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**SBC leaders say restructuring
won't lessen disaster ministry**

By Art Toalston

**Baptist Press
5/16/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--There will be no change in Southern Baptist Convention-related ministry to victims of hurricanes, floods and other disasters under the "Covenant for a New Century," SBC leaders noted in statements released May 17.

Further, the SBC leaders described as "unilateral" and "not necessary" the creation of a new Association of State Brotherhood Leadership by those leaders, whose work involves, in part, disaster relief coordination in their states.

Said Morris H. Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, "This unilateral action of the state Brotherhood leaders is certainly unexpected and surprising. I hope they will re-evaluate their intentions and decide to continue working with (the new North American Mission Board being created under the restructuring) in the same relationship of cooperation which has existed for a long time with the Brotherhood Commission."

Robert Reccord, chairman of the Implementation Task Force appointed by the Executive Committee to oversee the SBC restructuring, said the ITF "is thoroughly supportive of the convention's disaster relief program. We have indicated at every turn that the ITF would support this important aspect of our convention's ministries, and would work to avoid lapses during agency restructuring."

The Covenant for a New Century restructuring places the crucial disaster relief ministry assignment with the new North American Mission Board, Reccord noted, quoting the Covenant's wording that the NAMB will "assist churches in relief ministries to victims of disaster."

"The task force has absolutely no intention of varying from the stated direction of the Covenant," Reccord said.

"It would certainly have been beneficial for all concerned had the state Brotherhood leadership communicated their concerns and intentions with the ITF," Reccord continued. "I think they would have agreed that the new association was not necessary."

The Covenant, approved by messengers to the SBC sesquicentennial meeting in Atlanta last June, will reduce the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12, including the NAMB merger of the current Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Radio and Television Commission.

The restructuring yet needs an additional vote by messengers on SBC Bylaw 15's list of SBC agency names, a vote slated for the upcoming annual meeting June 11-13 in New Orleans. Implementation, then, is scheduled to be completed by the end of the June 1997 annual meeting in Dallas.

The new Association of State Brotherhood Leadership was created during the annual Brotherhood Commission-sponsored Disaster Relief Round Table Meeting, April 30-May 2, attended by 26 Brotherhood leaders from 20 state conventions at the Tennessee Baptist Convention offices in Brentwood.

News of the association's formation was circulated May 9 in a release written by Will Pollard, Brotherhood leader for the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio and editor of the Ohio Baptist Messenger.

"The concern of the new Association of State Brotherhood Leadership is that the momentum of these ministries not be lost during the days of transition," Pollard wrote, referring to disaster relief work coordinated by the SBC Brotherhood Commission and state convention- or local Baptist association-owned and -operated units, encompassing 65 feeding units, 46 recovery units, 12 command units and 13 temporary emergency child-care units, manned by a total of 10,000 trained volunteers in 23 states. According to the SBC Brotherhood Commission, Baptist disaster relief volunteers have prepared 80 percent of the meals served by the American Red Cross since Hurricane Hugo in 1989. The Red Cross and Brotherhood Commission have operated for a decade on a signed statement outlining roles of the two agencies in disaster response.

In addition to creating the new Association of State Brotherhood Leadership, the Brotherhood leaders voted to schedule its first meeting for the first week of December in Dallas.

No specific list of the new organization's purposes or functions was included in Pollard's report.

The state Brotherhood leaders had selected a four-man group to review their work and bring a report, an action taken at the Brotherhood Commission-sponsored State Brotherhood Leaders Meeting in January at the SBC agency's headquarters in Memphis, Tenn.

State leaders serving on the four-man Brotherhood study group were Tommy Puckett of Alabama, Tim Bearden of Tennessee, Lloyd Jackson of Virginia and Bob Simpkins of Kentucky. Bob Dixon, executive director, Texas Baptist Men, also was listed as involved in the study, as a co-convenor representing the state leaders to work with the Brotherhood Commission for their annual state planning meeting with commission personnel.

Brotherhood Commission President James D. Williams, in a May 17, statement, said, "Perhaps the necessity of the new association could be questioned. As I have stated previously, it is possible that the group's objectives could be accomplished through the existing denominational structure without forming a new organization.

"But, the organization of this informal group should not be perceived as a negative reaction to the efforts of the Implementation Task Force to implement the Covenant for a New Century, but as a statement of concern for the continuation of a number of Brotherhood-related ministries that are carried out through local churches, associations and state conventions," Williams continued.

"Since the Brotherhood Commission was not included in the formation of this organization, we can only assume that its intention is one of support for the Brotherhood Commission, the yet-to-be-formed North American Mission Board and the Southern Baptist Convention," Williams said. "These are highly competent, committed leaders who can be trusted to maintain the integrity of these ministries at all levels."

Said Chapman of the Executive Committee: "Members of Baptist Men across our convention hopefully understand that this new organization was not precipitated by any decisions made by the ITF. On the contrary, members of ITF had no reason to anticipate anything other than the same spirit of cooperation which has previously existed between state and SBC Brotherhood organizations. I am hopeful that Baptist Men will encourage state leaders to work toward resolving whatever concerns caused them to initiate the forming of an organization to do what is already being accomplished in cooperation with SBC Brotherhood efforts."

**New bill would limit
alcohol promotion**

By Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP)--Expansive legislation to restrict alcoholic beverage advertising and promotion, especially when directed toward young people, has been introduced in Congress.

Rep. Joseph Kennedy, D.-Mass., announced May 16 his introduction of the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse Prevention Act. The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and a variety of religious, consumer and health organizations have endorsed the legislation.

The legislation actually is a package of six bills which goes beyond measures introduced in previous sessions by Kennedy and Sen. Strom Thurmond, R.-S.C. Those measures required health-and-safety warnings in alcohol advertisements but never reached the floor of the Senate or House of Representatives for a vote.

Among its proposals, Kennedy's new legislation would:

-- Restrict alcohol advertising on television between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. to only a picture of the product with a voice-over;

-- Prohibit alcohol promotion on audio and video tapes, compact discs, computer games and movies;

-- Limit alcohol advertising in publications read by young people, at the rate of 15 percent of readership or more than 2 million, to text only in black-and-white print;

-- Ban outdoor alcohol advertising within 1,000 feet of schools, playgrounds or other facilities where people under 21 years of age congregate;

-- Require health-and-safety warnings in print, radio and television advertisements;

-- Prohibit alcohol promotion campaigns on college campuses;

-- Eliminate tax deductions for alcohol promotion, which would generate as much as \$700 million in additional revenue;

-- End federal subsidies for alcohol promotion in other countries;

-- Require the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to report annually on trends in alcohol advertising;

-- Require labels on alcohol containers to reveal the alcohol content by volume and the number of drinks in the container.

Passage of the legislation will not be easily attainable, Kennedy admitted.

"Anytime you take on" the television networks, beer companies, professional sports and others, "it might be kind of a long-term project," he said at a Capitol Hill news conference. "It really requires a groundswell of the American people saying that 'This is something we're in support of.'"

He is willing to break up the bills in the package and attach them to other pieces of legislation in order to gain their adoption, Kennedy said.

The legislation is needed especially because of the alcohol companies' disregard of their advertising's impact on young people and children, he said.

Kennedy cited a recent study which showed 73 percent of children 9 to 11 years old recalled the slogan of the frogs in the Budweiser beer ads, surpassing the slogans identified with Tony the Tiger for Frosted Flakes, 57 percent, and Smokey Bear, 43 percent.

Alcohol is the No. 1 killer in the United States of people under 24, Kennedy said. It kills five times as many people as all illegal drugs combined, he said. Eighteen million people, including 4 million children, are addicted to alcohol, he said.

His legislation "is a message to tell the Budweiser frogs to go jump in the lake," Kennedy said.

As expected, the alcohol industry, which had representatives at the news conference, attacked Kennedy's proposal.

In a written statement, National Beer Wholesalers Association President Ron Sarasin called it the "most oppressive piece of legislation since Prohibition."

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"Blaming beer advertising for complex and serious societal problems is both misdirected and simplistic," said Beer Institute President Raymond McGrath. Research shows "no direct correlation between advertising and alcohol abuse," he said.

In response, Kennedy said, "The obvious question is: 'Why would they spend \$2 billion a year on promotion of their products if there is no linkage (between advertising and influencing people to purchase alcohol)?' What an enormous waste of money."

In a prepared statement released at the news conference, Christian Life Commission President Richard Land said the alcohol industry has shown a "callous disregard for the physical and emotional health of Americans."

The industry's "lack of self-control requires that Congress do something," Land said. "... there is no doubt that the alcohol industry is a well-lubricated political machine with great influence in Congress. Its influence in this city, like its ads on TV, is a stark reminder that Scripture is indeed correct in telling us that the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil."

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Lay mobilization predicted
as key job in 21st century

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
5/17/96

DALLAS (BP)--Some churches call it team ministry. Some call it lay mobilization. Others speak of "gift-based" ministry. But whatever the term, it's a growing movement, according to trend-watchers.

And the "point person" on a church staff who facilitates lay ministries is the minister of the 21st century, these observers say.

"It's a trend in churches that has developed out of necessity and from a movement of the Holy Spirit," said Brad Smith, director of project development for the Leadership Network in Tyler, Texas.

Leadership Network, an organization that tracks societal trends and helps innovative churches respond to them, has been watching the lay mobilization movement carefully for about three years. The network works with about 350 churches that have staff members whose major job assignment is lay ministry development.

Successful lay mobilization requires the visible support of top leaders in the church, Smith said. The pastor's sermons emphasize the importance of each member of the body of Christ exercising his or her spiritual gifts. And those laypeople have the freedom and opportunity to share testimonies of their marketplace ministries.

"If there is highly visible support for lay ministry, it creates a culture of mobilization," Smith said. "Once you have created that culture, the more entrepreneurial members who catch the vision will figure out on their own how to do it, even though they may have to build the system themselves."

The senior pastor is the "vision caster" who sees the big picture and presents the dream, according to Smith. The minister of lay mobilization is the administrator who sees the details and helps turn the dream into reality.

The minister of lay mobilization, sometimes called the director of lay ministries, is an empowerer and equipper, not just an enlister and assimilator, Smith said.

"In the Southern Baptist world, there has been a flurry of activity in hiring directors of assimilation over the past three years. The idea has been that in the wake of church growth that has focused on the 'front door' to produce crowds, these churches now want to close the 'back door,'" he said.

But in too many cases, he said, churches have defined this position as moving visitors toward membership. They have focused on greeters, rapid visitor follow-up and assimilation into Sunday schools. Then once they have "closed the deal" and enlisted the new members, they have neglected to involve the newcomers in ministry and service.

"The leading-edge churches who have hired these directors have discovered they did not close the back door. They only lengthened the hallway," Smith said.

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The key is moving from visitor to member to involved disciple, he noted. People typically will leave a church within six months if they fail to find a place where they can have significant relationships or responsibilities.

When the new member becomes involved in contributing to the church's life by exercising his spiritual gift, "the back door is genuinely closed," Smith said.

While the director of lay ministries is the "point person" on staff for mobilizing the laity, the key responsibility for teaching new members and placing them in ministry roles lies with lay members, not staff, Smith said.

In fact, the director of lay mobilization may be a layperson who has the spiritual gifts of administration or leadership -- preferably both -- and a good dose of one of the mercy gifts, according to Sue Mallory, director of the Leadership Network's training program.

"The ideal is someone with a cluster of these gifts. But the key is that this person has the ability to put together a core team of people whose spiritual gifts supply the missing elements that he or she may lack," Mallory said.

While most pastors and church leaders theologically "buy into" the ideas of gift-based ministry and the priesthood of believers, some feel threatened by the reality of "turning loose" of their "turf," she said.

Still others struggle with the question, "Now what?" Once they have helped members discover their spiritual gifts and identified ministry opportunities, they are not sure how to take the next step, Mallory said.

As associate pastor for lay ministry at Lake Pointe Baptist Church, Rowlett, Texas, Karl Shackelford defines his role as helping people move to the "next step" of commitment in church life, from visitor to member to minister.

"Our mission is to create fully developing followers of Jesus Christ," Shackelford said. "The goal is not to find a slot for everybody because we have so much work to do, but to help people exercise their spiritual gifts to do the work of God's kingdom."

Charlie Lowry at Crestview Baptist Church, Midland, Texas, describes his job similarly. While he carries the traditional title "minister of education," he sees his role shifting from one who does ministry on the congregation's behalf to one who equips believers for service.

"We want every adult member of our Sunday school involved in ministry," Lowry said. "We're trying to get more people involved in taking an active part in ministry teams. As they put together ministry action plans and develop their spiritual gifts, we are able to move on to develop them as leaders."

Lowry and other members of the Crestview staff attended conferences at Willow Creek Community Church in Illinois and other similar seminars in California looking for ways to mobilize their membership. They decided to use as their primary resource "Mobilizing Believers Now," a module developed by the Sunday school/discipleship division of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Mobilizing Believers Now is a leadership development plan designed to help new and current church members discover their spiritual gifts and exercise their gifts in ministry opportunities.

Lowry developed a series of three adult Sunday school lessons on spiritual gifts to go along with the plan. Then volunteers were enlisted and trained to give spiritual gifts inventories in each class. That information is being entered into the church's computer system. Meanwhile, Sunday school departments are putting together ministry teams based on the gifts they have discovered and the needs that they perceive.

"The ideas for ministry are coming from the grassroots as Sunday school departments develop them," Lowry said. "Then we who are on the staff will help develop training and equipping programs to help them do the ministries they have said are needed."

In most cases, making the transition to gift-based ministry and lay mobilization is too big a job for a minister of education with other responsibilities, according to Mallory of Leadership Network.

"Christian education is one piece of the puzzle," Mallory said. "But if a minister is responsible for Christian education and lay mobilization, one is likely to get short-changed. Lay mobilization has to be a partnership. It is a supportive foundation for the entire ministry -- evangelism, Christian education, ministry action, social justice and everything else."

At Lake Pointe, communicating the "value of service" is a priority that permeates all of church life, Shackelford said. Pastor Steve Stroope stresses it in his sermons. Veteran church members model it for new arrivals. Periodic "ministry fairs" allow inquirers to browse booths highlighting available places of service. And each new church member is required to attend a three-hour membership workshop, offered once a month on Sunday evening.

At the workshop and in individual sessions with trained counselors, new members take spiritual gifts inventories and personality assessment tests. Counselors help the new arrivals "find the best ministry fit" on the basis of their spiritual gifts, natural abilities, personality type and "passions," Shackelford explained.

Currently, 56 percent of Lake Pointe's members serve in some ministry, and the goal is to involve 100 percent.

Members receive ministry training at "Lake Pointe University," the church's discipleship program offered on Wednesday nights every other month. Four basic courses teach members how to "worship God, live by God's Word, contribute to God's work and impact God's world," Shackelford said. These classes include developing a personal devotional life, witnessing, finding a place of ministry and managing finances according to biblical teachings.

"We want as many people as possible involved in entry-level positions," he said. "The plan is to get them involved as soon as they arrive in some ministry. It might be as an usher or greeter or some other role that doesn't require a lot of training or experience. We want to let them discover a good ministry fit through experimentation.

"People want to be involved in ministry. We want to develop an environment that allows people to be involved in a ministry that sets them free, rather than binding them in red tape."

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There's more than one way
to learn about the faith

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
5/17/96

DALLAS (BP)--Discipleship training is alive and well, but a card-carrying BYPU member might not recognize it.

Reading aloud from a study course book during Sunday afternoon training union hour is a thing of the past in many Baptist churches.

Members today are more likely to watch a video-based curriculum during the Sunday night worship time, meet in someone's home to work through the principles of "Experiencing God" or attend a short-term Wednesday night series on parenting.

Making disciples is what counts, not the day or the location, according to Eric Williams, coordinator for discipleship training, Baptist General Convention of Texas.

"It's OK to do it at a time other than Sunday afternoon," Williams said. "Churches need to hear that it's legal to do it anytime they can get people together."

The training program began about 100 years ago as "Baptist Young People's Union." In the mid-1930s, it was renamed "Baptist Training Union." By the mid-1950s, about 2.2 million Southern Baptists were enrolled in training union -- more than one-fourth of the churches' total membership.

Some believe the Sunday afternoon training hour -- renamed "Church Training" and finally "Discipleship Training" -- began a lingering demise in the 1960s and drew its final breath in the 1980s.

But last year in Texas Baptist churches, for example, about 300,000 were enrolled in discipleship training. And the program seems to be enjoying a new birth in many churches that are adapting it to meet changing needs and different schedules.

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At Lake Pointe Baptist Church, Rowlett, Texas, Wednesday evenings every other month are devoted to worship services. But on the alternating months, Wednesday is the night for discipleship classes in "Lake Pointe University."

"The goal is to produce fully developing followers of Jesus Christ," said associate pastor Karl Shackelford, echoing the church's mission statement.

Basic courses focus on teaching believers to grow spiritually, share their faith naturally, find their ministry and manage their finances according to biblical principles. Electives include classes in Christian parenting, time management, interfaith witness and prayer.

Last October, Fairview Baptist Church, Sherman, Texas, adopted a similar approach. The church repackaged its training program as "Discipleship University." While discipleship training previously drew about a dozen participants on any given Sunday, it now averages at least 10 times that number.

"It's not original with us," said Danny Cowart, minister of education. "But our motto is, 'Every member a minister.' And our purpose is train and equip every member for ministry."

Fairview offers courses at four levels, each aimed at a different phase of discovery. Five introductory 100 level classes focus on "discovering membership." Classes at the 200 level concentrate on "maturity," 300 level courses major on "ministry" and 400 level seminars help each member discover his own "mission."

"Fairview 101" is a single two-hour introductory course taught by pastor James Shupp that the church requires all new members to attend. The course is adapted from principles in "The Purpose Driven Church" by Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in southern California.

More advanced classes include courses on prayer and spiritual awakening by Henry Blackaby, Claude King and T.W. Hunt, doctrinal studies and LIFE (Lay Institute For Equipping) Support groups on topics such as "Making Peace With Your Past."

Once members have been through a class on discovering their spiritual gifts and natural abilities, they are free to choose elective courses to help equip them for ministry and mission. They range from a basic course in sign language to a class on using drama in worship. Offering multiple options is essential, Cowart said.

"People like buffets, cafeterias and restaurants where there are a lot of choices on the menu. When it comes to television, they want 100 choices in what they can view. When they get to church, it doesn't make sense to tell them they have one class to choose from if they want to attend discipleship training," he said.

Fairview's leaders continue to revise Discipleship University as new needs become apparent and opportunities for improvement arise, Cowart said.

"We are committed to every leader being a learner, so we constantly critique ourselves," he said. "We are continually evaluating everything we do, striving for excellence."

A commitment to excellence is essential to a successful discipleship training program, according to Stephen Ponder, pastor of First Baptist Church, Brenham, Texas.

When he came to Brenham five years ago, the church had discontinued discipleship training due to lack of interest. Now discipleship training draws about 150 learners each week -- more than one-third of the church's average Sunday school attendance.

And as discipleship training has grown, so has Sunday school -- from 188 five years ago to about 450 now.

"We always are looking for the tools for a quality program," Ponder said. These range from the "Experiencing God" curriculum by Blackaby and King and the Sunday School Board's "TeamKids" discipleship program for children to non-Southern Baptist sources such as Willow Creek ministries and Focus on the Family.

In addition to quality, Ponder points to several other necessary ingredients:

-- flexibility. First Baptist, Brenham, has dismissed its traditional Sunday evening worship services. Instead, the church offers discipleship training from 5 to 6:15 p.m. Twice a month, the church also offers specialized training for Sunday school leaders on Wednesday evenings.

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-- pastoral support. From the pulpit, Ponder encourages participation in discipleship training. He also teaches courses himself. "One reason I think that we've had little resistance to discontinuing Sunday evening worship is that those who would miss the pastor's teaching are still getting it," he said.

-- bite-sized morsels. "Ongoing courses haven't worked for us. Our people need a beginning and ending point," Ponder said. Some courses last only four weeks. Most are six to eight weeks. The longest courses last 26 weeks, and they are broken into two 13-week segments.

-- meeting needs. It may be equipping Sunday school teachers to teach. It may be training parents how to train their children. But whatever the area, participants have to feel the need for improvement before they will enroll in a course on any given subject.

-- experimentation. At Brenham, one popular Southern Baptist discipleship course was a huge success, drawing about 200 participants. Another course written by that same author "flopped," Ponder said. But the congregation is willing to try new things without installing a fear of failure in church leaders.

"We've used a multitude of different things," Ponder said. "We're just committed to using the best resources that we can find to train teachers, meet the needs that our families feel they have, and help persons grow deeper in their walk with God."

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**Missionary 'prospectors' seek
'gold' on remote Brazil plain**

By Wally Poor

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5/17/96**

BOA VISTA, Roraima, Brazil (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionary Vic Nickerson has struck gold in the remote Brazilian state of Roraima.

It's not the lustrous yellow element that has lured many to this area of gold fields and fertile soil. It's spiritual "nuggets" like Leondala Souza.

Souza was a seeker. She had worked for Seventh-day Adventists and examined Mormon doctrine. Neither convinced her.

Then one day, as she stood in her kitchen washing dishes, she heard through her windows a message preached in English and translated into Portuguese. "I knew immediately that was the truth," she recalled.

Out on the street, Nickerson, a former Florida pastor, was wondering how effective the street preaching was.

"I wondered if anyone would listen to a message that had to be translated," he said. Volunteers from Texas had come to help with evangelism and church planting.

Nickerson's doubts dissolved when Souza came to the services that night and accepted Jesus Christ. "It's completely changed her life," he said. "Now, her two older children and her husband have become believers."

Iada Francisca DaSilva's husband reacted differently.

DaSilva lived across from a Baptist church. One night, observing its doors were open, she crossed the street -- and became another "nugget" mined by Nickerson and Brazilian Baptist "prospectors" when she accepted Christ.

Her husband was off working in the gold fields -- the state's main attraction until a few years ago when the government shut them down because they're on protected Indian lands. He was gone from home for months at a time.

When he finally returned, his wife's decision enraged him. "I forbid you to be a Christian," he told her.

"But I already am one," she replied. As she remained faithful, he eventually set fire to the house and left again for the gold fields. She hasn't seen him since. Church members helped her put her life back together.

Many others have turned to Christ in the "mother lode" of seekers found by Nickerson, who works with Brazilian Baptists to open new work in the Kansas-size state bordering Venezuela and Guyana. The population, now 250,000, doubles each decade and land is available for homesteading.

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Boa Vista, Roraima's capital, sits in the middle of a treeless plain 90 miles across and 150 miles long. Amazon jungle surrounds it. Local history says it was once a huge lake. It's fertile and self-sufficient in many foodstuffs.

Nickerson and his wife, Janice, also have found the plain not only rich for church planting.

The Nickersons use the "Pioneer Evangelism" method developed by Wade Akins, another Foreign Mission Board missionary in Brazil. It begins with several home Bible studies in a target area. As people are won, they're brought together in larger groups for discipleship -- and a church is born. A key to this method is its emphasis on using laypeople as church leaders.

Roraima had five congregations and 250 Baptists when Nickerson came in 1990. Now it has 16, with 650 Baptists -- and prospects for many more.

Many people have come to Boa Vista seeking gold or good land. Vic Nickerson found something more valuable.

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Retiring missionary stirred
by unfolding prayer ministry

By Wally Poor

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RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP)--It hurt missionary Bob Hampton to step down as Brazilian Baptists' national MasterLife promoter.

"That probably was the most difficult thing I'd gone through since my first wife, Wilma, died (in 1978). I brought it from birth to adulthood in Brazil. It was a deeply emotional severance," said the Missouri native, who left his position to set up a smooth transition for a successor as he neared retirement.

The pain was like labor, and what emerged -- a ministry of prayer -- has been like a new baby, with a life of its own.

Hampton, 64, and his wife, Margie, say God used the trauma to set them in a new direction. The result far exceeds what could be expected from missionaries phasing out of 30-plus years in foreign missions.

The new direction has made them leaders in a prayer revival and in developing a prayer network among Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries in south Brazil.

Prayer unleashes a spiritual power source that the Hamptons believe enables missionaries to strike a "winning blow against a concealed enemy" -- Satan -- as they strive to reach people for Jesus Christ.

Margie began a prayer bulletin for the missionaries in south Brazil after the group's annual meeting in 1994. In September 1995 she started putting it on an e-mail prayer net. Many of her colleagues check it the first thing every morning.

"The prayer ministry in south Brazil alone has done more to bring our mission (organization of missionaries) together than anything else," said Margie, a Louisiana native, whose first husband, Dallas Bateman, died in 1976 while they were missionaries in Kenya.

"Missionaries now know how to pray for each other. Before we just knew that So and So was down in Timbuktu but not what he was doing. Now we're sharing and praying for one another."

The Hamptons' MasterLife experience and training helped lay the foundation for their new direction. "MasterLife helped me with my quiet time with the Lord," said Bob, who will begin in November a one-year furlough with Margie in Missouri before retirement.

"It seems like every time I find a new book, it's about prayer. Everything points to that, and my whole interest has been turned to that," he said.

He has culled some gems from one such book, "Quiet Talks About Prayer," by S.D. Gordon. One is that prayer strikes the winning blow. Others include:

-- "You can do more than pray, after you have prayed. But you can't do more than pray until you have prayed,"

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-- "There are four kinds of people. Those who talk about prayer. Those who say they believe in prayer. Those who explain about prayer. And those who take the time to pray.

"They may not have time, but they make time," Bob continued, quoting Gordon. "They put prayer first.

"They're the soul-winners, the problem solvers, the ones who awaken churches and supply people and money for missions.

"They keep lives on the mission field fresh and strong. They keep the whole earth sweet a little longer."

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California board affirms
GGBTS seminary, president

By Mark A. Wyatt

Baptist Press
5/17/96

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary and its president have received a special commendation for training pastors throughout the West from California convention officials.

California Southern Baptist Convention executive board members voted May 10 to affirm William O. "Bill" Crews and faculty of GGBTS "for their effort to train pastors at the various satellite centers at Brea, Portland, Phoenix, Denver and Albuquerque."

Fresno pastor Steve Williams said the action grew out of a disagreement between Southern Baptist Convention officials and the Northwest Baptist Convention. SBC leaders were displeased when the Northwest convention voted to divert \$50,000 from its budgeted SBC Cooperative Program allocation directly to Golden Gate's Portland campus.

That decision "drew a lot of ire," observed Williams, chairman of the California board's denominational relations committee. "We're not wanting to make any statement about whether it was right or wrong for that convention. It is an autonomous body.

"We just felt like it was a healthy thing to affirm Dr. Crews and his visionary leadership," Williams said. Golden Gate is "strategic in the West," he explained. "It would be a valuable thing for us to affirm (Crews) and let the seminary know we appreciate their strategy of providing training for leadership."

The Northwest convention's move was in response to a seminary funding formula which limits SBC Cooperative Program funding for students not trained on a seminary's main campus. That formula has been a sore point with GGBTS supporters since most of Golden Gate's recent growth has come through creation of regional campuses. Consequently, SBC funding has not kept pace with Golden Gate's total enrollment increases.

Meeting in April at the seminary's main campus in Mill Valley, Golden Gate trustees discussed the need to increase endowment funds to reduce reliance on CP funding.

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Reported by Mark Wyatt.

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