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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 22, 1996

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Rogers: Seminary's business  
is to 'bring souls to heaven' By James A. Smith Sr.

Baptist Press  
4/22/96

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--"The business of this seminary is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and bring souls to heaven," declared Adrian Rogers at an April 21 community rally in a 1,200-seat tent pitched on the campus of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Understanding the worth God places in each soul should motivate believers to win souls to Christ, Rogers said.

The community rally was part of a weekend of activities held for the inauguration of Mark Coppenger, Midwestern Seminary's third president. A 24-hour prayer vigil also marked the weekend. The inaugural ceremony was held Monday, April 22, on Midwestern's Kansas City, Mo., campus and featured evangelical theologian Carl F. H. Henry.

Noting that creativity, potentiality, durability and rarity often determine an object's worth, Rogers said the greatest indicator of worth is "what someone will pay for" an object.

"If you want to know the worth of the soul, go to Calvary," said Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, Tenn., preaching from Mark 8:34-38.

"Go up into heaven and put your ear upon the beating heart of God and with every heartbeat it is saying, 'I love you. I love you.' Climb down to the blood-drenched slopes of Calvary. Hear the Lord Jesus as he says, 'I thirst.' Hear him as he cries, 'My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?' Go down lower and see Jesus as he baptized his soul in hell for you and for me," Rogers preached to the near-capacity audience.

A torrential thunderstorm and high winds buffeted the tent as the rally began but failed to interrupt the service. During the music portion of the service, extended to allow the storm to pass over, Rogers recounted he and Coppenger prayed that God would remove the storm.

"He is the master of the wind and the rain, the sky and the sea, the earth, the air and all that is. He is almighty God!" declared Rogers, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Later, as Rogers was nearing the conclusion of his sermon, the generator failed. To the delight of the audience, Rogers left the platform and preached through the isles of the tent.

"Dr. Coppenger, I charge you to make this seminary the fountainhead of a great soul-winning movement that will reach this nation," Rogers declared. "Any seminary which does not teach soul-winning is guilty of high treason!"

Noting that soul-winning is the obligation of all believers, Rogers had a warning for those who felt they had a different calling: "There's nothing wrong with you that salvation or an old-fashioned revival won't fix!"

"Young preachers, your life has to be given to winning souls," Rogers said. "I want the Lord to find me winning souls when he comes."

Following Rogers' pleas for witnessing, Paul Brooks, the master of ceremonies, noted had brought prospect cards requested by Coppenger for his evangelism class. Brooks is pastor of First Baptist Church of Raytown, Missouri.

Before the community rally, a 24-hour prayer vigil was concluded. During the vigil more than 40 trustees, administrators, faculty and students took shifts to begin the inauguration weekend seeking God's blessings on the seminary.

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To reach today's unchurched,  
target as Jesus did, Warren says By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
4/22/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Targeting groups and individuals for the gospel message is not a new marketing twist for today's Christian messengers but a skill demonstrated by Jesus, almost 1,600 church staff and lay leaders were told during a one-day seminar on "How to Build a Purpose-Driven Church."

"Targeting your community is understanding who you are trying to reach, not to exclude but to be effective," Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church, Mission Viejo, Calif., said April 18 at Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn.

Warren, featured speaker for the conference and author of a book on the same topic, told church leaders from 26 states and 24 denominations and nondenominational groups Jesus knew about the woman at the well, and because he knew her, he knew how to talk with her. During his ministry on earth, he dealt with each person out of specific knowledge about that person, he said.

Likewise, reaching out to people today who have not heard the gospel requires knowing who they are and how to talk with them, he said. Defining one's ministry target in the 1990s includes knowing how many people live in the area; what types of people they are by age, marital status, income, education and occupation; learning about their values, needs, interests and fears; and determining what they already know about the gospel.

"Seekers are different all over America," Warren observed. "What is seeker sensitive in one place may be seeker repulsive in another."

He recommended attempting to reach first "the persons you are most likely to reach. The more you focus on your target, the easier it is to reach them. You have to focus. You can't reach everyone."

He compared failure to have a target to a hunter who stands in a field and shoots in random directions, hoping to hit some game, and to a photographer who snaps photographs without ever focusing, hoping to get a usable image.

To determine the best target group, he said, the answers to two questions can provide insight:

First, what kind of people already attend our church? "Everybody is looking for somebody like themselves," Warren observed. "Teenagers are looking for other teenagers, parents with babies are looking for others with babies. If they find them, they'll be back. If they don't, it's unlikely they'll return."

Second, what kind of person am I as a leader? "Who do I naturally feel comfortable around? If God called you to ministry, there are people that only you can reach."

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He said people reach other people to whom they can relate. "You attract what you are, not what you want. When the church matches the community and the pastor, explosive growth will take place. A good man in the wrong place will have limited results. If you don't match, move."

Three options exist for churches that don't match the communities in which they are located, he said. They can build on existing strengths, reinvent themselves by intentionally changing or create a new congregation by starting new services or sponsoring a new congregation.

Warren challenged church leaders to "think like an unbeliever. Imagine being told, 'I have the greatest news in the world, but before I tell you, you have to come to my building, wear my kind of clothes, understand my way of talking and sing my songs.' That's a statement for failure," he said. "We do it every week. It is selfish."

To discover the mind-set of unbelievers, Warren said he conducted a door-to-door survey when he moved to southern California, believing "if you don't ask the right questions, you won't get the right answers. If you don't get the right answers, you won't develop the right strategy. If you don't develop the right strategy, you won't get the right results."

Warren's questions included:

1. Are you currently active in a local church?
2. What do you feel is the greatest need in this area?
3. Why do you think most people don't attend church?
4. If you were looking for a church, what kind of things would you look for?
5. What advice would you give me? How can I help you?

He said results of the survey showed him unbelievers perceived sermons to be boring and irrelevant, church members to be unfriendly to visitors, churches to be more interested in the person's money than the person and perceptions of child care to be poor.

He said he came to believe most unchurched people are not atheists. "They are just turned off and too busy. They say, 'I like Jesus. I just don't like church.'"

Warren also confessed he had underestimated the power of music in evangelism.

"It is the number one communicator of values in our society," he said. "It bypasses the intellect and goes straight to the heart."

"You have to choose the style of music you are going to use and stick with it," he continued. "Make sure the music matches the target. Music tells who you are going to reach and who you are never going to reach."

He said he has discovered only 2 percent of music sold in the United States is classical.

"And yet when I was in seminary, that's the kind of music I was told to use (in church). There is no such thing as Christian music. There are only Christian lyrics. What is sacred is the message. We need to stop defending the tune."

He urged worship planners to preview all music to determine if the message is doctrinally sound and if it matches the mood of the worship service. And he urged caution in the amount of music used and the language employed for lyrics.

"Unbelievers don't like to sing words they don't know to tunes they never heard about things they don't understand," he said. "Use more performed music than congregational singing for seeker services."

Warren said he does not advise other churches to become "clones of Saddleback. It takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people. If you are doing something that works, I like it. If a principle is biblical, it is transcultural. It will work anywhere."

"We've done more things at Saddleback Church that didn't work than did work. We're just not afraid to fail."

Any church can be a purpose-driven church, Warren maintained. "The test of success in ministry is, does it last? The thing I like about the Southern Baptist Convention is the variety. We serve the same Lord and believe the same things, but the expression of that is done in a thousand different ways."

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"How to Build a Purpose-Driven Church" was sponsored jointly by Saddleback and the Baptist Sunday School Board's pastor-staff leadership department.

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(BP) photo (color horizontal) is posted in the SBCNet News Room under the file name Rick.JPG. Outline is posted under the file name Rick.TXT.

CBF coordinator search,  
conflict with SBC continue

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
4/22/96

ATLANTA (BP)--The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship continues to look for a leader to replace retiring coordinator Cecil Sherman, Carolyn Crumpler of Ohio told the CBF Coordinating Council during its April 18-20 meeting.

The council also expressed dismay over Southern Baptist Convention material discrediting the CBF, adopted a \$14 million budget and heard from a committee studying whether the Southern Baptist splinter group should become a separate denomination.

Crumpler, coordinator search committee chairman, said the committee had offered the nomination to one person who considered it for six weeks before turning it down. She said the committee hopes to have a recommendation by June.

The SBC material came to the CBF's attention after the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship explored mission opportunities in Puerto Rico. The moderator of a Puerto Rico association requested more information about the CBF. Eliu Camacho-Vazquez, director of the Home Mission Board's Caribbean Office, responded with a two-page letter and the 15-page SBC packet.

The packet includes a letter from Bill Merrell, vice president for convention relations for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, saying the information is for church members "where the CBF push is strong."

Cecil Sherman, CBF coordinator, said such information "grossly misrepresents" the CBF. He used the material to urge CBF members to challenge such claims.

"If we do nothing, we let these ugly pieces and packets define us," he said. "If we do something, we are likely to get in an ugly contest with people who are loose with the truth and have a vast public relations machine."

Merrell issued a response April 22, noting: "Our office was glad to provide a packet in response to an information request regarding the CBF from Brother Camacho-Vazquez. One of our responsibilities is to help the people and churches of our convention with information as they request it. The packet was prepared in 1994 following the Southern Baptist Convention decision not to distribute funds channeled through the CBF. It contains copies of articles on the CBF, information on the SBC fund distribution policy and direct quotations from CBF leaders illustrating that some of their positions represent clear departures from the doctrinal and moral beliefs of the preponderance of Southern Baptists.

"I think I can see why CBF leaders hope this information is not distributed, but we believe it is wholly accurate," Merrell continued. "Charging we are 'loose with the truth' and referring to 'a vast public relations machine' is artful to the point of being sly, but it doesn't make the case. The charge does not specify which of the material is untrue. If there is inaccuracy in the information distributed, we would want to modify it. This packet is readily available to Southern Baptists, and we are most happy to furnish it on request."

The proposed 1996-97 CBF budget, which will be voted on during the CBF general assembly in June, is a 6 percent increase over the 1995-96 budget of \$13.3 million. The budget goal is not being met, however, as receipts for the fiscal current year, which ends June 30, are expected to reach \$12.8 million.

Bill Owen, layman from Ardmore, Okla., and chairman of the finance committee, said the committee expected a growth rate of 25 percent when it planned the 1995-96 budget. Instead CBF has experienced a growth rate of 16 percent, resulting in less income than expected.

The 1996-97 budget is 9.6 percent more than this year's anticipated income.

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The 1996-97 budget calls for \$10 million to support missions, which includes 111 missionaries; \$3.2 million on items labeled Baptist principles such as theological training, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and Associated Baptist Press; and \$808,456 on church resources including leadership conferences and state fellowship support.

During the first three months of this year, CBF received contributions from 1,342 churches, compared to 1,150 last year, Sherman said. After the meeting Sherman said his "best guess" is that 300 of those churches have CBF in their budgets. Some churches allow members to decide where their individual missions support is sent and other churches are channels for individuals to designate gifts to the CBF but do not include it in their budgets.

Unlike the CBF, only churches affiliate with the SBC, and their representation at the annual meeting is based on gifts contributions to the SBC's worldwide missions/education enterprise through the Cooperative Program and designated gifts to SBC offerings for foreign and home missions and hunger relief. The SBC is composed of 40,000 churches and has more than 9,000 home and foreign missionaries.

A committee studying whether the CBF should become a denomination will bring its full report to the CBF general assembly in June, said committee member Eileen Campbell-Reed. The report will be a compilation of survey results, opinion papers and letters, not a recommendation for action, she said.

For the study, current and past coordinating council members were asked if the CBF should become a denomination as soon as practical. Of 92 responses, 14 said yes, 59 said no and six did not reply. In the same group, however, only 14 people said the CBF should never become a separate convention. Sixty-one said that if the CBF declared itself a new convention, support from their local church would probably not increase.

Opinions expressed in letters to the committee ranged from urgency to become a denomination because churches and individuals need an organization with which to identify to not becoming a denomination because it would split churches.

While reports and business took most of the council's time, the SBC packet generated the most emotional response.

The letter from Camacho-Vazquez said the differences that separate the SBC and CBF are "mostly in the areas of theology and practice." Camacho-Vazquez said the CBF "holds that the Bible is not infallible, in other words, that it contains errors." He said the CBF considers homosexuality an alternative lifestyle and promotes the ministry of women to the point of justifying lesbianism.

Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president, said, "Dr. Camacho's letter is not an official statement of the Home Mission Board nor does it represent an official position of the board. It is simply as a personal letter attempting to address a problem in the Caribbean."

Camacho's letter referenced "CBF leaders." Lewis said, "Whether or not the various quotes are correct, I cannot say. However, if they are correct and these are indeed leaders in CBF, he was justified in citing them."

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Art Toalston contributed to this article.

Electronic media expand  
BSSB consultative services

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
4/22/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Baptist Sunday School Board consultant Ron Pratt went to south Florida a few weeks ago for 90 minutes to train and dialog with a group of church staff people in the Palm Lake Baptist Association.

Less than a half-hour after that meeting ended, he stood to teach before a large group at the Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn. And that afternoon he led an interactive conference with Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary students in Fort Worth, Texas, and with ministers of education in a variety of locations.

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Like the more than 100 other Sunday School Board consultants who lead conferences for church staff and lay leaders across the United States, Pratt is learning to meet more Christian education needs through technology.

The morning session in Florida was made possible by videoconferencing, the addition of images to voice telecommunications. The experience for the conference leader and the participants is much like being together in a classroom. Pratt was able to see the Florida group on a large television screen, while viewing his own image and the materials he presented on a small screen-within-a-screen on the same video monitor.

In Florida, the group watched Pratt, video clips and computer-generated instructional materials on a large screen. The smaller image in the corner of a Miami Kinko's Copy Center monitor allowed them to adjust the view Pratt would see at a Kinko's in Nashville. As questions were asked, the camera was directed toward the person speaking to provide a more personal interaction.

Pratt used all of the teaching materials and techniques he would have used had he met with the group in a church or hotel meeting room. But he did so for about \$400, considerably less than the cost of a round-trip airline ticket, a rental car, a hotel room, restaurant meals and miscellaneous travel costs. As in the case of on-site consultation, the Sunday School Board paid for the conference.

"I spent last night in my own home," said Pratt, who, like his fellow consultants, spends up to 120 days each year on the road. "My family knows who I am," he laughed, "and I still spent the morning in Florida."

A quick repacking of conference materials, and Pratt was on his way back to the downtown Nashville Sunday School Board complex. After a presentation to a larger group in one of the board's conference rooms, he prepared for a different technology encounter, an SBCNet on-line conference.

SBCNet is the denomination's on-line network, with more than 8,000 Southern Baptist computer users participating in a variety of services, including interactive discussion groups and teaching sessions.

Hosting the meeting, Pratt assisted a guest lecturer who was, at the time, nowhere near a computer. Pratt interacted by telephone with the guest, author of a Christian education textbook chapter. Meanwhile, an SBCNet staff person, also on the telephone with the speaker, keyed the speaker's answers to on-line questions from computer users. The cost amounted to one long-distance telephone call on the board's WATS line.

The flat-rate cost of SBCNet for the users is \$7.95 monthly, plus \$9.95 monthly for CompuServe. Users may read and download files and participate in on-line conferences, without per-minute charges within SBCNet.

While not all Sunday School Board consultants conduct on-line training sessions, SBCNet coordinator David Haywood said he anticipates greater use of the medium because of its economical cost.

"As our user group continues to increase, significant numbers of persons having common training needs and subject interests are emerging," he said. "For persons who do not have work time or budget to attend multiple meetings and training sessions, SBCNet has become the professional development medium of choice."

The Sunday School Board also has its own videoconference room, a small facility that may be used for training sessions with groups gathered in other facilities such as those available at some Kinko's locations. More often, it is used for private business meetings between board employees and people from out-of-town businesses or SBC agencies. Cost for the use of this facility is 20 cents per minute, the cost of two long-distance calls.

In mid-June, personnel from the Sunday School Board, Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board and Woman's Missionary Union will participate in a meeting by videoconference, saving considerable travel costs for each agency.

Establishing a videoconferencing facility requires a personal computer, special software and hardware (including a mini-video camera and speaker phone) and access to an Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) telephone line.

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Users may share documents; write, erase and use a pointer on the screen; play videotapes; or record conferences for playback to other groups.

As the Sunday School Board continues to respond to training requests, the speed and economy of technology is expected to multiply the influence of consultants like Ron Pratt, enabling them to meet needs literally across the nation within a day's time.

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(BP) photos (2 horizontal, color) are posted in the SBCNet News Room under the file names Tele-1 and Tele-2.

Baseball exec at peace  
with outspoken reputation

By Victor Lee

Baptist Press  
4/22/96

BALTIMORE (BP)--In 1982 Kevin Malone showed up at Tennessee Temple College in Dayton, Tenn., expecting to be the head baseball coach, only to find out they had hired someone else. Instead, he became a volunteer assistant. The former University of Louisville star second baseman, who had been cut after a year of pro ball in the Cleveland organization, was in no position to imagine where he would be within a dozen years -- general manager of the Montreal Expos.

Malone is an outstanding example of a focused man working his way toward God-given goals. What could have been construed as a mistake -- going to Tennessee Temple -- turned out to be a perfect piece of God's plan.

"Best move I ever made," said Malone, now assistant general manager of the Baltimore Orioles. He went to Tennessee Temple to learn more about the Bible, as well as coach. He left with great spiritual depth, focus -- and wife Marilyn. He has needed each to stay on course these past few exciting, but tumultuous, years.

"I've learned what my bottom line has to be at all times -- serving Jesus," Malone said. "As long as that doesn't change, I'll be fine."

After Tennessee Temple, Malone worked for the Jim Rice Baseball School and scouted for the California Angels and Expos before becoming a scout for the Minnesota Twins. He earned a break of sorts when he was the scout whose information helped the Twins beat the Atlanta Braves in the 1991 World Series. After that he joined the Expos again, this time as scouting director. Two years later, he succeeded Dan Duquette as general manager, at 36 the third-youngest in baseball.

Then came a series of bad breaks: Malone's Expos had the best record in baseball but the strike meant there were no playoffs or World Series. By the time baseball got back on the field last spring, the Expos were about broke financially. Malone had to sell or trade much of his best talent, and the team was significantly weakened. It was during the strike Malone began to be known as an outspoken, honest man whose words sometimes didn't sit well with baseball's hierarchy. He was a media favorite, a "great quote" by its standard, a man who always found a microphone in his face.

"What I recognize about myself is that I am a fan at heart," Malone said. "I love the game of baseball and I care about the fans."

So he spoke the truth, as he saw it, about the strike. When the owners were wrong, he said so. When the players were wrong, he said so. When he didn't like having to dismantle a great team, he said so. He was also vocal about his faith.

"I just felt like I was a voice for the fans," said Malone, whose family lives in West Palm Beach, Fla., and attends First Baptist Church of Lake Park, Fla. "I feel that someone has to stand up for the truth, someone has to speak honestly, with integrity. It wasn't for my own benefit -- I had no selfish motives or intentions.

"I've also learned that may not be what's best for my career, but I believe as long as I'm honest to God, family and self, I have the right to stand up for the truth."

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Even if it doesn't sit well with the baseball structure. When he resigned from the Expos in October '95, Malone went into a time of searching -- for a job and for clear direction. Baseball executives -- some Christians -- privately criticized his outspokenness. As one of the youngest executives, they wondered why he talked so much. For three months he searched. He considered going into some form of ministry, and it appeared he might when his best job possibility -- general manager of the Baltimore Orioles -- went to former Canadian rival Pat Gillick, who built the Toronto Blue Jays.

Malone heard the criticism of him from within baseball's Christian circle.

"The problem is we've got a lot of lukewarm Christians who make God sick," he said, referring to the God's words to the church of Laodicea. "My encouragement would be to take a stance for the Lord. You can't walk the fence. Either you follow God and tell people about him or you don't. You can't serve two masters. I believe when you serve God, your life is a reflection and there will be some persecution and ridicule."

There's no way to know whether his frankness about the strike and his openness to the media cost him any jobs. But though the months of looking were trying, he said they were also very valuable.

"I clung to Jeremiah 29:11," Malone said, referring to the verse that speaks of God's plans to prosper, not harm. "It was a great three months in the sense that I got some time with my family. But it was also hard because of the uncertainty. I've never been in the Word so consistently for three months. It was very good because it drew me closer to the Lord."

The wait ended with a work of irony. Malone was asked to be Gillick's assistant in Baltimore, a role that calls for a lower profile but allows the still-very-young executive -- at age 38 -- to continue learning from a man many consider the best in the business.

"I don't think I'd do anything differently," Malone said, reflecting on his course to becoming a general manager and his actions with the Expos. "I tried to be honest, straightforward and sincere. God is in control of the obedient Christian's life. To tell you the truth, I don't think I've ever been happier than I am now."

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Lee is a free-lance writer in Wake Forest, N.C.

Instead of big-league career,  
he found big-league ministry

By Victor Lee

Baptist Press  
4/22/96

ATLANTA (BP)--It was the day after Thanksgiving, and Tim Cash and 3-year-old daughter Rachel were hanging Christmas lights on their Auburn, Ga., home. Tim's wife, Barb, suggested they do something different, so Tim and Rachel erected a cross using the post and guardrail on the front porch.

It was no deep evangelical effort, just a symbol of the family's commitment to Jesus Christ. Two days later, as Cash stood in the driveway washing his van, a man using a crutch limped down the street. Cash said hello, then said, "You look like you're in pain." The man walked his way and they began to talk. He spoke of his medication, but Cash sensed a deeper hurt and risked asking about it. "You look like you're disturbed -- what's going on?" Cash said.

As Cash pushed son Benji in a stroller, the three went for a walk and the man began to open up. He shared about his wife's drinking problems, a recent auto accident she had while drunk, her attempt at suicide, his own abuse as a child from a broken home and suicidal tendencies, and the rocky marriage. Cash found himself in a position to minister to this total stranger.

"I was blown away by his transparency," Cash said. Seizing the moment in the power of the Holy Spirit, Cash led the man back to his house and they sat in lawn chairs in the driveway. Within a few minutes, the man accepted Christ as his Savior.

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After Cash had given the man a Bible and some discipleship material, he said, "Just one question before you go, 'Why did you stop at our house today, why were you so comfortable stopping and opening up?'" The man answered, "As I was on my way home the other night, I passed by your house and saw the cross, and so I thought maybe I could talk to you."

Cash has devoted his life to being light in a dark world. He is not a pastor, per se, nor has his audience primarily been the average man on the street. Cash works with Unlimited Potential, whose motto is "Serving Christ through Baseball." Cash does evangelistic baseball clinics throughout the United States and overseas, utilizing major league baseball players to teach the game and, foremost, to share Christ.

Cash, a former pro baseball player and a member of Hebron Baptist Church, Dacula, Ga., ministers to almost 100 major league players, many in a Bible study setting in the home of center fielder Brett Butler near Atlanta.

Cash's encounter with the neighbor is one example of his broadening scope of ministry. Of it, he said, "I was washing a van -- Jesus was washing a heart. I had been hanging lights -- Jesus was revealing the light." To everyone he asks, "When people pass your way, do they see the cross?"

Cash didn't see the cross until he was 21 years old. "Baseball was my God," he said. Growing up in Newnan, Ga., Cash would have the baseball gloves and balls laid out on the front porch when his father arrived home from doing drywall work.

"I grew up with a young dad, and it was great, because sure enough, before he would go inside and kiss mom, he'd pick up the glove," Cash said.

Baseball got him through college and to the pros. But he drank regularly, smoked marijuana and battled arm problems. Frustration mounted, especially after his first elbow operation in 1985.

"I was hurting, reaching out," he said. His father had been "radically saved" the year before. The man who helped him learn about baseball also helped him accept the cross of Christ as Cash was saved that year. He would have a total of three elbow and shoulder operations and would not make it to the major leagues, but Cash's focus had changed to serving Christ. Now baseball and the gospel work together.

His role with Unlimited Potential comes first, but his ministry is spreading as he is asked to speak in a wide variety of situations and is regularly asked to fill the pulpit. Unlimited Potential puts Cash in contact with the men who are in the place he once wanted to be.

"I'm really am a pastor to the majority of the guys, in the sense that we're doing Bible study, having ministry to the guys and through the guys," Cash said. "We're trying to fulfill the angle of discipleship and equipping, but also of evangelism by taking the guys out into situations where they can share their faith."

Cash's wife ministers to the players' wives in Bible study. The players meet with the Cashes as couples, individuals and in a group regularly for study and fellowship. Although most are regularly church attenders, the home fellowship with the Cashes becomes church, in a sense, because of their unique circumstances.

"They're hounded at the park by autograph seekers, and even at church they're asked, or somebody's always wanting to talk to them," Cash said. "So for them to get freed up and caught up in collective worship, they almost have to do it somewhere else."

Cash's position allows him to know intimately many men who have achieved their dreams for athletic and financial success, and he knows that is not what gives them peace. His message:

"Satan comes to steal, comes to kill and he comes to destroy. Satan is not some cat dressed up in a red suit with horns and a pitchfork. The Bible says he disguises himself as an angel of light. I want people to see the real light, the cross of Jesus Christ. It is the only thing that brings peace."

Theologian says 'hell shows  
what Jesus rescues us from'

By James A. Smith Sr.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--"Studying hell shows what Jesus rescues us from," theologian Robert A. Peterson said in a visit to Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

Peterson, professor of systematic theology at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, spoke in the April 4 chapel service, an evangelism class and the seminary's Faculty Club at the invitation of President Mark Coppenger.

Studying hell "makes us thankful for (Jesus') saving work," Peterson added. "Salvation is only properly appreciated in the light of its alternative."

The reality of a literal hell and two types of eternal punishment is illustrated by the mathematical equations of subtraction and addition, Peterson said in his chapel message.

On the cross, Jesus "suffered the pains of hell for sinners," Peterson said. "He endured both the subtraction and addition ... subtraction of the Father's love; addition of God's wrath."

In contrast to Jesus' formerly intimate relationship with the Father, on the cross, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me." This separation from God was the punishment of subtraction, Peterson said.

Peterson, author of "Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment," rejected the arguments of some who suggest Jesus merely "felt abandoned" on the cross. "No, the abandonment was real ... The eternal relations between the Father and Son were interrupted.

"At the cross we catch a glimpse of the enormity of our sins' offense to God," Peterson said. "Here we learn about hell when the Lord Jesus, the beloved Son of God, takes the penalty of hell for us, even separation from God, that we might be delivered. Here we look deeply into the mystery of the love of a holy and just God for sinners."

Jesus also suffered the wrath of God on the cross, the addition of punishment, Peterson said.

"How do we account for our Lord's despair," Peterson asked. "Why did he repeatedly ask the Father, 'If it is possible, may this cup be taken from me?' Why did the prospect of drinking this cup inflict such trauma on his holy soul? What is this cup?"

"The cup from which Jesus shrank in the Garden of Gethsemane was the terrible cup full of the wine of God's wrath," Peterson said, noting Psalm 75:7-8 and Jeremiah 25:15-19 which teach about the cup of wrath from which the wicked must drink.

"On the cross the Son of God drank to the dregs the cup of God's wrath for sinners like you and me. He endured the pains of hell, the wrath of God. He suffered the positive infliction of torments in the body and soul, the punishment of sense, of which the fathers and reformers spoke. Listen to his resolve after Gethsemane when Peter begins to fight to prevent Jesus' arrest, 'Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?'

"The cross sheds light on the fate of the wicked, because on the cross the spotless Son of God suffered that fate," Peterson said, quoting Revelation 14:10-11, which teaches the damned will be tormented for eternity after they have drank the "cup of (God's) wrath."

"Either I trust Jesus to have taken the wrath of God for me or I drink the cup of God's wrath myself."

Recognizing the punishment Jesus endured on the cross should cause believers to thank Jesus, Peterson said. "Our lives should burst with gratitude for such grace."

Understanding the punishment which awaits the damned, Peterson said, should cause believers to be more burdened for loved ones, friends and neighbors who don't know Christ.

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"Lord, forgive me for not living for you with all of my strength, with all of my being," Peterson said. "Forgive me for playing with sin, for lacking in zeal."

Peterson, speaking to the seminary's Faculty Club and an evangelism class, lamented the rise of theories hostile to the traditional notion of hell as a place of eternal, conscious suffering for the damned. Peterson refuted the heresies of annihilationism, universalism and post-mortem evangelism -- the teaching that people will have a chance for salvation after death.

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Texas CLC family proposal  
awaiting BGCT's OK, funding

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
4/22/96

DALLAS (BP)--The Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission endorsed a comprehensive proposal to enhance family life in Texas, during its April 18-19 meeting in Dallas.

Pledging to "boldly go where no state convention has gone before" in the area of family life, the CLC approved a broad-based family ministry proposal that could result in Texas Baptists helping 5,000 families get off welfare and providing parenting mentors to 29,000 at-risk families for one month when their children are born.

Implementing the plan would require about \$200,000 in its first year, with the amount increasing each of the following four years. The proposal will be submitted to the BGCT administrative committee for consideration in planning the 1997 budget. The CLC also will explore possible foundation grants and other funding sources.

Key aspects of the proposed plan are creating a group of up to 100 certified family ministry trainers, enlisting and equipping a 1,000-member "Family Ministry Corps" around the state and launching Family Training Centers.

Certified family ministry trainers would receive extensive instruction in marriage enrichment, premarital preparation, parenting education, family strengths and spirituality, interpersonal family relations, crisis intervention and support groups. They would know how to design overall church plans for family enrichment and ministry. They also would be informed about state and community programs related to family needs.

Members of the Family Ministry Corps would receive two full days of training and would commit at least 320 hours or 40 weeks a year to work in family enrichment programs at churches throughout Texas.

Family Training Centers would coordinate research and maintain libraries of up-to-date information on family life, as well as providing training for church staff, family ministry trainers and the Family Ministry Corps. The center would be housed in the CLC offices, and satellite facilities would be housed in Texas Baptist churches or institutions.

Goals include:

- providing infant care information and the offer of mentoring parents for one month to at least half of the at-risk parents in Texas by the year 2000.
- encouraging each Texas Baptist church to adopt one family on welfare and to help them become self-sufficient.
- conducting in 1998 a major "Senior Adult Summit" to focus on the needs and opportunities of senior citizens in Texas. The CLC would work closely with other Baptist entities such as Buckner Baptist Benevolences, Baptist hospitals and the BGCT Sunday school/discipleship division in planning the event.
- providing premarital counseling for every couple married in a Texas Baptist church.
- creating family development programs in 5,000 churches.
- enlisting thousands of grandparents to stay with latchkey children.
- using a media campaign on family life that would include a toll-free phone number to call for help.

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In other business, the commission appropriated more than \$718,000 to combat hunger outside the United States through projects sponsored by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Baptist World Alliance and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

An additional \$240,000 will fund Texas Baptist hunger projects and \$242,000 will go to Southern Baptist Home Mission Board-related projects. The funding cycle is for the next 20 months.

Many of the project requests also will involve opportunities for volunteer involvement by Texas Baptists, noted Nathan Porter, BGCT world hunger consultant.

After several years of sharp drops in hunger giving, the Texas Baptist executive board in recent months approved a new funding method and set the four Sundays prior to Thanksgiving as the time to emphasize the hunger offering.

Instead of promoting a general hunger offering divided 80 percent to the Foreign Mission Board and 20 percent to the Home Mission Board, the Baptist General Convention of Texas now solicits specific ministry proposals from the mission boards, as well as from the BWA and CBF.

Proposals are considered by a world hunger ministry team that includes representatives of the Texas CLC, the State Missions Commission, Woman's Missionary Union of Texas and Texas Baptist Men. The team then recommends projects for funding to the full CLC at its spring meeting.

Requests for world hunger funds totaled \$3,068,505. Of that total, the commission approved \$1,200,144 for its "primary list" of priority projects.

The commission granted priority approval to \$441,492 for rural development and other hunger-related projects through the Foreign Mission Board.

Also approved on the primary list was \$160,252 for Baptist World Alliance World Aid and \$116,400 for Cooperative Baptist Fellowship hunger projects.

Key FMB hunger projects are:

- \$100,629 for village development in Bangladesh, including tutorials for children, sanitary latrines, agricultural training and cutting ponds and roads, as well as \$53,093 to sink 1,000 wells in eight areas of that country.

- \$96,450 for the "wells of salvation" water system in Haiti. Funds will be used to repair old pumps and wells and to dig new wells.

- \$75,000 for community development in the Philippines. That includes \$65,000 to train rural youth in appropriate agricultural techniques, nutrition and sanitation and to develop a fishing cooperative among the boat-dwelling Badjaos people. The remaining \$10,000 is for vocational training of youth in metropolitan Manila.

- \$50,000 to dig wells in the state of Ceara in northeast Brazil, an area of great poverty and disease where there is little Baptist work.

Other primary FMB-related projects include a rural development model program in Indonesia, vocational and health training in rural Guatemala, health and nutrition programs in 18 rural Indian villages and two urban slums in Bangalore, India, and a training center for youth agriculture, health care and Bible storytelling in the Kondh Hills area of India.

The commission received \$1,019,658 in other requests from the FMB, \$255,023 from within Texas, \$40,000 from the HMB and \$553,680 from the CBF.

Thanksgiving is the designated time for emphasizing the hunger offering in Texas Baptist churches. But CLC Director Phil Strickland said that if churches wait until November to give, many of the approved projects could lack funding.

"Even now, church should begin enhancing their emphasis on world hunger giving in order to meet these critical needs," he said.

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Church has family role,  
Garland tells Texas CLC

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
4/22/96

DALLAS (BP)--The adopted family, not the nuclear family, is the New Testament model, according to Diana Garland, who recently resigned from the Carver School of Social Work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

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"It is the job of the church to cut across boundaries of blood and marriage and define family the way the Bible defines it, not as culture does," she told the governing board of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Garland led members of the Texas CLC in an examination of Jesus' teachings on family at their April 18-19 quarterly meeting near Dallas. At that meeting, the commission adopted a comprehensive proposal to enhance family life in Texas.

"All of God's children need family. We are created not to be alone. Jesus linked the people he loved into family in a new way," she said.

Garland took Jesus' words from the cross commending his mother to the care of the apostle John and his special relationship with Mary, Martha and Lazarus as examples of family formation.

"Jesus did not sit down on the hillside and talk to us about how to be family. Sometimes I wish he had. But what he did was model it for us. And that is more powerful," she said.

Shared faith creates stronger family ties than bloodlines, Garland said. Pointing to Jesus' words in Matthew 12 regarding his own mother and siblings and the wider family of God, she noted, "Jesus doesn't paint them out. He's widening the circle, breaking the bounds. He is saying that family is not limited to biological and legal kinfolk.

"The New Testament model is not the nuclear family. It is the adopted family. In God's kingdom, nobody has to be alone. Family transcends kinship for us."

Garland drew a distinction between universal "neighbor love" and the special love that exists within families. While Christians are called to love their neighbors unconditionally, expecting nothing in return, family love makes demands and confronts conflict.

"Family is based on covenant, and that is mutual," she said.

Strengthening families is central to the church's task in evangelism and ministry, Garland said.

"It is the church's job to seek out lonely -- to mend families that need mending," she said.

Specifically, Garland said churches should:

-- foster "family" relationships among groups of 15 to 20 people within the larger family of faith.

"Strengthen families by building community around them," she said. "We need to be about the task of making sure there is nobody alone."

-- find ways to recognize and celebrate family ties as they are biblically defined.

-- give families the tools for facing conflict and life's struggles together.

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People with AIDS receiving  
more ministry from churches

By Johnie Sentell

Baptist Press  
4/22/96

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--For more than 15 years the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has been spreading across the United States and around the world. In the early years, it was diagnosed mainly among homosexual men and became widely known as a "gay plague."

In the last few years, AIDS has begun to affect more heterosexual individuals and children of infected mothers. A recent article carried by Evangelical Press news service noted from 1987-92, a yearly average of 13,000 Americans contracted AIDS through heterosexual contact, while 20,000 were infected through homosexual contact.

So far, about 300,000 Americans have died with AIDS. Another 600,000 are infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and half of them have already developed AIDS.

Malcolm Marler, a chaplain to people with AIDS in Birmingham, Ala., said Baptist churches are becoming more involved in AIDS ministry. Since the first of January, he has spoken to 40 groups in Alabama Baptist churches and associations interested in starting AIDS ministries.

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"I expect to have another 25 Baptist churches involved by the end of summer," Marler said. "We have 54 AIDS care teams in all denominations and faith groups. I expect that number to more than double this year."

"We are creating a new AIDS care team per week. About half of the new ones are due to this year's AIDS emphasis by WMU. That one move by the WMU has made more difference in Baptist churches in Alabama than had been accomplished in the 10 previous years," he said.

Recent WMU ministry projects have been aimed at involving Baptists in hands-on missions. This year's emphasis is on AIDS.

"It has been a remarkable, compassionate response by Baptist churches," Marler said. "The WMU is the ideal group to present this in churches not only because of their integrity but also because young women are in the fastest-growing group of new cases of HIV. Teenagers are the second-fastest-growing group."

Dellanna O'Brien, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union, said Christians should be guided by "a love ethic that causes us to see what God sees, go where God goes and do what God does." She said, "The challenge of the church today is to get the salt out of the salt shaker and into the world, where it belongs."

The primary purpose of WMU's ministry emphases, O'Brien said, "is to create awareness in social issues, to give women and men some handles on how to minister in those areas and then possibly continue in those ministries after the emphasis year."

Churches and associations across the nation have been sponsoring AIDS conferences using materials developed by WMU. Also, funds are being collected to operate an AIDS hospice in Brazil.

James Best, director of missions for Bethlehem and Pine Barren Baptist associations in Alabama, said an AIDS awareness meeting March 5 in Frisco City was "an eye- and heart-opener to all who attended."

Best said Marler "did a great job of informing the participants about AIDS and inspiring them to start care teams in our area."

As a result of the conference, 25 people showed an interest in starting AIDS care teams. The Bethlehem and Pine Barren associations' first meeting is scheduled April 20 at the associations' joint conference room.

Carol Brake, secretary for the two associations, said AIDS awareness and ministry "is something every church is going to have to get involved with."

Brake told about a young man in his 30s who had AIDS. As a teenager he had been one of a dozen or so friends of her children who often came to their home to watch TV, eat spaghetti and play Uno.

The man came home from living in California after having developed AIDS, and he lived for about a year and a half until his death.

"Many people around churches don't know what to do in this kind of situation," Brake noted.

Roberta Hawkins has been a member of First Baptist Church, Birmingham, for about two years. Four and one-half years ago, her son, Ed, died with complications from AIDS. She described him as a talented person of high integrity and highly educated. Ed had served five Baptist churches in Alabama and Texas as music director, beginning at the age of 16. It has been only in recent weeks his mother began to feel able to speak out about her feelings.

In a testimony at her church, she said, "I don't ask you to accept, or to even understand, the lifestyle of these people but to adopt a redemptive attitude toward them and their families. Some Christians approach them in a manner that puts them down instead of seeing them as a person. It shouldn't be that way. They are made in the image of God and loved by God. Though he doesn't approve of their lifestyle, he does love them. No one wants condemnation or criticism leveled at their child."

"If ever we needed the understanding of the church, we need it now," Hawkins said. "Unless we treat them with some measure of kindness and compassion, they will not hear our message. AIDS is in the world. We have to confront it and come to grips with how our churches will deal with it, however we feel about it. To a large measure, a lot of them are lost people, I do think. We are able to take to them the message of salvation and give them the opportunity to be saved."

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The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) reports 2,087 people have died of AIDS in the state.

As of late March, there were nearly 3,800 people in Alabama with AIDS and another 4,000-plus definitely diagnosed with HIV who have not developed AIDS yet. In 1995 there were 617 new AIDS cases reported in the state.

"The problem with the figures," said Marler, "is that most people have never been tested. The AIDS statistics only tell you about people who have been diagnosed with AIDS. We know there are at least 10,000 persons in Alabama living with HIV. They may or may not have advanced to develop AIDS yet."

Official figures in Alabama count 116 babies born to mothers who were infected with HIV, but the children's HIV infection status has not yet been determined (the determination takes about 18 months after birth). There are currently 53 pediatric AIDS cases (children under 13) in the state. Another 36 children have definite HIV infection but have not developed AIDS yet.

About 25 percent of children born to HIV-infected mothers have themselves developed HIV infection, but a recent study showed that a three-step treatment with the drug AZT, if done at a certain time, can reduce the children's infection rate by about two-thirds.

Such a precaution has become standard care for infected pregnant women, according to the ADPH. The expectant mothers take AZT during their second and third trimesters, starting around the 14th week of pregnancy. In addition, the newborn baby is administered AZT syrup for six weeks after birth.

In addition to Baptist churches across the state involved in AIDS ministries, other Baptist groups in the Birmingham area with AIDS care teams include the staff of Birmingham Baptist Association, students at Samford University and Baptist Campus Ministries at Birmingham-Southern College.

The list is growing weekly, Marler said.

Melanie Griffith, one of the coordinators for the AIDS care team at Trinity Baptist Church, Madison, Ala., said the group only recently got started and has had two monthly meetings so far.

"We don't have a friend yet," Griffith said. "We are excited and hoping to get a friend real soon. We are wanting to be open to whatever that person needs. We want to do what friends would do -- whatever you would expect of a friend, to be there for you no matter what."

In Dothan, local churches have come together to form an AIDS ministry, Marler said, with First Baptist Church playing an important part.

Dane Smyre, minister of community ministries at the church, said, "We have a community organization umbrella put in place to provide specific opportunity for four or five different programs we can feed people into. One of those is the AIDS care teams. We started on this thing a couple of years ago. The whole idea is to work cooperatively with the Christian community."

"We started the AIDS ministry back in August, training three teams then and one large team in October," Smyre said. "I guess the most surprising part of this to me was the response -- greater than I would have imagined. We have right at 50 volunteers involved with the AIDS teams now. One team relates to two families, and the other teams are relating to just one."

"We did an educational conference workshop in February of last year," he said. "Since then, we got involved in transporting children who are affected by AIDS. We have some Acteens groups that made Valentines to be distributed to those children. We have had parties for people who attend AIDS support groups. Some of our people have been able to put a real face on AIDS."

"Right now," Marler said, "we are having AIDS care team training in Birmingham on the second Saturday of every month from 8:30 to 4:30. We hold it in a different church every quarter."

Interested people may call Malcolm Marler at (205) 975-9129 or 934-1917 for more information about AIDS care team training.

## FIRST-PERSON

AIDS care team didn't know

Andy once was a millionaire

By Kathy Sexton

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Our AIDS care team at Southside Baptist Church has been in existence about three years. I joined it about two years ago. I have been told it was one of the earlier teams in the Birmingham (Ala.) area. We first became involved with a group called Parkview Place, sponsored by the AIDS Task Force of Alabama. Parkview Place provides a temporary home for people with AIDS while helping them find permanent housing.

Initially we provided friendship and support to the residents. We would take meals over on Wednesday evening from the church. We would go by and pick them up for Sunday services and other church activities. We also would go by and maybe take them to dinner or to a movie or just go by and visit and provide them with videos. We bought them a VCR. We tried to let them know somebody cared.

The way our team works is that we actually have five small teams made up of three people or three family units. Each is responsible for one week every five weeks. During that week it would be their responsibility to contact the residents to see if they wanted to go the store or a movie or go to church. One of the residents - a former resident now in his own apartment -- has joined our church.

About a year ago we decided we wanted to become more involved in actual care of an individual suffering from the disease. One of the residents we had become particularly close to had moved out on his own. He did not have any family in town, so we decided to adopt him as our care team friend.

Our care team and the people of Southside Baptist Church completely furnished an apartment for him, from furniture to all the cookware and linens. We told the church we were trying to help him establish a home. We had a lot of extra items donated and were able to donate some to other organizations.

We began trying to be a family for him. We ended our affiliation with Parkview at that time and took on the one individual as our project. We used the smaller groups in the same way as before. We would take him to the grocery store, to church and other places. He seemed to enjoy the fellowship and the friendship, having someone around to talk to.

Sometimes we would go by and just visit with him. If someone had a get-together, they would invite him. We would try to provide friendship and support and make sure he was doing all right.

About last October, Andy became ill. This was really the first time he had an illness related to the disease. He got a skin disorder and was very uncomfortable. It was a reaction to the medication he was taking for HIV. Then he got sicker and had to go to the hospital right before Thanksgiving. The doctor determined he had pneumonia and had to be put on a respirator. He died Dec. 1, three weeks after he went into the hospital.

He did have family from out of town. The relative who had kept in touch with him was an elderly aunt who was unable to be with him in the hospital. Our care team visited him daily while he was there and communicated with his aunt to let her know how he was doing. He was in intensive care for two weeks until the day he was taken off the respirator at his request. He died that night. We were able to be there with him, and our ministerial staff was there as well.

Some of his family did come from out of town while he was in the hospital. His aunt seemed to be very appreciative we could be there. Since that time we helped her with some arrangements. She donated all of the furniture from the apartment back to the care team. The things are being sorted to help someone else furnish a home.

Andy never joined our church. However, he really came to love Southside, telling his aunt the church was very special to him.

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This was a very unusual situation. This man at one time was a millionaire. He had a mental disorder. He suffered from depression and lost all his money. He was basically homeless. We didn't know this at the time. We just knew his present circumstances. It meant a lot to him for us to help him furnish a home and to live on his own. His aunt said he was so proud of his place when he showed her around. Later we found out about his former circumstances.

It was a very humbling experience for us -- Andy had had so much and lost it all. He was very appreciative for everything the team had done and for the friendship. The people just accepted him for who he was. He was 58 when he died, I believe. Several of us attended his funeral and met his family. Later we had a memorial service just for his care team.

We had an impact on him and he on us. After Andy's death, we really took the month of December off. We had gotten very close to him. It was like losing a member of the family. It takes a while to grieve and to work things out. We cleaned out his apartment and gave his clothes away.

One of our church members who is a member of our care team also has AIDS. He is being looked after by a care team from another church. He was adopted by that team before our care team was formed. He had been in pretty good health until the last six months. We have decided to assist the other care team in meeting his needs. He has been in and out of the hospital several times. We are providing meals two nights each week and also trying to stay available to assist if he needs someone to provide more direct care as he becomes sicker.

We have not chosen to adopt another individual yet because we want to be available to help with one of our own. He was an active member of our care team until he became too ill to take part during the last six months.

Maybe the biggest lesson God has taught us through all this is one of grace. We are not here to judge people for any reason. We are here because of the grace of God to us, and we want to extend that grace to those suffering from AIDS. Through our friendship and our concern for them as individuals, we share with them the love of God.

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Luis Palau featured weekly  
on RTVC's FamilyNet, ACTS

By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press  
4/22/96

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Over the past 30 years, almost 12 million people in 63 countries have heard international evangelist Luis Palau in person. That number has been multiplied many times by those who have heard him on radio and television.

His call-in TV program, "Night Talk with Luis Palau," is now aired on FamilyNet, the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission broadcast television service that reaches into more than 33 million homes, and on ACTS, the Baptist agency's cable television service that reaches into more than 25 million homes through the Faith and Values Channel.

Both FamilyNet and ACTS broadcast the program on Sundays at 11 p.m. Eastern.

"Luis Palau brings a very vibrant, inspirational program to our weekly ministry mix," said Deborah Key, RTVC vice president of network operations and general manager of FamilyNet and ACTS. "Simplicity and believability, I think, are two keys to the success of the program. In Luis Palau you have an honest, caring individual addressing genuine needs in the lives of people who are lost and seeking the saving power of Christ in their lives."

During the program Palau fields calls from viewers who want to discuss spiritual, family and other concerns. Many are looking for peace with God, forgiveness and freedom from guilt. Palau explains the plan of salvation and prays with those who want to receive Christ as Savior.

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Palau, a native of Argentina equally at ease speaking English or Spanish, began preaching when a teenager. During the 1970s he and his team conducted crusades throughout Latin America. By the early '80s his ministry was impacting Europe, especially Great Britain, and doors of opportunity were opening around the world.

Since 1990 the Luis Palau Evangelistic Association, headquartered in Portland, Ore., has led major evangelistic crusades in 15 American cities. During Palau crusades worldwide there have been almost 635,000 known decisions for Christ. There have been almost 40,000 other known decisions for Christ through Spanish mass media. Luis Palau programs are now carried on some 550 radio stations.

Said evangelist Billy Graham, "That God's hand is upon Luis is evident by the growing influence of his ministry. I've followed his crusade activities with interest and observed the blessing of God as thousands have responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ through the outreach of Luis and his team."

"When I came to America in 1960, I felt in my heart the day would come when I would preach the gospel to tens of thousands in this country," Palau said. "Was that presumptuous for a young Argentine who hadn't yet preached to crowds much larger than 100 in Latin America? I'll leave it to the Lord to judge my motives. I simply believe he

gave me a special concern for this greatest of nations that would become my home."

Palau said for 29 years he felt the restraint of the Holy Spirit, that until Billy Graham's crusade ministry slowed down in the United States he believed God was leading his team to concentrate on crusades in Latin America, Europe and Asia.

"In 1989," he said, "I felt the time had come for a new wave of national evangelization. My first thought was to ask for Billy Graham's blessing. Billy said to me, 'You don't need it, but if you want it, you've got it. We've got to get on with evangelism.'"

America needs a national wave of evangelization, Palau said, because the gospel has the power to change people from the inside out.

"Only the gospel gives new life," he said. "Only the gospel can change America."

HOUSE MAIL

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