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**FMB meeting highlighted  
by missionary appointments**

**By Louis Moore**

**Baptist Press  
8/19/96**

ATLANTA (BP)--A doctor, a former jet engine project manager, a third-generation Chinese-American, several pastors and six MKs (missionary kids) were among 61 people appointed Aug. 14 by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to carry the gospel to 29 countries.

Coming from churches large and small and from across the country, the group included a man whose physician discovered a malignant thyroid growth during physicals required for appointment. Robert Rice, then minister to students at Westwood Baptist Church, Cleveland, Tenn., was successfully treated for the illness, slowing his appointment process by only months.

The appointment service, at First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga., brought the total number of Foreign Mission Board missionaries under appointment to 4,150. Some 2,800 people attended the service, which highlighted the Aug. 13-15 FMB trustee meeting in Atlanta.

As the missionary candidates, ranging in age from their late 20s to late 50s, paraded across the platform at the suburban Atlanta church, each told of ways God had uniquely called him or her to leave the United States for service abroad. Some said it was a sudden experience while others spoke of years of wrestling with God's will for their lives.

For the Woodstock church and its pastor, Johnny Hunt, the service marked a rite of passage in the conservative congregation's move to involve itself in Southern Baptist cooperative mission efforts through the board.

"We're a 165-year-old church, and for 155 years we didn't produce a missionary," said Hunt, who has served there since 1986. "Now someone comes forward every week or two to make some kind of missions commitment. It's a great, great joy."

Adding to the significance of the event was the presence of SBC President Tom Elliff of Del City, Okla.

The new missionaries included Frank Drinkard, who became a Christian and committed his life to full-time ministry at First Baptist, Woodstock. Drinkard, 42, grew up in Woodstock and Decatur, Ga. Since 1977, he has been minister of recreation at Germantown (Tenn.) Baptist Church. Drinkard has been a short-term volunteer in sports ministry in Asia, Africa and South America. He and his wife, Chita, will work in sports evangelism in the Dominican Republic.

Board President Jerry Rankin told the new missionaries their move overseas must parallel that of Abraham's some 3,000 years ago. He said God first called Abraham to leave Ur of Chaldees and follow him before he led Abraham and his family to the Promised Land, later known as Israel.

"A call to GO is a call to leave ... a call to GO is a call to follow ... and obedience to the call to GO is a call with a promised blessing," Rankin said.

"Your call is to leave your country and family (here) and go. God calls us not so much to a place as to himself.

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"Every month we hear of missionaries being denied visa renewals ... and sometimes we have to evacuate missionaries from countries because of wars and other troubles," Rankin said.

Because they have been called to follow God wherever he leads them, missionaries are then able to adjust to other countries, the board president said.

Missionary service includes sacrifices which God turns into blessings, Rankin said, noting they are not materialistic but spiritual.

"Because you are obedient and willing to go, God will bless you by touching and blessing others through you," Rankin said.

Elliff, once a Foreign Mission Board missionary in Zimbabwe, said he had just returned from a retreat in South Africa.

"Leaders of the Baptist mission, Baptist convention and Baptist union (in South Africa) met to seek God's face in light of the wonderful new opportunities for mission which that country's transition is providing. The retreat, planned by missionary John Gordy, was remarkably attended with the presence of God," Elliff said.

"It is evident SBC missionaries, members of the Baptist union and the Baptist convention of South Africa want to be spiritually poised to seize these critical days for positive witness and effective outreach."

During the trustee meeting, Rankin reviewed the tasks and responsibilities of the board's home-office staff in support of the missionaries and in relating foreign missions to Southern Baptists. He also told trustees of a new staff report seeking to define and guide the "culture" of the home office.

"Every organization has its own culture, that is, the beliefs and values reflected in relationships and attitudes," Rankin said. "It is often defined by unwritten rules about how employees relate to one another, their attitude toward their work responsibilities and the objectives of the organization. It defines the behavior of a group in terms of who we are, what we believe and how we do things. A culture provides cohesiveness throughout the organization and usually develops naturally over a period of time."

Rankin said "a culture cannot be nurtured simply by administrative directives or adherence to structure, policies and procedures, but is something to which every staff member and employee contributes."

Quoting from a staff task force's study of the organization's culture, he listed seven goals of the evolving culture: commitment to God's leadership, to Christian-principled work, to the worth and dignity of all individuals, to innovation and risk-taking, to continuous improvement, to open communication and to lifelong learning and skill improvement.

He also cited the task force's statement, "We value leadership that ... provides a vision and clearly defines expectations, empowers staff, gives feedback and recognizes achievements; and provides appropriate salary and benefits."

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**Coauthors' 'Revival!' tells  
of recent spiritual awakening**

**By Dwayne Hastings**

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Alvin Reid has never seen such a yearning for revival as in the past year: "There is a hunger. People are sincerely looking for a genuine touch of God."

In examining the signs of revival hopscotching across the nation, Reid said many in the church may have finally come to the conclusion: "We've tried it our way; let's try it his way" -- God's way.

"There are so many signs of spiritual hunger," said Reid, associate professor of evangelism and church growth at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

Reid pointed to the popularity of the "Experiencing God" discipleship materials by the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Promise Keepers men's movement as evidence of revival, noting these emphases have made the soil fallow for a larger moving of God.

The fresh wind of spiritual awakening that began its sweep across churches, colleges and seminaries last year is the theme of a new book, "Revival!" published by Broadman & Holman of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

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"In the churches that have had the most powerful revival movements, they had talked about revival beforehand -- there was preparation and expectation," said Reid, one of the book's three coauthors. "These churches had prepared for revival."

There is something to be said for studying the nature of revival and spiritual awakening, he said. "Many churches have been praying for revival for a number of years."

Yet Reid warned spiritual awakening will not just explode in a big bang: "There are often streams of revival that begin to merge, and before you know it, there is an awakening."

Brokenness over sin must precede any true revival, Reid said.

"Some call what we are experiencing across the U.S. a confessional revival," Reid said, pointing out the current revival movement centers on personal confession.

"Prayer is the foundation of revival. Testimony is the fuel of revival," Reid said.

God uses the power of testimony to revive his people, said Malcolm McDow, professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and another "Revival!" coauthor. "The most powerful thing we have to share is our personal testimony -- what God is doing in our life," he said, noting much of the New Testament consists of reports of the power of testimony.

"The Book of Acts is simply an account of the revival in the New Testament period," McDow explained.

Reid predicted the years leading up to the turn of the century will see a feverish fascination in eschatology and a renewed interest in spiritual revival.

"History has recorded spiritual movements at the close of the 1700s and the 1800s," Reid said, anticipating that perhaps God will yet do something widespread as the year 2000 approaches. While Reid does not believe the country is in the midst of a third great awakening, he insisted there are places where a real awakening has occurred.

Commenting on why the present outbreaks of spiritual renewal are occurring most often among students, Reid said college campuses are perhaps the most fertile: "College students are perhaps more open and idealistic."

He suggested others may have become too calloused to expect a pronounced moving of the hand of God, warning that a person can be right in the middle of a spiritual movement or activity of God and miss it.

"Revival!" is a weaving together of the details of this pronounced movement of God in a compilation of sermons, personal journal excerpts and eyewitness accounts.

Historically God has fanned the flames of revival by the spread of accounts of his moving, said Avant, the third of the book's coauthors and pastor of Coggin Avenue Baptist Church, Brownwood, Texas, which has experienced its own renewal. "Our heart's desire (in writing this book) was that through the retelling of these accounts that people's hearts would be hungry and open and desirous of seeing God move where they are."

One of the greatest dangers in the church today is a failure to recall what God has done in the history of the church, Avant said. "We've got to educate and share not only what God is doing now, but what he has done in history," he said, expressing hope that an awareness of God's moving in history would cultivate a hunger for spiritual awakening today.

McDow said accounts of revival in the book have already sparked instances of personal and corporate revival, with Reid adding, "During the past few months, I have been in many services where revival erupted -- with hours of confession of sin and a hunger for God -- in South Carolina and North Carolina." In his classes at Southeastern, Reid said students also have given testimony of revival in their own lives and in their churches.

"Our prayer is that God will use this (book) as a catalyst to stir the revival fires within the hearts of his people," said McDow, who noted both Reid and Avant were former students in his classes.

The meaning of the word revival has undergone a transformation in church history, Reid said. Among Southern Baptists the word more often than not brings to mind the occasion of the annual four-day church meeting led by a guest preacher, he recounted. Yet Reid said man cannot manufacture a moving of God no matter what the meeting is called.

There is a difference between an evangelistic crusade and a revival meeting, Reid continued. Revival and spiritual awakening begin with and within the church; evangelism primarily reaches to those outside. As with Jonathan Edwards' "Faithful Narratives" and Albert Finney's revival lectures, Reid said he trusts "the reading of this book will be an encouragement to believers to seek God in their own life."

EDITORS' NOTE: The following three stories address the growing use of computers by religious organizations.

### Computers changing the way churches do their ministry

By Wes Fulton

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--In the small African nation of Mali, Bintu, a young Malian mother, is assisting missionary Sandra Knop with her work in the town of Nara.

Today, though, Bintu is seriously ill, suffering from dehydration, fever and dangerously low blood pressure.

The local hospital had no staff members on hand to help her when she was brought in for treatment. In years past, Bintu might have endured her illness alone, living as she does in a part of the world far removed from the thoughts of many Baptists.

But today, Bintu has powerful allies. Baptists across the globe know of Bintu's condition and are offering prayers for her recovery.

News of Bintu's situation was posted on CompassionNet, an online bulletin board service provided by the Southern Baptist Convention, which lists prayer requests from foreign missionaries. Thanks to CompassionNet, foreign missionaries who once had to conduct their work cut off from much of the rest of the Christian world can now be assured their efforts and concerns are being supported in the prayers of fellow Christians back home.

It's just one example of how the computer has drastically altered Christian ministry.

Stories like Bintu's showcase the dramatic possibilities of new technology. But most of the progress in church-related computing has been made in the less-exciting but no less important arenas of daily church administration.

#### Office efficiency:

Gone are the days of a single church secretary with just a typewriter. As with many other work places, computers have quickly become the workhorses of church offices. Spreadsheets, databases and word processing are now standard in many churches and Baptist associations. Some use professional publication design programs to produce newsletters and bulletins.

Rebecca King, a secretary for the Franklin Baptist Association in Alabama, has seen firsthand the efficiency computers can bring to church work.

"(Franklin association) used computers very little before I came," she said. "When I first started working here, they were putting together their back page for The Alabama Baptist by the cut-and-paste method. They typed it up on a typewriter and used a copier to enlarge it or reduce it to fit. I asked the director of missions if we couldn't switch to computers. I have been working on computers for years, so I prepared something to show him what it would look like, and he was amazed."

Margaret Holden, church secretary at Calvary First Baptist in Russellville, Ala., agreed computers have taken a great load off the shoulders of church employees.

"I used to have to do all my financial reports by hand, using a calculator. I had to write out all the checks by hand," she said. "Now I can do it automatically with the computer, and that's made it so much easier."

In larger churches, a computerized office is indispensable. "I can't imagine not using computers in a church of this size," said Nancy Strange, an office manager at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala. "We've been working with computers for about 10 years now. We have all our membership, all our attendance and all our financial reports on computer," she said. "We used to do everything manually, and type everything on a typewriter."

#### Geographical statistics:

Computer use is not limited to office products. Thanks to the capabilities of computers, churches and associations are now able to accurately plan their ministries.

One helpful program is ScanUS, which uses census data to produce demographic profiles of geographic regions.

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Originally produced for use with urban planning, the program is licensed to state conventions by the Baptist Sunday School Board. By specifying a specific geographic area, the user can produce a demographic profile of the region. The profile gives an overview of standard demographic data such as race, age and income level, and also sorts the population among 15 different lifestyle categories and 62 subcategories -- everything from "blue-blood estates" (elite, super-rich families) to "hard scrabble" (older families in poor, isolated areas).

Steve Cloues, who runs demographic studies for the Alabama Baptist Convention, said information like this is valuable to churches because it allows them to evaluate the potential of different areas for outreach. Churches can use the information to tailor their ministries to the specific needs of the community.

Vaughn Forest Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala., has seen the benefits of using demographic planning. "(The demographic studies) help us to discover what our target area is," said pastor Lawrence Phipps. "This information actually helped determine where this church was located. This property was selected by the Montgomery Baptist Association nine years ago."

At the time the property was bought, Phipps said, east Montgomery was a "dead area." But studies by the state convention indicated the area could expect sizable growth.

"Now, east Montgomery is exploding. ... Growth for our area has been about three times what the growth for the rest of Montgomery has been," Phipps said.

"Your plans are not based on what you can see, but on what is projected," he said. "This might relate to what the apostle Paul meant when he said that we live by faith and not by sight. Most churches make their plans based on what they can see, but we make our plans based on what we can't see."

Such information is helpful even for churches that aren't eager to grow, Cloues said. "It can give churches a renewed sense of vision. Sometimes, you'll have churches that will say, 'We've reached everyone we can reach, we can't grow.' We'll run a demographic profile of their area to show them that there's always people to reach. Many people are surprised at what comes up.

"Now we can accurately pinpoint fruitful places to start, and predict what kind of worship styles, singing or Bible study would be most effective," Cloues said.

#### Church growth:

Churches also can use computers to gain a more accurate picture of their own efforts. Six years ago, the Alabama Baptist Convention's Sunday school department introduced a software program for exactly that purpose. Called "Alabama ChurchGrow," it is made available free of charge to any Alabama Baptist church.

ChurchGrow is a software program designed to help churches manage, plan for and anticipate future growth. An employee enters in a range of figures relating to the church, such as its membership and its resources, and the computer produces an analysis of the church's Sunday school program. The analysis calculates the attrition rate, whether the church has enough classes and enough workers, the ratio of contacts the church makes to the contacts it needs to make and other variables relating to church growth. The program can even anticipate when a church is likely to face a parking problem.

"If any of the parameters are out of balance, the church is not likely to grow," said Sunday school department associate Ed Hancock, who wrote the program.

The program also has the ability to run growth spirals, in which a church sets a goal for enrollment and the software program tracks the church's progress and compares it with the progress the church will need to make to reach its goal.

Churches can even communicate information with the state convention offices via the convention's electronic bulletin board service. The BBS can be used to upload information about enrollment and download programs and software updates.

The Sunday school department also will do analyses for churches lacking computer access.

Dale Smith, minister of education at Grace Baptist Church, Oxford, Ala., has used the program the past three years.

He said he appreciates the way it allows churches to better visualize their progress. "Sometimes, you think you're doing a good job, and you can use this program to see what your average attendance is, if you need to be making more contacts, if you need to do more follow ups. You can easily see if you're really doing a good job, or what areas need some work," Smith said. "For me, it's made me more conscious of where we are and how much work needs to be done."

### Bible study:

Modern technology also can help pastors plan their ministries in a more personal way. With the powerful searching and referencing tools of today's software programs, pastors can do research for sermons without leaving their computers. Sermon preparation that would have taken days can now be done in hours, or even minutes.

Steve Hewitt, editor of Christian Computing Magazine, based in Raymore, Mo., said Bible study software accounts for the second-largest share of the religious software market, right after office and accounting products. Bulky concordances and volumes of commentary are quickly going the way of the eight-track cassette, he said.

"Nowadays, you can get entire commentaries on CD-ROM," Hewitt said. Every major translation of the Bible is available in software format, and with the help of sophisticated search tools, a pastor or layperson can find every reference in the Bible to a particular word, verse or concept with the touch of a button.

Want to locate every single verse in the Bible that uses the phrase "kingdom of God?"

With the help of Ken Hamel's popular "Online Bible" program, a pastor can quickly produce a list of all 69 times the Bible uses the phrase "kingdom of God."

A more narrowly defined search can find every time Paul uses the word "faith" in his epistle to the Romans or every verse in the Old Testament which uses the word "covenant." Revealing Bibles statistics: "Love" appears 290 times; "salvation," 166; "baptism," 22; "righteousness," 300; "grace," 163; and "eternal life," 26 (all references, KJV).

For more sophisticated Bible students, some manufacturers produce software versions of original source material, such as the Septuagint and the Textus Receptus, along with lexicons to assist with translation.

### Online services:

For the past six years, the Southern Baptist Convention has operated a special on-line forum called SBCNet through CompuServe.

SBCNet coordinator David Haywood said the forum is designed to "provide Southern Baptists access to information about current events, trends, news articles and updates from the state conventions and seminaries."

"There is a whole wealth of information," Haywood said. Other resources include CompassionNet and a resource directory that allows users to order church and Sunday school materials.

Right now, access to SBCNet is only possible through CompuServe, but Haywood said that may change. "We're working to keep up with the changes (in technology). By the end of the year, you may be able to get into SBCNet from the World Wide Web."

Many ministries and churches now advertise themselves with home pages on the World Wide Web. Home pages for churches run from very basic -- a picture of the church, service times, names of pastors, maybe the text of the pastor's weekly sermon -- to dazzling multimedia displays that push the performance envelope of many home computers.

Some churches include sound recordings of their church choirs and video from church services. Others produce separate home pages for various individual members of the church.

"You hear a lot about the amount of sex and pornography on the Internet, but you never hear about what churches are doing," Hewitt said. "If you use one of the most powerful search engines on the Web, and you key in the word 'sex' and do a search, you'll come up with 200,000 Web sites. A lot of people see that and think, 'Uh-huh, there you go, it's nothing but pornography.'"

But before writing off the on-line world as hopelessly lost, Hewitt suggested doing a word search for the word "Christian." You'll come up with hundreds of thousands of listings, Hewitt noted. "If you search for the word 'church,' you'll come up with 300,000 listings. Despite the negative press about the seedier side of the Internet, Christians have an incredible presence there."

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Fulton is an intern at The Alabama Baptist newsjournal.

**Computer visionary challenges  
denominational on-line pace****By Wes Fulton**

RAYMORE, Mo. (BP)--Almost as soon as whiz kids Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak put together their first personal computer in a garage during the late '70s, already a few people in the church were aware that Christian ministry was about to enter a new era. Although it has been a long, uphill struggle for such visionaries, today many of them are rewarded by seeing the dreams they have nurtured beginning to bear fruit.

One of those original visionaries is Steve Hewitt. Eight years ago, the computer aficionado founded Christian Computing Magazine in the basement of a church where he was pastor. Christian Computing was the first magazine to provide computer-literate Christians news and information about the computer industry with a spiritual dimension in mind.

With two national radio shows and an about-to-be-published book, Hewitt is one of the most prominent figures in the Christian computing world. He has strong opinions on where Christians ought to be on the information superhighway.

"Stats say that around 40 percent of all homes in America now have a PC in them. Projections are that by the end of the year, it will reach 50 percent," Hewitt said, meaning that approximately one-third of the population would be on-line.

Hewitt eagerly cited examples of the ways churches and religious organizations have adapted to the new technology. The Internet is a loosely organized, worldwide network of computers that allows communication between users through such features as e-mail and electronic "chat rooms," in which users communicate in real time.

The World Wide Web is part of the Internet which uses a type of graphical interface that allows more variety than the "text-only" portion of the Internet, including pictures, video and audio.

Hewitt cited the Chicago-area church that put up what he described as "an incredible Web page."

"They gave all sorts of information about the area, listing all the information people wanted to know, such as where to sign your kids up for soccer, what kind of events would be taking place in the area, etc. They let people know this was a ministry, and they promoted it. Within a matter of months, they had over 1,000 visitations to the church which could trace directly to this Web page."

Hewitt said the Internet could be used for direct evangelism. "There are self-proclaimed missionaries who go out every night (on the Internet) and proclaim the gospel. There have been people who've been led to Christ as a result of their work."

Hewitt said he is encouraged with the way churches and ministries have jumped on the technological bandwagon, but is displeased with the sluggishness with which denominations have reacted.

"Every para-church organization has a page on the Web. Promise Keepers has a Web page, Campus Crusade for Christ has a Web page with the 'Four Spiritual Laws.'

Churches are on the Web like crazy. ... Individuals are taking a great deal of advantage of this, he said, noting this may prove to be a problem. "Denominations are really dragging their feet on this. They've missed the boat. Para-church ministries have just taken over, while denominations just sit around and appoint a committee and take 10 years to study."

Hewitt said he believes a major stumbling block is the fear of new technology. "Churches need to get over their fear of technology and stand against those few in their churches that do not want to move ahead and reach the new generation that is on-line," he said.

Hewitt dismissed suggestions that the "on-line culture" might be unresponsive to the gospel.

"The on-line world is a direct reflection of the real world. There is probably the same percent of non-Christians on-line as there are in your community that are not attending church each Sunday. Being on-line is being visible to the real world. When you try to have a witness, you will be rebuked and even persecuted by some, but this has always been the price for going public with our beliefs."

## New terminology growing in computer networking

By Wes Fulton

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Confused by all of today's computer lingo?

Here's a glossary to some of the more common computer terms.

-- Bulletin Board Service (BBS): A part of the Internet where users can electronically "post" information that can then be obtained by other users. Nearly any sort of information can be "posted" on a bulletin board, including text, graphics, photos, audio recordings and software programs. Once an item has been "posted" on a bulletin board, it is accessible to anyone who has access to the bulletin board.

-- Chat rooms: The computer equivalent of CB radio. Users access a certain area and type in and receive messages to each other in "real time," meaning the messages appear on the screen as they are typed. If one user types in a sentence in a chat room, that sentence will appear on the screens of all the computer users anywhere in the world who have accessed that chat room. Users of chat rooms frequently use nicknames to identify themselves.

-- E-mail: Electronic mail. The user types in a message on his or her computer and then sends it over the telephone wires to the computer of a specified user or users. The user receiving the document can then read what has been written by the sender.

-- Hypertext: Words and phrases that are highlighted on the computer screen. If these highlighted words are "clicked on," the computer provides the user with more information about the highlighted word or phrase.

-- Internet: The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that communicate through telephone lines. The genesis of the Internet was a computer network set up by the Defense Department in 1969 to allow communication between defense researchers in government and private industry. Today, the Internet, or 'Net' as it is sometimes called, consists of a sprawling, very loosely organized network of computers that spans the globe. The Internet is an almost completely supranational, decentralized entity, perhaps the first of its kind in the world. No individual, organization or country "owns" the Internet, although certain parts do remain under private or governmental control.

-- World Wide Web: This is a part of the Internet that provides a "graphical interface," a format which is much easier for people to use and understand. The World Wide Web, or the "Web," as it is usually called, is made up of thousands upon thousands of "home pages" or "Web sites." These are essentially computerized bulletin boards containing any information the owner wants to put on them. Video, audio, animation, graphics and "hypertext" (see above) can all be placed on a home page. Accessing the Web requires a special program known as a "web browser." If the Internet could be compared to a convention, the Web could be described as a very, very large book in which thousands of individuals and organizations have contributed their own personal pages.

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## See You at the Pole participants asked to report electronically

By Sarah Zimmerman

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ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)--This year's See You at the Pole participants can report results of their gatherings on-line.

See You at the Pole is the annual meeting at school flagpoles for students to pray before class, said Dean Finley, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board youth evangelism specialist. See You at the Pole is the third Wednesday each September, making this year's date Sept. 18.

This year participants can report results of their meeting on the youth evangelism Internet home page. The address is <http://www.ozarksol.com/youthsbc>. Results also can be sent to the CompuServe address of 103441,2742.

In previous years, reports have indicated as many as 60,000 students participated in See You at the Pole, Finley said. With the ease of electronic reporting, he hopes to have quicker, more accurate information. People who report their participation will be asked the name of their school and the number of participants. They also can leave short comments.

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People without computer access can phone or fax results to (417) 862-1111 or write Youth Evangelism Office, 906 S. National, Springfield, Mo., 65804.

Other information on the youth evangelism Internet home page includes:

- A list of more than 5,000 secondary schools with Christian clubs. It could be used by families who move to a new area and want to know if a Christian club exists on a nearby campus, Finley said. The list includes names and phone numbers of people to contact about each club.
- Guidance on how to start a Christian club on campus.
- A bulletin board where participants can share ideas for youth ministry and ask for help with problems, such as what to do if a school's administration resists the Christian club movement.
- Ideas on promoting "True Love Waits," the youth campaign that encourages sexual abstinence outside of marriage. Each campus will be encouraged to have its own True Love Waits emphasis next year on Valentine's Day.

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**Shepherd's Inn aids families  
in town where prisons abound**

**By Dan Martin**

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PORT ARTHUR, Texas (BP)--Anna and Karen were among the first people to use the Shepherd's Inn Hospitality House near the new Mark Stiles state jail in Port Arthur, Texas.

Anna and her 5-year-old son, Gary, drove 14 hours through thunderstorms from Arkansas to southeast Texas so they could visit her husband and his father, one of about 2,500 inmates housed in the new state jail facility.

Karen drove 10 hours from west Texas to visit her father and to see him receive his G.E.D.

The women and their families were able to make the trip because of the Shepherd's Inn, a ministry of Golden Triangle Baptist Association and the Southeast Texas Correctional Ministry which provides lodging and food to families visiting state prison inmates.

Anna's husband was convicted of drug-related crimes about the time their son was born. Anna did not want her son to grow up not knowing his father, but the distance is great and the cost of making regular trips prohibitive.

Shepherd's Inn makes it easier to visit because Anna now has only to find the money for gasoline, and she does not have to worry about the cost of lodging and food.

Karen, a schoolteacher, is the only one of her family to maintain contact with her father.

She came to see her father graduate. She remembers that when she graduated, she bought him a pair of new pants and a new shirt and gave him directions about how to get to her school. He didn't bother to come. But she wanted to be present for his graduation.

Shepherd's Inn is expected to be at full capacity this fall, said Dion Ainsworth, director of community ministries for the Golden Triangle Baptist Association. Then, he said, it will provide lodging and food for 25 to 30 people at a time.

The ministry, he said, is greatly needed because the prison population of Port Arthur is growing. "Five years ago, we had zero prisoners. Now we expect to have 15,000 by next spring," he said.

There are three state jails which house from 1,000 to 3,500 prisoners; a state school operated by the Texas Youth Council, which has about 100 inmates; and a soon to be completed federal "super prison" which will incarcerate 5,000 to 8,000 people.

Shepherd's Inn operated for 40 years as a rooming house for merchant seamen until heirs of its proprietor decided to donate it to the association and asked it be put to use to "help people," Ainsworth said.

He added the name, Shepherd's Inn, was chosen in keeping with the use of the building to provide guidance and assistance for families in crisis.

Several prisoners at the Mark Stiles Unit have produced oil paintings for each bedroom of the house and a larger painting of a shepherd for display in the living area.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas supplied a grant to pay for beds and office equipment, and operating costs come from donations from area churches and individuals. Texas Baptists help to support special associational ministries such as Shepherd's Inn through their gifts to the Mary Hill Davis Offering for State Missions.

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Barbara Melancon lives at the Shepherd's Inn, supporting herself during the week as a paramedic so she can be available to minister to the families of prisoners who arrive for visits on the weekends. Volunteers provide other staffing.

Ainsworth said there is a need for additional funding and for volunteers. "We have requested a Mission Service Corps couple to help, but we haven't heard anything yet," he said.

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**He deals with futures --  
both financial and eternal**

**By Todd Deaton**

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MODOC, S.C. (BP)--For 15 years, Charles Jenkins has been advising people about investments in their future security -- with Merrill Lynch. For three years longer, Jenkins has been encouraging people to make a commitment to their eternal security -- as pastor of Modoc (S.C.) Baptist Church.

Representative of the one in five pastors in South Carolina who is bivocational, Jenkins stands among the "double-duty, twice-blessed servants" who do "whatever it takes" to share the gospel. He is president of the South Carolina Baptist Convention's bivocational council, which promotes the future of bivocational ministry as a missions strategy.

Jenkins' bivocational story began following a career with IBM. With an eye to his family's future, this father of five -- and soon to be grandfather of 12 -- longed to "put down roots in one place." He accepted a position with Merrill Lynch in Augusta, S.C., where he is now vice president.

Afterward, he learned the 90-member congregation of Modoc Baptist Church had voted to search for a full-time pastor and needed an interim. He offered to assist the small Edgefield Baptist Association church for "four or five Sundays" as it looked toward its future.

Little did he know, this was the launch of a career in the ministry, a future for which he had prepared years earlier at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. And, although Jenkins had not been in the pulpit for more than 15 years, he soon discovered a calling to do "whatever it takes."

During his first weeks, a fire destroyed the sanctuary. The congregation grappled with not having enough funds to rebuild and to afford its dream of fully funding a pastor. Jenkins was asked to stay on, and while the building has long since been finished, he's kept preaching for 18 years.

His family shares his fascination for futures, financial and eternal. Two of his five children work with him both at Merrill Lynch and Modoc Baptist Church. His oldest daughter, Joanna, an administrative assistant, serves as youth director; a son, Ferrell, a junior partner, teaches Sunday school, serves as deacon and leads children's church; his wife, Mary, is director of music.

Far from the mistaken perception of being "part-time" or "half-committed," bivocationalism is the art of balancing a ministry with the needs of self, family, social life and a secular vocation, Jenkins said. "Being bivocational keeps you plugged into family concerns and vocational pressures of the world in which we live. You're not insulated; you see what's happening in the lives of members.

"It's true that bivocationalists aren't able to spend as much time with church membership," he acknowledged. But that's not all bad.

"This encourages lay leadership," he explained. "They realize that if something is going to get done, then they will have to step up to the plate."

Recent research by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board suggests he's right. While almost 90 percent of churches led by bivocational pastors have fewer than 300 members and most are in areas with populations of fewer than 2,500, these churches are as effective as similar-sized churches with fully funded pastors in Sunday school attendance (36.4 versus 37.1 percent of resident members), missions giving (13.2 percent of offering versus 13.7) and evangelism (4.1 baptisms per 100 members versus 3.8).

"More churches could be effectively served by bivocational pastors," said Jenkins. "Many congregations are strapping themselves unnecessarily by trying to fully support personnel, reducing money available for missions and ministry.

"Even medium to large churches could be served by a bivocational staff of ministers in music, youth, education and children," Jenkins added.

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