



SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee
-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

MAR 18 1996

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

March 15, 1996

96-46

TENNESSEE--List of meetings for week of March 17-23.
ATLANTA--Charles Stanley's wife drops divorce suit.
NEW ORLEANS--NOBTS trustees hear new president's plans.
NEW ORLEANS--Seminary building key site in Chuck Kelley's ministry; photo.
NEW ORLEANS--NOBTS trustees elect 3 laymen, approve 5 percent budget hike.
NORTH CAROLINA--Southeastern trustees address enrollment growth challenges.
ATLANTA--10,000 AIM '96 volunteers to serve crowds at Olympics.
ATLANTA--Paralympics: this summer's other volunteer opportunity.
ATLANTA--Million WMU hospitality bags to comfort Olympics visitors.
ATLANTA--Baptist creative arts groups to relate to Olympics crowds.
ATLANTA--Baptists to trade pins in popular Olympic hobby.
ATLANTA--Baptists to open homes to Olympians' families.
FLORIDA--Big-leaguers tell youth their priority is Jesus.

CALENDAR

TENNESSEE--Stewardship Commission annual meeting, March 21-22, Nashville.

Charles Stanley's wife
drops divorce suit

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
3/15/96

ATLANTA (BP)--Anna Stanley, wife of First Baptist Church of Atlanta senior pastor Charles Stanley, has dropped her nearly 3-year-old divorce suit, according to her attorney.

Adrienne Marting, who with David Ross represented Anna Stanley, confirmed March 15 the petition for divorce had been withdrawn from Cobb County Superior Court.

A statement from In Touch Ministries, which oversees broadcasts of pastor Stanley's sermons, quoted his wife as saying, "I am pleased to announce that Charles and I are making progress toward reconciling our marriage differences. This past week I canceled my petition for divorce."

Her statement, to be read Sunday, March 17, at First Baptist Church, continued, "Although we are not living together at this time, we are working toward that end. Thank you for standing by our family during this difficult time. We all feel that the progress made in the past several weeks is due in great part to your prayers."

The Friday, March 15, edition of The Atlanta Constitution quoted Charles Stanley as saying, "Naturally, I am pleased and grateful to God for answered prayer . . . Especially, I am grateful to my church for their patience and support and unwavering love for me through this difficult time."

The announcement apparently ends speculation on Stanley's leadership at First Baptist. Stanley had stated if the divorce became final he would resign from the church, which has not allowed divorced men to serve as deacons or pastors.

NOBTS trustees hear
new president's plans

By Debbie Moore

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The health of a seminary should not be measured by the number of students or the size of the endowment, the new president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary told the board of trustees March 13 during their annual meeting on the seminary campus.

Rather, the health of a seminary should be measured "by the health of the churches where its graduates lead," said Charles S. Kelley Jr., elected Feb. 23 as eighth president of New Orleans Seminary.

Referring to an estimate that 70 percent of Southern Baptist churches are plateaued or declining, Kelley, who has taught at NOBTS since 1983 as a professor of evangelism, said he wants NOBTS to raise up graduates to reverse that trend.

Noting the affirmation of the former president, Landrum P. Leavell II, and of administrators, faculty, staff and alumni, Kelley said the seminary is "in the midst of a smooth handoff." He commended school administrators "for not just keeping the school surviving" during the 13-month search for a new president, but for "keeping the school humming," he said; "they have done a superlative job."

NOBTS started the 1995-96 academic year with more than a 3 percent increase over the previous year; second semester enrollment is 4 percent higher than the year before. Current enrollment is 2,240.

During the interim period, two new extension center campuses were started, along with a Church Leadership Certificate program which has enrolled 153 students in three states. Also during this time, the seminary:

- was the first of the six Southern Baptist seminaries to purchase and begin using compressed interactive video to link its main campus with extension center campuses and the first to establish an Internet address and home page presence on the World Wide Web.

- constructed eight new classrooms to accommodate what has been termed a "bulging" student enrollment.

- constructed an Information and Technology Center (ITC) which houses computer lab classrooms, a statistics lab, a foreign language lab and computer workrooms for students and faculty.

Kelley reported on the seminary's regular 10-year self-study and reaffirmation visit, and noted accreditation guidelines limit institutional comments prior to the final evaluation of the agencies, but that "our results were very positive."

Among the tasks at hand, Kelley said he will be working with administrators and faculty through the spring to formulate proposals to be presented at a special full trustee board meeting June 13 concerning the following items:

- naming a provost, who will be from outside the seminary, Kelley said, since the president was chosen from inside the seminary. Kelley, by presidential appointment, has named C. Ferris Jordan interim provost.

- reorganizing the administrative structure "to involve a few more people and spread the load," Kelley said.

- filling 10 faculty positions throughout the seminary's five graduate divisions and undergraduate school of Christian training. Since Leavell's retirement in December 1994, no professors have been hired to fill positions created by expansion, retirements or resignations.

- developing short- and long-range plans for raising faculty compensation and lowering workloads.

- "attacking the issue of relocation," Kelley said. "Although we are not planning to move, we do not have the luxury of avoiding that question. ... We need to put the seminary in a position to be able to make that decision" when the time comes. In his proposal, Kelley wants to assemble all data necessary to make a decision, from "What do we need to do to stay?" to "What do we need to do to move?" Most importantly, he said, he does not want the seminary "to have to face a single choice." Kelley was careful to note a decision on relocation is not imminent; no committee is even considering the matter, he said.

--more--

-- revising endowment strategies "to finish off what Dr. Leavell started," Kelley said, and look for other sources.

-- creating and funding a 21st-century library since "knowledge access will be the key issue in the future," Kelley said. Whereas utilities have become a fixed expense for an educational institution, technology is the new fixed expense, he said. Besides networking the campus, Kelley wants to network the campus with the world. "No one knows how technology will be changing the way we'll do education 10 years from now," he said, "but we've got to be ready and be prepared."

-- integrating computers in the classroom. Two classes on campus, one in the study of the Greek language and one in the study of evangelism, currently use computers as the primary visual aid, Kelley said. "That's how children today are being raised," he said, "and they won't settle for a 1950s way of educating."

-- enhancing the role of NOBTS in a servant role to the Louisiana Baptist state convention and to Southern Baptist Convention churches, "groups we can serve more than just as a school," Kelley said. "We want to help them fulfill the Great Commission in their communities."

--30--

Seminary building key site
in Chuck Kelley's ministry

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press
3/15/96

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"This is not about bricks and mortar," the new president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary told seminary trustees concerning the building in which they met March 12-13 for their annual board meeting.

"This building" -- the seminary's Leavell Center for Evangelism and Church Growth -- "is about people," said Charles S. "Chuck" Kelley Jr., named seminary president Feb. 23 after serving since August 1983 as associate professor of evangelism at New Orleans Seminary and since June 1993 as the Leavell center's director.

Originally from Beaumont, Texas, Kelley said he believes his evangelism ministry in New Orleans has now come full circle.

A significant element in that circle is the building where the Leavell center is located, which has housed Kelley's office the past three and a half years. Before that, however, the building was originally constructed as a Baptist Book Store on the southwest corner of the New Orleans Seminary campus.

The renovation of that particular building into Southern Baptists' first center for evangelism and church growth, together with the center's directorship and now the seminary presidency, has been a redeeming experience for Kelley, who entered a time of personal trial when he had to confront his father-in-law, Bob Harrington, with biblical truth when Harrington strayed from the ministry in the mid-1970s.

Harrington, who achieved national recognition when the mayor of New Orleans named him officially as "the Chaplain of Bourbon Street," was an evangelist in New Orleans' French Quarter in the 1960s and '70s.

Following the 1976 confrontation, "which just about destroyed me," Kelley said he "hit the bottom spiritually." Harrington had been not only Kelley's father-in-law, but also his employer and mentor.

One day Kelley went to the Baptist Book Store, "as was my habit whenever I went by there," to browse at books and listen to demo tapes.

"In the exact spot where I leaned my head against the wall and had God put my life back together as I listened to the latest hit release, 'Oh, How He Loves You and Me,' there is now a dedication plaque for the Center for Evangelism and Church Growth," Kelley said. The plaque is in the room where Kelley held his first full trustee board meeting as seminary president.

Kelley said he believes God has redeemed his time of trial not only as he watched the transformation of the building, but also as he experienced being named as director of the center and now as president of the seminary.

Said Kelley, "God gives treasures in the dark that we never noticed in the light.

--more--

"My dearest interest is evangelism and church growth," said Kelley, who completed a master of divinity degree in 1978 and a doctor of theology degree in preaching in 1983, both at New Orleans Seminary. Kelley also is known nationally in Southern Baptist circles for his research in the area of church work with "baby boomers" and "busters."

"God has given us a precious task," Kelley told trustees, "and we must be excellent, faithful and diligent in what we do.

"I don't want New Orleans Seminary to be a great seminary. I want us to change the world."

--30--

(BP) photos available upon request from New Orleans Seminary's office of public relations as a color or black & white JPG file via the Internet or as a print.

NOBTS trustees elect 3 laymen,
approve 5 percent budget hike

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press
3/15/96

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary trustees, during their annual spring meeting March 12-13, elected three laymen as chief officers to work with the new seminary president and approved a record \$9.66 million operating budget.

Trustees met in the Leavell Center for Evangelism and Church Growth, directed since 1993 by Charles S. Kelley Jr. who was elected Feb. 23 as the seminary's eighth president.

After nine years of leadership by pastors, trustees elected what may be a unique situation for any Southern Baptist agency board: laymen serving in every top position. All nominated for their positions by pastors, new trustee board officers are William M. Hamm Jr., a retired mechanical contractor from Shreveport, La., chairman; Arnold A. Burk, a pharmacist from London, Ark., vice chairman; and William A. Hanberry, a retired commercial contractor from Hattiesburg, Miss., secretary-treasurer.

A new fee schedule, rent charges and salary information were included in the 1996-97 budget adopted by trustees. The seminary operates on a Aug. 1 to July 31 fiscal year.

The new budget is a 5 percent increase over the current year's budget. The increase will come from a 6.3 percent boost of \$319,765 from SBC Cooperative Program funds, as well as other revenue increases amounting to \$143,677.

The new matriculation fee will be \$800 per semester for the seminary's undergraduate, master's and non-degree programs. The seminary's doctoral degree fees will increase from \$900 to \$950 per semester.

The new budget includes a 3 percent faculty and staff salary and retirement increase. Approximately 65 percent of the overall budget is allocated for salary costs. Gary Enfinger, chairman of the trustees' instruction committee, said he wanted seminary faculty to know trustees are "their best cheerleaders and their strongest prayer warriors." Enfinger is pastor of Thomasville (Ala.) Baptist Church.

The 40-member board of trustees met for three hours in their plenary session Wednesday afternoon. Following dinner together, they met during the evening session for prayer, asking God for wisdom during transition; for guidance in the selection of a new provost, who will be coming from outside the seminary; and for revival both on campus and in the greater New Orleans area.

In other action, trustees:

-- heard a proposal from Harrison Olang, president of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Arusha, Tanzania, concerning the establishment of a formal relationship between IBTS and NOBTS.

-- accepted the retirement of Billy K. Smith, effective March 31. Smith, who most recently served as interim president, has been provost and academic dean of the graduate faculty since 1992; he joined the faculty in 1976 as professor of Old Testament and Hebrew.

--more--

-- heard of two presidential appointments. C. Ferris Jordan, who will be interim provost, has been NOBTS professor of adult education and J.M. Frost Baptist Sunday School Board Professor of Christian Education since 1978. Charles Register, the new director of the Leavell Center for Evangelism and Church Growth, joined the faculty in 1994 as an assistant professor of evangelism after serving as pastor of First Baptist Church, Cantonment, Fla., from 1989-94. Kelley noted he wants to go back to the old model of having the center's director as a member of the seminary's administrative council.

-- promoted Walter Brown to professor of Old Testament and Hebrew; Sidney Buckley to professor of voice, occupying the Lallage Feazel Chair of Church Music II; Rick Byargeon to associate professor of Old Testament and Hebrew, occupying the J. Wash Watts Chair of Old Testament; Dennis Cole to professor of biblical archaeology, occupying the McFarland Chair of Archaeology; Paula Stringer to associate professor of childhood education; and William Warren to professor of New Testament and Greek.

-- granted tenure to Byargeon; Argile Smith, assistant professor of preaching, occupying the J.D. Grey Chair of Preaching; Asa Sphar, assistant professor of psychology and counseling; and Gerald Wright, associate professor of missions. Granting tenure, Kelley commented to trustees, does not mean a professor now has "license to teach anything," but rather "is a statement of lifelong commitment, meaning we want you to plan on spending the rest of your life here." Tenured professors, he said, are held to the same standards of accountability as before receiving tenure.

-- approved sabbatical proposals for Philip Coyle, associate professor of psychology and counseling, for the 1996-97 academic year, and for the 1997-98 academic year, for Buckley and Charles Ray, associate professor of New Testament and Greek.

-- heard a report from Jimmy Dukes, assistant provost, concerning the rapid growth of the seminary's new Christian Leadership Certificate program, approved last year, which now includes 153 students in Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida and, as of April, will include a first-time Vietnamese class in New Orleans. The Vietnamese are one of the largest ethnic groups in the greater New Orleans area.

-- approved the 1994-95 fiscal year audits for both the seminary and its foundation.

-- recognized two trustees who will rotate off the board in June: J. Stephen Sells, pastor of Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Morganton, N.C., and W. Keith Huffman, director of missions for Shoal Creek Baptist Association, Neosho, Mo., each of whom have served two consecutive five-year terms.

-- recognized Ed Johnson for his leadership as chairman of the board of trustees the past two years. Johnson is pastor of First Baptist Church, Ocala, Fla.

-- agreed to change the summer executive committee meeting to a full board meeting on June 13 on the campus and change the semiannual full board meeting usually held in September to Oct. 28-30 to coincide with the presidential inauguration.

Trustees also approved several housekeeping items, heard reports from all administrators and testimonies from several first-year faculty members.

--30--

Southeastern trustees address
enrollment growth challenges

By Dwayne Hastings

Baptist Press
3/15/96

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (bp)--The record rate of growth in enrollment at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary set the agenda for the spring meeting of the school's board of trustees March 11-12.

"In just the last three and a half years, our student population has more than doubled," reported Southeastern President Paige Patterson. "Our faculty has grown nowhere close to that rate. We are twice the size we were two years ago in terms of students; so we are trying to make up for lost time."

--more--

Trustees responded to the skyrocketing enrollment figures by electing three new faculty members, calling for the creation of a task force to develop a campus master plan, giving the school's administration permission to move forward with additional married student housing and approving a proposal to renovate the lower level of the women's dormitory on the seminary's Wake Forest, N.C., campus.

The enrollment doesn't appear to be leveling off, Patterson said, citing admissions office figures which show the count of applications approved for admissions 33 percent ahead of the same time last year. "It is a great blessing from God," he said.

The school's "non-duplicating headcount" through the spring semester is 1,248, Patterson announced, indicating the figure is approaching the largest headcount enrollment in the school's history. Southeastern will need to add more than 10 new faculty members by the fall to meet the curriculum needs of its degree programs, he said.

Trustees elected three new faculty members: Greg Lawson, currently assistant professor of religious education and director of counseling at Williams Baptist College, Walnut Ridge, Ark., as assistant professor of Christian education; Mark F. Rooker, who serves now as chairman and professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Criswell College, Dallas, as associate professor of Old Testament and Hebrew; and a third professor, whose name is being withheld until he notifies his current place of ministry, as vice president for student services, dean of students and professor of pastoral leadership and church ministries.

Sharing his vision of a new library, cafeteria and banquet facilities, and additional classroom and office space at Southeastern, Patterson said work needs to begin at once to meet the immediate needs of the school.

In agreeing with Patterson, trustees voted to employ an architect to draft revisions and plans for future development. They called on the president to appoint a task force to develop a campus master plan. The task force is expected to build on the land use plan approved by trustees in 1994 by providing construction and architectural details for the expansion of the seminary's campus.

A tentative solution for Southeastern's married student housing shortage was reached as trustees voted to proceed with the purchase of land near the seminary campus to develop a modular home park. Trustees also approved the administration's proposal to renovate the ground floor of Lolley Hall, a residence hall for single women, to provide additional dormitory housing.

Renovation of Bostwick Hall is nearly complete, Patterson said. The building, located on Southeastern's main campus, will have 25 apartments for married students ready for occupancy this summer. He identified Mackie Hall, which once housed the school's student center and bookstore and is now home to the Wake Forest Boys and Girls Club, as a candidate for renovation in the near future. He said the building was prime for professorial offices. The Boys and Girls Club is scheduled to construct its own building nearby the seminary.

The status of rezoning of seminary land fronting U.S. 1 for commercial purposes was addressed by Patterson. Admitting he was unsure if the once-defeated request would be approved by the town's planning commission and town commissioners this time around, he speculated the vast majority of townspeople are in favor of the rezoning. "They want a place in town where they can go and buy a pair of slacks without going all the way to Raleigh. We're encouraged by the popular support we have for rezoning," he said.

While welcoming three new faculty members, the board said goodbye to another, recognizing Danny Akin, Southeastern's vice president for student services and dean of students, for his nearly four years of service at Southeastern. Akin was elected vice president for academic administration and dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., in February.

"I struggled and prayerfully sought the Lord's will," said Akin, who will assume his new position June 1, but "I could not be more excited about where Southeastern is and where it is headed." He asked the trustees to pray he would be faithful in his new calling.

At the close of the trustees' Wednesday plenary session, board members gathered around Akin to pray for him. Trustee Ned Matthews of Gastonia, N.C., led the prayer, thanking God for Akin's "ministry and fruitfulness of it." He said while the Southeastern family will miss Akin, there was a "sense of rejoicing" for the ministry he will have at Southern.

In other business, trustees:

-- gave approval for an advanced field archeology course within the seminary which will allow students to return to the archeological dig at Hazor, Israel, and receive course credit. The dig is sponsored by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and is located nine miles north of the Sea of Galilee.

-- approved a general studies curriculum, required for students in the college's associate of divinity program.

-- increased matriculation fees by \$5 per hour for master of divinity students.

-- ordered a study of faculty and administration salaries "to ascertain if the school is in line with other seminaries and colleges," with a report to be given during their fall 1996 meeting.

Trustees also approved the addition of three new members -- Curt Ball, Baytown, Texas; Jack Fallaw, Charlotte, N.C.; and Larry Howell, Oviedo, Fla. -- to Southeastern's board of visitors, a group whose purpose is "to provide a means by which a broad range of friends of the seminary can assist in fulfilling our purpose of preparing God-called men and women for service."

The board of visitors not only supports the school in financial development but is committed to praying for the students, faculty and administration, said Bart Neal, Southeastern's vice president for institutional advancement.

--30--

EDITORS' NOTE: The following six stories focus on Baptist ministries during the upcoming Summer Olympics and Paralympics.

10,000 AIM '96 volunteers
to serve crowds at Olympics

By James Dotson

Baptist Press
3/15/96

ATLANTA (BP)--Among hundreds of thousands of visitors to the 1996 Olympics and Paralympics will be one special group of individuals who form the core of Atlanta International Ministries: the volunteers, expected to number 10,000 strong.

They will come from across the country, as well as from local churches in venue areas, providing a range of services primarily related to hospitality. All told, about 6,000 volunteers already have been officially registered, and as many as 4,000 more -- primarily Georgia Baptists -- are expected to take part.

Registration for out-of-state volunteers has been closed since last fall, according to AIM '96 volunteer coordinators Bud and Norma Taylor, and assignments to venue sites were made in December. But there is still room for out-of-state volunteers who are bilingual, as well as those with medical skills.

"We really feel like with the Georgia heat and the crowds ... we need medical people at each hospitality site," Norma Taylor said.

The volunteers traveling to Georgia will have much of the same experience as a typical mission trip, only the scale of the effort will be perhaps larger than any other Southern Baptist mission project ever before.

The groups and individuals will report to their venue site on a Sunday, begin their assignments on Monday morning and work through Friday, and participate in a recognition fellowship time in a local church on Friday night.

"As far as local people are concerned, we are suggesting if they possibly can to work with us on the weekends," Taylor said. Many in-state volunteers working with local churches assigned specific projects do not need to formally apply, but other Georgia Baptists who want to volunteer at any of the Olympic venues can still apply through the AIM '96 office.

--more--

What will the volunteers be doing? Venue directors for AIM '96 between now and the games will decide on specific assignments within their venue, and some volunteers such as creative arts teams already know how they will be spending their days. But central to the effort are hospitality ministries, meeting basic needs of the crowds outside the venue sites.

In most cases that will mean staffing what are called hospitality tents, handing out bags of basic supplies that contain such items as sunscreen and snacks, as well as free cups of cold water. (In the commercial environment outside the venue sites, even free water is not necessarily a given). They will also be available just to chat -- possibly sharing the gospel through the Interactive Pocket Guide '96 tract -- and to make visitors feel more comfortable and welcome.

In Stone Mountain, for instance, there will be a tent staffed by AIM '96 volunteers on property owned by First Baptist Church, Stone Mountain, across from Stone Mountain Village.

Another ministry will be day camps as a service at some of the area hotels, where parents can leave children while they attend Olympic events.

Also, Campers on Mission will be lending a hand at some of the venues to provide full-time security for various hospitality sites.

AIM '96 is providing housing for the out-of-state workers -- in most cases in a local church gymnasium or similar venue -- as well as breakfast. Other meals are on their own. Organizers are anticipating shifts of about four hours a day, in part because of the logistical bottlenecks in the congested venue areas.

One thing volunteers won't be doing is attending Olympic events, at least not during their week as volunteers.

"They are coming here for ministry and not for the Olympic Games," Taylor said. "We have had some people call us and say, 'I have tickets for this week and I'll come and serve.' So we are suggesting that you come a week for ministry, and if you are planning to see the games that you make that a different week."

Overall, the Taylors said the experience will be an exciting time for both those experienced with mission trips and those who aren't.

"It's a new experience for a lot of people, and the Olympic emphasis is what's caught their attention," said Taylor's husband, Bud. "And hopefully the outgrowth of that is they will be involved in other mission projects."

In the area of prayer, AIM '96 officials listed these prayer needs:

- Pray for the selection of site supervisor and coordinator for the downtown venue.
- Pray for creative arts teams as they prepare.
- Pray more homes for housing families of athletes through Atlanta Host would be secured.
- Pray for more bilingual and medical volunteers.
- Remember the AIM '96 staff in prayer, especially in these final months approaching the Summer Games.
- Pray the AIM '96 downtown ministry center would be ready for occupancy soon.

--30--

Paralympics: this summer's
other volunteer opportunity

By James Dotson

Baptist Press
3/15/96

ATLANTA (BP)--One of the best opportunities for volunteer work and ministry during the summer of 1996 in Atlanta might not even be during the Summer Olympic Games, but 12 days after the Aug. 4 closing ceremonies when the Paralympic Games begin.

AIM '96, the Southern Baptist ministry arm to the Olympic and Paralympic Games, has been asked to provide about 1,000 of the estimated 12,000 volunteers needed for the events, in addition to the AIM '96 volunteers to be providing hospitality and other services surrounding Paralympics venues. Currently the number of volunteers provided through AIM '96 is far short of the number promised.

--more--

Unlike many of the Olympic volunteer opportunities, the Paralympics will allow individuals the opportunity of working firsthand with some of the most inspiring athletes in the world -- those who have overcome grave physical disabilities to become world-class competitors.

About 3,500 elite athletes from more than 120 countries will participate in the world's second largest sporting event in 1996.

Ministry will come during the time spent with the athletes and families every day, said Joel Wayne, the AIM '96 liaison to the Paralympic Games.

Opportunities include all phases of the games, including accreditation, the athletes village, opening and closing ceremonies, press operations, VIP services, language services, spectator services, medical services, hospitality, athlete services, results and scoring, security, technology, transportation and venue setup.

Volunteers will be asked to commit to seven eight-hour shifts during the period of Aug. 16 through Aug. 26. The three biggest perks of being a volunteer, according to Paralympics organizers, are the training, the limited time commitment and the opportunity for a high level of responsibility.

"The training that Paralympic volunteers will receive will go far beyond their assigned position," said a Paralympics news release. "Volunteers will receive extensive training in disability awareness, cultural awareness and customer service."

Workers will also receive uniforms, credentials, limited edition volunteer pins and other gifts.

Volunteers, who must be at least 18 years old, can still apply to work with the Paralympics by requesting a Paralympics volunteer application through AIM '96 at (770) 455-4884.

--30--

Million WMU hospitality bags
to comfort Olympics visitors

By Josh Jackson

Baptist Press
3/15/96

ATLANTA (BP)--To visitors coming from places as far as Russia, Peru and New Zealand this summer, the Georgia heat may not be such a friendly welcome. Woman's Missionary Union of Georgia, however, hopes to provide some large-scale Southern hospitality by providing 1 million bags filled with items to help visitors feel comfortable in the summer sun.

Sun screen, lip balm, Band-Aids and moist towelettes in packets assembled by Georgia WMU members will be given in the spirit of hospitality by Baptist associations and individual churches across Georgia. Barbara Wigger, executive director of Georgia WMU, hopes the project will help Georgia Baptists welcome the world.

"We want to express to the visitors who come that people in Georgia care about them," she said. "Ultimately, we hope that these bags will be one step in expressing our faith in Jesus Christ and giving a witness to them."

To reach the goal of providing 1 million bags, Wigger wants to involve every Georgia Baptist church in collecting items and filling the hospitality bags, which can be ordered through the WMU for 10 cents each. Each bag needs to contain five items from a list that also includes peanuts, mints, granola bars and tissues.

"We need people to buy the bags and fill them," Wigger said.

To participate, a church needs to create a plan for collecting the items and filling the bags and contact the director of missions of its association to find out which venues or welcome centers will be closest. In May and June, church members will take the bags to the distribution points.

During the Olympics, designated AIM '96 volunteers from across the country will give the bags to visitors at rest areas and other hospitality sites, as well as at each Olympic venue. Volunteers will also give away New Testaments and tracts, including AIM '96 Interactive Pocket Guide '96, which features a list for Olympic event results, along with the gospel message.

--more--

Almost 200,000 of the specially imprinted drawstring bags have already been ordered. Wigger said that after having the project featured in Missions Mosaic, the magazine for Women on Mission, support also has come from outside of Georgia. A sister convention recently sent bags to one Georgia church to distribute.

--30--

**Baptist creative arts groups
to relate to Olympics crowds**

By Josh Jackson

**Baptist Press
3/15/96**

ATLANTA (BP)--Any visitor to Atlanta, Athens, Savannah, Columbus, Ga., or Benton, Tenn., is likely to see more than just the Olympics this summer. More than 100 Southern Baptist creative arts groups will be performing at the various Olympic venues.

Since the majority of visitors will be unchurched, AIM '96 -- the Southern Baptist ministry arm to the Olympics -- will use contemporary crossover pieces to better relate to the audiences. Seventy percent of the music and material used by the performing groups will have a positive message without being overtly religious.

Karen Cheatham, creative arts coordinator for AIM '96, believes using music people recognize will draw them in to listen to music with a Christian message.

"Our philosophy," said Cheatham, "is that the people we're trying to reach may have never darkened the door of a church. So we're trying to use music that people will be familiar with -- wholesome secular music like timeless show tunes and Disney. Then use the opportunity to share our faith."

The entertainers will use magic, mime, painting, balloon animals, juggling, dance, drama and puppets, as well as music to attract crowds. Each group of artists sent in a video audition which was reviewed by a panel from AIM '96. Eighty-five groups from around the country already have been assigned.

The groups will perform at welcome centers, hospitality areas, malls, streets and parks around each Olympic venue.

Some of the volunteers are local professionals donating their time during the games. The cream of AIM '96 crop, however, is a team of six multi-talented college students who were selected by AIM to perform as Atlanta Expressions.

The group is currently training and preparing for the summer at Cumberland College in Williamsburg, Ky., under the leadership of Baptist Student Union campus director Wendee Holbrook. A similar team came to Atlanta during the summer of 1995, performing at Stone Mountain, the CNN Center and several area malls.

"We used the team to lay the groundwork and get our feet wet," Cheatham said.

From June 15 through Aug. 10, Atlanta Expressions will minister through the use dramatic sketches, clowning, juggling, face painting and clogging.

--30--

**Baptists to trade pins
in popular Olympic hobby**

By Josh Jackson

**Baptist Press
3/15/96**

ATLANTA (BP)--Pin trading often has been called the largest sport of the Olympic Games.

It is one activity in which everyone can participate, and across the city of Atlanta, Olympic fans will be wearing the colorful pins on their lapels, hats and shirts. Already, Olympic pin collectors are feverishly preparing for the frenzy of meeting athletes, officials and fans from all over the world and swapping souvenirs.

This summer, Southern Baptists will have the "More Than Gold" pin to trade, designed to help share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pin trading has become a way to meet athletes and other fans and has added to the atmosphere of each Olympic city. When the modern Olympics were first held in 1896, athletes, judges and officials wore identification badges that were not much more than cardboard with a colored ribbon. The badges grew more elaborate with each Olympics, and athletes from participating countries began bringing their own unique pins.

--more--

Swapping these pins became a way to meet other athletes in the Olympic village. By the 1980 Winter Games in Lake Placid, N.Y., nearly all organizations surrounding the games seemed to have their own pins, from the media to the corporate sponsor, and those in attendance seemed to be spending as much time trading the pins as watching the games.

In Atlanta, Olympic fans began meeting to trade and collect pins more than two years before the date of the opening ceremonies. Olympic pin collectors now gather at various Atlanta restaurants several times each month.

Some of the early pins produced before Atlanta was awarded the games have become increasingly valuable collectors' items. One of the earliest pins produced, which reads "Live the Dream," now sells for up to \$400. More than 2,000 different pins will be produced commemorating the 1996 games, and many of the 2 million visitors to Georgia will leave with pins as souvenirs.

Atlanta International Ministries, the Southern Baptist Olympics volunteer clearinghouse, plans to use pin trading fever as a door to meet new people on the streets and share with them the gospel. They have put their "More Than Gold" logo on a lapel pin that will be used much like "The Wordless Book" with five different colored stars representing different areas of the gospel.

The blue stripe on the pin represents our hope and God's royal love; a dark color shows our separation from God; red symbolizes Christ's sacrifice on the cross; gold represents eternal life; and green shows our growth as a Christian. The logo is explained in the Interactive Pocket Guide '96, which will also be given out during the Olympics.

The Georgia Baptist Convention also has produced its own pin welcoming the world, depicting figures with joined hands across a backdrop of maps of Georgia and the world with a cross at the center. This will be only one of many ways that Georgia Baptists will display a Southern hospitality that stems from the love of Christ.

Here's a quick guide to Olympic pin collecting:

-- Commemorative pins are the pins sold in most retail stores. They may commemorate the number of days to go until the Olympics, feature one of the venues or depict Izzy, the 1996 Olympic mascot.

-- Sponsor pins, produced by many of the Olympics' sponsors, licensees and suppliers, are generally not sold in stores and are considered more valuable than most commemoratives.

-- National Olympic Committee pins are brought by athletes and officials from each of the 197 countries participating in the games. They are generally the most sought-after pins because some of the countries only bring a handful of athletes to the games, and therefore only a handful of pins.

--30--

Jackson, in addition to being a part-time staff writer for Georgia Baptists' Christian Index newsjournal, is editor of PINdemonium, a monthly magazine for Olympic pin collectors, 3965 Holcomb Bridge Rd., Suite 202, Norcross, GA 30092.

Baptists to open homes
to Olympians' families

By Josh Jackson

Baptist Press
3/15/96

ATLANTA (BP)--This summer hundreds of Georgia Baptist families will open their homes to the world by participating in Atlanta Host, an ecumenical outreach to families of Olympic athletes.

Sid Hopkins, director of missions for Gwinnett Metro Baptist Association, estimates of the 8,000 to 10,000 families needed to house family members of athletes, 2,000 will be Southern Baptists. As the administrative coordinator of housing and transportation for Southern Baptists, it is his job to find those families. Five hundred families already have volunteered, but many more are still needed.

"We need more churches to present the opportunity to their people," he said. "There are a lot of people who would be willing but have not heard."

--more--

The hosting families will provide a bed, breakfast and transportation to relatives of Olympians, who otherwise might not have had a place to stay in Atlanta.

"One of the key things for people to realize," Hopkins said, "is that many of the Olympic athletes will not know if they made the Olympics until six or eight weeks before the games."

Once the athletes do find out, most of the housing in Atlanta will already be gone. Families from churches of 28 denominations in the Atlanta area will enable visitors to see their family members compete.

Atlanta Host is organized under the leadership of AT&T, one of the Olympic sponsors that will help provide centralized locations for the families to go when they arrive in town. The program is one of many ministries of Quest, an ecumenical outreach for the Olympic Games. Hopkins said the different denominations have had a good spirit of cooperation.

"This is an avenue where we can work together for the cause of Christ," he said. "In many of these countries, Olympic athletes are national heroes. If we can show Christian hospitality to the athletes and their families, when they go back, (we) can really make a tremendous impact."

In addition to a room and food, hosts can also provide support to families when the athletes are met with disappointment in competition. Although the program is not designed for overt evangelism, it is an ideal opportunity for lifestyle witnessing.

Apart from Atlanta Host, a related opportunity for hosting families is to provide housing for FMB missionaries and Southern Baptist volunteers who will be coming from all over the country to minister during the games.

"The missionaries will be used in a variety of ministries because of their language skills and cultural background."

Hopkins can be contacted at the Gwinnett Metro Baptist Association, 1648 Lawrenceville Highway, Lawrenceville, Ga. 30244; phone, (770) 963-8350.

--30--

Big-leaguers tell youth
their priority is Jesus

By Barbara Denman

Baptist Press
3/15/96

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP)--A heavy-hitting lineup of major league baseball players told a youth rally a relationship with Jesus Christ is more important than America's favorite pastime.

Atlanta Braves pitchers John Smoltz and Greg McMichael and Montreal Expo infielders David Segui and Andy Stankiewicz encouraged more than 200 youth to travel paths that please God rather than men during a youth baseball sports rally at First Baptist Church, West Palm Beach, March 9. The city's Municipal Stadium is the spring training camp for the Braves and Expos clubs.

They were joined by Kevin Malone, assistant manager of the Baltimore Orioles and former manager of the Montreal Expos, who told of working with some of the greatest All Stars in the sport of baseball. "But the greatest All Star that ever lived is Jesus Christ," he said.

Malone, a member of First Baptist Church, Lake Park, Fla., said although he wears a world championship ring, has lived in the nicest homes and driven some of the most prestigious cars, he could not find happiness. "I've tried it all and the only thing that works is a relationship with Jesus Christ."

Braves pitcher Smoltz told how the team "shocked the world" in 1991 leading up to last year's championship season. "It's an accomplishment I'll treasure," he said, "but a more important accomplishment I treasure is my walk with Jesus Christ."

Smoltz said he strives to live a faith that covers "consistent bases and consistent walk." But the world has put on the pressure because he is a Christian, he added. "Everyone waits for us to make a mistake."

He encouraged the youth not to put their trust in people, but to seek guidance in the "instruction book of the Bible."

--more--

Relief pitcher McMichaels challenged the youth not to find their significance and self-worth in cars, clothes or family -- or even in an ability to play baseball. "We find our significance in Jesus Christ because of all the things he's done for us," he said.

Some of the youth may know Christ, McMichaels said, "but are not hanging out with the right people. Give every area of your life over to Christ."

Infielder Segui, one of the Expo's brightest stars, said he was not born with an abundance of talent and had to struggle to become the baseball player he is. "But in 1992, I realized I had made baseball my God. So I put Jesus number one, my family and then baseball. Overnight it made a change." That decision resulted in the best years of his career, he said.

"It was very important for my family to attend church religiously," said infielder Stankiewicz. "But I didn't have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ." After trying to live a good life, he realized something was missing. Then a group of Christian ballplayers "began sharing with me about a personal relationship."

Since that time he has committed his playing to Jesus Christ, he said. "Jesus Christ is the answer for this world. MTV may tell you there are other ways to God, but there's only one way, a personal relationship with Christ."

Following the testimonies of the players and coach, former professional ballplayer Tim Cash, president of Unlimited Potential, Inc., demonstrated the gospel message. Good works will not get you to heaven, he said. "The only ticket is Jesus."

HOUSE MAIL

(BP)	BAPTIST PRESS 901 Commerce #750 Nashville, TN 37234
F I R S T C L A S S	Southern Baptist Library and Archives