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BSSB unveils 'LeaderCare'
for pastors in crisis

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
4/30/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--"LeaderCare," a strategy to provide a network of help for pastors and staff in crisis, has been announced by the Baptist Sunday School Board, along with a realignment of the agency's pastor-staff leadership department.

According to Mike Miller, director of the board's church leadership services division, LeaderCare will provide resources and a network for help in personal crisis prevention, intervention and restoration for pastors, other church staff and their families.

To facilitate processes for LeaderCare and other work of the pastor-staff leadership department, Miller said a realignment of the department's work becomes effective May 1, with three sections -- personal development, professional development and resource development -- providing services to pastors and staff persons.

Managing the personal development section, where major focus will be on LeaderCare, will be Brooks Faulkner, a 31-year board employee and longtime consultant with ministers. Working with him will be Norris Smith and Neil Knierim, both of whom are widely known in work with pastors and other church staff persons. Linda Miniard, a field service planning and projects coordinator in the ministry leadership and development department, will assume a newly created position to work with women in church staff positions.

LeaderCare resources and services will be provided in partnership with state conventions, associations and other minister support groups, taking advantage of established, quality sources for help, as appropriate, rather than duplicating efforts.

"We do not envision ourselves as doing this ministry alone," said BSSB President James T. Draper Jr. "Wherever there may be resources, we see ourselves as partners. This is far too significant for us to take ownership. I don't believe any one of us can do it. I believe we're going to have to tap every resource we have in the Southern Baptist Convention. We want to help mesh together and maximize our resources."

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He said the SBC needs to find ways to prevent situations in which pastors "hit the wall from being fired or from ethical or moral breakdown. We are a convention of discouraged ministers."

Gene Mims, vice president of the church growth group, said the firing of approximately 135 pastors each month "is a crisis problem that threatens the entire denomination. I believe the ultimate way to help the churches is to help the pastors. This is a front-burner issue for us."

Miller said conferences and materials for prevention will identify potential life crises and life transitions concerns. Guidance and support for the minister's spouse and family will be provided through marriage, parenting and family enrichment initiatives.

Crisis intervention is expected to include a 911-type emergency telephone number for ministers, mediation services, assistance toward renewal in ministry and restoration in discipleship.

Restoration to ministry or career transition will include the use of peer support groups.

Objectives for LeaderCare, Miller said, include providing pastors the opportunity to develop a personal enrichment and development plan and providing listening ministry and encouraging advice, mediation services and restoration ministry services for pastors in transitional situations.

Among personal crises which face some ministers today, he said, are sexual misconduct, theft, difficulties with church members, overwork, depression, loneliness, personal financial problems, conflicts with church leaders, family problems and marital conflict.

"When I began talking with Jimmy Draper and Mike Miller about LeaderCare, I felt the providence of God," Faulkner said. "I have felt the pain of ministers as they were forced to confront their own flaws and failures. I know that their circumstances could easily have been mine."

"I am so grateful to have this opportunity to work with many people in this significant ministry of encouragement and reconciliation," he said. "Together, we can find the answers."

Faulkner has been senior manager of the pastor-staff leadership department's church ministry section and is a preacher, minister and counselor. He is the author of several books, including "Burnout in Ministry," "Stress in the Life of the Minister," "Forced Termination," "Getting on Top of Your Work," "The Holy Spirit in the Minister's Life" and "Approaches to Leadership."

He is a member of the American Association of Christian Counselors. He earned the B.A. degree from Southeast Missouri State College, Cape Girardeau, and the B.D. and Th.M. degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. He also holds the D.Min. degree from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.

He has been a pastor and interim pastor of churches in Missouri, Kentucky and Tennessee.

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(BP) photo (horizontal, color) is posted in the SBCNet News Room under the file name Brooks.txt.

African leaders grapple
with continent's agonies

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press
4/30/96

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (BP)--Tribal and ethnic wars, evangelization, discipling, mission strategy, economic concerns, health care and stress were among topics discussed and prayed about when 60-plus leaders from 17 countries attended the fourth and largest assembly of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship (AABF), April 17-21 in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

The AABF is one of six regional fellowships of the Baptist World Alliance.

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Led by Samuel Fadeji of Nigeria, AABF president, and Eleazar Ziherambere of Zambia, general secretary, both of whom will continue to lead the AABF, the gathering stretched from the joy of many leaders attending for the first time to sadness because neighboring Liberia was engulfed in fighting.

"Please pray that we will not become discouraged," said Emile Sam-Peal, general secretary of the Liberia Baptist Convention, in a faxed letter to the AABF meeting. Sam-Peal's own exit from the country came after the AABF meeting had ended.

While the Rwandan Baptist Union is back at work in its offices and "right now we have peace, (but) we fear sooner or later the war will begin again," Samuel Rugabage, the union's general secretary, told the AABF gathering.

"Pray for the end of the war" in Sierra Leona was the cry of K.S. Kamara, general secretary of the Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone, who reported warfare there has destroyed the four corners of his country and cut off the convention from contact with many Baptist churches.

"Tribalism and regionalism are some of the things that separate Africans and we must do something to stop the fighting," said Ziherambere. "All of these divisions make it difficult to reach the goal of winning the continent of Africa."

"We want to work more for evangelization," Fadeji said, noting the value of united effort, "and fight against such problems like drug abuse, moral ills and illiteracy. We also want to look at a Christian approach to solving the crises in Africa."

"I hope this AABF meeting will be healing balm for a sick continent," said Monney Luc, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) who welcomed the Baptist leaders to the first such meeting in a Francophone country.

"The purpose of regional fellowships is for Baptists to learn to cooperate within the region," said BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz. "This is good stewardship. As African Baptists you must come together and learn from one another."

One of the things they learned about each other was the great growth of Baptist work in Africa in the last decade.

Almost all of the 23 Baptist unions and conventions in the AABF have record reports of growth in their churches. More than 15,850 congregations number encompass nearly 3 million baptized believers.

In a statistical report, Tony Cupit, BWA director for evangelism and education, study and research, reported Baptists in the AABF grew by 2 million in the last 30 years but in the last five have grown by more than 1 million.

While the largest Baptist groups are in Nigeria, Zaire, the Cameroon and Malawi, the fastest-growing are in Burundi, Ghana and Rwanda.

For all their growth, consistent with the massive growth of evangelical Christianity in Africa, every Baptist leader reported planning in their respective countries for strengthened evangelistic efforts.

Cupit also reported of the 53 countries in Africa, there is a significant Christian presence in 43, which leaves 10 "with no Christian presence."

In some countries, Cupit said, "one can hardly count up to 200 nominal Christians, and Mauritania prides itself as the only country with no single officially known Christian."

"It is time to take a look at places where we do not have a Baptist witness and begin mission work there," said Frank Adams, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Ghana.

BWA President Nilson do Amaral Fanini, a Brazilian pastor, repeated his call to Baptists everywhere to join together, put away divisions and reconcile to win the world for Christ.

"Mission and evangelism bring Baptists together," Fanini told the Baptist leaders. "I now challenge African Baptist leaders to work together for evangelism."

Fanini also encouraged them to pray, saying, "I want 10 million Baptists praying every day," he said.

"Since the task we have is big, evangelizing and planting Baptist churches in every village and township of Africa, we need the energy of everyone," said Ziherambere, who also said the AABF needs to join with other evangelicals to win Africa for Christ.

Because this evangelization is equally the responsibility of Africans and overseas missionaries, African Baptist leaders expressed concerns over existing overseas mission strategy in their countries.

After a paper by Beatrice Kamuwanga, general secretary of Zambian Baptists, in which Kamuwanga called for new thinking on cooperation between overseas mission agencies and national conventions, AABF leaders called for a meeting with heads of foreign mission agencies to discuss these matters and asked Fadeji to initiate such a meeting.

How to disciple the many new converts and provide trained leadership is a major task for all of the unions and conventions, almost all of which struggle to find money for even their basic administration, their leaders reported. Many pastors have little or no salary and no transportation to do their work, especially in the interior of their countries.

"To win souls to Christ and baptize them are only the first steps in making unbelievers become Christians," Fadeji said in a message on discipling believers. "If they are not disciplined up to the point of their having both zeal and a basic knowledge to win others, the job is only half done."

But it takes money to provide trained leaders and discipleship materials and for most African Baptist unions and conventions, money is in very short supply and, in some extreme cases, almost nonexistent. As the economy of their countries goes, so go the Baptists.

"Africa is endowed with resources, yet there is a constant cry for finances and resources," said Fred Deegbe, pastor of 3,000-member Calvary Baptist Church, Accra, Ghana.

Deegbe, who spoke on a Christian approach to solving economic crises in Africa, called Baptist churches to "a new missionary strategy" of helping to lift countries by investing in them.

Using his own church as an example, Deegbe stated Calvary Baptist has bought land for members who otherwise could not afford homes. The members pay in affordable installments to the church. "Any church that has a mind to help their people can do it," Deegbe said.

He also called on Baptists to get involved with aid agencies which, he said, often get back 60 to 70 percent of the aid money they bring; help stop the arms trade to Africa, especially as most African countries do not produce the arms which are used to constantly destabilize their continent; and get involved in health and education, which are deeply affected by poverty.

"We need trade and not aid," Deegbe said.

Poverty, war and disease bring stress, and Uche Enyioha, senior lecturer at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, urged pastors to take their pastoral role more seriously. "The stress tends to be only on evangelism," Enyioha said, "and pastors are often the first to flee when members are in crisis."

Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid, challenged the African leaders "to commit not only to evangelism, but to a world that truly knows Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior where abundant life is experienced by all."

Conference points church
toward needs of children

By Jennifer Davis

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--"Where is the religious community? Where are our voices?" asked Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, a Washington-based nonprofit organization devoted to advocacy efforts for the children of America.

Edelman and other featured speakers voiced messages explaining the needs of children to nearly 200 attendees at the "Children and the Church II" conference April 24-26 at the Woman's Missionary Union national headquarters in Birmingham, Ala.

"The religious community has to be the moral locomotive, not the moral caboose, especially when it comes to our children," Edelman said, urging it to "stand up and keep our children safe."

"We have to stop separating our Sunday life from our professional and civic life. They all have to be put together.

"We are living in an incredible moral moment, nearing the beginning of a new century and a new millennium," Edelman said. "What message will be sent to our children?"

Diana Garland, professor of church social work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., told conferees, "To show our love for children is to show our love for Jesus and the one who sent Jesus." Garland is founder of the Child Advocacy Network that developed the idea for such a conference "to seek justice for children."

The effect of violence in children's minds is spiritual, she said. "Our society's focus on collecting stuff is killing our souls and making us scared of our neighbors and our neighbor's children."

Garland said in her generation children had fears, but the things they were afraid of were "over there" -- a big war, a bomb. "The difference is that fear is inside the wall. What's frightening about the violence in our society is that it's inside us. The fact is that most violence in our society is not random. The fact is that most violence happens within the home.

"I am more concerned about the effects of the fear of violence on our children than the violence itself," she said. "We were afraid of what we didn't know. Children today are afraid of what they do know."

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, said children know about so much violence because of the media, and if the impact is not changed "many of our children will not have a future."

"TV has the greatest impact," Land said. "We have less control over TV than any other form of media ... and except for working and sleeping, the average American spends more time watching TV than anything else. TV has become the substitute mom, dad and baby-sitter" and could be termed electronic child abuse, he said.

"If we allow the increased violent activity we see on TV to continue, then we are going to continue to see this dramatic increase in violence ... (V)iolence begets violence. It must stop, and it's not going to stop unless we insist that it stop ... We must move beyond words to action.

"We can save our children's future by stopping the endless flood of violence that is flooding into our children's bedrooms and our family rooms," Land said. "Children can't protect themselves. We must do it."

"We are called to be peacemakers," Garland stressed. "It's not enough to set ourselves apart. There's not a neighborhood safe enough or a fence high enough to protect us."

"That which we have become as organized institutional church is not capable of meeting this crisis," said William O'Brien, director of the Global Center at Samford University in Birmingham. "The modern western church has departed from its call ... (W)e have forgotten our story ... (The world) can hardly tell the Christian families from the non-Christian families," he said. "We better let the dance begin before the lights go out on a mere in-house religious party."

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Craig Loscalzo, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky., encouraged conference participants to embrace the innocence of children. Americans are outraged when they hear about parents in Thailand selling their daughters as prostitutes, he said, but "our American hands are not so clean when it comes to dealing with kids."

"What about the father who forces the child to be who he is not, not for the good of the child, but because he must live his life through the child?" he asked. Loscalzo referenced the recent death of Jessica Dubroff, the 7-year-old pilot who died when her tiny Cessna crashed during her attempt to be the youngest pilot to fly cross-country.

"Whose dream are they living out? Who's looking for meaning in life?" he asked. "We want our children to have all of those things we never had and we forget that what they really need as children is to be children ... laughing, playing, doing all those things that children do.

"We (as adults) are locked into our routines," he said. "I've never seen a child pull out a day timer.

"It's through a child's innocence that we should look at the world. God help us when we do not give them time for innocence, for inquisitiveness, for spontaneity."

Children and the Church II highlighted ways the church can respond to child advocacy needs and provided encouragement for individuals as the group came together and shared concerns, Garland said.

Garland served as coordinator of the first Children and the Church conference which was held on the campus of Southern Seminary in 1993. "Last spring we felt it (the second conference) would be better hosted at WMU," Garland said. "It is a more neutral territory."

And the "timing was incredible," said Sylvia DeLoach, co-coordinator of the event. The conference came to WMU at just the right time, she said. Next year's WMU national project is "Project HELP: Child Advocacy." This was not planned, DeLoach said, "but it will be a launch for the project. WMU leadership from 12 states were represented at the conference and will be able to take all of this information back with them to use."

The theme for the WMU child advocacy project is "Time for Children" and will focus on ways to educate and involve Christians in responding to the needs of children and the church's role as their advocate within the church family, the community and the world.

The conference hosted more than 30 workshop and conference leaders from all across the nation. "These leaders were experts in their fields," said DeLoach. With 80 small-group sessions held during the three days, DeLoach and co-coordinator Barbara Massey agreed the variety proved satisfactory. "The only complaints we received were that there just wasn't enough time to get all the sessions in," DeLoach said.

The conference provided advocacy models for participants to see, said Massey. "We want to make it clear enough that anyone can do this." Churches need to understand that "advocacy must be ongoing," Massey said. "It is not a one-time event."

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Carrie Brown and Rebecca Day contributed to this story.

Southwestern 'logs on'
with 'Youthworks 96'

By Bryan McAnally

Baptist Press
4/30/96

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Formatting ... booting up ... logging on ... surfing the web ... downloading information ... upgrade complete. Riding the wave of popularity of Windows 95, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary presented Youthworks 96, its version of an information upgrade for Baptist youth workers April 12-14.

More than 375 participants from 10 states attended the conference -- an annual effort to keep youth leaders abreast of the latest methods and trends in the field.

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Workshops were designed to address the special ministry needs facing youth workers. "Understanding African American Youth," "Youth Ministry with Asian Youth," "How to Spot Teens at Risk," "Relating to Parents of Teenagers" and "Teaching Youth to Minister to Their Peers" were some of the offerings provided.

The event also featured worship services and information booths representing camps, universities, ministries and Christian businesses.

Ray Cole, a 1958 Southwestern grad now serving in Fayetteville, Ga., said he came to study contemporary issues and hear new views.

"After 43 years of service, youth change and different approaches are required. Attitudes are different and parents change as well. As adult Christians, we take an oath to God that we will raise our children to know all about him and his love for them," he said.

After the second of the weekend's six conference sessions, Southwestern President Ken Hemphill led a Friday evening worship service, describing leadership as "the biggest need we have. There is a leadership drain in our nation today."

Hemphill referred to Samson as a case study on failed leadership: "Samson had it all and lost it."

The president noted six reasons why Samson failed as a leader: He had no clear sense of purpose; he abused the gifts that were his; he tried to do it all by himself; he had a lack of discipline; he compromised his distinctives; and he took spiritual things lightly.

When people avoid the problems that befell Samson, they can become the true leaders needed at a time when a great Christian movement is possible, Hemphill noted.

"Our country is so hungry that we are hungry enough to believe in anything. We need to challenge our young people to be different for Christ. We are at a time when we can have a harvest of apostolic proportions."

Listing four common factors defining history's significant Christian movements, Hemphill noted:

- The movements were conservative theologically.
- They were aggressive evangelically.
- They called for a lifestyle change.
- They called for a serious commitment.

"We thought we had eliminated our need for religion and spiritual links, but for some reason our spirits just won't let go," he said.

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Church lags behind Farrakhan
in reaching men, speaker says

By Bryan McAnally

Baptist Press
4/30/96

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The behavior of African American youth today is far different from their African ancestors, said Cassandra Jones during her "Understanding African American Youth" conference at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's YouthWorks 96 youth ministry lab April 12-14.

Jones, who grew up in an African American neighborhood in San Francisco, taught high school music 13 years in inner-city Dallas before entering doctoral studies at Southwestern. She became involved in a Baptist World Alliance youth conference at age 11 and has continued BWA involvement since.

The experience of black youth, Jones said, encompasses a depreciated character, cultural incompetence, psychological scars, ambivalent behavior and a confused self-concept from influential characteristics of the environment.

Black youth during the 1800s, Jones said, demonstrated six strengths that aren't as evident today:

- the ability to adapt to an oppressive environment without being totally debilitated by it.
- the ability to survive with little guidance from formal educational institutions and a cohesive family structure.
- a strong desire to be free.

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-- a strong work orientation that allowed them to assume adult responsibilities.
 -- a high regard and respect for elders.

-- an obedient attitude that was necessary if slaves were to function in a cooperative manner for the general welfare of all.

Citing the appeal of Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam, Jones said it is now more important than ever to remember African American youth in ministry efforts.

"They are putting an emphasis on the black male that Christian churches are not," she said. "Our black churches are 95-98 percent female."

With statistics claiming one-half of all African American males between the ages of 15 and 25 will either be dead, imprisoned, on parole or addicted to drugs by the year 2000, Jones said the time to move is now.

"The African American males that are boys today will be those men tomorrow. If we don't take action now, those projections may very well become reality."

The Fort Worth, Texas, seminary's annual lab, April 12-14, focused on contemporary issues in youth education in the church.

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Worldviews described as key
for ministry to Asian youth

By Bryan McAnally

Baptist Press
4/30/96

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Examine the basic differences between Asian culture and Western culture, Joy Chung told youth workers, to better minister to Asian youth.

Chung, who led a workshop at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's YouthWorks 96, is a Southwestern doctoral student and youth worker at Korean Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

"The church is no longer in an age when the children come from the same 'cookie-cut' background," Chung said. "Asian youth are coming through the church doors, and ministers need to be aware of what makes them who they are."

The differences begin in the broad sense of worldly understanding, Chung said: While Western youth have an individual-oriented worldview, Asian youth are more relationship-centered.

Communication also is different between the two cultures, Chung said.

"Western youth exchange in free dialogue with their elders. Asian youth are often the listeners of a one-way conversation."

Other differences, she recounted, include: Western youth are independent, while independence is discouraged in Asian cultures; Western youth are taught to be assertive and express feelings, while Asian youth are urged to respect authority and withhold any demonstrations of emotion; Western youth discover their identity from personal ability and achievement, whereas Asian youth are identified by their position within their peer group.

"When the minister better understands the composition of the youth whom they minister to, they can better understand their problems, their motivations and the influences in life that they find important," Chung said.

The seminary's annual lab, April 12-14, focused on contemporary issues in youth education in the church.

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Warning signs listed
for at-risk teenagers

By Bryan McAnally

Baptist Press
4/20/96

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Teens who experience changes in school, social and family patterns are at the highest risk of emotional problems, according to Sandi Black, leader of the "How To Spot Teens At Risk" conference at YouthWorks 96, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's annual youth lab April 12-14.

"Parents and ministers should be alert to watch for the onset of any signals of problems," said Black, a licensed counselor for Texas Christian Counseling Centers.

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Black noted several identifiers, including:

- school attendance and grade problems.
- emotional highs and lows.
- unexplainable, erratic or lethargic behavior.
- changes in physical hygiene and/or appearance.
- drastic changes in eating habits and/or weight.
- changes in sleep patterns.
- new "friends" and secretive behavior.
- loss of initiative.
- manipulative and bargaining behavior.

Any of these problems are dangerous, Black said, because they potentially have a profound effect on the youth's physical, mental, emotional and/or spiritual health.

"Any one of these signs alone might just be normal teen behavior, but a pattern suggests problems that could be as dangerous or life-threatening as you could imagine," she said.

According to Black, parents provide a pivotal role in maintaining the balanced health of youth.

"Adults should actively communicate with their youth, be they children or friends of children. Children need to know parents care and love them. When a parent takes the time to invest in the life of the youth, the parent is making a statement that they perceive a value of worth in that child," Black said.

"Communication is important to every successful parent/child relationship. The families that I see that are floundering the worst are those where the child cannot communicate with the parent."

The Fort Worth, Texas, seminary's annual lab focused on contemporary issues in youth education in the church.

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(BP) photos available upon request from Southwestern's office of public relations.

For effective peer ministry,
be aware of snares, benefits

By Bryan McAnally

Baptist Press
4/30/96

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Eight traps can snare youth who seek to minister to their peers, according to Cassandra Jones, a Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary doctoral student and former high school teacher in inner-city Dallas.

Jones led a conference on "How to Teach Youth to Minister to Their Peers" at YouthWorks 96, Southwestern's annual conference for youth issues.

Awareness of the possible snares, Jones said, will help youth productively address the problems of their peers.

The eight traps, she said, are:

-- Don't focus on the problem of somebody else. Identify the problem of your friend.

-- Rather than spending hours blaming the problem on somebody else. Help the friend "own" the problem.

-- Don't listen for your own understanding. Listen in a way that helps the friend understand his or her own feelings and the problem.

-- You are not a professional therapist. Don't try to be.

-- Don't become personally emotionally burdened.

-- Don't insist someone else solve the problem while you sit and do nothing.

-- Don't consider the option which was chosen is actually desirable until an evaluation is made.

-- In your zeal to help, don't be the one who does everything -- this takes the responsibility away from your friend.

Making an effort to avoid these traps, Jones said, can help youth teach their peers to relate to one another in healthy ways.

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Jones also listed steps to be taken in establishing strong peer ministries.

A peer ministry leader should work to develop a resource library for youth that provides information on shelters or abuse prevention, Jones said. The ministry leader also should develop a network of churches with youth peer ministries.

The peer ministry should recruit youth who not only are mature and sensitive enough to handle difficulties but also are committed enough to stay involved, Jones said. Supervisors should be placed to provide guidance and assistance to the youth leaders.

Finally, the peer ministry should be continually monitored so any necessary adjustments are made or required training is provided.

A strong peer ministry will provide four benefits, Jones said: It helps youth develop confidence in relationships; it helps youth have mutual respect; it helps youth move into a deeper relationship with God; and it encourages honesty among youth which leads them to open their hearts to God in honesty.

"The peer ministry is such a new ministry that we haven't seen the long-term benefits yet, but we know that this ministry actually gets teens involved with the process," Jones said. "They are taking the lessons they learn in Sunday school or mission classes and applying them to real-life situations. They are improving their listening and communication skills and building relationships in the process."

The seminary's annual lab, April 12-14, was held at its main campus in Fort Worth, Texas.

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Tips for parenting reviewed
at Southwestern conference

By Bryan McAnally

Baptist Press
4/30/96

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"God gives us two ears and one mouth. Parents should listen and speak in that ratio with their children," Phil Briggs said in the "Developing Parent Ministry" conference during Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's YouthWorks 96.

Briggs, professor of youth education and church recreation at Southwestern, teamed with conference leader Rosemary Hoover of Independence, Mo., in presenting the workshop.

Noting parent ministries currently are a popular subject in Baptist circles, Briggs applauded Southwestern for being on the forefront of the ministry for more than 20 years.

"We were doing parent ministries before parent ministries were cool," he said.

Conference participants were asked to complete several inventories to establish an understanding of the relationships between teens and their parents. Other exercises analyzed parenting styles involving teens, via such phrases as, "I don't have to give you reasons, just do as I say."

"Teens are living in a difficult age," Hoover noted. "Their peers will hassle them for talking to their parents -- teens want to be independent and talking with their parents gives a perception that they still depend on their folks."

Briggs and Hoover cited ten keys to keeping love the focus of a parent-child relationship:

- Watch what you say and the way you say it.
- Listen eloquently, realizing you don't always have to be right.
- Sacrifice as an expression of love, not because of the need to be a martyr.
- Be patient.
- Make your times together positive, constructive, affirming.
- Mutually give and receive with your teens.
- Be courteous.
- Do not take advantage of your teen's vulnerability.
- Have a short memory of evil and a long memory of good.
- Never let the commitment of love for your child die.

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They also recommended improving communication by enjoying fun activities with their children.

"My son wasn't much of a talker until we starting golfing together regularly," Briggs said.

The Fort Worth, Texas, seminary's annual lab, April 12-14, focused on contemporary issues in youth education in the church.

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Tanner briefly in hospital
after mild heart attack

Baptist Press
4/30/96

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)--William G. Tanner, executive director-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, will be out of his office at least until May 15 after undergoing an angioplasty procedure April 22. He suffered a mild heart attack April 18 and was hospitalized first in Shawnee.

He was transferred to Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City where physicians removed most of the blockage in one artery. Damage to his heart was described as minor.

Robert Haskins, BGCO associate executive director, said Tanner is recovering at home and is "doing fine." He has cancelled most of his speaking engagements in the near future.

Physicians said he could attend the scheduled May 3 retirement banquet at the Cowboy Hall of Fame, but not the autograph party for a biography slated before the banquet.

Haskins said Tanner will not be speaker for the Kiamichi Assembly youth camp in July, as planned. He has also cancelled an appointment to be chaplain for the Oklahoma House of Representatives for a week.

Tanner may be addressed at 2403 Robinwood Place, Shawnee, OK 74801. Phone calls are discouraged, Haskins said.

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Claude Thomas says leaders
should dare to be extravagant

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--While not frequently cited as a Christian virtue, extravagant actions can be an appropriate response to God, according to Texas pastor Claude Thomas.

Too often church life is occupied with perpetuating the ordinary, said Thomas, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, during an April 16 chapel service at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. "I'm sure we should not wasteful, but I am convinced in the cause of Christ and in the kingdom of God to the glory of God there is a place for that which is extravagant."

In God's service, focusing on the routine can cause weariness, said Thomas. "But if we will be sensitive, there are opportunities that God gives us to move out of the rigid routine and experience something of an extravagant expression."

Thomas commended Billy Graham's plan to preach the gospel around the world via a simultaneous satellite broadcast. He also praised Southern Seminary's recent decision to construct a \$3.9 million conference and dining facility.

Thomas challenged the notion that church buildings should focus on functionality and ignore beauty. "The Temple in the Old Testament was not just a simple, functional facility, but it was an edifice to the glory of God," he said.

Churches that are preoccupied with the ordinary frequently fail to reach the unchurched, said Thomas. Yet he emphasized church leaders who dare to be extravagant risk criticism.

"When you give yourself to an extravagant expression, it will cost you something and it will cause you something," Thomas said.

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