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Land mine victim leads ministry to other amputees

Baptist Press 12/11/96

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (BP)--Land mines are everywhere in Cambodia, and so are their unsuspecting victims.

Stepping on a land mine usually means losing more than a limb. It often means losing job, home and family as well. It sometimes means losing hope.

"Because they are disabled, they think they are useless with a meaningless life," said Iv Vanna Rith. "They are concerned about their living every day."

Rith, executive secretary of the Khmer Baptist Convention, knows what it is to survive as a land mine victim. A small land mine blew off his left leg just beneath the knee. Unable to support his wife, he lost her. But unlike many land mine victims, Rith did not lose hope.

"I have testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ who died on Calvary on the cross for us, for everybody, and on the third day, Jesus rose," Rith said.

Rith has been taking that testimony to other disabled land mine victims in Phnom Penh, so they, too, might have hope.

One key worker with Cooperative Services International (CSI), the Southern Baptist humanitarian aid agency, prayed a handicapped Christian like Rith would come forward to impact land mine victims for Jesus Christ.

"Many have lost wives. They have no means of being able to support themselves. They have no house. They have no food," the CSI worker said. "Rith is able to identify with these people and minister to them effectively."

Rith learned the Scriptures while living in a refugee camp on the border of Thailand from 1981-89. There he discovered the importance of prayer.

"I had nothing for food, nothing. When I was in starvation, I started to pray again to God. Two days after my prayer that we would have food, they brought food to the Thai border camp," Rith said.

When Rith returned home to Phnom Penh, he brought nothing but his Thai Bible with him. He eventually began attending Russey Keo Baptist Church. There he received his calling to the ministry and began to pray for God's direction.

In 1995 he accepted a job surveying the handicapped for CSI.

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"While he was conducting the survey to ask such information as felt needs, personal biography and other details about their receptivity to the good news of Jesus Christ, there were 29 handicapped who made professions of faith during that three-month period," the CSI worker said.

Because disabled people could access it easily, the base of a Buddhist temple high on a hill was chosen for a worship place for these new believers. Rith preached his first sermon there Nov. 4, 1995, to 31 amputees.

Since that first meeting, about 100 people have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior just as Rith, 36, did when he was 28. Rith baptizes the new Christians only after they understand the commitment to Christ that baptism symbolizes. He has baptized 11 physically handicapped Christians and one of their spouses.

"There were limbs. There were crutches, just everything along the river bank. They would take (their prosthetic devices) off and then swim out to be baptized," the CSI worker said. "One man had both legs missing. We just picked him up and kind of set him in the water, and he made his way over to where he was baptized. It was just awesome."

The "church" Rith started at the foot of Wat Phnom now meets in six groups throughout the city. Rith meets with each group about twice a week, once for discipleship training and once for worship. On his own time, the CSI worker trains and assists Rith.

God also has used Rith to impact the life of another handicapped Christian man who has been called by God as an evangelist to others who are disabled.

"The man Rith has been discipling one-to-one went on his own to a district where we have no existing churches and began to do some evangelism," the CSI worker said. "On his first encounter to the area, he had nine professions of faith. Well, in a month, they had about 21 decisions. There's a little pocket of believers that's meeting in this location now."

Rith, who also administers a small loan program funded by CSI to help handicapped people get established in small business, sees his ministry as a gift from God. "As Jesus has given us hope, we want to give them hope," he said.

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(BP) photo (horizontal) and cutline mailed to state Baptist newspapers Dec. 10 and posted in SBCNet's BP Photo Library by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Cambodian Christians risk danger to share Christ

**Baptist Press
12/11/96**

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (BP)--In Cambodia, the desire to share Jesus' name is a tedious, dangerous and sometimes deadly struggle -- even today.

When a Baptist volunteer shared the gospel with a group of Cambodian women in their primitive home, she learned villagers had been told they were not to follow Jesus Christ. One woman said some Christians once lived in that village, but one by one, they mysteriously disappeared.

In Cambodia, Christians do disappear. They are abandoned. They must work within boundaries set by district leaders and other government officials. They even still come face-to-face with dreaded Khmer Rouge rebels.

Whatever the threat may be, accepting Christianity often means stepping into danger. So Christians are few -- but strong.

On a recent volunteer trip, Jamie Atkinson told how one Cambodian man prayed to receive Jesus Christ as Savior despite his perceived fears.

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"We went to a little hut where this one man was staying, and we shared the gospel with him for about an hour and a half to two hours. ... He was really intently listening to us," Atkinson said. The man committed himself to Jesus, then asked, "Now that I've accepted Christ, what am I going to do, because now they are going to come and kill me."

Followers with such faith set their face like a flint and cause God's kingdom to grow in Cambodia.

Shaw, a Christian woman who lives in southwestern Cambodia, is another such follower. When Shaw announced plans to show the "Jesus" film, threats came not from her predominantly Buddhist neighbors but from area police. "If you show that film and start any outreach, I am going to burn your house down and take your children," volunteer Danny Evans quoted the police chief as saying.

The threat came after Evans and two Khmer Christians made a trek to Krong Kaoh Kong, the provincial capital, at the chief's insistence. The lengthy boat ride cost \$240 for the three passengers. The average annual income in Cambodia is \$300, Evans said.

Eight religious officials interrogated the men for four hours. "These people had never seen a Bible. We had to show them a Bible. They had never heard the name Jesus, so we had to tell them who he was," Evans said. "Eventually, after several hours of going back and forth, they got the paperwork and they all stamped it and put their signatures on it. God blessed it, and we got all the paperwork to spread the gospel."

But the area police chief still was not satisfied. "You know what Shaw did? She showed it anyway," Evans boasted. "She said, 'I don't care. I know Jesus.'" Police officers with M-16s on their shoulders arrived, but they did not disturb the presentation. Fifteen of Shaw's neighbors accepted Jesus that night.

The story of Shaw and her Christian friends is just one example of the persecution leveled against Christians in Cambodia today. Attacks may come from government officials, police chiefs, even spouses.

One woman Atkinson met was abandoned by her family when she decided to follow Christ two years ago. Now she harvests lotus nuts to support herself. She offers her house as a place of worship on Sundays and every evening. Her husband and two children live within a mile of her home but never come to see her. She is what some would refer to as the village's "man of peace."

Based on Luke 10:6, the man of peace is the open door to a village's receptivity to the gospel. Sometimes the man of peace may be a village leader, a young man or even a great grandmother.

"You look for that 'man of peace' in every village and you go there, and you stay there until you have the work planted," said one Cooperative Services International (CSI) worker formerly in Cambodia. CSI is Southern Baptists' humanitarian aid agency.

Cambodian pastor Leng Sovann oversees more than a dozen churches. Most meet in homes that are great distances apart. Each day Leng travels by motorbike to villages in the Battambang area where Christ's name often has not been heard. He spends hours visiting district officials and village leaders to ask permission to talk with area residents.

Although Leng and others serve despite hardship, many Cambodians long to hear truth. Volunteer groups, invited to Cambodia by the Khmer Baptist Convention, have been reaching some of them.

One searching man's question posed to volunteer Mark Hopkins illuminates the need. Recalled Hopkins: "He asked, 'Did your God create every country, even Cambodia? Then why did it take so long for someone to come tell us?'"

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(BP) photo (horizontal) and outline mailed Dec. 10 to state Baptist newspapers and posted in SBCNet's BP Photo Library by the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Local parents reflect trend for 'released time' classes

By Ken Walker

KINGSPORT, Tenn. (BP)--Despite failing to establish off-campus religious instruction for public school students in this northeastern Tennessee community, a parents group that includes several Southern Baptists will try again.

"Religious liberty is an issue that will not go away," said Ann Bennett, a member of the eight-person steering committee seeking to organize "released time" classes in Kingsport. "People haven't given up in the past."

While the Kingsport city school board unanimously voted down the concept in early December, the parents' group expects more favorable treatment from the adjoining Sullivan County school board.

Bennett, a member of Indian Springs Baptist Church, said the county board is likely to approve soon a pilot project for a middle school. Parents plan to approach educational authorities in neighboring Bristol, Tenn., as soon as they find a church to sponsor a class.

If the parents convince the city school board to reconsider, six churches already have agreed to teach the Kingsport sessions. Three are Southern Baptist churches -- Indian Springs, Calvary and Lynn Garden Baptist.

"We want to give parents in the public school system an alternative to morals that are already being taught," Bennett said. "The goal of family life education classes is to prevent teen pregnancy, but it never asks if (premarital sex) is OK. We think that's terrible.

"Many programs are based on the idea that children are going to have sex anyway. A released time program will teach (abstinence)" and introduce biblical morality, Bennett said.

Although it is only one city with less than 40,000 residents, the struggle in Kingsport has nationwide implications. It is one of more than 10 school systems where programs either are being considered or have been implemented recently with the assistance of Scripture Union, a Philadelphia-based ministry which operates in 119 countries. Its work led to the formation of the well-known college campus outreach, InterVarsity Fellowship.

Roger Blankenship, vice president of Scripture Union and director of its national school division, said the resistance encountered in Kingsport is unusual.

Advance press coverage probably contributed to some negative impressions of the concept there, he said.

"When a school board perceives public sentiment is running against it, they'll vote it down, whether it's the right thing or not," Blankenship said.

Presently, Scripture Union has helped organize released time at two schools in Milwaukee; four school systems in South Carolina; and pilot projects in Paterson, N.J., and Philadelphia.

The ministry is planning to present soon a proposal to a variety of denominations, including the Southern Baptist Convention, encouraging their participation in released time. School authorities are generally more receptive to an interdenominational approach, said Blankenship, an ordained Southern Baptist minister.

"We're leading up to a national conference next fall," he said. "We've never had a national field ministry. We work with churches; ... then we stay in the background and answer questions."

Although it has been around for more than 80 years, he said released time is unfamiliar to millions of Americans. It refers to releasing students from public school classes to attend religious-based instruction, usually for an hour or two per week.

Although the Supreme Court ruled in 1948 that it was unconstitutional to use public classrooms for such classes, four years later it upheld the practice for off-campus sessions.

The first Supreme Court ruling had a negative impact, said the Scripture Union official, with enrollment peaking in the early 1950s at 2.5 million before beginning a long slide. Unfortunately, the 1948 Supreme Court decision received considerable media coverage, he said, but not the 1952 decision.

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Classes continued in various parts of the nation, however, leading to the formation of the National Association for Released Time Christian Education in 1982. By then, student enrollment had dwindled to 180,000. Since then it has increased to more than 250,000.

Blankenship served as executive director of the association, an informational clearinghouse, from 1989-94. He then joined Scripture Union to become more actively involved in starting new programs.

"I taught a released time class in Georgia and saw it as the most exciting thing for students today," said Blankenship, who currently attends a nondenominational church because no SBC churches exist in his Philadelphia suburb. "We look at this as a tool, a good method. We want to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with young people wherever they are."

He acknowledged a primary criticism of released time comes from groups, including Christians, concerned about possible violations of church-state separation.

He also is concerned about keeping the state out of church affairs but said these classes simply offer parents an option.

"Since attendance is voluntary, off campus and privately funded, the state has no control over it," he said. "What this is doing is opening the door to parents in the community. The parents determine the content of this class."

Other critics say released time will open the door to all kinds of strange religions and cults, but Blankenship said that has never happened.

The Buddhists don't want to invest the resources it takes to offer released time classes, he added. But if they, or other groups like Jews or Mormons want to, that is what the Constitution is designed to guarantee, he said.

"I'm not concerned about the free exchange of ideas," said Blankenship. "I'm more concerned about the suppression of ideas. (Critics) are almost grasping for reasons not to do it."

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'Released time' religious classes succeed in rural Georgia county

By Ken Walker

Baptist Press
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ELLIJAY, Ga. (BP)--Located in the Blue Ridge mountains about 75 miles north of Atlanta, the Gilmer County school system is one example of how released time education can succeed.

When the proposal originated, a group of local churches banded together and raised enough money to purchase property next to Gilmer County High School, said superintendent Ben Arp.

The interdenominational group built a Christian Learning Center (CLC) and in 1985 began offering elective courses throughout the school day, he said. Eighty-five students, or just over 10 percent of the student body, are currently enrolled in CLC classes.

The center is governed by a board of directors chosen from area churches, which in this area of north Georgia are predominantly Baptist and Methodist, Arp said.

Students take a class just as they would band or another elective, he said. Some high school teachers have told him of positive improvements in the attitudes of students enrolled at CLC.

"We haven't had any complaints from any parents or groups opposed to it," said Arp, who became superintendent in 1992. "The church I go to (First Methodist of Ellijay) was heavily involved in it and I don't know of anyone who opposed it."

"Kids have told me it's a very positive experience. I think they look at (CLC) personnel a little bit differently than school personnel. I think they feel a little bit freer to talk to the teachers there."

With just 14,000 residents, Gilmer County is a very rural area; the two largest employers are a poultry processing plant and the school system. But the superintendent said he believes released time can be as effective in urban areas.

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The key to the program is the quality of the instructors, he explained, noting CLC director Sid Webb also serves as a volunteer coach for the high school cross country team.

"I give them a lot of credit," Arp said. "Quality people would work as well in an urban setting. However, in an urban setting there might be a chance that someone would protest the existence of one."

While their current plans don't include building an instructional center, parents in Kingsport, Tenn., still hope to hold released time classes despite the city school board's recent rebuff.

Ann Bennett said the parents' group got started after several parents saw an article about the concept in Christianity Today magazine. It seemed like the perfect solution to balance church-state concerns with those who are upset about the exclusion of the Bible from public schools, she said.

After preliminary discussions, the Sullivan (County) Baptist Association last spring invited Mike Whitehouse, a member of First Baptist Church, Elizabethton, Tenn., to speak about the released time program in Union County. The reaction was so positive they invited other denominations to get involved, she said.

This isn't just an excuse to get Christian students out of class, she said -- nationally about 60 percent of released time students come from non-Christian homes.

"When I spoke at the Optimist Club, one of the most enthusiastic responses was from a woman who told me she and her husband both work on Sunday," Bennett said. "She was excited about her daughter getting religious instruction during the week; 9:45 to noon on Sunday does not meet a lot of people's needs anymore."

Kingsport's steering committee had proposed allowing students from three schools to attend released time in lieu of family life, wellness and guidance classes.

Bennett objects to the family life curriculum, commonly called sex education, because of demonstrations of condoms and other contraceptives, as well as displays of sexual "pleasure items." These incidents have been reported by students in both family life and wellness classes, she said.

Objectionable material also has been part of elementary guidance classes, she said. Some in Tennessee have featured guided imagery, where children are given puppets and told to close their eyes and imagine what the puppet would tell them to do, Bennett said.

"There's all the difference in the world between biblical education and pragmatic moral choices," said the member of Kingsport's Indian Springs Baptist Church.

"We're asking that students in morals classes be released to get biblical morals. Eighth-graders have been shown French ticklers (a type of condom). Tell me how that prevents pregnancy, particularly for eighth-graders."

Bennett said she believes the need for released time education can be seen in 1995 statistics gathered by the federal Centers for Disease Control.

They show 80 percent of high school students have tried alcohol, 42 percent have used marijuana and about 20 percent have sniffed glue or other inhalants. In the month before the survey, 20 percent had carried a gun or other weapon to school. Fifty-three percent had engaged in sex, a figure that rose to 60 percent in Tennessee.

"The moral state we're in is so serious we should consider it a judgment of God," she said. "We should repent of taking him out of our daily situations and making him into a Sunday and Wednesday God."

**Judge vows to keep praying
in his county courtroom**

By Laurie A. Lattimore

GADSDEN, Ala. (BP)--Etowah County (Ala.) Circuit Judge Roy S. Moore has vowed to defy a Nov. 23 ruling prohibiting prayer in his courtroom, no matter what the circumstances.

In a nationally publicized case, Circuit Judge Charles Price upheld Moore's right to display the Ten Commandments in his Gadsden courtroom but banned prayers before jury summons in any Alabama courtroom. Price said courtroom prayers violated the First Amendment.

Moore, however, said he believes the ruling "warps" the U.S. Constitution. Although Moore was happy with the Ten Commandments decision, he believes the ban on prayer violates his right to acknowledge God.

"I will not take down the Ten Commandments, and I will not stop prayer," he declared in a press conference after the decision.

Although he is unsure what a contempt of court ruling will do to his future, Moore said he is more concerned about the Almighty Judge than Price. "It is my duty to acknowledge God."

Moore has consistently opened up jury selections with a prayer from visitors or clergy members. It may not be until Moore's next scheduled jury trial Feb. 24 that Price will have to act on Moore's vow not to stop prayer.

The ruling comes out of a 1994 American Civil Liberties Union suit against the judge for displaying the Ten Commandments and saying a prayer. The ACLU case was thrown out of federal court, but Gov. Fob James filed in state court to settle the issue of prayer in court. After counter suits by both parties, the ACLU and Moore agreed to summary judgment in September. Moore said he plans to appeal the case to the Alabama Supreme Court.

Price's ruling comes days after Moore was unseated from a divorce case in Etowah County in which the woman is alleged to have had a lesbian affair. The woman and her attorney filed suit with the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals, claiming Moore's Christian beliefs prevented him from sound judgment in the divorce proceedings. Moore is appealing that ruling as well.

Dean Young, head of Alabama's Christian Family Association, called the week one of the darkest in judicial history. Young is organizing a petition to take to the Supreme Court on Moore's behalf.

"The justices will have to pay attention to this," Young said.

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**Rural crisis pregnancy center
seeing 40-50 women monthly**

By Dwayne Hastings

**Baptist Press
12/11/96**

CLARKSDALE, Miss. (BP)--In an area of northwest Mississippi famed more for the glitter and glamour of its casino night life, a group of Southern Baptist churches in the intensely rural area is striving to preserve the lives of unborn babies.

"We're 20 small churches and one tiny mission in the poorest part of the United States," noted Helen Johnson, the first director of the area's only crisis pregnancy center and wife of M.C. Johnson, director of missions in the North Delta Baptist Association. "If we can do it, anybody can."

A study of the six-county region released in 1986 revealed a serious lack of access to health care and a high illiteracy rate in an area known for its rampant poverty. "85 percent of the babies born in this area are born to unwed mothers," said Helen, her voice tinged with a hint of despair. "There's also a very high rate of infant mortality here due to lack of prenatal care.

"We're probably the only center that deals with extremely low-income rural families in the state of Mississippi," Helen said, noting most centers deal with crisis pregnancies in the inner city or the suburbs.

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The county's health department stopped giving free pregnancy tests to women last year, referring the women instead to the Clarksdale, Miss., crisis pregnancy center, Helen recounted, with the arrangement affording counselors a prime opportunity to tell more women about Jesus.

"They get a free pregnancy test when they come in," M.C. Johnson said. "We help them to face the facts as to what has happened in their lives and to let them know it's not the end of the world.

"If they don't have time to talk with us about spiritual matters, then we try to get them to come back later," M.C. said. "We see that they get the prenatal care their baby needs and we get them in a Bible class conducted by volunteers at the center.

"We have compassion for them," he continued. "But if we are going to just be another social agency, we might as well just close up -- ours is a spiritual ministry."

"If there is not a change on the inside, there's not going to be a change on the outside," said Helen, echoing her husband's comments. "They're going to have to change that lifestyle, and only Jesus can change that inside. If we haven't helped them make a change in their life, we haven't done very much.

"We get a lot of calls from women who want an abortion. We don't tell them we don't do abortions here; instead, we do everything we can to get them in here and let them see a video, receive some education and get some counseling so that at least they can make an educated decision," Helen said.

Not every visitor to the center is considering abortion, she added. "A 38-year-old came in one afternoon saying her biological time clock was running out. She asked me, 'Would you consider this a crisis for a pregnancy and pray for me?'"

The center's ministry extends beyond those now considering terminating their pregnancy, embracing the growing number of women who already aborted a child. In any congregation, upwards of one out of six women have had an abortion, explained Nancy Pennington, the center's director. "They need to know they can be forgiven."

Cases of post-abortion trauma are increasing, symptomatic of the statistics that reveal nearly one out of three babies is aborted.

Pennington told of a woman in her mid-30s who came to the center in September: "She was hurting really bad from having had an abortion in her past. She needed some counseling and some prayer because she was actually suicidal. She got down on her knees and asked forgiveness and really got forgiveness from the Lord that day."

Yet the pain persists, Pennington said, despite the fact this woman was forgiven by God and had three children since the abortion. "She is still dealing with this; it doesn't end just because she got forgiveness. The pain and the guilt is still there because she doesn't have her baby."

"This is our ministry," M.C. said. "It is what God has called us to do (share the Gospel)."

The center, located just outside Clarksdale, struggles financially as do most crisis pregnancy centers, yet Helen said it is sacrificial giving that keeps the ministry afloat.

"Regardless of how small the gifts are, they are important to us," she said. "Folks give sacrificially because they believe in this ministry."

Churches in the association have Sunday school enrollments ranging from seven to 400.

"If you believe in something strong enough and you don't have the financial resources, there are people out there who have God's money and they will use it if they are challenged," said Helen, confessing she had to force herself in the beginning to ask for money to run the center.

The center draws support from a local Roman Catholic priest as well as a Presbyterian women's group in the area, proving the outreach stretches across denominational lines. Generally individual supporters give less than \$25 a month and, by far, most give \$10 or less a month to support the center, she said.

"We have not hurt anybody's church budget by operating this crisis pregnancy center," Helen promised. "When the Lord is in it, he just clears the way."

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"Some days when you go home you are completely drained; it is not from physical hard work but from the stress of being concerned, and being in prayer, and even from crying," Pennington explained.

"We see 40-50 girls a month. That sounds sad, and it is, but we know they are out there and if they come in to us, they get the gospel shared and they get educated about abortion. If they'll come to us, maybe we can make a difference in their decision to abort their baby," Pennington said.

"Once they come in, you just hope and pray they will come back because that way you know they are going through with their pregnancy," Pennington continued, "and if they don't come back, you wonder if they did go on and get an abortion.

"I know there are some who come in and then walk out and get an abortion, but we do what we can," she said.

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**Fred Wolfe to begin
itinerant ministry**

**Baptist Press
12/11/96**

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)--Fred Wolfe, a former chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, is leaving the pastorate to launch a ministry for local churches, pastors and staff members.

Wolfe, 59, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., since 1972, will leave the 7,800-member congregation Jan. 31 to begin "Barnabas, a Ministry of Encouragement."

Wolfe chaired the Executive Committee from 1993-95; was an SBC presidential nominee in 1994; president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference in 1983; and twice chairman of the SBC Committee on Order of Business. He delivered the SBC convention sermon in 1990.

In his new ministry, to be based in Mobile, Wolfe said he will conduct three weekend church conferences per month focusing on "encouragement and equipping," including a Saturday night service, a full Sunday schedule and a Monday morning meeting with pastors invited from the surrounding area. The ministry will have a newsletter and monthly tape.

In a Nov. 29 letter to Cottage Hill members, Wolfe wrote, "I am not resigning as your pastor because I am tired, burned out, discouraged or disheartened. I am not under pressure from anyone or anything. I am being led by God to a new ministry." He described Cottage Hill as "a healthy, loving, growing church with a great future." For more than 25 years, Cottage Hill has been among Alabama's top churches in baptisms.

The church has a \$4.5 million yearly budget and opened a \$9.2 million 4,000-seat worship center and education complex in 1989 without debt. Currently it is in a \$6.5 million expansion to include a Christian high school and academy to open in September 1997.

Wolfe is a native of Rock Hill, S.C.; former pastor of churches in Rock Hill and Greenville, S.C., and Decatur, Ga.; and author of two books. He and his wife, Anne, have two married sons and five grandchildren.

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Compiled by Art Toalston.

III. Sunday school director assumes new post at BSSB

By Chip Alford

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Al Riddley, director of Sunday school services for the Illinois Baptist State Association in Springfield, Ill., has been named to the newly created post of national strategist for new Bible study units at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn.

In hiring Riddley, Steve Cretin, director of the BSSB's ministry leadership development department, said: "Al is uniquely qualified for this position. He comes to us following 18 years of state Sunday school work. During the last seven years, he has played an instrumental role in the creation of thousands of new Bible study units in Illinois churches. We're excited to have Al join our team."

Riddley will assume the new post at the Sunday School Board Jan. 1. Cretin said the job was created "to intentionally focus our work on creating new Bible study units. We've established a goal of creating 100,000 new units during the next five years. We see this as a vital way to reach people for Christ."

During Riddley's tenure as leader of Sunday school work in Illinois, the state received the B.W. Spilman Award for the best ratio of new to existing Sunday schools three times and also was honored once with the J.N. Barnette Award which recognizes the largest numerical increase in state Sunday school enrollment.

Before taking over leadership of Illinois Sunday school work in 1989, Riddley served 10 years as director of the Baptist Convention of New England's church development division in Northboro, Mass. He also has served as an associate pastor, minister of education and minister of youth at several Kentucky churches.

He holds the bachelor of arts degree from Georgetown (Ky.) College and the master of arts in religious education degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Riddley has written numerous articles for denominational publications and has led national training conferences at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

He and his wife, Karen, have three children, Nicole, Stephanie and Matthew.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Gov's Confederate flag stance stirs debate in South Carolina," dated 12/10/96, please correct the last part of the 18th paragraph to read: "... with 60 percent opposed or not caring whether the flag continues to fly."

Thanks,
Baptist Press

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