-time missions service with three more family units and two singles likely to be appointed this year.

Member Helen Chao Harlan is back from Asia after serving with the Foreign Mission Board from 1992-94. Newly married, she plans a return to the field to continue full time the work with her husband.

"The Lottie Moon support was a big part of my ability to minister in Asia," Harlan said. "I had gone on two short-term missions before where we raised our own support. Through the Lottie Moon giving, I was able to fully concentrate on the work. I really benefitted from that.

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"I want to thank people for praying and giving. I know a lot of people say they don't know where their money goes, but I can tell you, it helps spread the gospel. Because of my ethnic background, I was able to go places that other missionaries could not go. I will always remember a man who came to hear us. He had walked for four hours to hear the preaching. I asked him if there was anything we could bring him. He said, 'Just bring us the Word of God.' He could have asked for anything. I want people to know that their giving makes a difference," Harlan said.

Short-term teams also have been embarking from Brady since 1978. Three young adult members just returned from a 22-day trip to Indonesia.

"I learned a lot about discipline," Michael Tafoya said of his missions involvement. "Those people pray five times a day. They showed me that we have a God who is listening. He wants to hear us. We have a prayer life built around our schedules. They set their schedule based on their prayer life."

Beatrix Histan said her Indonesian mission experience gave her a new perspective on her Lord. "It showed me how big God is and how small I am. God is working in lives all over the world," Histan said.

For the third member of the trio, Sylvia Olivares, following God's call was the lesson learned. "The trip confirmed for me the creation of a pattern of obedience every day," she said. "I found I can give up my life for the gospel. I didn't know if I could do that."

Current teaching pastor Tom Wolf, whose vision set the course that would see Brady regularly commission full-time missionaries from among its members, came to the church as pastor 28 years ago.

"My Southern Baptist pastor influenced me to go to Moody Bible Institute," Wolf explained. "They have a motto there, 'If churches were doing their job, Moody would not be necessary.'

"In the New Testament, what they reproduced was churches," he continued. "The concept of reproducibility, the church as a seminary, comes from many influences, but I had a personal conviction to mobilize the church to fulfill the radical command of God to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

"God's people are the instruments of God fulfilling his purpose," Wolf said. "All the resources needed to see his purpose done are in the local church. If all the resources are present, then the people should fulfill what God has called them to do, and thus fulfill his will."

Wolf and his wife, Linda, were themselves headed to the mission field. Their training process put a burden on their hearts for the local church.

"We felt called to Brady," he shared. "We desired for Brady to become a spiritual reference point east of downtown Los Angeles and a sending base to the ends of the earth. We stayed in the U.S. because God said that through us he would thrust more to the ends of the earth than if we ourselves went. We are a local church. We are God's people being God's people."

But sending was just the beginning for Brady. They see equipping their members to be effective in other cultures at the core of their responsibilities.

"Our four-step training and mentoring process for missionaries headed for the field prepares people for cross-cultural evangelism as well as reproductive and church planting initiatives. Church planting at home becomes a laboratory for equipping future missionaries," Davis said.

"Our Life Groups adopt the missionaries we send out. It's wonderful to see groups of families and individuals adopt a missionary family for care and nurture while on the field. It is our goal that at least one family from the cluster of groups who adopt an overseas worker will spend at least one week a year on the field with their missionary. Life groups make sure the missionaries' needs are met and that they are nurtured on the field," Davis said.

In addition to supporting full-time missionaries, Brady sends 50 to 75 members on short-term mission trips annually. And giving isn't foreign to Brady either.

"This church was an extremely poor church when I came 23 years ago, but it was a very generous church. It still isn't a wealthy church, but it is very loving, committed and always generous.

"Our Lottie Moon Christmas Offering emphasis begins in November as a Thanksgiving offering which in recent years has been between \$9,000 and \$12,000. Our seasonal giving is tied in with our annual Conference on World Evangelization, now in its eighth year. This event features plenary sessions, over 80 seminars and a children's and youth conference. Last year participants came from 22 states and two foreign countries. We focus on basic as well as cutting-edge topics of the emerging issues we must face," Davis said.

"Because of the diversity of our congregation, we live cross-culturally every day, which gives a wonderful context of training for those headed for the field," Davis said.

Brady offers a fully accredited master's degree program in intercultural studies through Biola University as one of its preparation options. Wolf directs the program.

"Over the years we have had interns tell us that their study and experiences here were like master's degree work and that we should give credit for it. That seed thought has now developed into a two-year degree program. We have had four graduating classes," Wolf said.

Community ministry is another area where Brady excels. The church staffs a Center for Community Counseling; facilitates Brady JobNet, a jobs network and training program for the difficult to employ; periodically has tutoring and English as a second language; offers groups for those with addictions through their Freedom ministries; has assignees for probation supervision, and responds to needs through its food distribution and Share the Blessing program at holiday time.

"We have a coordinated vision," Davis said. "Reproduction of ministry is doing it in such a way that you train the next generation of leaders in the context of everyday church life."

With a legacy of continuing expansion in missions and ministry, Brady transitioned from Tom Wolf to a new senior pastor three years ago. New pastor Erwin McManus is now leading the church to stay at the forefront of carrying the gospel message and calling out the called by being a "point-base ... glorifying God by being a spiritual reference point in Los Angeles and a sending base to the ends of the earth," McManus said.

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Conway is an editor for the Brotherhood Commission.

Church's missions thrust
underscored in first grade

By Joe Conway

Baptist Press
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LOS ANGELES (BP)--"We want children to have the same experience and enthusiasm for missions that adults do.

"We want to develop in children a heart for God and a heart for the world," said Steve Sakuma who, with his wife, Janice, directs children's ministries for The Church on Brady.

The vision for children to share in the congregation's goal to see every member involved in ministry has sparked the creation of opportunities and activities designed to provide children with hands-on experience with missions.

"As with the adults, each missionary kid on the field is adopted by children in the church," Sakuma said. "The children serve as pen pals and prayer partners for the MKs."

Brady also sponsors GlobeTrotters Camp, a five-day mission trip for kids in fourth through sixth grade.

"We have ministered in Los Angeles, Tijuana, Mexicali, and this year we went to San Francisco to serve one of the churches Brady has planted there. The children did prayer walks, shared personal testimonies, puppetry, drama, music and storytelling," said Linda Wolf, director of children's outreach and wife of teaching pastor Tom Wolf.

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"It was an absolutely awesome experience to see the children work and to see their leadership developing," Wolf said. "They told people on the streets that they were from L.A. and came to bring a blessing to San Francisco. People would talk with them and the children would pray for them on the street.

"There was one man who told some of the kids that he had no hope, it was too late for him," Wolf recalled. "A sixth-grade girl walked up to him and said, 'You can't say there's no hope. We prayed for my father who was an alcoholic and he was saved.' And then she prayed with the man."

Additionally, Brady hosts Mini-Globe Trotters Day Camps, a half-day event for first- and second-graders, and a day-long camp for third- and fourth-graders.

HOUSE MAIL

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