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Foreign board reports
record gains in 1995

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
2/28/96

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Proclaiming the gospel and ministering in the name of Christ, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries and their partners overseas experienced record gains in 1995.

A record 2,612 newly constituted churches represented a 21 percent jump from 1994 and contributed to a record 39,073 partner churches. A significant number of new churches (367) and baptisms (6,548) were reported among people groups considered inaccessible to traditional mission work.

For the first time in history, total membership among affiliates overseas topped the 4 million mark -- to 4.11 million. And the year's 287,806 baptisms, the second-highest number in history behind last year's 302,132, amounted to the equivalent of a Pentecost harvest every four days. Mission strategists say it likely represents more than 1 million professions of faith.

The most telling story about baptisms, however, was the 14-to-1 member-to-baptism ratio among overseas partners, contrasting sharply with the 40-to-1 ratio among Southern Baptists in the United States.

The increase in the number of new churches in 1995, from 2,162 in 1994, and the continuing high number of baptisms "reflect the work of the Holy Spirit through the witness of missionaries, volunteers and national co-workers," said board President Jerry Rankin.

Foreign Mission Board leaders say they see results overseas as affirmation of the very gospel missionaries preach, that signs follow those who believe and proclaim Jesus Christ. They consider the record showing a result of discovering where God is moving in the world, and rolling up their sleeves to go to work beside him.

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"We are filled with praise that God has allowed us to participate in what he is doing around the world in such an amazing way," Rankin said. "It's especially thrilling to see the level of response among previously unreached people groups who never before had access to the gospel."

Missionaries and their partners started working among 41 new people groups in 1995, many of them in "The Last Frontier," or "World A." Mission strategists define World A as the 2,466 cultures that have never been exposed to the name of Jesus Christ or seen the Bible translated into their languages. They have been locked behind political, religious and cultural boundaries.

"It's amazing," said Avery Willis, the board's senior vice president for overseas operations. "We're seeing that once we take the gospel into these darkened places where it's never gone, people are responding. We never expected it to happen this quickly."

One country, with only 65 known believers a few years ago, now has an estimated 200,000 Christians.

Church growth surveys in recent years have helped missionaries zero in on lost people in all parts of the world. The clearer focus played a role in increasing the number of new churches, said evangelism and church growth analyst Jim Slack, who compiled the annual report. Another contributing factor was the board's dual focus on the Last Frontier and traditional harvest fields.

"The Last Frontier changes shape every year as lives yield to the movement of the Holy Spirit and advancement of Christ's kingdom," said Bill Bullington, the board's vice president for overseas services. "The body of Christ is growing and appearing in places among peoples we might have thought unlikely or even impossible."

The total number of churches on the field increased by 6.65 percent in 1995, from 36,638 in 1994. At that growth rate, the total will double in 10 years, Slack said.

Growth was strong in Eastern Europe, which has benefited in recent years from the fall of communism. In church starting, Romania led Southern Baptists' overseas affiliates with 313 new churches. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Baptist union there has started at least one church every week. In Russia, 130 new churches and 6,693 baptisms were reported. Ukraine, formerly a Soviet republic, reported 9,119 baptisms in 1995.

Brazil, a populous, mature mission field, led other countries in the total number of baptisms, with 71,993. Kenya reported 23,078, Nigeria 20,000, South Korea 16,050.

The tiny southeastern African nation of Malawi produced 15,857 baptisms, or one for every seven members, about twice as many per member as the worldwide average in 1995.

Slack singled out discipleship among other notable gains in 1995. A heightened sensitivity to members "leaving out the back door" contributed to a 74 percent increase in discipleship efforts, he said.

Bible teaching ministries increased by more than 11 percent. Record growth also occurred in Vacation Bible School enrollment, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood enrollment, literacy training and youth ministries.

Still another gain came in the appointment of missionaries by overseas affiliates. Home missionaries were up by 44 percent and foreign missionary numbers increased by 87 percent.

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(BP) graphic (horizontal) and (BP) photo (horizontal) mailed 2/26/96 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Color graphic and cutlines available in SBCNet News Room. Please note corrected graphic has been posted.

**Annuity Board assets top \$5 billion;
benefit payments near \$200 million**

By Thomas E. Miller, Jr.

DALLAS (BP)--The Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention closed its 78th year of operations with assets of \$5.173 billion after paying a record \$192.56 million in retirement and relief benefits.

Trustees met in Dallas in regular session Feb. 26-27 and were told total earnings in 1995 were almost \$794 million, which made possible a permanent 5 percent increase in benefits on Jan. 1, 1996, for all annuitants with benefits established for five years or longer.

Trustees also heard a report from President Paul W. Powell that the SBC Executive Committee had responded with positive action on the request by Annuity Board trustees to approve creation of two new business trusts. The two trusts could be used to implement a mechanism for using registered mutual funds for the investment activities of the Annuity Board. Trustees are not expected to take final action to convert investment funds to registered mutual funds before the first quarter in 1997.

In its regularly scheduled election of general officers and executive officers, the board of trustees re-elected Richard C. Scott to a third year as chairman. Elected vice chairman to serve with Scott in the one-year term beginning July 1 will be Michael L. Rochelle, pastor of West Oakey Baptist Church, Las Vegas. Rochelle, a trustee since 1993, succeeds Thomas A. Shaw, pastor of Red Fork Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla.

All present executive officers were re-elected on recommendation of the trustees' nominating committee.

At the initiation of Powell and W. Gordon Hobgood, chief operating officer, trustees began discussion of a succession plan for the two top officers of the Annuity Board. Hobgood plans retirement in 1998 and Powell in 1999. The executives told trustees the size and complexity of Annuity Board operations invites a study of the organizational structure and a review of the responsibilities of the two top executive positions. Trustees took the subject under advisement and will discuss it in their next meeting.

Treasurer Harold D. Richardson reported contributions to participant accounts continued to rise, with \$254 million representing a 6.5 percent increase over 1994.

There were 11,097 new retirement plan enrollments in 1995, and 4,413 new benefits were established. Of the new benefits, 3,568 were age retirements at an average of 63 years, 102 retired on disability at an average of 55 and 723 were survivor annuitants. There were 20 education benefits established for dependent children.

Richardson said increases in Cooperative Program receipts and increases in available funds from the board's endowment funds made it possible to make relief payments of \$1.29 million in 1995, and 531 people or couples were on the relief roll at Dec. 31, compared to 503 persons on relief the same date in 1994. The board received \$1.1 million from Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program, all of which was used in the relief program. Annuity Board operation expense is paid by earnings on assets.

In addition to the relief program, the Annuity Board paid \$962,250 during 1995 in \$50-a-month supplements to annuitants with very low monthly benefits. At year end, there were 1,711 people receiving the special gifts from the board's Adopt An Annuitant Program that is funded by designated gifts.

At the February meeting, the relief committee considered 63 requests, approved 33 two-year monthly grants, 10 two-year expense grants, four one-time grants and declined 16 requests because the applicants were outside established relief guidelines. The committee also approved raising the relief death benefit from \$300 to \$500 and raising the Christmas check for relief recipients from \$175 to \$200.

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The board's insurance program recorded a successful year with growth in nearly all categories and benefits paid totaling \$101.1 million, compared to benefits of \$93.5 million in 1994. Claims exceeded premiums in the Personal Security Program (PSP) comprehensive medical plan which resulted in the first increase in premiums since July 1992. A 7.6 percent increase went into effect Jan. 1.

Trustees were told there will be no increase in PSP medical rates on July 1, 1996, and the next rate review will be for Jan. 1, 1997.

The next meeting of Annuity Board trustees will be July 29-30 in Boston.

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**Board's new trusts begin move
toward registered mutual funds** By Thomas E. Miller Jr.

Baptist Press
2/28/96

DALLAS (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention's Annuity Board, during their Feb. 26-27 meeting in Dallas, acted on permission received from the SBC Executive Committee to form two business trusts that eventually could become registered mutual funds to conduct the board's investment activities.

The Executive Committee, acting Feb. 20 under bylaw 35 of the constitution of the SBC, responded favorably to the Annuity Board trustees' request for approval to create the Annuity Board Select Funds Trust and the Annuity Board Blended Funds Trust. Annuity Board trustees, in their Feb. 26-27 meeting, then made requested amendments to trust application documents and Annuity Board bylaws, clearing the way to create the trusts they had approved in November 1995.

The board's president, Paul W. Powell, said, "If Annuity Board trustees continue to approve the steps in progress, the board could register its funds as early as the first quarter of 1997. Much work remains to be done, and trustees have the final say." The two trusts would be the vehicles to register the Annuity Board's investment funds.

The investment funds available to participants will be restructured in a separate action on Jan. 1, 1997. After restructuring, participants will have access to four "blended" funds with varying built-in asset allocations among stocks and fixed income and cash instruments. Or, a participant may use an array of "select" funds to create his or her own individual investment portfolio.

"Our participants have asked for more choices," Powell said. "We will give them a wide range of choices. They can make investment decisions simply, by using the blended funds, or they can use select funds to satisfy individual desires for more flexibility."

John R. Jones, senior vice president and director of the board's investment division, said, "The Annuity Board will launch a massive educational effort this spring to prepare participants for their choices of new plan funds. This process is separate from, but would facilitate, conversion of the funds to registered mutual funds at a later date."

Speaking about the SBC Executive Committee action, Powell said, "I cannot say too much in appreciation for the enormous time and effort by (Executive Committee President) Morris Chapman, his legal counsel and the elected members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee has never had more on its plate than now, with the convention restructuring mandated by the 'Covenant for a New Century.' Yet, they extended every courtesy and hundreds of member-hours in meetings to enable us to answer every question and respond to every suggestion."

Powell emphasized Annuity Board staff, trustees and the Executive Committee were united in determination that a change to a mutual fund environment would retain trustee control through the established Southern Baptist Convention process, and trust documents would ensure the ability of Annuity Board trustees to continue control of investment policy including establishment of investment restrictions.

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Each mutual fund will have 10 trustees. Sixty percent (six) of the mutual fund trustees will be "interested" trustees elected by the Annuity Board's board of trustees from among its own members. The 40 percent (four) "disinterested" trustees required by federal regulations will be elected by the board of trustees from among 14 nominations approved by the SBC. The SBC Committee on Nominations will present 14 names to the convention for its approval. The "disinterested" trustees must be active members of churches in friendly cooperation with the SBC and have the time and willingness to serve without pay.

Action by the SBC Executive Committee on the business trusts came after the Annuity Board trustee request had made its way through the bylaws workgroup and administrative subcommittee to the floor of the Executive Committee.

"The end result, should we adopt mutual funds as the vehicles for our participants' investment activities," Powell said, "will be a very significant increase in disclosure of information to participants. Anyone who presently invests in mutual funds is aware of the prospectuses and reports that accompany such participation. We will be no different, since we will then be under regulatory requirements for such communications."

For several years the trustees and executive staff of the Annuity Board have been studying the structure through which the board offers its retirement plans and the investment structure used by participants for retirement savings.

The Annuity Board has been converting its computer system from a mainframe environment to an IBM AS/400 and client-server environment that has the flexibility to handle what is one of the most complicated retirement plan designs in existence.

"The Church Annuity Plan," said Powell, "with its multiple contribution sources and a combination of old Plan A and the present defined contribution plan, is different from anything else in the world. The Convention Annuity Plan that serves institutions and agencies has more than 200 separate plan supplements. For two years we have been working with an outside firm to develop the computer system that can handle this gigantic record-keeping task. We are nearing implementation of a record and reporting system that will offer our participants remarkable new advantages."

About mid-year, the current four funds will have daily valuation, paving the way for daily transfer of accumulations among the four existing funds. Funds currently have their values established at the close of business at the end of a month and transfers can be made only once a month.

Beginning in just a few weeks, participants will be invited to regional meetings to hear about the restructuring of investment funds on Jan. 1, 1997. That restructuring will greatly broaden the choices of funds for participants. On Jan. 1, 1997, individual accumulations and contribution orders will move to new funds, based on prior decisions made by the participants.

"The choices our participants must make will be made easier by a program of new educational materials," Powell said. "The materials have been tested in focus groups, and we hope every participant will join an orientation meeting in their area. For those who can't attend, the printed materials will walk them through each step." Powell also reported foreign missionaries will receive special assistance through video conferences in area meetings during 1996.

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Kelley voices NOBTS vision
to trustees, faculty, staff

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press
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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"I don't want to do anything that requires just me; that's too little," said Charles S. "Chuck" Kelley Jr., president-elect of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, during an afternoon session Feb. 23 with all seminary staff members.

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"I want to be in a place doing something that takes everybody working together as a team and takes everybody doing his best," said Kelley, elected unanimously by seminary trustees that morning. Kelley takes office March 1 as the eighth president of the nation's third-largest seminary and one of six Southern Baptist seminaries.

In three separate meetings Feb. 23, Kelley told professors, trustees and staff members what he believes is the purpose of the seminary: "to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries."

Kelley also told each group his five core values for the seminary:

- doctrinal integrity ("our beliefs").
- spiritual vitality ("our zeal").
- mission focus ("our passion").
- characteristic excellence ("our effort").
- servant leadership ("our attitude").

"We're going to cast the vision and apply the core values consistently across the institution. ... I want us to do something big for God that requires all our gifts as a team," he said. Kelley said he wants New Orleans Seminary to be a place "where people can spread their wings and fly," as well as a place "where spectacular things can happen."

Asked by trustees about his vision for the future, Kelley took a moment to praise the recently retired president, Landrum P. Leavell II, for the "wonderful foundation" he built, including the seminary's reputation and endowment. "These are tremendous building blocks," he said.

Keeping an emphasis on "what historically has been the strength of the school -- involvement in ministry" -- Kelley said he wants to do "all we can to focus on academic excellence. I want us to challenge people to develop to the height of their ability."

Concerning the seminary's single greatest challenge, Kelley told trustees the faculty are "worn out" due to just coming out of a self-study year for reaccreditation and all of the resulting extra committee meetings, as well as to having 10 faculty vacancies due to several factors including expansion, retirements and resignations.

"I want to get everybody on the same page," Kelley said, "and I want to create such a climate that this will be a place where people will want to spend the rest of their lives," which includes raising salaries as his top priority, he told trustees.

In looking for faculty, Kelley said his priority will be "to recruit from the Great Commission out." After considering a prospective faculty member's ability "to reach people for Christ and disciple them," he said he will want professors "with excellent skills and knowledge in their fields," as well as an excellent ability to communicate that knowledge.

He wants professors who not only will have a heart for students but also will be interested in being mentors.

"Openness to change and creativity" is another characteristic for prospective faculty members, since "no one can predict the exact impact technology will have on education 10 years down the road," he said.

Kelley said he also wants professors who are "deeply anchored in the Word of God, but open to seeing new ways to teach and apply."

The first position Kelley will seek to fill will be the office of provost and academic dean of the graduate faculty. The current provost, Billy K. Smith, will be retiring at the end of the 1995-96 academic year.

"I am committed to bringing in a provost from outside," he said, not only because trustees chose him, "an insider," to be the next president, but also "because I have blind spots. I need someone to help me be objective," said Kelley, who has lived and worked on the NOBTS campus more than 20 years. Of critical importance in making his choice for provost will be finding someone who has "an understanding of the direction of the seminary," he said.

When asked to describe his leadership style, Kelley said his primary spiritual gift is service. "Serving is my leadership style," he said. "I see my role as a chief servant rather than as a chief executive officer."

Kelley also said he is "big on communication and dialogue." While he understands "the trustees have been assigned responsibility from the Southern Baptist Convention for what this school does," he also feels "the people who don't have a vote do deserve the chance to be heard."

"I am not going to go back and deal with the past," he said. Believing every situation has a window of opportunity in which to be properly handled, he said dealing with the past "makes everyone unstable."

"I'm going to deal with the present," he emphasized.

Asked by trustees what he would look for as "red flags," Kelley said he would look for a pattern rather than an event. Kelley asked trustees not to get upset about events, since a goal of theological education is to challenge students to think.

"This is a seminary with a conservative tradition," he said. "It is a given that New Orleans Seminary will be a seminary based on absolute confidence in the Word of God."

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(BP) photos available upon request from New Orleans Seminary's office of public relations; phone, (504) 286-3603; e-mail, nobts@communique.net or 70420.62@compuserve.com.

Kelley commissioning service
followed NOBTS trustee vote

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press
2/28/96

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"Today is the greatest and grandest moment for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and the Southern Baptist Convention," said Morris Anderson, chairman of the seminary's presidential search committee, in prelude to the words the nearly 1,000 people in attendance in the seminary's chapel waited to hear:

"I present to you the eighth president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Charles S. Kelley Jr."

Introducing Kelley as "a family man, a church man, a seminary man and God's man," Anderson said Kelley is "totally committed to the Lord and the Lord's work."

"Chuck Kelley loves his wife more, loves his church more, loves this seminary more, because he loves Jesus Christ the most," said Anderson, vice chairman of the NOBTS board of trustees and pastor of First Baptist Church, Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

Edward Johnson, chairman of the NOBTS board of trustees, led the presidential commissioning service in the seminary's Roland Q. Leavell Chapel immediately following the trustees' Feb. 23 vote to elect Kelley.

"Dr. Kelley is God's first choice," said Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Ocala, Fla. "He is gracious and kind, and he truly has a servant's heart. His heart is with this seminary. Chuck Kelley was the unanimous choice of the trustees as the next president for this great institution."

Johnson asked Kelley and his wife, Rhonda, to kneel in front of the platform steps beneath the pulpit area for a prayer of dedication while trustee officers, Provost and Academic Dean Billy K. Smith, Student Body Association President Kevin Trinkle and Billy Simmons, faculty representative on the presidential search committee, laid hands on the couples' shoulders, while Johnson said a prayer of dedication.

"God has done wonderful things in our lives on this campus," Kelley said during his brief address. "But more importantly, God has done significant work in our souls. He stripped us to zero and then put us back together again in this place.

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"What we celebrate today is the faithfulness of God," Kelley said. "God was, is and ever will be faithful to his people."

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(BP) photos available upon request from New Orleans Seminary's office of public relations; phone, (504) 286-3603; e-mail, nobts@communique.net or 70420.62@compuserve.com.

Dip in working women
first in 25 years

By Ken Walker

Baptist Press
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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--While social observers don't agree on the depth of a trend toward working women returning home, Cindy Abernathy can see the evidence all around her.

She is one of six college-educated, professional women in her northern Kentucky community who quit working the past few years to concentrate on raising their children.

Abernathy taught music 16 years before the birth of her son, Clayton, in June 1994. "I feel I'm the best caregiver he could have," said Abernathy, a member of Latonia (Ky.) Baptist Church. "I wanted my priority to be him instead of teaching school. I took a year off because I had tenure and fully intended to go back. But I decided my heart wasn't in it.

"I knew the quality of life was more important than extra income. I couldn't be super-mom and super-teacher."

Although the numbers don't indicate a huge shift -- dual-income families still outnumber single-income families three to one -- the number of working women ages 25 to 44 declined in 1994 for the first time in 25 years.

In the Christian world, the recent release of Larry Burkett's book, "Women Leaving The Workplace," will add fuel to the dialogue.

The book was spurred by the marketing director of a large pantyhose manufacturer telling Burkett of a 25 percent drop in sales, which the company primarily attributed to women leaving work and not needing as much pantyhose for casual, domestic wardrobes.

Burkett, a nationally syndicated radio host and member of Blackshear Baptist Church, Oakwood, Ga., gathered thousands of letters on the subject, many of which are excerpted in the book.

Burkett said his book doesn't judge whether women should quit working outside the home -- it is aimed at preparing those who want to make the step. In his research, Burkett made a surprising discovery: It's easier for a couple with an income of less than \$25,000 to make it than those making over \$40,000. The reason: Those with lesser incomes can adjust easier.

"With those who still made over \$40,000 (after the wife quit working), they had been making around \$60,000 and adjusted to that lifestyle -- homes, cars and so on," he said.

"You can't just cut back one thing, you have to cut back on a lot of things. It requires a lot of sacrifice, such as shopping flea markets, cooking all the food and making some of the kids' clothes. If you're not committed to that lifestyle, it won't work."

If women had their choice, it appears there would be a massive change in society: If they had enough money to live comfortably, only 15 percent would work full time.

That finding was part of a survey of working women by Louis Harris and Associates last spring.

Another 33 percent would choose to work part time, 31 percent would stay at home to care for their families and 20 percent would choose volunteer work.

Information gathered by Mothers at Home shows the majority of preschool children already spend their days with their mother, and that most mothers and families want more time with their children.

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"I think there's a new appreciation for nurturing in our culture," said Marian Gormley, the group's public relations director. "Women are saying, 'I feel so strongly that my children need me that I'm going to put my career on hold for this.' And younger women aren't sure they want their life that full of stress," from a combination of outside work and child rearing.

Founded 11 years ago to encourage stay-at-home moms, the group publishes a monthly journal, "Welcome Home," which now has 14,000 subscribers (for order inquiries, call 1-800-783-4666). The organization sends members to testify before congressional committees and tracks cultural issues and their media treatment.

While Abernathy and other stay-at-home mothers love spending time with their children, they acknowledge day-long responsibilities bring frustration at times.

Abernathy said she, like others in a six-member, informal support group she meets with weekly, plans to return eventually to work.

The mothers have children ranging in age from 18 months to 2 1/2 years. The "play group" gives the kids a chance for socialization, while their mothers get to compare notes, share ideas and cry on each other's shoulders.

But whether or not she had this outlet, Abernathy is committed to staying with Clayton in his formative years. "He's a happy, well-adjusted little guy and I think the main reason is because we have that anchor at home. I had not planned to do this and didn't think I'd be happy at home. But I've changed my mind."

Susan Wilder has stayed home since 1990, when she and her husband, Frank, moved back to his native Louisville, Ky., so he could join his family's electronics business.

She does work two half-days a week, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at St. Matthews Baptist Church's "Parents Day Out" program. But her two oldest daughters are in school then and her 21-month-old daughter accompanies her to the program.

"As frustrated as I get sometimes, I told Mollie the other day, 'Nobody loves you like I do,'" she said of their youngest child.

Like Abernathy, Wilder also was a teacher. "Even though I love teaching, for me it was a real pull. I never felt like I was giving anybody my full time," Wilder said.

"The most rewarding part is there would have been so many things I would have missed had I not been here. I looked at my 9-year-old recently and thought, 'How did she get to be 9 already?' It's amazing how quick they grow up."

Although Cynthia Cary occasionally sells clothing and gift items at flea markets and craft shops, she primarily has devoted her time to family since earning a degree in home economics at Murray State University more than 20 years ago. "I don't want someone else raising my kids," said Cary, a member of First Baptist Church, Benton, Ky., and mother of four. "We want to teach them our values.

"And if you work, when you get home you have to fix supper and pretty soon it's bedtime; you don't get much time with them."

Although some see a trend toward mothers quitting work, not Cary. She doesn't know many others in her shoes, and she said others' condemning attitudes poses one of her biggest challenges.

"There's almost a prejudice against non-working mothers, like we are lazy. I hear people say, 'I wish I could stay home,' especially if I go out somewhere in the middle of the day," Cary said.

David Harmon-Vaught was a highly paid, well-traveled professional, but when he and his wife, Darlys, adopted their first child nearly three years ago he decided to become the stay-at-home parent.

He didn't set out to make such an unconventional choice, it just worked out that way. "I had an option to sell out to my partner," explained Harmon-Vaught, who was president of a pharmaceutical purchasing group with operations in 37 states.

"It gave me an opportunity to have a retirement plan, invest the money and stay home." He now parents two children full time. In addition to son Mark, the couple adopted a daughter, Sarah, after her birth last April.

"It's a lot harder than my other job," laughed Harmon-Vaught, a member of Louisville's Broadway Baptist Church and graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "I have a whole new respect for women. The worst thing is the repetitive chores."

He said he hasn't "gotten any flack" about his decision. "In our circle of friends, I get grudging respect. I've had friends say they wish they could do this. Guys at church tell me, 'I'd give anything to have the time with my kids the way you do with yours.'"

Not that he intends to stay at home forever. He already is considering drawing up plans for a home-based business for the day when April is old enough to attend pre-school.

"We owned a country store and gas station in South Carolina, and our home was next door," he said. "Growing up, both parents were around and that was important to me."

Abernathy advises couples considering the move to a single income to first try living on one income. Knowing they wanted her at home when they had a child, the Abernathys saved for that day and "didn't live beyond our means," she said. When they built their house three years ago, they relied solely on his salary.

"You learn to work within a budget. We cut coupons and go to consignment shops for baby clothes ... I wear more sweats and jeans, casual clothes (that cost less)," Abernathy said.

Susan Wilder said when she and her husband considered work-related expenses for food, clothing and gasoline, they didn't feel they would be that much worse off with her at home.

Still, with three daughters, "hand-me-downs" are a way of life, she said. In addition, several friends and her sister-in-law have worked out an informal clothes-sharing network for clothes their children outgrow.

At the Cary household, Cynthia said finances are handled on a month-to-month basis. Sometimes they have to forego things like new carpet or furniture. At such times she thinks about how they could afford them if she worked outside the home.

"But it's not worth it," she said. "We just make do with what we have. I'd rather live on worn-out furniture than not be home with my children. Furniture wears out but kids grow up fast and leave."

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Elisabeth Elliot: Preoccupation
with self blunts discipleship

By Lee Weeks

Baptist Press
2/28/96

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Mankind's compulsive obsession with itself, said Christian author Elisabeth Elliot, is an "unconscionable appeasement to the demon self."

"How can we be preoccupied with self-image and self-esteem and self-actualization and at the same time be denying ourself and taking up the cross and following Jesus?" Elliot said. "It's not going to work. It won't do at all. It's either/or."

Elliot was the opening speaker Feb. 22 at Women's Leadership Consultation VI, a women's leadership conference held on the campus of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

"I really don't see how any of us are going to be leaders of the sort that Jesus spoke of unless we completely divest ourselves of our popular notions today of self-actualization and self-esteem," Elliot, host of the weekday "Gateway to Joy" radio program on 200 radio stations across the country, said during her address to the seminary's Binkley Chapel audience.

Elliot, the daughter of missionary parents, was born in Brussels, Belgium. She served as a foreign missionary 11 years in Ecuador, South America, before returning to the United States in 1963.

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In 1956, Elliot's husband, Jim, and four others, were killed by Auca (Waorani) Indians in South America. Two years later, Elliot and her daughter returned to serve as missionaries to the Aucas.

"The best way to find out whether or not you really have a servant's heart is to see what your reaction is when somebody treats you like one," Elliot said.

Elliot said Christians are called to follow the example of the suffering servant.

"Jesus went to the cross in a total denial of himself," she said. "He who made the stars put himself into the hands -- the hands which he had also made -- of ordinary men and was subject to their limitations and to their mockery and to their hatred and to their indifference."

The first step to following Christ, Elliot said, is denying yourself. "That means you don't have any rights," she said.

Followers of Christ should not wallow in the world's pool of "satanic" self-pity, Elliot said.

"Take your unfulfilled longings to the foot of the cross," she said. "They've been dealt with. It's not new (to Jesus). If you were horribly abused as a child, that's a horrible thing. Yet it has been dealt with at the cross of Jesus Christ. He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

Elliot said followers of Christ should not be surprised or dismayed when they suffer for their convictions.

"How do we expect to follow one who took up a cross and not encounter suffering?" she said. "He is not looking for heroics. He's looking for those who are willing to follow him down that road of sorrows no matter how tiny the form that cross may take."

Leaders, Elliot said, are measured by how much they sacrifice, not by how much they gain.

"When the will of God cuts across the will of man, somebody has to die," she said. "Leaders are meant to be losers -- losers of ourselves (and) of our rights."

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Reaching young families
focus of 'First Contact'

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
2/28/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Question: When do unchurched young adults often begin thinking about church involvement?

Answer: When they become expectant parents or parents of young preschoolers.

"Even if they haven't been involved in church, many young couples want their children to grow up with the positive Christian values and morals they learn in Sunday school," Ann Edwards, a preschool consultant in the Baptist Sunday School Board's Bible teaching-reaching division, said.

Churches have a unique window of opportunity to reach these young families, she said, by showing an interest not only in their children or children-to-be, but in the parents themselves.

Many Southern Baptist churches have been doing exactly that for years through "Cradle Roll" Sunday school departments. These departments minister to expectant parents and families with babies up to 12 months old.

Beginning in October 1996, the Cradle Roll ministry will take on a new look and name. "First Contact" is designed to provide an ongoing emphasis for outreach and ministry through a church's preschool Sunday school division.

"Some preschool leaders felt the Cradle Roll name was outdated, and we also found many churches had so many preschool needs they weren't enlisting an additional person to serve as Cradle Roll director," Edwards explained. "Hopefully this new structure -- changing it from a department to an ongoing ministry -- will make it easier for churches to reach new parents and their children."

Edwards said a preschool staff person, Sunday school director, preschool division director or preschool outreach leader can initiate First Contact. She outlined eight steps for carrying out the ministry:

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1) making church members aware of the opportunity to reach young families through First Contact.

2) enlisting a core group of people who will visit prospects. This group may be composed of adults with a love for young unchurched families, couples from young adult Sunday school classes, adults active in the church's outreach and evangelism ministry, preschool Sunday school teachers or others. Each person should agree to visit one or two prospect families.

3) developing a detailed plan for ongoing prospect discovery and ministry. Edwards suggested several ideas for prospect discovery, such as new birth listings in the local newspaper, Vacation Bible School prospects whose brothers or sisters are 12 months old or younger, prospects submitted by church members from their workplace or neighborhood and an expectant parents class offered in the church. The Sunday School Board's Broadman Prospect Services also will work with churches interested in identifying prospects in their area, she said.

4) developing a plan for ministry that may include some ongoing opportunities for cultivating relationships with prospects, such as Bible studies for new parents ("Experiencing God" or "Parenting by Grace," for example), including prospect families in young adult Sunday school fellowships and parent dedication services that include church members as well as prospects from First Contact.

5) meeting on a regular basis with volunteer visitors to make new assignments, review visits and make plans for future prospect discovery efforts.

6) training volunteers to make contacts -- assisting them, for example, in developing visiting and witnessing skills.

7) preparing a budget for the preschool division director to submit to the church budget committee. Edwards said leaders should budget for resources and supplies needed for visitation, outreach events, gifts for new parents and publicity events. Events such as new parent fellowships, parenting classes and young adult fellowship events may already be included (as outreach events) in the church budget, she noted.

8) developing a calendar that includes special events such as parent dedication services and prospect discovery events.

Another important factor to note, Edwards said, is many young couples live away from their nuclear families and face the stresses of having and raising a child alone.

"The church has the opportunity to become an extended family to these couples. Any little thing you do, they will find encouraging," Edwards said.

Changes in the traditional family structure also mean churches need to plan on ministering to different kinds of caregivers through First Contact, Edwards said. Other special needs groups include grandparents who are raising their grandchildren, adoptive parents, single parents and unwed and/or teenage mothers.

"This is such a great opportunity for churches," Edwards said. "When you show an interest in someone's children, it is easier to build friendships and relationships. It can really make a difference."

Information about First Contact is included in the administrative manual, "Toward 2000: Leading Children in Sunday School," and also will appear in preschool Sunday school literature published by the Baptist Sunday School Board and "The Sunday School Leader" magazine. Churches interested in contacting Broadman Prospect Services for assistance in prospect discovery should call 1-800-443-8032.

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Quarterly, dictionary guide
Buddhist man to salvation

Baptist Press
2/28/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A Burmese immigrant now living in Nashville, Tenn., accepted Christ recently after reading the plan of salvation in a Bible study quarterly published by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

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U-Nyunt Shwe, who comes from a Buddhist background, became a Christian after studying an article titled, "How to Become a Christian," in an adult Life & Work Sunday School quarterly.

"He is learning English so he had to use a dictionary to work through the material," O.J. Finley, an adult Sunday school teacher at Judson Baptist Church, Nashville, said of Shwe.

The man had visited Finley's class and had expressed interest "in learning more about Jesus."

"My wife thought of giving him the quarterly and pointing out the article about how to become a Christian. The next Sunday we took him to our house for lunch. He said he had read the material and that he wanted to live for Jesus.

"I read some Scriptures, shared with him and led him in the prayer of salvation," Finley recounted. The Sunday school teacher later obtained a Burmese Bible from the American Bible Society to give to the new convert.

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Ike Reighard says obedience
to God's vision brings success

By Lee Weeks

Baptist Press
2/28/96

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Like any successful business, there must be a vision if Christian ministry is to flourish. But the vision, Dwight "Ike" Reighard cautioned, must come from God.

"God says if you do what you're supposed to do, then you will be prosperous and you will have success," Reighard said Feb. 27 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. "Success is finding God's will and doing it."

Earlier this month, Reighard became senior associate pastor at First Baptist Church, Atlanta. Reighard had served as pastor 17 years at New Hope Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga.

Reighard warned with God's vision will come attacks and obstacles aimed at undermining the divine plan.

"You do not struggle against flesh and blood, but there are powers and there are principalities and there are elements that are going to come against you," he said.

Still, Reighard said at the Wake Forest, N.C., school, Christians must hold fast to their calling no matter what Satan hurls at them.

"If you have put the time in on the front end to know that this (vision) is from God, then you're not going to let go of your dream even when it appears that your dream has died," he said.

Reighard recommended putting a God-given vision for ministry in writing by setting goals to make the dream a reality.

"You're going to live your life by default or by design," he said.

Reighard said pastors and other Christian leaders would do well to follow Jesus's philosophy for ministry.

First, Reighard said, Jesus "visualized" his ministry when he said, "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost."

Jesus "verbalized" his vision through his teachings, Reighard said. And finally, Jesus "vitalized" his vision consummating his earthly ministry on the cross.

Likewise, Reighard said, Christian leaders who have a vision for ministry must lead by example.

"You will never lead people any further than you yourself are willing to go as their leader," he said. "Do not be guilty of the sin of partial disobedience."

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Frank Pollard: God answers
prayers by sending people

By Dena Dyer

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Nearly every time people cry to God for help, God's answer is his people, said Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss., in a Feb. 22 chapel service at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"In all of Scripture, we find people crying out to God," Pollard said. "And God says, 'I have seen, I have heard and I am coming down to help you.' Then he takes someone -- usually unknown and unimpressive -- and says, 'Come here, you are my answer.'"

For example, Pollard cited Exodus 3:7-10, in which God said he was sending Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, and Joshua 1:1-9, when God answered the cries of his people by enlisting Joshua to lead them into the promised land.

"And just like Moses, you get the feeling that Joshua was neither strong nor courageous -- but God used them both," Pollard said.

"And in our lives, he uses people to be the answer to our problems. How did you become a Christian? How did you know you were called? God sent someone," he said. "The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in you and can help you do whatever God calls you to do.

"We need to teach people to be the answer, because they are," he concluded. "All around us are people crying out to God for help, and he says to you and me and to all who know Jesus -- you are the answer."

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(BP) Brites
Compiled by Art Toalston

Baptist Press
2/28/96

Can't preach, so he gives 30-minute 'greeting'

DETROIT (BP)--A visit to the Office of Immigration and Foreign Affairs was an unexpected part of a visit to Cuba last fall by evangelist Sammy Tippit of Texas and Carlos Liese, pastor of First Spanish Baptist Church in Detroit, in connection with Michigan Baptists' partnership with Baptists in eastern Cuba. Liese recounts: "We were escorted into a small office where an officer waited at his desk with a lieutenant across the room and a corporal at a typewriter. They took our passports and tourist visas as they began to explain that in order for a society to maintain order, there have to be laws. The law states that tourists are supposed to do tourist things, not preach in Cuban churches. Sammy told them that while other tourists go to the nightclubs, since we are Christians, and Baptists, we like to visit churches in the evenings. ... We were reprimanded and told that if we spoke in church again, we should be aware of the risk we were taking. They warned us we would be subject to a fine, arrest or deportation. They typed up a report and dismissed us." That evening, in a service attended by 600 people at a church in Holguin, Cuba, a city of 250,000, Liese continues, "The pastor told the congregation what had happened and there was a great groan heard throughout the sanctuary. Since the authorities made it clear we could not go up to the pulpit, we were allowed to bring a greeting from our pew, so Sammy delivered a 30-minute 'greeting.' That evening 60 people made professions of faith when the pastor held an invitation to come to the altar!"

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High schooler took 'church' to jail

PINEVILLE, La. (BP)--In a jail in Bastrop, La., Wade Akin got his first dose of nontraditional evangelism as a high school student tapped by an evangelist to preach in a wing of the jail. "I remembered what I heard about Billy Sunday and Billy Graham," Akin, now a Southern Baptist missionary in Brazil, recounted at the Louisiana Baptist evangelism conference, "and I really started waving my arms and yelling and tried to do like both Billys. There was one poor man sitting there in that cell, and I think he was more frightened of me than I was of him." Even so, the inmate accepted Jesus as his Savior. Then, Akin learned the man was on his way to death row in Angola. "That man never could have gone to church. If he was going to be saved, the church was going to have to go to him," said Akin, recounting the sense of call he subsequently felt to spend his life taking the gospel out of the four walls of the church.

Small-town church ready to meet needs

ANZA, Calif. (BP)--There's a lot of ministry to be done in a small town, says Robert Reece, pastor of Anza (Calif.) Southern Baptist Church. "Whatever need that would appear in the community -- a loss of housing due to fire, a hospice situation or if the highway patrol or county sheriff finds a family stranded on the highway -- instead of calling a social service agency, they call the pastor. Since I have been here the longest and I am the best known, I get the calls," Reece says, who came to the town of 6,000 south of the San Jacinto Mountains nine years ago. "We have prepared our church to respond to local emergencies," he notes. "We have medical equipment and supplies, generators, cots, bedding, stored water. If a bus full of kids has a wreck, we are prepared for that. The agencies are aware of that." The pastor adds, "I feel this is God's appointment for me. ... I feel fulfilled and satisfied."

Smash a pallet of eggs, call a ministering church

PITTSBURGH, Calif. (BP)--When a customer falls on a pallet of eggs, what's a grocery store in the San Francisco Bay Area to do? It called Pittsburgh Baptist Church "to see if we would take the messy eggs," a news release from the congregation recounts. The church had wanted to put a carton of eggs in each food box it was distributing in its Christmas toy and food ministry to 500 needy people. Funds had run short and church members were praying, when God put the church members to work and then gave a blessing: "We spent three hours cleaning the mess but were left with 140 cartons of good eggs!"

Son gets chance to tell dad what to do

SPARTA, Tenn. (BP)--Ralph Benningfield jokes that his son, Doug, has wanted to tell him what to do since he was a little boy. But now that he can, Doug rarely does. Doug is pastor of Hickory Valley Baptist Church, Sparta, Tenn., the mother church of nearby Laurel Hill Baptist Mission where his father is pastor. Ralph says he doesn't worry about things at the new congregation: "If you can't trust your dad, who can you trust?" Besides, "Dad has 40-plus years of experience," Doug says of his father's ministry as a pastor and an associational director of missions. "The mission work has been a spiritual lifesaver for me," the senior Benningfield says. "To retire and not have a regular place to serve would leave a hole inside that couldn't be filled."

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Tulsa pastor going home
with Singing Churchmen

By Dave Parker

Baptist Press
2/28/96

TULSA, Okla. (BP)--When the Singing Churchmen of Oklahoma make their trip to China in April, for most of the entourage it will be a new experience in a land they have never seen before.

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For Ted Lam, pastor of Tulsa's International Baptist Church, it will be a homecoming.

Lam, who is serving as interpreter for the Churchmen, was born in Fuzhou, China, on a date important in U.S. history: Dec. 7, 1941, the day the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

In 1947 and 1949, though, as communists took control of mainland China, Lam's family joined a mass exodus of people who fled to the nearby island of Taiwan. There he stayed the next 10 years.

For his high school years, Lam moved to Hong Kong, then at age 18 he moved to the United States, where he attended Union College in Lincoln, Neb., then the University of Nebraska.

In 1975, he moved to Tulsa to work as a computer analyst with American Airlines. He is now the senior computer analyst, but plans to retire this year.

Lam said he is looking forward to the trip back to China.

"This trip is very exciting to me because I get a chance to go to the land I was born in," he said. "I have a great compassion for the Chinese people, because I am a Chinese.

"Somehow, I think when we talk about China, the Lord touches many people's hearts. China is a hard country to reach, but the Lord touches people's hearts. It is such a big country, I think the Lord just doesn't want to let go.

"We Baptists have done a good job working with the Chinese," he added. "Right now, we cannot send missionaries to China, but we can send teachers, musicians and technicians. We have to adapt to different situations.

"The government position is they will not allow missionaries to go, because missionaries may threaten Chinese sovereignty," he said. "Chinese people can preach the gospel to their own people, though, and the government has invited religious leaders before," including evangelist Billy Graham.

"Religious activity is limited to the church compound, though," Lam noted. "So, Christians can't hand out pamphlets in the street, but within the church compound they can do whatever they want."

By the same token, he said Bibles may be distributed within the churches but not on the streets, and Christian bookstores are not allowed.

He said he feels many people's understanding of China has been handicapped by sensationalism from some evangelicals who solicit funds over the airwaves.

"If you want to bring in four or five Bibles, they will let you in," he said. "If you try to bring in 50, they'll want to know why. I saw one program where a man taped Bibles to his body, but that was sensationalism. He could have carried them in his suitcase."

To avoid problems, the Singing Churchmen -- comprised of ministers of music from across Oklahoma -- will actually buy Bibles, hymnals and study materials in China, where they are printed in Nanking. They then will ship the materials to the churches. When the Churchmen visit, they will distribute them.

Lam said China's policy is not that different from U.S. policy in that regard.

"If I tried to bring a crate of Chinese books into the United States, customs agents would ask what they are for," he said.

Lam visited China in 1993 and witnessed in the city of his birth. There he met his brother, who had stayed in mainland China, for the first time in 40 years.

He said visiting Chinese churches was an eye-opening experience.

"There are two types of churches there: Three-Self churches are government controlled, then there are home churches, which are underground," he said.

The Churchmen will only be visiting Three-Self churches.

Lam said Three-Self churches are run by an administrative committee that includes a government official. The official ensures the church abides by Chinese laws.

The church he visited was officially built for 1,000 to attend but had more than 2,000 for a standing-room-only crowd. Some watched over closed-circuit TV from another location.

"The paint was old, they sat on wooden benches and it had a cement floor," Lam recalled. "By the standards in this country, it probably would have been torn down or not called a church.

"I went through the whole hour crying. I saw the suffering side of the cross. Here, we go to church and see the glory side of the cross. Everything here is too nice.

"After seeing the churches in China, I think we need to restrain ourselves," he reflected.

When Chinese take the Lord's Supper, he said they pass around one glass of juice, and members use small plastic spoons to dip out a portion.

"Here, we use some of our finest dishes for the Lord's Supper," he said.

"In China today, there are lots of souls ready to harvest," Lam said. "The people's hearts are ready, after 40 years without the teaching of God, to accept the truth. Here, people's hearts are not ready to accept the truth."

So many people are ready for the gospel, and Three-Self churches are so scarce, that home churches are thriving, even though they are underground. Lam said the daily church meetings rotate from home to home, and at each service the location for the next meeting is announced.

Because there is very little structure to home churches, he said they are easy targets for Jehovah's Witnesses and other cults.

Lam's wife, Jane, will accompany him on the trip. Of Chinese descent, she was born in Indonesia and raised in Hong Kong. She was saved and baptized at Kowloon City Baptist Church, which the Churchmen will visit.

Lam's work in Tulsa began in 1986, when he started a Bible study for international students at the University of Tulsa. Only three people showed up for the first Bible study, but the group soon grew to 40.

By 1989, he felt God leading him to start a mission, but a refurbishing project at the university left them with no place to meet. Sequoyah Hills Baptist Church volunteered the use of its facilities, and the mission started there in 1990.

In 1994, the mission became a full-fledged church, and it is currently planning to move to its own facilities within two years.

The church ministers to a diverse group, although 60 percent of its members are Chinese. The next-largest groups are Indonesian, Japanese, Korean and Anglo. Over five years, more than 50 different countries have been represented in church services.

Lam preaches in English, but his message is interpreted into Chinese, Indonesian and, beginning next month, Japanese.

Last year, the church baptized 30 people, or one baptism for every 3.3 members. Its budget is now \$100,000.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Baptists add 'First Priority' to reaching teens on campus," dated 2/21/96, please correct the first sentence to read, "After 26 years as a bivocational youth minister and teacher/coach in public and private high schools"

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