

The logo consists of the letters 'BP' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, enclosed within a white outline of a pair of parentheses. The background is solid black.

October 29, 1996

96-189

TENNESSEE--Williams urges NAMB funding equal to agencies being merged; photos.
ALABAMA--National entities exhorted to think 'local' & 'global.'
VIRGINIA--FMB attorney's giving spirit has root in family, church.
ALABAMA--WMU hunger documentary shown on international teleconference.
NEW YORK--History of N.Y. convention entails sacrifice & blessing.
ALABAMA--Faith strong for family of young leukemia victim.
ALABAMA--With cancer looming, her focus is family & sharing her faith.
ILLINOIS--Teen-conscious church leaders become 'champions of breakfast.'

**Williams urges NAMB funding
equal to agencies being merged**

By Steve Barber

**Baptist Press
10/29/96**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Brotherhood Commission trustees heard a call for adequate funding support for the new North American Mission Board and praise for the faithfulness of a staff in the midst of transition at their Oct. 25-26 meeting.

"I hope that NAMB's birthright is that it has been 'birthed right,'" said James D. Williams, Brotherhood Commission president. "This new flagship agency will need not only our prayer support, but also financial support.

"At the next meeting of the SBC Executive Committee meeting in February, critical decisions will be made regarding the budget support of those entities that are named as a part of the new structure of the Southern Baptist Convention, as outlined for us in the 'Covenant for a New Century,'" Williams said. "I want to go on record and speak to you and all Southern Baptists about the need for adequate funding of the new North American Mission Board."

Williams told trustees he supports a Cooperative Program budget allocation of 50 percent for what will become the International Mission Board, 25 percent for the North American Mission Board and the remaining 25 percent "spread among the seminaries and other agencies."

"Why do I say this?" Williams asked. "We Southern Baptists are a missions people. We first came together in 1845 for the purpose of propagating the gospel. Missions support should receive priority in the budget.

"Some are suggesting that NAMB's Cooperative Program allocation be cut back to the current Home Mission Board level of 19.56 percent. That would be a serious mistake and would certainly limit what NAMB is able to do in its initial years of serving Southern Baptists, if we are to win every person in North America to faith in Jesus Christ."

At a minimum, Williams added, the new NAMB should receive 24.2 percent, the percentage now allocated to the three entities (HMB, Brotherhood and the Radio and Television Commission) that will make up the new agency.

"I'd like to see that rounded out to 25 percent," he said. "You say that's just about 1 percent. Well, 1 percent of \$140 million is \$1.4 million ... so, even 1 percent is significant."

The Brotherhood Commission is scheduled to merge with the HMB and RTVC by next June, forming NAMB, to be based in Alpharetta, Ga.

--more--

Williams praised the agency's staff, a high percentage of whom serve on interagency transition work teams while carrying out their regular assignments.

"Right now, 19 work teams are developing recommendations for integrating the business and ministry services of the NAMB. Literally hundreds of hours are being spent in teleconferences, conference calls and one-on-one meetings," Williams said.

"I want to commend this staff for the manner in which they are balancing the competing demands of transition on the one hand and the need to continue servicing our programs on the other."

In other action, trustees:

-- approved an adjusted nine-month budget with a total anticipated income of \$4.6 million and a total distribution of \$4 million, in effect until the agency closes next June.

-- reviewed the status of the agency's ongoing missions education and involvement programs.

-- voted unanimously to suspend the agency's bylaws to re-elect the 1995-96 slate of trustee officers to serve until the agency's closure. The action was recommended by the trustee nominating committee in the interest of "continuity in the face of transition."

The officers are Donley Brown, retired military management analyst, Jefferson City, Mo., chairman; Kenneth King, director of missions, San Marcos Baptist Association, New Braunfels, Texas, vice chairman; and Charles Brown, engineering support specialist, Aurora, Colo., recording secretary.

-- welcomed new trustees Carl D. Davis, Sand Springs, Okla.; William A. "Will" Fields, Conyngham, Pa. (Pennsylvania/South Jersey convention); and Ric Herrera, Nashville, Tenn.

The next meeting of the Brotherhood Commission trustee executive committee is scheduled for Feb. 7 in Dallas. The final meeting of the entire trustee board will be April 25-26, 1997, in Memphis.

--30--

(BP) photo specials of new officers and trustees mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Brotherhood Commission.

**National entities exhorted
to think 'local' & 'global'**

By Teresa Dickens

**Baptist Press
10/29/96**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Given the prospect of a post-denominational era, national denominational entities must become as relative as possible to the local church in order to have a place in the 21st century.

This message was voiced repeatedly during a future planning conference at Woman's Missionary Union's national headquarters Oct. 16-18. Conference participants included WMU program staff and invited guests.

Among the speakers during the three-day meeting were Tom and Chistine Sine of Seattle; Carol Davis, director of ministries at The Church on Brady in Los Angeles; Bill O'Brien, director of the Global Center at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.; Bob Franklin, director of missions for Noonday Baptist Association in Marietta, Ga.; and Catherine Allen, author of WMU's history, "A Century to Celebrate."

The speakers said the church-goer in the post-denominational era is more concerned about what is happening in the local congregation than in a national organization. Yet, the individual is interested in global issues and in helping to meet needs in the global arena.

How then do national denominational entities become relative to this local, global thinker? While none of the speakers proposed a clear-cut answer to the question, they did suggest several arenas leaders of these entities should explore:

--more--

IDENTITY: National entities must focus on purpose, not survival, Davis said. The question, "How can we survive?" is "most tragic," she warned.

In discovering purpose, Davis said leaders should begin with the question, "What business are we in?" The answer to this question should set a course for the future, she said.

The ultimate goal of a national religious organization, Davis suggested, should be to "serve the churches and make them successful serving the fields." Unfortunately, too many national groups see their purpose as "doing missions for the churches and taking their resources to do it."

National entities must return to the question, "How do we serve the church?" she declared. "Those who answer that question and are successful in its rebirth will be integral in the future."

MOBILIZING THE LAITY: With the young "local-global thinker" on the scene in today's congregations, church leaders need resources to enable them to put these individuals into action, Franklin said.

Franklin cited mission partnerships as one resource that is successfully mobilizing the laity. "These partnerships provide hands-on mission opportunities while also bringing together individuals from different backgrounds and cultures."

Because partnerships usually focus on short-term assignments, Franklin said he believes volunteers need to be better trained before going to a mission site. The ultimate goal of this training, he said, would be for the volunteer to provide training on the field, enabling the work he or she starts to go on after they return home. A national entity could be the source for such training material, he said.

FUTURE THINKING AND PLANNING: While there is a lot of talk among Christian leaders about the "21st-century church," few actually plan for the future, said Tom Sine, author of several books including, "Cease Fire: Searching for Sanity in America's Culture Wars."

"Our future planning tends to be for more of the present," he said. "We are preparing our young people to live in the world we grew up in and not the third millennium. Our youth and college ministries and seminaries need to be preparing leaders who are high initiating, self-starting problem-solvers."

National entities can help in this effort, he said. One example he gave is the development of curriculum that teaches a holistic approach to missions -- missions as a lifestyle.

O'Brien also spoke about future planning. Using a diagram he dubbed "Back to the Future," he discussed the need to develop mission strategies for the present based on perceived needs of the future. Given the unknowns, he explained, these strategies need to be fluid enough to change quickly as the future unfolds, but steady enough that ministries and missions efforts can be launched from them in the present.

The need for future thinking and planning is urgent, O'Brien said. "If future generations are to have equal access to the gospel of Jesus Christ, those of us in this generation must be willing to make dramatic changes in how we think about and do missions."

--30--

**FMB attorney's giving spirit
has root in family, church**

By Marty Croll

**Baptist Press
10/29/96**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The few lawsuits Lewis Booker has fought -- and won -- for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board tell only part of the story. Possibly more valuable are the myriad he's helped the board avoid.

Lewis Booker, a trial lawyer known for 42 years of fighting with the big boys in major litigation for one of the Southeast's largest law firms, has been vital to the Foreign Mission Board as its relationships overseas and at home have grown ever more complex.

--more--

Board trustees recognized him during their October board meeting. His services as general counsel since 1987 have been based on reduced-fee arrangements, and many times he has worked free of charge.

As the board has grown from dealing in budget figures of tens of millions to hundreds of millions, and legal matters have evolved from routine property transfers to personnel disputes and international currency and visa regulations, Booker's nationally known expertise has become increasingly vital.

"Where lawsuits lurk around every corner, his counsel has steered the FMB in such a fashion that it's never been forced to pay damages," said Don R. Kammerdiener, the board's executive vice president. "He keeps us from doing something that would give (someone) a case."

His ability to tune in to the sensitivities of people in the midst of complex legal issues prompted the Baptist-related University of Richmond to establish a chair of religion and ethics in his honor in 1994. The chair recognizes his ability to apply spiritual life to contemporary ethics. Booker has served on the board of the Baptist-related university since 1972, including 11 terms as its chairman.

In retirement, Booker, 67, substitutes as a judge in Richmond's general district court. In addition, he continues to give his time as general counsel to the Foreign Mission Board, the Christian Children's Fund and the Virginia Baptist convention. He's also done a "fair amount of work" -- as he puts it -- for the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia.

On several occasions, he's traveled overseas for the Foreign Mission Board, including once for a volunteer stint teaching at a Baptist-related school in Japan.

And almost every weekend for 40 years he's taught Sunday school at Richmond's Second Baptist Church, even flying home for several years from a job assignment in the Midwest. Oh, and he's been church treasurer to boot.

His free-time schedule alone is enough to make most people pant.

But one of Booker's greatest contributions to the world around him is his demeanor -- a gentleman in every respect, as board President Jerry Rankin noted during the trustees' meeting. His warm, down home spirit is disarmingly winsome.

"I think law is an honorable profession," he says. "Most of my ancestors were preachers, and subject to great respect. Most of the lawyers I've known are the same."

His character probably finds its root in his family life and "second home," as he calls it -- Second Baptist Church. He has centered life around the church as long as he can remember, well before he married his wife, Nancy, and they began raising three sons and a daughter.

When Booker lived in a St. Louis apartment while fighting a series of cases centered mostly in the Midwest, his clients there came to understand he'd be gone most weekends. "I felt a desire to be with my family and church," he remembers. "I was enrolled in cradle roll two weeks after I was born, and my brother and sister are members there. My friends are there."

When Booker came home from a tour of duty in the U.S. Army, his father, then the Sunday school superintendent, asked him to teach college-age young people. Later he began teaching an adult class, which now numbers 40 to 50 in attendance.

For several years, he team-taught it with Dellanna O'Brien, who has since moved to Birmingham, Ala., where she serves as the Woman's Mission Union executive director. In fact, his and Nancy's friendship with Bill and Dellanna O'Brien was a factor in his offering his services to the board. Bill O'Brien is the board's former executive vice president.

Now he's engaged in the labor-intensive, detailed work of helping the board prepare to operate legally throughout the world under a new name, the International Mission Board.

Booker hopes to practice law until age 70. That's three more years he has to ensure the largest evangelical missionary-sending agency in the world can stay out of court -- and stay focused on the task of winning the world to Jesus Christ.

**WMU hunger documentary shown
on international teleconference**

By Teresa Dickens

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Woman's Missionary Union's award-winning hunger documentary, "One Common Need," was shown during the 13th annual World Food Day Teleconference.

The teleconference was broadcast Oct. 16 via satellite around the world to colleges, universities and government agencies. Select PBS stations also carried the broadcast. The annual event is sponsored by the U.S. National Committee for World Food Day, which includes representatives from Baptist World Alliance and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Christian Life Commission.

"It was an honor for 'One Common Need' to be a part of the telecast," said Stan Hill, executive producer of the documentary. "The teleconference reaches virtually everyone interested in the hunger issue."

In producing "One Common Need," Hill and his production team went to the experts -- both those who study the problem and those who live it. "In their own words, these experts explore the scope of hunger, its effects, its causes and some solutions that are working," he said.

Among those included in the documentary are former President Jimmy Carter; Congressman Tony Hall of Ohio; Larry Brown, director of the Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy at Tufts University; Christine Vladimiroff, director of Second Harvest; David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World; David Shrock-Shenk, global education assistant for the Mennonite Central Committee; and Kathryn Wolford, executive director of Lutheran World Relief.

Earlier this year, "One Common Need" was awarded a silver medal at the Houston International Film Festival, a Silver Angel award from Excellence in Media and a Bronze Telly award. It has also been recognized by the Religious Public Relations Council and Women in Media.

Along with Hill, the production team included Van Payne, producer; John Grable, writer-director; and Patrick Gutierrez, director of photography.

"One Common Need" was produced by Woman's Missionary Union with funding provided by the WMU Vision Fund and has been released on videocassette by New Hope publishing, an imprint of WMU.

To order a copy at \$19.95 plus tax and shipping, call WMU customer service at 1-800-968-7301. Ask for product #N963144. It is also available on WMU's home page at <http://www.wmu.com/wmu>.

--30--

**History of N.Y. convention
entails sacrifice & blessing**

By Michael Arges

**Baptist Press
10/29/96**

EAST SYRACUSE, N.Y. (BP)--"God called the BCNY into being," Keith Cogburn says of the Baptist Convention of New York.

"I can't tell the story, I can't read the story without seeing God's providence," says Cogburn, author of "Like the Book of Acts: the Baptist Convention of New York Story."

"So I want people to know the story, but I also want the present generation to be inspired, to realize the good work that God began among us is a work that he wants to carry through to completion."

The book, released in October, chronicles the growth of Southern Baptist Convention work in New York from the founding of the first churches in the mid-1950s to the 25th anniversary of BCNY, celebrated in 1994 with more than 300 member churches.

Cogburn is vice chairman of the convention's executive board and pastor of Raritan Valley Baptist Church, Edison, N.J.

--more--

He notes the story of Southern Baptist ministry in the New York/New Jersey territory of the convention really is "Like the Book of Acts." As in the New Testament book, the BCNY story is one of many able pastors and lay leaders enduring hardship and finding often-remarkable results. But also like the book of Acts, the BCNY story is mainly about the work of the Spirit, who sustained these Baptist "pioneers" in times of discouragement, opened unexpected doors for ministry and generously blessed their efforts.

Concerned that the early story of the convention would be lost as the leaders passed away, Cogburn conducted a large number of interviews with former pastors, missionaries and Home Mission Board personnel. He said he was amazed at the extraordinary leaders God raised up for the imposing challenge of ministry in the region.

"I noted how sophisticated they were in their understanding of what it meant to do mission in a nontraditional area for Southern Baptists."

A good example is Paul James, the founding pastor of Manhattan Baptist Church, who helped initiate much of the early work in metropolitan New York. Cogburn describes James as "an extraordinary missionary statesman ... sophisticated, urbane, well-educated, something of a Renaissance man." James "had the savvy, he had the political shrewdness, in the best sense of that word. ... You could have looked far and wide and never found someone better for the Manhattan church than Paul James."

Another example of "remarkable leadership" was Paul Becker, a native of Syracuse who had started his ministry as a pastor in rural South Carolina. Becker had a decisive role in the planting of two of the stronger churches in central New York: Central Baptist Church in Syracuse and Southport Baptist Church in Elmira. Paul Becker "just knew how to plant churches," Cogburn says.

Among leaders sustained through times of discouragement, Norman Bell, who became a leader in the Adirondack region, talked about the "piercing loneliness" he and his wife felt going through their first winter in the region's villages. Bell's ministry, however, proved especially effective in calling together congregations with little or no reliance on transplanted southerners.

Leobardo Estrada is another example of an able leader who found victory over discouragement. Before he was called to New York City, Estrada was pastor of First Spanish Baptist Church of Los Angeles and weekly host of a Spanish-language version of "The Baptist Hour," heard throughout Latin America. When first approached about leading the language missions effort in New York City, Estrada prayed earnestly that the Lord would find someone else. But in 1962 Estrada found himself leaving sunny California to encounter the rigorous climate of February in New York. He left his family behind so his children could complete their school year. In the city, he made his home in the Manhattan YMCA.

One evening, thinking about what he'd gotten himself into, Estrada dropped to his knees and cried, "Lord this work is too big for me, I can't do it." He began by working to form a Spanish-language Sunday school class for the Manhattan Baptist Church. Estrada walked the streets of New York, handing out gospel tracts and promotional fliers to anyone who looked Hispanic. On rainy or snowy days he worked the subway platforms. Within a month he had made more than 200 personal contacts and was ready to start his class. He was greatly disappointed when only four prospects arrived on that first Sunday morning. But the four liked what they saw and promised to bring their friends next Sunday, and within three or four years Estrada's efforts had yielded a half-dozen Spanish-speaking churches in the metro New York area.

In addition to noting the hardships and discouragements faced by pastors and missionaries, Cogburn was surprised by the level of sacrifice laypeople were willing to make. Beyond hours of volunteer work, laypeople were willing to "take a chance" on a new church start rather than sitting back and enjoying the extensive program of an established church.

Cogburn says he wonders whether Baptists of his own generation and younger are willing to make the same kind of sacrifices that were instrumental in BCNY's dramatic early growth. Also he fears a tendency to complacency: "I think people of my generation might be tempted to look at the BCNY and say, well, we've made our mark, we've done pretty much what we're going to do. We've established student ministries at strategic campuses, we have reasonably strong congregations in the major areas of the metropolitan Northeast. To some extent we reflect the pluralism of the region with our language churches and missions."

He adds, "There might be a temptation on our part to be at ease in Zion, to think the work has been done, and now is the time to maintain what we've established." But Cogburn's optimism for the BCNY's future is based on his confidence in the Holy Spirit's continued guidance: "The book of Acts reminds us that the Spirit is always at work, the Spirit is always calling us to mission, and the Spirit has new surprises for us."

--30--

Arges is campus minister at Princeton University.

**Faith strong for family
of young leukemia victim**

By Laurie Lattimore

**Baptist Press
10/29/96**

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (BP)--Scott Whiteaker still recalls the plane ride from Birmingham, Ala., to Memphis, Tenn. A thunderstorm was thrashing below, but the plane was above the storm clouds and the sun was shining bright. Four-year-old Zachary Whiteaker noticed the plane's shadow on the clouds was protected by a rainbow.

"I told him right then, 'See, Zach, that means God is going to take care of you,'" Scott said. The two were flying to Memphis to talk to doctors at St. Jude's Children's Medical Center about Zach's diagnosis with leukemia.

Scott's eyes still well up with tears when he recalls the hours and days just before the trip. To test Zach for leukemia and to determine which type, doctors put two needles in his spine to extract bone marrow.

"I had to hold him down, while he," Scott paused, swallowed hard and wiped his eyes, "while he was screaming, 'Don't let them hurt me, Daddy, don't let them hurt me' ... it is still hard.

"It is devastating, to say the least, to learn that your child has a life-threatening disease," said Whiteaker, a member of Locust Grove Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala.

One year and several medical procedures later, Zach and his family are still battling his life-threatening disease, but they know they are not doing it alone. Relying on their faith in God, the Whiteakers are taking it one day at a time.

At their apartment near the Memphis hospital, Zach and sister Lindsay are playing the game "Candyland." Turning up the Candyland card with the double purple box printed on it, he immediately moves his game piece past Lindsay's to win the race to the finish.

"I win!" he screams.

"He always beats me," Lindsay confesses with a smile.

Zach crawls up onto his dad's lap for some affection before jumping down to go with his sister to find another toy. They return this time with a wooden box full of paper and pens, a yo-yo and other treasures. Zach's bald head from the chemotherapy accentuates his gigantic smile and happy eyes. Scott sports the shaved version of a bald head so he could be like his son.

"One of the verses I always go back to is Proverbs 3 -- 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding' -- I don't understand cancer, but God says, 'Don't worry about what you don't understand. Trust in me, and I'll help you get through it.'"

--more--

Scott and his wife, Eva, thought Zach just had a cold back in September 1995. They were in the process of moving from Atlanta back to Huntsville when Zach became sick. When he didn't get better, they took him to a doctor. Nothing unusual was discovered. Zach's condition did not improve, so they tried a different doctor. This time the news was not so positive. Leukemia was suspected, a disease of the white blood cells. The cells crowd out red blood cells and platelets so that the body cannot fight infections. People with leukemia often have big bruises that grow instead of disappearing because they have no cells to fight the damaged area.

After doing a bone marrow biopsy at Children's Hospital in Birmingham, Scott and Eva learned their son had acute myelocytic leukemia (AML), which is a rare form and usually strikes men over 50. The cure rate is only 50 to 60 percent compared to 98 percent for people diagnosed with the more common acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL).

Within four days of the first doctor's visit, Zach arrived at St. Jude's -- a hospital that devotes its attention to children under 18 with cancer or other life-threatening diseases. Zach had a central line put in -- tubes taped down to his chest that go through the skin directly to a main artery where medicines can be injected and blood can be drawn.

Four days after arriving at St. Jude's, Zach started his first round of chemotherapy -- 24 hours a day for five days. Ten days later, he had the second round. For the third round, doctors used a more powerful chemo drug called "DAV" because they noticed the leukemia had come back even stronger after the second round.

For his fourth Christmas, Zach was in St. Jude's ICU. He was given a 10-hour day pass to leave the hospital on Christmas Day. He and his family drove around to see the Christmas lights. On New Year's Eve, he was released to live at the nearby Ronald McDonald House. In February, Zach went into remission for almost four months until he relapsed June 5, the day after his fifth birthday.

At that point, Scott and Eva knew a bone marrow transplant was their last hope for Zach. To find a donor, a person's bone marrow makeup must be a close match on six categories. Eva, Scott and 7-year-old Lindsay were not nearly close enough for a bone marrow match to Zach. Instead, bone marrow from a German woman matched Zach's in five out of six categories, which doctors consider good enough for the transplant.

Zach underwent the bone marrow transplant Aug. 17. For several months, he is restricted from going out or coming into contact with a lot of people while his body responds to the new bone marrow. Prior to a transplant, Zach underwent four days of chemotherapy, followed by four days of total body radiation to zap out any diseased tissue. He also was injected with the protein ATG, which comes from horses, to kill off Zachary's T-cells so the new T-cells from the donor marrow could be accepted. The donor marrow was flown in from Germany. About eight hours are spent counting the cells in the donor marrow and taking out all red blood cells and most of the T-cells, leaving some for the transplant.

Doctors predict only a 10 percent chance of cure after the bone marrow transplant, but so far they have been amazed at Zach's response to the new marrow. At his 21-day checkup after the transplant, 99 percent of the bone marrow had been grafted. Doctors usually aim for 100 percent by the 100th day after recovery, so they are optimistic about his progress.

"The Lord has taken such good care of him," Scott said.

Both Scott and Eva know they have a long and uncertain road ahead of them, but they also know that their strength to handle the future will come from their reliance on God.

"I don't know how people do it without Christ," Scott said, adding one of the St. Jude's chaplains said about two-thirds of the families who come to the hospital do not believe in God.

Both Scott and Eva consider part of their purpose to be their witness to other hurting families. "What we pray for is that others will see Jesus through us, that they will see something in us that will make them want the same comfort we have," Scott said.

--more--

Although the Whiteakers do not understand why Zach had to have leukemia, they have never been angry at God. Rather, they acknowledge their own relationships with God have become stronger.

"I don't think it is fair to blame bad things on God. I don't believe God makes children sick. Satan does this and God makes us strong enough to hold Satan off," Scott said. "We never said, 'Why us?' Why not us? Christians are not exempt."

Throughout the pain, prayer and Christian support have played a major role. During Zach's first visit to Children's Hospital in Birmingham, Scott called the representative for Promise Keepers and asked if someone could come pray with them during Zach's surgery. Seven men showed up.

"You just cannot imagine how it made us feel to be the recipients of the power in that prayer," Scott said.

During Zach's transplant surgery in August, their church in Huntsville held an all-night prayer vigil specifically for Zach.

"Zach is on every prayer list there is," Scott said.

When Zach goes into surgery, Scott goes with him and Eva goes to the chapel. Lindsay often keeps her eyes shut after the regular food blessing to say an extra prayer for her little brother -- something Scott and Eva cherish.

"The prayers of children are so innocent and so humble," Scott said. "I think the Lord hears them first. We need them the most."

Scott specifically recalled his prayers when Zach was in ICU last December.

"I was scared to death, and it was then I realized I just had to turn Zach over to God," Scott said. "Zach and Lindsay are his children that he gave to us and trusted us with them, so how could I not trust him?"

As Zach crawls into his mom's lap and Lindsay gives her dad a hug, Scott said, "We ask, ask, ask for healing, but we don't praise God enough for what we have ... He is so good to us."

--30--

**With cancer looming, her focus
is family & sharing her faith**

By Jennifer Davis

**Baptist Press
10/29/96**

RUSSELLVILLE, Ala. (BP)--"The doctor did not have to tell me -- I knew when I saw his face that I had cancer," Leaten Smith said as she recalled the day in the doctor's office more than two years ago.

Since that first sign of cancer, Leaten has faced a seemingly miraculous recovery, then a recurrence of the cancer and now a limited future.

In July 1994 Leaten had surgery to remove the colon cancer that had been found. To the doctor's amazement, Leaten survived the surgery and seemed to have a chance at recovery. A year and several chemotherapy treatments later, however, another mass was found in her colon. In August 1996, cancer was diagnosed once again.

"The second time around was harder," she said, "because we knew it was final."

Even though her first reaction was to cry hysterically, Leaten said she never felt angry or denied the prognosis that nothing could be done. "I accepted it from the first," she said. "God gave me the reassurance that no matter what I had to face he wouldn't leave me. The Holy Spirit was there and I felt it."

She said she believes the reason for her peace "is so I can help my family deal with this and to cope."

Leaten noted she talks with her family, letting them know where she is hurting and listening to them tell her where they are hurting.

--more--

"We cry, laugh, hurt, talk and make plans," she said. "It is so hard on the family members, much harder than it is on the patient. They have to see you suffer and not be able to do things you once could."

Although her husband and children had a hard time at first, they are much more comfortable talking about the cancer now, Leaten said. "We are all Christians and we spend lots of time praying and talking about God. It's hard not to put myself first in prayer, but I try," she said.

Over and over Leaten prays, "God, your will not mine be done," and she continually goes to John 14:1 and Psalm 55:22 for strength.

The last two years since the first diagnosis of cancer is actually a gift from God, Leaten said.

Of her doctor's amazement that she survived the first surgery, she noted the chemotherapy contained her cancer to one area. Colon cancer normally spreads. "God knows how long he wants me to live, so I'm just going to enjoy my family for now."

Leaten believes the extension on her life also has given her the chance to know her new daughter-in-law and to let the world know Jesus. "I couldn't understand why God let me live," she said. "I figured out it was to be a witness to my brothers and sisters."

And, since that day, Leaten, a member of Beulah Baptist Church in Russellville, Ala., has done just that. "I witness to everyone I come into contact with," she said.

Not only does Leaten love to tell her story to those who come to visit her, she also has spent time volunteering with cancer patients in a local hospital and in hospice care. Her eyes light up as she recalls the many patients she has visited and been able to share how God has taken care of her. "They always listen and never get mad when I share with them," she said.

Next to God and her family, it has been the church that has helped Leaten through this difficult time. "They have all been so good to pray for me," she said. "God has blessed me so much through their prayers."

People in the community have also called to check on her, visited her and taken on certain chores, she said. "Even the little things are a great help."

Known to her fellow church members by her strong faith and a smile that beams of joy that only Jesus Christ can provide, Leaten continues to draw strength from God. "All we can do is turn it all over to God. It's in his hands."

--30--

**Teen-conscious church leaders
become 'champions of breakfast'**

By Tim Ellsworth

**Baptist Press
10/29/96**

MT. CARMEL, Ill. (BP)--While Wheaties may be known as the "Breakfast of Champions," Randy Mullinax and Bryant Jeffers of First Baptist Church, Mt. Carmel, Ill., could very well be called "Champions of Breakfast."

Mullinax, the church's pastor, and Jeffers, the Sunday school director, are ministering to area teens by feeding them breakfast several times a month. Jeffers came up with the breakfast ministry idea about three years ago, and the church sprang into action.

"We started off feeding the football team," Jeffers says. "This is a football town." But the ministry grew bigger than just the football team. The church soon expanded to include all athletic teams, then opened the doors for all academic groups as well. Now, pretty much any group from the high school can come to the church for breakfast.

And Wabash Valley Junior College is joining the fun. First Baptist has fed the college's volleyball and basketball teams, as well as a group of international students.

The largest group was the National Honor Society from the high school, with about 100 members.

--more--

"It's really taken off big time in the last year, year and a half," Mullinax says. "They call us about these breakfasts. It's gotten to where the kids now mention it to the coaches."

Here's how it works:

On days when breakfast is scheduled, Jeffers and Mullinax arrive at the church around 6 a.m. and start cooking -- sausage, scrambled eggs, hash browns, fruit salad, biscuits, gravy, French toast and cheese grits are some of the favorite menu items. And as for drinks, Mullinax has it figured out. "One thing we've learned, Mountain Dew is the beverage of choice," he says.

Team or group members usually start rolling in around 7:30. Mullinax gives about a 10-minute devotional, during which time he presents the gospel.

After that, breakfast is served. But not everyone on a team can eat everything. The Mt. Carmel girls volleyball team learned that. "Spikers don't get cheese grits," Jeffers jokes, noting how spikers don't need to be weighted down.

By about 8:05 a.m., team members are off to school, and cleanup begins.

Noting the purpose of the ministry is to encourage local teens, Jeffers says, "We thought we needed to recognize the youth and what they're accomplishing."

Another added benefit is the kids become familiar with First Baptist Church and Mullinax, "should they ever need the services of a pastor," Jeffers says.

"But most of all, we want to show them that the Word of God is relevant to where they are and what they are doing, both now as well as in the future," Jeffers noted in a written description of the outreach. "What better way to minister to students than to fill their mouths with a delicious breakfast and their hearts with dynamic truths from the Bible."

Julie Steckler is a member of First Baptist and a member of the Mt. Carmel girls volleyball team. "I like it. It's a good experience," Steckler says. "If members of the team don't have the chance to be around church, this gives them a chance. It makes them feel better inside knowing someone actually cares about them."

Mandy Goldman, Mt. Carmel volleyball coach and member of First Baptist, says the ministry is "uplifting to them. It kind of gets 'em motivated for that game."

Goldman also points out the ministry's importance because the youth are coming "of their own free will. It's not their parents telling them. It's a good atmosphere."

The ministry isn't without its hazards. On a recent morning, Mullinax drops a potholder onto an oven burner while trying to take out a pan of sausage. The potholder bursts into flames, and Mullinax uses a couple of spatulas to toss it into the sink.

Mullinax quickly shifts the blame away from himself. "Why'd you make me drop that potholder?" he asks Jeffers. "I can't believe you caught that potholder on fire."

"That's the first one we've lost," Jeffers replies. Mullinax concurs. "In all actuality, that is the first casualty of this ministry."

But, even though an occasional potholder might get burned, Mullinax, Jeffers and First Baptist are trying to keep souls from suffering the same fate.

"This is definitely a seed-planting ministry," Mullinax noted in his written description. "Even though it hasn't tripled our Sunday school enrollment, you would be surprised how many of these young people remember your name and the fact that you took time to share your life with them. In light of the impact of this ministry on their lives, the work and expense is insignificant."

"Just having the opportunity to share Christ with them for a few minutes is worth it all. And only God knows the eternal results."

HOUSE MAIL

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, TN 37234

F
I
R
S
T

C
L
A
S
S

Southern Baptist Library
and Archives