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**Missionary To Blind
Has Special Insight**

By Karen Estes

TALLADEGA, Ala. (BP)--Since Sherilyn Richardson is blind, working with the blind was "the obvious thing to do." But it wasn't obvious to her, she had always insisted.

God changed her attitude though and she has spent this summer working with the blind in the Talladega area. She was appointed by the Home Mission Board and worked through the First Baptist Church, Talladega to visit in homes and be involved with students at the E. H. Gentry Technical School in Talladega.

There are more blind people in Talladega than in any other area of Alabama, she said. The Alabama Institute for the Blind and Deaf has been located there for over 100 years and students come to school and after graduation stay.

In spite of the high concentration of blind people there is almost no integration between the blind and the rest of the community and "segregation is the accepted thing," she has found. Most churches in the area welcome blind members but don't actively attempt to help them become interested.

"My dream is to have students from the school for the blind involved in church and youth activities and participating just like any other children or youth," she said. "Sunday School and worship services are held at the school but it is better for the kids if they can come here and take part in the church," she explained.

Richardson is seeking prime members of the church for a greater ministry to the blind, aware of churches in other communities that took an interest in ministry to the blind for a few months then dropped the program altogether. "That's worse than never starting," she admitted. She hopes to help First Baptist Church understand her dreams and some of the problems involved with ministry to the blind so many of those problems can be overcome at the beginning.

The Vinings, Ga., native went through the public schools in Cobb county and is a recent graduate of Shorter College in Rome, Ga. She graduated from both high school and college with honors. "It was a tremendous advantage to grow up with sighted people," she said. The state of the blind won't advance, she continued, "until parents, families and blind children themselves can accept their blindness and go on from there." Churches are going to have to play a major role in this concept Richardson feels, "because schools aren't doing it."

While visiting in homes, Richardson tries to help parents of blind children realize that they can develop normally and do anything they want to do. She has a special interest in working with families with blind children--especially young children.

A big part of her summer job assignment involved speaking to large groups. "I try to show with my own life that a blind person can be involved in a normal lifestyle." In speaking, she tries to "interweave my life and testimony with my work here." This summer she has lived in a backyard apartment with her seeing-eye dog, Skipper. "Skipper is an asset in witnessing," she said, "because people come up to me to see him and it gives me a chance to talk to them."

In college Richardson majored in music education. "I still think I would love to teach," she said. In March she felt God calling her into mission work so while working for the Lord this summer she is waiting for him to show her what to do next.

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Adapted from the Alabama Baptist.

(Karen Estes, a senior at Samford University, was a summer public relations intern for the Southern Baptist Convention.)

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers.

Ferguson Shares Experience
Of Daughter's Tragic Death

By Gail Rothwell

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--In dealing with questions of faith and suffering, "I want you to know I live where you live," Milton Ferguson told college students at Glorieta Baptist Assembly.

"My wife and I had made long-range plans to bring our youngest daughter, Jo Katherin, to this student week," Ferguson, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, said. "But 18 months ago, at the age of 16, she was killed in a car accident."

Ferguson said he had sought answers as to why the tragedy had to happen but later realized, "God does not give us answers to the question 'why.' He provides us the knowledge of how we can put our lives back together with gratitude and joy."

He warned, "the Christian has no guarantee against suffering but he can have victory over suffering. This solution to suffering is found in a person's relationship with God." The Christian must recognize God is responsible for a world in which evil is a possibility but he is not the direct agent behind evil, Ferguson stressed.

And while Christians must not deny the existence of evil, "we can know the healing touch of God's suffering love in Jesus Christ," he said. He called suffering and tragedy the common threads that run through all of life, plaguing man from birth to death.

He said people tend to classify suffering according to the responsibility they feel for it. "If the suffering has a purpose we never call it evil. When we are personally responsible for our suffering in some measure we understand it," he noted.

"But when tragedy suddenly strikes with no apparent purpose, then we are confronted with the problem of why." This problem is increased when children die before their parents, Ferguson admitted. "When children die first, this is contrary to how things are supposed to happen."

The Christian way may not be able to provide answers to the "why" when this kind of tragedy strikes, but God can answer the question of "how," Ferguson emphasized. He admonished conferees to remember Christian victory is not deliverance from suffering, but strength and courage from God.

More than 3,100 students attended Student Week, sponsored by the Sunday School Board's National Student Ministries.

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School Prayer and Abortion
Decisions Snagged in Senate

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
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WASHINGTON (BP)--A week-long flurry of Senate activity on abortion and school prayer measures underscored the divisiveness of these social issues but provided little indication they will be approved during this session of Congress.

The debate's focal point prior to Congress' adjournment for a Labor Day break was the Senate floor where Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., offered amendments on abortion and school prayer to the pending debt ceiling bill--a "must pass" piece of legislation Congress has to clear by Sept. 30 to keep the government in operation.

But Helms' proposals ran into stout resistance from a pair of Republican colleagues, Lowell P. Weicker of Connecticut and Bob Packwood of Oregon, who initiated a filibuster and predicted the volatile issues were going nowhere in this session of Congress.

Helms' school prayer amendment would strip the Supreme Court and lower federal courts of jurisdiction in school prayer cases. His abortion rider declares the Supreme Court "erred" in its controversial 1973 abortion decision and contains a number of restrictions on abortion. It would permanently bar federal agencies from performing abortions and the use of federal funds to pay for abortions except to save the life of the mother.

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In addition to the effort to derail the Helms proposals by filibuster, Weicker and Sen. Max S. Baucus, D-Utah, offered a pair of amendments which underscore the role of federal courts in enforcing the constitution. In the only thing close to a test vote thus far in the debate, a Helms motion to table the Weicker amendment was rejected, 59-38.

With Weicker and Packwood vowing to prevent a vote on the Helms amendments, the only thing certain is that abortion will be the topic of debate when the Senate returns Sept. 8.

Then, majority leader Howard H. Baker Jr., R-Tenn., plans to temporarily leave the debt ceiling bill to consider a constitutional amendment on abortion sponsored by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, under what he hopes will be an eight-hour debate limit. The Hatch amendment would require a two-thirds vote to clear the Senate.

On Sept. 9 the Senate will vote on a cloture motion Baker filed to limit the debate on the Helms abortion amendment. Helms will have to muster 60 votes to end the filibuster.

Exactly how the dispute over abortion and school prayer will be resolved remains uncertain, but with less than 20 legislative days to complete all its work by the anticipated Oct. 2 adjournment date, the Senate will be under pressure to act quickly. In addition to clearing the debt ceiling measure, appropriations legislation must be passed to fund government spending for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

Other legislation pushed by New Right groups was the subject of Senate committee action prior to adjournment. The Finance Committee, unable to resolve differences over anti-discrimination provisions in the tuition tax credit bill pushed by President Reagan, failed in three tries to clear the measure for floor action.

On another school prayer front, the Senate Judiciary Committee resumed hearings on President Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment on school prayer. But given the school prayer debate already pending on the Senate floor as well as the near impossible odds against action this year in the House of Representatives, the amendment's backers may have to shoot for next year.

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'Old South' States
Dominated Convention

By Craig Bird

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A near record number of messengers from 46 states, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico registered at the annual Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans in June but the numerical strength continued to reside in the states of the 'Old South.'

Lee Porter, registration secretary for the convention, reported 20,456 registered messengers for the gathering, second only to the 22,872 at the 1978 convention in Atlanta. "And we actually registered more people on-site in New Orleans because in Atlanta we pre-registered 5,005—something we don't do anymore," Porter said.

But with the 1983 convention scheduled for Pittsburgh it is interesting that Porter's figures show that six states provided more than half of the messengers in New Orleans, 10 states accounted for more than three-fourths of the number and more than 90 percent of the messengers came from only 14 states.

Texas (2,633 messengers for 12.87 per cent of the total), Louisiana (1,676 and 8.19), Georgia (1,642 and 8.03), North Carolina (1,630 and 7.97), Alabama (1,586 and 7.75) and Mississippi (1,500 and 7.33) combined for 52.15 per cent of the total number of messengers.

When the totals from Tennessee (1,438 and 7.03), Florida (1,137 and 5.56), South Carolina (1,131 and 5.53) and Kentucky (1,110 and 5.43) are added the top 10 states had 75.69 percent of the votes. The messengers from Virginia (974 and 4.76), Missouri (724 and 3.54), Oklahoma (688 and 3.36) and Arkansas (667 and 3.26) up that amount to 90.6 per cent.

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On the other hand Alaska, Delaware, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin were represented by fewer than 10 messengers while Idaho, Maine, North Dakota and Vermont did not have any voting representatives.

Porter pointed out four states that have shown outstanding increases in their attendance levels at the national convention. Georgia, with 8.32 percent of the Southern Baptist Convention's membership had averaged 5.87 per cent of the messenger total the three previous conventions (Houston in 1979, St. Louis in 1980 and Los Angeles in 1981) but provided 8.03 per cent of the total in New Orleans. Florida improved from a three-year average of 3.85 to 5.56 this year (compared to 5.88 per cent of the SBC membership) and Mississippi went from 3.94 to 7.33.

Porter acknowledged the proximity of those three states to the host state of Louisiana helped swell the figures but is still pleased they have increased their participation level. West Virginia, a state that didn't benefit from geography, also drew Porter's attention. Though still too few to be a significant percentage, West Virginia has 70 messengers at the Superdome after averaging 38 the three prior meetings.

Porter also conducted a sampling to determine how the messengers were distributed among churches. His projection reveals 6,818 churches represented by an average of three messengers per church--up from the 2.5 in recent years. The maximum number of messengers (10) were registered by 322 churches while 4,989 churches were represented by one or two messengers.

The number of messengers from the other states were: Illinois (291), California (252), Ohio (199), Maryland (184), Indiana (153), New Mexico (149), Kansas (110), Colorado (79), Arizona (70), Michigan (65), District of Columbia (32), Pennsylvania (30), Washington (28), Nevada (27), New Jersey (19), Nebraska (16), Oregon (15), Hawaii (14), Connecticut (12), Massachusetts (12), Wyoming (12), New York (11), South Dakota (11), Utah (11), Alaska (9), Iowa (8), Minnesota (8), Montana (7), Wisconsin (6), Delaware (5), Puerto Rico (3), New Hampshire (1) and Rhode Island (1).

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New Compensation Study
Lists Salaries, Benefits

By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Although retirement and insurance benefits seem somewhat neglected, pastors in Southern Baptist churches with fewer than 300 members report general satisfaction with salary and benefits according to a recent compensation study.

The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board conducted the survey to determine compensation for pastors in the size churches which comprise 62 percent of the 36,079 Southern Baptist Convention congregations.

Overall pastors in these churches reported satisfaction with their total compensation when compared to other SBC pastors or in relation to job expectations. In comparison to other educated professionals the majority consider their salaries lower than they should be.

Respondents were selected by random procedures in the specified church size and questioned on 18 benefit including salary, gifts, insurance, retirement, convention and education expenses, revival time and housing. Respondents were divided into three groups (0-99 members, 100-199 and 200-299) so pastors and church compensation committees could equate information as directly as possible to their particular situation.

In churches with 200 or fewer members, only slightly more than one-half of the full-time pastors have any kind of retirement plan provided by the church. Part-time pastors in the two smaller categories have retirement provided one-fourth of the time. It should be noted that nearly all of the part-time pastors are bivocational and likely to have retirement from their other income source. Almost 67 percent of the churches in the 200-299 bracket provide retirement for full-time pastors.

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Less than one-half of Southern Baptist pastors in churches with 300 or fewer members have hospitalization, medical, disability and/or accident insurance provided, the survey revealed. In the smallest category only one-third of the full-time pastors have hospitalization provided with much lower totals for other kinds of insurance. The study also revealed fewer than one-fourth of all pastors in churches of 300 or fewer have any life insurance provided by the church.

Another point of interest is the average time allowed for a pastor to preach revivals away from his community—two weeks.

The education level of pastors in these churches is quite high, with 70 percent of all full-time pastors questioned have one or more years of college. The highest percentage of pastors having one or more years of college education was part-time pastors in churches with fewer than 100 members, where 73.2 percent reported that level of training.

Approximately 44 percent of the wives of pastors included in the study worked outside the home and the overwhelming majority reported the reason was to augment family income.

Also figured in the compensation study were average salaries and total compensation figures for pastors in each category. In the 0-99 group full-time pastors' salaries average \$7,701 while the average for part-time pastors was \$3,356. Total compensation, which includes all benefits, averaged \$13,523 and \$4,575 respectively.

The average salary for pastors in churches with a membership of 100-199 was \$9,190 and \$4,786 respectively and total compensation was \$15,373 and \$7,444. In the top category, 200-299, the average salary for full-time pastors was \$11,080 and for part-time pastors, \$5,686. Total compensation was \$18,866 and \$8,076.

John Chandler, supervisor of the church and staff support section in the church administration department of the BSSB, said the study is available on a cost recovery basis to guide church leaders as they make financial plans related to salary and benefits for pastors. Responses from 534 pastors served as the basis for the study.

To obtain a copy of the Compensation Study Among Pastors of Churches With Fewer Than 300 Members, send \$2.50 to the Church Administration Department, 127 Ninth Avenue North, Nashville, Tenn. 37234. Copies of the 1981 study of pastors in churches with more than 300 members also are available from the same department for \$2.50 each.

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H. Leo Eddleman Joins Faculty
Of Clear Creek Baptist School

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PINEVILLE, Ky. (BP)--H. Leo Eddleman, former president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Georgetown (Kentucky) College and Criswell Center for Biblical Studies (Dallas) has been named distinguished professor of Old Testament at Clear Creek Baptist School in Pineville.

Eddleman, 71, became president of NOBTS in 1958 after being president of Georgetown for five years. He resigned his position at the seminary in 1970 to become executive vice president of Religious Heritage of America. Later in 1970 he was named to the newly created position of "doctrinal reader" (later changed to manuscript analyst) at the Baptist Sunday School Board in the aftermath of a controversy over the Broadman Bible Commentary.

He became the first fulltime president of the Criswell Institute in 1972, a position he resigned in 1975. Since that time he has been on the faculty of the Dallas school.

He was a Southern Baptist missionary to Palestine (now Israel), 1935-41, pastor of Parkland Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky. for 10 years and taught Old Testament and Hebrew at both New Orleans Seminary and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

The Morgantown, Miss., native is a graduate of Mississippi College and holds master of theology and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southern Seminary.

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