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**Baptists invited to seminaries  
 by Elliff for revival thrust**

**By Herb Hollinger**

**Baptist Press  
 7/15/96**

DEL CITY, Okla. (BP)--The president of the Southern Baptist Convention has issued an invitation to Southern Baptist ministers to attend one-day convocations at seven seminaries with "preaching, singing and powerful praying as we turn our hearts toward God."

Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., issued the invitation in a July 15 letter to Southern Baptist pastors, state convention executive directors, state Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood and division directors and associational directors of missions. More than 40,000 of the letters were sent in a cooperative effort by the SBC president and the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Labeled an "urgent invitation," Elliff said the 20th century "is rapidly drawing to a close. Tragically, this could be the first century in our nation's history to pass without a great, sweeping move of God. Will that be the case? Many of us believe the Lord is saying 'turn to me!' He is calling us to revival: calling us to the cross; calling us to the crucified life."

Elliff said the seminaries are opening their campuses for the day "when all energies and interests will be focused on revival." He urged Southern Baptists to find the nearest campus, "on the day most suited to your schedule."

Primarily directed to Southern Baptist pastors and leaders, the convocations will be a day in which at least three generations of SBC ministers join hearts in "crying out to God for revival in the land," Elliff said.

James T. Draper Jr., BSSB president, said the board believes the cause of renewal, revival and spiritual awakening is "so important that we were glad to underwrite this mailing."

"I hope thousands of Southern Baptists will respond to our president's invitation and attend these convocations," Draper said.

Each convocation begins at 10 a.m.

Meeting dates and locations: Aug. 29, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.; Sept. 3, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; Sept. 4, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.; Sept. 10, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; Sept. 11, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.; and Sept. 12, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

A convocation also will be held Sept. 5 at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis, Tenn., Elliff said.

Elliff said, "Come as early and stay as long as you like. ... I urge you to begin praying now for a mighty moving of God during these days. Such a concerted effort, touching lives, churches and campuses, will be in vain 'unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down.'"

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Elliff, a former missionary to Africa, was elected president of the SBC at the June 11-13 annual meeting in New Orleans.

The "cry for revival" was a vivid theme at the SBC annual meeting as Ronnie Floyd, Arkansas pastor, delivered the convention sermon calling for Southern Baptists to make plans for prayer and fasting.

Floyd, chairman of the SBC Executive Committee and pastor of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark., asked Southern Baptists to make four commitments: to issue a call for prayer and fasting on Sunday morning, Oct. 27; hold a "solemn assembly" that Sunday evening to call people to repentance for sin; observe Wednesday, Oct. 30, as a day of humiliation, prayer and fasting for personal, church and national revival; and use both morning and evening services on Sunday, Nov. 3, to focus on the subject of revival.

To assist churches in preparing for the emphasis on prayer and fasting, the BSSB will send a mailing to churches about Aug. 1. The mailing will include a letter from Draper, a guide to prayer and fasting by Floyd and an audio tape with Floyd's message from the SBC meeting and a message on family values by Josh McDowell, founder of the national Right from Wrong campaign.

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**In wake of Hurricane Bertha,  
Baptist feeding units respond**

**By Steve Barber**

**Baptist Press  
7/15/96**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Hurricane Bertha left less damage and dislocation than first expected, yet Southern Baptist disaster relief feeding units have been at work in the Carolinas since Saturday, July 13, according to Mickey Caison, Adults in Missions associate director at the Brotherhood Commission and off-site coordinator for the disaster response.

As of July 15, North Carolina Baptist Men have two feeding units in operation. Unit 1 is based at Hampstead High School in Hampstead, N.C., near Wilmington and Unit 2 is at Cape Carteret Baptist Church in Cape Carteret, N.C., near Jacksonville. The units provided 25,000 meals Saturday and Sunday.

The evening of July 14, a Charleston, S.C.-based unit was activated to support the unit at Hampstead. The July 15 meal count is expected to surpass 20,000.

No other state convention's units are on either "standby" or "alert" status.

The preliminary damage report from the American Red Cross, released July 15, shows 1,000 homes damaged and six shelters open, with 78 people. Red Cross is continuing its assessment of damage and the need for clean-up and recovery units. Most of the damage has been limited to beach and barrier island areas.

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

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**House overwhelmingly OKs  
Defense of Marriage Act**

**By Tom Strode**

**Baptist Press  
7/15/96**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly July 12 to approve legislation designed to enable states to refuse recognition of homosexual marriages.

The Defense of Marriage Act, H.R. 3396, cleared the House by a 342-67 margin which did not reflect the fervent debate on the floor.

The legislation has been on a fast track since it was introduced in both the House and Senate in early May in response to an expected Hawaii court ruling which threatens to legalize homosexual marriage in a sweeping way. In a case scheduled to go to trial later this summer, it is expected a Hawaii court will declare homosexual marriage constitutional.

If such a union made in Hawaii is legal, it likely would be considered legal in all other states under the full faith and credit clause of the U.S. Constitution, unless a state is able to show it has a compelling policy opposing such unions. Eleven states have enacted legislation banning homosexual marriages.

The bill says no state shall be required to recognize a homosexual marriage from another state. It also amends federal law to define marriage as "only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife" and to define a spouse as "a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife."

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Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission consultant Ben Mitchell said, "The lopsidedness of the vote shows two things: First, that the American people are not willing to redefine the institution of marriage on the whim of a radical segment of our society; second, that Americans are tired of having the homosexual agenda shoved in their faces.

"The tactics of the homosexual lobby are as old as humanity. The way we sinners often deal with sin is to redefine it. We try to make it palatable and rationalize it away. Thankfully, the House has shown that it is not willing to do so," said Mitchell, the CLC's consultant on biomedical and life issues.

While opponents of the legislation charged it is politically motivated and mean-spirited toward homosexuals, supporters said it is a timely response to an attempt to legalize same-sex marriage through the decision of one state. Defenders of the bill also said it reflects the traditional view of marriage and does not prevent a state from granting legal status to homosexual marriages performed in other states. The bill only says states are not required to recognize such marriage by the full faith and credit clause, they said.

"This is far from a trivial political issue," said Rep. Charles Canady, R.-Fla., in floor debate. "Families are not merely constructs of outdated convention, and traditional marriage laws were not based on animosity toward homosexuals.

"Our law should not treat homosexual relationship as the moral equivalent of the heterosexual relationships on which the family is based," Canady said.

Rep. Gerry Studds, D.-Mass., one of three openly homosexual members of the House, called the homosexual rights movement the "final chapter in the history of the civil rights of this country. ... (W)e can embrace that change and welcome it, or we can resist it, but there is nothing on God's earth that we can do to stop it."

After the vote, the White House reaffirmed President Clinton would sign the legislation as passed by the House.

The Senate is expected to consider the legislation before the close of the session. The Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing July 11 on the Senate version, S. 1740. Sen. Edward Kennedy, D.-Mass., led the opposition to the bill during the hearing. It is anticipated Kennedy will attempt to attach a homosexual rights amendment, the Employment Non-discrimination Act, to the bill.

Rep. Bob Barr, R.-Ga., and Sen. Don Nickles, R.-Okla., introduced the Defense of Marriage Act in their respective chambers.

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### **Husband's death not the end of this missionary's career**

**By Craig Bird**

**Baptist Press  
7/15/96**

BANGKOK, Thailand (BP)--Packing and shipping a lifetime of memories to the United States seems an unusual way to assert you are "coming back home" to Thailand. But Delores Hill is doing just that.

Her husband, Dan, 54, died May 22 when he apparently fell asleep while driving near Cadiz, Ky., and the car overturned. Hill was en route to their two younger sons' U.S. Army basic training camp graduation in Indianapolis.

Delores Hill returned from Thailand immediately and began "asking the Lord for a sign about what I should do." She set a deadline of May 30 -- just four days after the funeral -- to decide if she would return to Bangkok as a single missionary. That would dictate an abrupt adjustment since "we'd always worked as a team." The Hills had served as Southern Baptist missionaries in Asia since 1974.

"I was called by God to be a missionary before Dan, so my Christian vocational commitment was not dependent on his," Hill explained. "Even now I'm still working through parts of the grief. I will for a long time -- perhaps forever -- but his death didn't negate my call. We were a team and our work in Bangladesh and Thailand was a part of who we were. Coming back was what I wanted to do from the first because it is still part of who I am."

Her occasional use of the present tense "we" and "our" reflects a core conviction. "So much is left undone," she said. "We have invested so much of our time and energy into so many specific people's lives. Our work isn't complete."

But she wanted to feel that God wanted her to return.

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Daily, both before and after the funeral, Thai Christian friends called to comfort her and to urge her to come back to Thailand. Winit Wong Sumugsura, their pastor at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Bangkok, was one of the first. The contacts were encouraging and affirming, but not the absolute assurance she was seeking.

Then, on deadline day, another call came from Thailand.

"I have known this woman for seven or eight years and repeatedly told her about my faith. But she never has become a Christian," Hill noted. "She always spoke to me in the dialect Thais use for formal conversation when they want to keep an emotional distance. But when she called, she used the familiar dialect you use with families and close friends. Talking to me like a sister she insisted, 'You have got to come home.' That was the sign I was waiting for."

On July 8, Delores Hill landed in Bangkok.

Two emotionally draining tasks now loom before her. The church held a memorial service July 13, to "help them deal with their grief over Dan's death," she said.

She then would begin packing away most of the memories of their 30-plus years' missionary career and ship them to the United States. "This way I can move into a smaller house and carry on planting churches, and the children can complete their grieving process and emotional separation from their daddy."

Hill had been living in Atlanta, with oldest son Daniel and his wife while completing the final 10 hours for a master's degree in counseling and psychology from Georgia State University. "I've got his diploma," Hill pointed out proudly.

Daniel, 28, now plans to leave his job as a plumber and move his family to Fort Worth, Texas, to enroll at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where his dad also had graduated.

"Those were special times, my dad was the greatest man I've ever known," he noted. "Aside from my wife, I loved him more than any other human on this earth. Because of him, I'm responding to a call from God to go to seminary and train for Christian service."

The two younger brothers -- Dave, 21, and Tom, 19 -- are in military intelligence training, where one is learning Arabic and the other Serbia-Croatian. The Hills' daughter, Deangela Chastain, 30, lives with her husband in Conyers, Ga.

Despite the devastating emotional pain of widowhood, Hill said she has found "lots of victory" the past six weeks.

"Danny was one of the most exciting, vibrant people I have ever known," she said. "He was virtually indestructible. In our 31 years together there was at least one situation a year which could have been fatal to him but God kept him safe."

"There are people all over this world who can testify that mediocrity was not in his vocabulary. Everything he did he did it all the way." The couple first worked in Bangladesh from 1974-78, where they directed a vocational rehabilitation center for handicapped men. They transferred to Thailand in 1979 where for five years they worked in Cambodian refugee camps. In 1985 they moved to Bangkok to establish churches.

The Hills' style of on-the-edge ministry -- one that often seemed to challenge standard (they would say "run-of-the-mill") methods -- brought them praise, at times, and criticism and conflict, at other times, from fellow workers and administrators, Delores Hill said. Yet ironically, she discovered in a time of tragedy that "in spite of differences, we are part of a large family (of SBC missionaries) that has given us tremendous spiritual and emotional support -- a family I didn't fully appreciate until now."

"I will miss Danny a lot, but it is getting easier to talk about it," Hill admitted. "He wasn't afraid to die." Accordingly, the remaining half of the team is not afraid to go on living -- in Bangkok.

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EDITORS' NOTE: This story has local ties to Georgia (Dan Hill was a graduate of the University of Georgia and Georgia State University); Texas (Hill graduated from Southwestern Seminary, Delores Hill is a native of Amarillo); Kentucky (the fatal accident was near Cadiz); and Indiana (the Hills' sons' boot camp graduation was in Indianapolis).

**Draper preaches family sermon  
for 40th wedding anniversary**

**By Charles Willis**

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Being president of the Southern Baptist Convention or pastor of a big county seat church is not the best reward, Baptist Sunday School Board President James T. Draper Jr., told pastors and church staff members July 14 during the National Conference for Church Leadership at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

"The best reward is the wife God gives you," he said during a sermon on the family July 14, as he and his wife Carol Ann celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

"We minister to everyone else before we minister to her," he said of pastors and their wives, warning "if Satan can destroy the families and marriages of Christian leaders, he can go a long way toward neutralizing their Christian witness."

Before preaching from Ecclesiastes 9:9, Draper gave his wife an anniversary gift, the surprise visit of their their children, spouses and two of their four grandchildren to help celebrate the day. Oldest son Randy Draper with his wife, Elizabeth, and sons Kyle and Kevin emerged from a side door carrying a rose bouquet, followed by Bailey and Kim Draper and Terri and Mike Wilkinson. Carol Ann Draper later joked it was "a wonderful gift," but frustrating to be on the front row of Glorieta's Holcomb Auditorium "with all my family and I couldn't talk to any of them!"

Draper told church leaders, "I have a wife who loves God, who never said, 'That was a lousy sermon.' My wife prays for me and pulls for me. I have three children who came through the rigors of being raised in a pastor's home."

Success of the kingdom of God does not rest on the programs, ingenuity or creativity of the church, he said, but on the strength of the home. Southern Baptists need to talk about character, he challenged church staff people.

"We need to be something before we can do something," he declared.

The marriage relationship is a necessity, he said, because it brings a unique glory to God. "It is a model for Christ's relationship to the church. He wants to know us as husbands and wives know each other."

The marriage relationship is God's heritage and extends a unique fulfillment of human need.

"God made us for relationships," he said. "He doesn't make us to be alone."

He said the nature of marriage in today's culture too often is a contract.

"But marriage is not a contract," he said. "It's a covenant between a man and a woman and God. A biblical marriage involves three parties, not two. We must have God in our marriage if it is to be what the Bible describes. A husband and wife who bond together in that kind of covenant with God will have a great relationship," he said.

"My marriage to my precious wife is not wrapped up in physical and emotional changes that happen over the years. It's wrapped up in a covenant."

Marriage is nurtured in gratitude, Draper continued, and mutual submission.

"When we live faithfully in that relationship, it honors God. The greatest thing you can do for your children, your church, for a lost world, is to love your wife."

The National Conference for Church Leadership, July 12-15 and July 15-19, focused training on leadership, ministry and worship and was sponsored by the BSSB's church leadership services division.

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**Once-taboo subjects now aired  
in churches' support groups**

**By Charles Willis**

**Baptist Press  
7/15/96**

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Subjects churches once considered too personal for public discussion are now topics for group studies growing in popularity across the Southern Baptist Convention and with other Christian groups, an editor of LIFE support products said.

Dale McCleskey told participants in Discipleship and Family Development Week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center that shame and guilt contributed to the lack of healing and support groups in churches until recent years.

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"But about four years ago Baptist Sunday School Board leadership realized millions of people go to support groups," McCleskey said. "The reason a lot of secular support groups developed is that we in the church were not doing what God wanted us to do. There was a tremendous need. The church was intended to meet the need, and people were having a problem finding the help they needed."

The opportunity to participate in a Christian support group enables people to freely identify their "higher power" as Jesus Christ, Kay Moore told participants in an earlier session July 4 during the Jericho Missions Festival at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

"Churches traditionally have ministered effectively to persons with physical problems," said Moore, a former editor of LIFE support materials now living in Richmond, Va. "But for many years people have felt uncomfortable in coming to the church with the deepest needs of their hearts."

However, she said the BSSB has released more than 40 resources dealing with family, lifestyle and addiction issues that once were only whispered about in church.

One of the earliest courses, "First Place," provides a Christian context for weight loss, Moore said.

"It enables people to rely on Christ's power, not willpower, to help them with weight loss and healthy eating habits," Moore said.

Another early release, "Search for Significance," is designed to build self-worth on the forgiveness and unconditional love of Christ.

"This is an excellent starting point for a church's support group ministry," Moore said. Related courses include "The Search" for youth, "Untangling Relationships: A Christian Perspective on Codependency" and "Breaking the Cycle of Hurtful Family Experiences."

Moore emphasized LIFE support courses are "lay-led. These are not therapy groups. The leader is there to facilitate. Members are told over and over not to tell others what to do. They can share out of their experiences."

Other LIFE support group studies include:

-- "Making Peace with Your Past," to help understand problems and feelings from childhood experiences that affect your life today. Related is "Moving Beyond Your Past," designed to help people take responsibility for their own emotional and spiritual wholeness."

-- "Shelter from the Storm: Hope for Survivors of Sexual Abuse" provides understanding in the effects of sexual abuse, a means to let go of the past and the ability to reclaim trust, control and intimacy.

-- "A Time for Healing: Coming to Terms with Your Divorce" offers help in grief for broken relationships, understanding past issues that may have contributed to divorce, understanding how to reconcile relationships involved in the dissolution of the marriage and dealing with practical issues such as finances, employment, custody, legal needs, holidays and emotional adjustments. Related are "Healing the Wounds -- Teenagers Learning to Cope with Divorce" and "KidShare: What Do I Do Now?" for children in grades three through six.

-- "Recovering from the Losses of Life," dealing with death of a loved one, loss of a job, broken relationships, leaving home, loss of identity or loss of a dream or goal, among others.

-- "Conquering Codependency" helps change the compulsion to rescue and control others. Related are "Conquering Eating Disorders: A Christ-Centered 12-Step Process" to deal with anorexia, bulimia and compulsive overeating;" "Quitting for Good: A Christ-Centered Approach to Nicotine Dependency;" "Conquering Chemical Dependency: A Christ-Centered 12-Step Process" and the workbook "Conquering Chemical Dependency: First Steps to a Christ-Centered 12-Step Process," both of which offer insights into chemical dependency and the process for restoration; "Killers: Alcohol and Other Drugs" for youth.

-- "LIFE Support Leader's Handbook" and "LIFE Support Group Series Training Video" for help in starting and conducting support group ministry. Related are "WiseCounsel: Skills for Lay Counseling" and "Family and Friends: Helping the Person You Care About in Recovery."

McCleskey said a resource for blended families, "New Faces in the Frame," will be released soon. All resources are evangelistic, he added, presenting the gospel as Jesus did.

"He met people's needs, loved them and then introduced them to God."

Moore said LIFE support courses are being used internationally.

"Many of our missionaries have participated in these courses during furloughs and then taken them back to the mission fields," she said.

LIFE resources are available from the BSSB at 1-800-458-2772.

Discipleship and Family Development Week, July 6-12, was sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division.

## **Intergenerational ministry is 21st-century challenge**

**By Charles Willis**

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Integrating knowledge of generational trends into effective ministries that cross generational lines is one of the greatest challenges facing Southern Baptists for the 21st century, a ministry leader maintains.

Terry Arnold, church development director for the Nevada Baptist Convention, told participants in Discipleship and Family Development Week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center that "the biblical model for the family and the biblical mandate to accomplish the Great Commission form the foundation for intergenerational ministry.

"The creative narrative of Genesis chronicles the creation of the family as a social institution that was intended by God to propagate the generations," Arnold said during sessions July 6-12. "The type of family we see by the time Genesis closes with the death of Joseph is the extended family."

Arnold said the extended family model offered "the best possible environment for intergenerational living because it had at least four generations who lived the majority of their lives together." And while bringing the extended family back as the norm for society as a whole is impractical, he said, the church can be the extended family, an effective model for intergenerational ministry.

"This is especially true in the smaller-membership church, often being the extended family by default," he said. "The mid-sized, program-oriented church has to work a little harder at being extended family because they are built around an organizational model that is nuclear. Some committee, task force or ad-hoc team must take responsibility to bring the extended family model into this size congregation. The mega-church can hire ministers who coordinate and lead intergenerational ministry activities built on the extended family model."

Intergenerational ministry succeeds only in a church where the pastor leads the church to be an extended family, Arnold said.

Citing the 1.5.4 concept of church growth, Arnold said he believes a church should be able to take the five essential functions for church growth (evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship and worship) to help design methods for intergenerational ministry.

For example, intergenerational evangelism can be accomplished as several generations participate in Bible study. The Baptist Sunday School Board's Family Bible Series, he said, makes it possible for all members of a household to study the same biblical material, providing for enhanced participation among generations in the home.

He said discipleship relies more on stages of faith than chronological age. Support groups, special-interest studies and steps to spiritual maturity programs lend themselves to intergenerational ministry, especially among adults.

Mid-life adults are most often called on to minister to younger age groups, he said, and often are the primary caregivers for senior adults. Although such intergenerational ministry is natural, it is not always easy to accomplish, he observed. Churches must be intentional in designing and implementing these ministries.

Congregational worship is intergenerational in some churches and strictly age-segmented in others. Smaller-membership churches seem to do a good job with worship for all generations because they have no other choice, Arnold said. Larger churches may have multiple worship options, some of which may be designed to appeal to a particular generation.

The concept of fellowship has been misunderstood in churches for generations, he maintained.

"Perhaps it is our aversion to the word 'party.' We say, 'There will be an ice cream fellowship after worship service tonight.' Perhaps we would be more accurate if we said 'ice cream party,' because even though fellowship refers to taking part in something with someone, it also has to do with giving and being a part of a congregation of believers."

He said it might be useful to think of fellowship in terms of participation in the evangelistic, discipling, ministry and worship activities of the church.

Churches would be wise to track generational participation, Arnold concluded, to make adjustments to maintain a balance between intergenerational and age-segmented activities in every area of church life.

Discipleship and Family Development Week was sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division.

**'I was blind but now I see'  
reflects Vietnam vet's faith**

**By Sarah Simmons**

HIGH POINT, N.C. (BP)--John Newton wrote the stirring words to "Amazing Grace" in the late 19th century, yet they still ring true for Christians like Clinton Edwards. In giving his testimony recently, he finished with the first verse of Newton's hymn: "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!"

Basing his life on Philippians 4:13, Edwards told members of Faith Baptist Church, High Point, N.C., "Many times I did things I didn't think I was capable of doing." Among them: his roles of husband, father and mechanic. If these aren't enough, he also serves Huldah Baptist Church, Asheboro, N.C., as a deacon and head of the church's Baptist Men's group.

Edwards' Christian walk is not the unique thing about him, however. Edwards is special because he does all these things despite a severe disability -- blindness.

Edwards, while a medic in Vietnam, was helping another wounded soldier on the Cambodian border when a nearby Claymore, a device that throws out ball bearings during detonation, exploded, blinding him. Both eyes had to be removed and Edwards was sent home to his new wife in darkness.

"I was bitter," Edwards said June 23. "I couldn't work because of insurance. That's when I learned what being handicapped means."

Relating his life to Saul's, Edwards spoke about Saul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus. After Saul was blinded, Ananias, a disciple, spoke to him -- "the Lord Jesus ... has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17).

Edwards' Ananias came in the form of a friend's wife.

"She came to the back of the church where (my wife) and I were sitting and asked me to give my life to Christ," he said with great emotion. That December day in 1971, he said, he decided to let God rule his life, and he has never been the same.

Saul was blinded before his conversion experience. Like Saul, Edwards said he believes his blindness forced him to find strength in the Lord. He is thankful "God so loved a sinner."

He is also thankful for his wife, Brenda. During his testimony, Edwards referred many times about his love for his wife and her daily stand beside him in whatever he does. "She has been my eyes ... for 31 years now. She is always by my side," he said. He smiled when referring to her and his children -- a daughter, 28, and a son, 26.

Edwards said his main question when coming to know Christ was, "What does a blind man do when he comes into the church?" For almost 25 years he has been answering his own question.

Because he had been working on cars and their engines for about 14 years at the time of the accident, his knowledge of cars became one way he could serve. Steve Welborn, pastor of Faith Baptist and a friend of Edwards, said Edwards often worked on their church bus.

The pastor tells a story of Edwards fixing the bus transmission twice in one Vacation Bible School week. "We never missed a single night," Welborn said.

Edwards finished his soft-spoken testimony at Faith by telling why being a deacon is important to him. "I look at being a deacon as serving the Lord to carry on his work," Edwards said.

After 17 eye surgeries and lots of emotional healing, Edwards is doing just that -- witnessing to others through his personal struggles and triumphs.

Even though he cannot see with physical eyesight, Edwards sees he "can do all things through Christ who strengthens" him.

As Newton's hymn rejoices, "I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see."

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Simmons, summer journalism intern at North Carolina Baptists' Biblical Recorder, is a rising senior at Mars Hill (N.C.) College and student newspaper editor.



**Journalist trades deadlines  
for bedtime stories, poetry****By Ken Camp**

DALLAS (BP)--After 32 years of telling the Texas Baptist story, Orville Scott will spend a bit more time telling bedtime stories to grandchildren once he retires July 31 as coordinator of news and information services for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

But even after he hands in his press pass, Scott plans to continue editing a State Missions Commission magazine, working on special projects for Texas Baptist Communications, and indulging his passion for penning poetry -- preferably while sitting on the front porch of the country home he is having built in East Texas.

Besides the thousands of news and feature articles he has written for the Baptist Standard and both the secular and denominational press, Scott's works in verse have appeared through the years in evangelism conference programs and various other Texas Baptist publications. Co-workers have dubbed him "poet laureate of the Baptist Building."

And whenever a friend celebrated a special occasion or experienced a birth or death in the family, he could expect to find a poem in the mail signed "o. scott." (all lowercase)

"Texas Baptists have good reason to offer thanks for the years that Orville Scott has served them and the cause of Christ," said William M. Pinson Jr., BGCT executive director.

"For more than three decades, Orville has shared the good news of how God has been at work among Texas Baptists. In addition to using his gifts as a writer, he also has been an exemplary personal witness for Christ and dedicated Christian layman.

"I join others at the Baptist Building and throughout Texas Baptist life in praising God for the contributions of Orville Scott and in praying God's blessings upon him and his family during his retirement years."

Thomas J. Brannon, BGCT director of communications, lauded Scott for his professional achievements, cooperative spirit and personal graciousness.

"I will be forever grateful for the 16 years God has allowed me to work alongside Orville Scott," Brannon said. "His unswerving loyalty, his commitment to the Lord's work and his sweet spirit have been humbling, gratifying and inspiring to me.

"While I will miss being in daily contact with Orville, I look forward to many times of fellowship together with him in the years ahead, and I rejoice with him for the well-earned time he will now be able to spend with his beloved family."

Scott was born in Arkansas and reared on an East Texas dairy farm near Carthage. A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, he worked for the Austin American-Statesman and edited a couple of trade journals before coming to work at the Baptist Building in 1959 as press representative in the Texas Baptist office of public relations.

He left the BGCT in 1965 to serve three years as editor of Charity and Children for the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina and to complete two years of graduate studies in journalism at the University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.

Scott returned to his post as Texas Baptist press representative in 1970 and was promoted to director of public relations two years later.

After five years at that administrative position, he returned to his first love -- writing. Since March 1977, he has directed the state convention's news and information service.

Scott is an accredited member of the Public Relations Society of America and a former president of the Dallas chapter of the Religious Public Relations Council and of the Texas Baptist Communications Association.

He has received a number of national awards for news and feature writing and other areas of communications from the Baptist Public Relations Association (now Baptist Communicators Association).

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