



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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85-75

Pre-Schoolers Register  
As SBC Messengers

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Reports of very youthful messengers at this year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting apparently have some substantial basis in fact, according to Lee Porter, registration secretary for the convention.

By Porter's estimate, "75 to 100 children six years of age or younger" registered as messengers from their local churches to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Dallas June 11-13.

One youngster, a four-year-old, was registered by his parents, who presented a messenger card for the child, Porter said.

The registration process does not raise the question of a messenger's age. The SBC Constitution says only a messenger must be "a member of the church by which he is appointed" (Article III).

Porter said the Dallas-area laypersons working in the registration line expressed to him their shock at the ages of some of the messengers being registered.

He said, however, the registration of young children as messengers this year was "no more than usual" and that the practice "has been happening pretty regularly" for several years. "Of course, there's nothing we can do," Porter observed. "Local churches decide who they take as members, and local churches decide who they will elect as messengers" to the annual meeting.

To set a minimum age requirement for messenger registration, as suggested by one motion made at the convention, would amount to instructing the churches as to whom they may or may not accept as members or send as messengers, he said.

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Education Commission's  
Capps Dies Of Heart Attack

Baptist Press  
6/24/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--George E. Capps Jr., associate director of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, died June 21 at his home of a heart attack.

Capps, 58, joined the Education Commission staff in 1975 after being pastor of First Baptist Church, Cookeville, Tenn., for 14 years. He also was pastor of churches in Parsons, Tenn., and Fordoche, La.

The Talladega, Ala., native was a member of the SBC Education Commission and the executive board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. He was president of the executive board for two terms and was president of the Tennessee Baptist Pastor's Conference in 1973.

Capps is survived by his wife, Betty, and three children: Paul, of Atlanta, and John and Linda, both of Nashville.

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Education Commission  
Budget Exceeds \$500,000

By Lonnie Wilkey

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--For the first time the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention approved a budget exceeding one-half million dollars.

Commission members adopted a budget of \$516,665 for 1985-86 during the agency's annual meeting in Nashville.

The new budget represents a 5.1 percent increase over 1984-85 despite only a 1.8 percent increase in Cooperative Program receipts voted recently by the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas.

The remainder of the budget will come from the sale of materials, interest on investments with the Southern Baptist Foundation and a transfer from reserve funds.

Commission members approved a motion to reaffirm Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director/treasurer of the commission, for his leadership amidst stress in the convention.

In other action, the commission approved an amendment to the Convention Annuity Plan which would allow employees to make monthly transfers of accumulations of their share of contributions among investment funds. Also, the amount of Opdye Scholarships was increased. These scholarships are provided to Baptist college students from mountainous areas.

Commission members adopted a resolution recognizing the contributions of George E. Capps Jr. to the agency. Capps, associate director of the commission since 1975, died of a heart attack at his home June 21.

All officers of the commission were reelected for another one-year term. They include: Thomas S. Field, president emeritus of William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo., chairman; John E. Johns, president of Furman University, Greenville, S.C., vice-chairman and Tom J. Madden, executive secretary-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Brentwood, Tenn., secretary.

The 1986 meeting of the Education Commission will be held June 4-7 in Gatlinburg, Tenn., in conjunction with the National Congress on Leadership co-sponsored by the commission and the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

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BTN Coverage Of SBC  
Increased Participation

By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press  
6/24/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Just because you couldn't get to Dallas in June didn't mean missing the record-shattering Southern Baptist Convention.

Through the cameras of Baptist Telecommunication Network (BTN) Dallas and the SBC were delivered into fellowship halls, association offices and private homes throughout the country to give Baptists a first-hand look at convention proceedings.

The number of persons observing the convention this year was increased by at least 50 percent, according to Joe Denney, manager of the telecommunications department at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Denney's estimate was based on the 75 letters, cards and telephone calls from persons reporting on different groups watching the coverage and information about cable systems carrying all or part of the BTN coverage.

At many of the locations, observers were not casually watching but participating simultaneously with the persons singing, praying and voting, with one report of a group in Gastonia, N.C., collecting a special offering for hunger.

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At the Putnam City (Okla.) Baptist Church, a women's group changed meeting locations to watch the convention, and rolled and wrapped bandages during the meeting to send to a missionary-doctor in Africa.

From Louisville, Ky., the wife of a retired minister wrote to say how meaningful it was for them since her husband's health would not permit traveling to Dallas.

Michael Savario, who watched with friends at his home in Gonzales, La., said, "We enjoyed the privilege of sitting in on the convention, absent in body but present in spirit."

In Springfield, Mo., at the Glenstone Baptist Church, there were 15 churches in the Greene County Association represented along with an Assembly of God missionary couple to the Philippines.

In Denton, Texas, a man rented a satellite dish so he could watch the convention at home, because he was afraid the crowds in Dallas would be too difficult to manage.

"We have been overwhelmed at the positive nature of the letters from people expressing gratitude and appreciation for the SBC broadcast," Denney said. "By viewing the SBC and other special events on BTN, churches all over the convention can have a feeling of belonging and be informed about denominational events and activities."

Just how much seeing the convention might have meant to individuals is impossible to measure, but one example points to the sincerity of viewers.

In Cordell, Okla., pastor J.V. Lobaugh reported a visitor to First Baptist Church made a decision to accept Christ following the Tuesday evening Foreign Mission Board report. The 58-year-old man had visited the church and heard an announcement of the broadcast of convention proceedings and decided to attend.

Denney said plans already are being made to broadcast an unscrambled signal of next year's Southern Baptist Convention from Atlanta on BTN.

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Southern Baptist Identity  
Enhanced Through BTN

By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press  
6/24/85

SPRINGFIELD, Ore. (BP)—Unprecedented access to the denomination and its leaders through the Baptist Telecommunication Network (BTN) has given members of Trinity Baptist Church a new feeling of belonging and Southern Baptist identity.

BTN is not just an interesting new technology, but an integrated part of the ongoing outreach and training ministries at the church, according to pastor Johnny Johnson.

"I think BTN is the best tool we have to bring Southern Baptists out of a localized isolationism into a cosmopolitan global missions outlook," he said. "Through BTN we can have a step-by-step unfolding of who we are and what this mission is that we are in together."

Southern Baptist churches in the northwestern part of the country are separated from the vast majority of the denomination by great distance, which makes participation difficult. However, seeing leaders and training programs on BTN reminds people in the area they are not alone, but part of a larger, cooperative effort.

Also, the Northwest is considered one of the most unchurched areas of the United States, with 70 percent of the population claiming no church affiliation, Johnson said.

Johnson said he is convinced BTN offers unparalleled opportunity for churches to grow if the network materials are thoroughly integrated into the church's ministries.

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The integration of BTN into the life of Trinity has come about largely because of the work of Dixie Huffman, the church's BTN coordinator. Huffman was a church secretary when the decision was made to subscribe to BTN. She recorded the materials straight through on one tape at first and later began to analyze how to implement BTN in their church, which averages approximately 300 in Sunday school.

Now, with a 45-inch screen, four video cassette recorders and four television monitors, Huffman lists at least 15 ways BTN messages have contributed to a new sense of identity for members of Trinity Church. She uses the four recorders to tape programs in an organized manner for later filing and use according to topics.

BTN tapes have been used in deacons' meetings, church council, church training, Woman's Missionary Union meetings, teacher training, lesson preparation and other small groups where individuals have expressed an interest.

When Johnson was preparing to introduce the annual promotion for the Lottie Moon offering, a five-minute tape of foreign missions work was shown in the Sunday morning worship service. Trinity doubled its Lottie Moon offering over the previous year and still gives 13 percent of its total contributions to the Cooperative Program.

"Southern Baptists are a special people with a global missions mandate," Johnson said. "When our church members see pictures of missionaries and hear of their needs, it strengthens our support of the Cooperative Program and other denominational emphases.

"Right now at Trinity, we are about 15 percent short of trained leaders for the classes we need," Johnson continued. "With BTN, we can have teachers who understand the history and heritage of the denomination and feel more secure about leading in Bible study or other positions of leadership."

Johnson explained the original dream for bringing BTN into the church was by Jack Stuart, pastor of the church from 1970-83, when he retired because of health problems. After Stuart's death, a memorial fund was established which has completely paid for the BTN equipment at the church.

Last year Johnson attended a leadership conference which required six days for travel and an expense of \$1,500. By comparison, Trinity has invested slightly more than \$6,000 in BTN and it is used several times every week by several people.

Time and finances will not allow churches to invite denominational leaders to the Northwest as often as they are needed, but Johnny Lewis, minister of education and music at Trinity, said with BTN, "We can have denominational leaders in our church every day."

"Churches are grown because of good education programs more than because of strong preaching," Johnson added. "For Southern Baptists, the Sunday school has always been the key to growth and for reaching people for salvation, Bible study and meaningful church membership.

"In order for people to think in their hearts what God wants them to think, we have to give them through their eyes and ears what it takes to make disciples of them," he said. "A lot of people are going to hell while we stand around and fight. We must carry out the missionary mandate of the Great Commission by showing faces and places. BTN brings back the globe to our church."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by BSSB bureau of Baptist Press

Campbell Joins  
National WMU Staff

Baptist Press  
6/24/85

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Karen Campbell, a native of Greenfield, Tenn., has joined the staff of Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to Southern Baptist Convention, as promotion specialist.

In her position at the national headquarters, Campbell will lead in planning and coordinating promotion of WMU's program and products.

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Campbell is a 1983 graduate of Union University of Jackson, Tenn. She anticipates completing a master of arts and communications degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in December.

During the summer of 1983 Campbell worked as editorial assistant for Crusader and Crusader Counselor at the Brotherhood Commission. In 1984 she was a summer intern in communications at the national WMU headquarters.

Campbell worked at the Fort Worth Star Telegram while she attended seminary.

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HMB Elects Three Staff;  
AAEO On Target For Goal

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press  
6/24/85

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptists' gifts to home missions were reported 38 percent above receipts for June of 1984, according to Southern Baptist Home Mission Board President William G. Tanner.

Tanner told HMB directors at their June meeting the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions totaled more than \$15 million as of June 1, more than half of the 1985 \$30 million goal.

May receipts totaled more than \$12 million, said Tanner, who added the goal would be within reach if June receipts remain high.

In other actions, directors elected John Patrick Cravins of Atlanta director of design services, Leonard Carl Savell of Jackson, Miss., director of interfaith witness, and William David Terry of Dallas, associate to the director of the board's language missions division.

Cravins, who has worked as the board's senior graphic designer since November of 1984, succeeds Karen Mitchell, who resigned earlier this year. As director of design services, he will manage the design and printing of the board's printed materials.

Cravins, a native of Atlanta, comes to the board with 14 years of graphics experience. Since 1974, he has worked with the Atlanta firms of Stein Printing Company, Phoenix Printing Company, Lewis Composition, Pro-Graphics and Baily Composition. He is a graduate of Georgia State University in Atlanta.

Savell, pastor of Woodville Heights Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss., and a member of the Atlanta-based mission agency's board of directors, was elected director of the interfaith witness department, effective July 1.

Savell succeeds Glenn Igleheart, who became director of missions for the Baptist Convention of New York last fall.

Savell will lead in developing interfaith witness strategies, services and materials for use by Southern Baptist churches, associations, state conventions and agencies. He also will help develop contacts and bolster relationships with national leaders of other religious persuasions.

A native of Mississippi, Savell has been pastor of churches in that state since 1958. He has been pastor of the Jackson church since 1967.

He is a graduate of Mississippi College, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Terry assumes his duties as associate to the director of language missions effective June 16, and succeeds Joe Hernandez, who became director of the ethnic resource correlation department in the language missions division last year.

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Terry, a native of South Carolina, will administer and supervise the sub-programs of Immigration and Refugee and Ethnic Liason Concordat, as well as help develop and implement a national strategy of language missions for Southern Baptists.

Terry was mission pastor at an apartment complex in Lewisville, Texas, prior to accepting the HMB post. He also has worked as a church training equipper for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and was a division director with the Bureau of Air Quality Control in Columbia, S.C., for nine years.

He is a graduate of Clemson University, the University of South Carolina and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

In other actions, directors approved the next step in the board's church loans division's plans to create new funding for church loans.

The SBC Executive Committee gave approval earlier this year for the board to take a proposal for church loans funding to the Securities and Exchange Commission of the federal government.

Robert Kilgore, director of HMB church loans, explained the plan would call for the board to isolate at least \$6 million of loans it "owns," or loans the board has issued to churches. The proposal would allow the board to use the loans as collateral for investment securities. The payment on the securities would parallel the repayment of the loans, while providing the board with funds to issue new loans.

Kilgore explained increased costs and restrictions make it impractical for the board to borrow money in the commercial market for loans, as was done in the past. Without the new plan, he said, church loan efforts would be severely limited.

Under the new plan, \$5 million of church loans funds initially would be generated, said Kilgore. The plan would continue to generate similar amounts, giving the board an on-going means of financing church loans at interest rates probably lower than those of current commercial markets, he said.

HMB Missions Vice-President Gerald Palmer added without the new means of generating church loan monies, few new SBC churches could have the financial resources to begin from scratch. In turn, he explained, the denomination would be hard-pressed to meet its goal of 50,000 SBC churches by the year 2000.

"The church loans plan probably will generate millions of dollars for new loans for new churches," Tanner added. "The proposal could generate a flow of resources that can conceivably make it possible to have 50,000 Southern Baptist churches by the year 2000.

"Bold Mission Thrust requires bold, creative thinking, and the HMB executive committee has voted to pursue a bold new venture to help start new churches," said Tanner.

The proposal will be presented to the Securities and Exchange Commission for government approval, said Kilgore. If the federal commission grants permission for the board to pursue the plan, HMB directors still must vote once more whether to carry out the church loans proposal. Such action would have to come before a full meeting of the agency's board of directors.

The executive committee also appointed five missionaries, two missionary associates, four church planter apprentices and approved 31 persons for church pastoral or field personnel assistance.

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Pastor Wants Super Church  
To Reach Texas Community

By Gail Rothwell

Baptist Press  
6/24/85

EL PASO, Texas (BP)—Pastor Elias Benitez wants Hispanic Baptist Church in El Paso to be a "superchurch." However, he is not asking for a multi-million dollar building.

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What he does seek is a congregation of bivocational ministers who are trained and sent into the community with a commitment to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to the four corners of the city.

Benitez, who has been pastor of the church for 17 years, 12 as a bivocational minister, believes a church grows by following the Great Commission to tell others about Christ.

"A church cannot be satisfied just to share in a worship experience without taking it beyond the four walls of the sanctuary," he noted. "God gave us the command to reach the lost and if we are going to reach the world for Christ then we first must have the burden to reach our own communities."

The church, which has an average Sunday school attendance of 250, presently has seven satellite ministries with an additional weekly attendance of 200.

Benitez has instilled into the congregation that witnessing is a lifestyle, "not just something you do on Tuesday evening. If people cannot come to our church, then we will take the church to them."

Explaining he would like to see the number of satellite ministries double by the end of 1985, Benitez said laypersons from the church are trained to be bivocational leaders of the satellite ministries.

Long-range goals include establishing some type of ministry in each of El Paso's 44 housing projects because, "the church must be an advocate for the needs of the people," said Benitez. "I believe the church must provide a ministry for the community not only spiritually, but in other ways. Children need milk to drink before they will be ready to hear the gospel."

Lorenza Pena, associate pastor for missions and ministries, said the church also seeks to provide skills in nutrition, parenting and social services to persons in the housing projects, along with presenting the gospel to them.

Pena believes Hispanic Baptist Church is a training institute with the mission of providing leadership for people throughout the community. Presently, more than 30 of the church's members have completed the 26-week in-depth discipleship course, MasterLife. MasterLife is a project of the Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department.

Pena has plans to conduct a mini-training institute during the year to give leaders additional skills in sermon preparation, witnessing and leadership.

Pena and Benitez agree growth comes from adding new units, not just Sunday school and church training, but other extensions of the church. For that reason, they always are looking for areas to begin another satellite.

The church conducts neighborhood surveys to determine the best possible ministry, then begins to look for a place to meet. Because the church is reaching "a capacity attendance in our building," Pena noted additional services will be held at Parkland Junior High School near the church to provide another ministry to the neighborhood.

In another neighborhood, Felix Sandoval, the church's Sunday school director, leads a Thursday evening Bible study for more than 20 neighborhood children. With the help of others from Hispanic church, a ministry to the parents of the children will begin this summer.

"We have a desire to grow for the honor and glory of God, not our own honor," explained Benitez. "Because I am just a layman called by God to preach, I am committed to training other lay leaders."

Benitez believes to accomplish the task of reaching the world for Christ, Christians are going to have to "pull together as a family and concentrate on loving and winning everyone. God has given us diversified gifts for the accomplishment of the Great Commission," he said.

John Lawrence Leaves Legacy  
In Ethiopia's Highlands

By Marv Knox

MINDEN, La. (BP)--Most of them don't know his name, but thousands of Ethiopians owe their lives to John Lawrence.

Lawrence left north Louisiana for Ethiopia in September 1983 as a one-year missions volunteer to teach in the veterinary school of the University of Addis Ababa.

He extended his tour of duty last fall to teach a third semester at the university. But when the opportunity came to stay still longer and oversee construction of a feeding and health care center in famine-stricken Menz-Gishe, he said God wouldn't let him turn it down.

So earlier this year Lawrence moved to the village of Rabel, 10,000 feet high in the mountainous district. Rabel is so remote the World Health Organization declared it the last place on earth where an active case of smallpox was confirmed.

For several weeks, Lawrence was the only foreigner in the district, serving as "field director"--administrator, treasurer, bookkeeper, labor contractor, government liaison, mechanic and logistician.

He led an Ethiopian team to erect buildings for registration, medical treatment and child weighing and measuring. They also built two warehouses for food distribution and storage, a feeding center, an airplane landing strip and a truck service garage.

But the bottom line is that he paved the way for distributing life-sustaining grain and medical care to starving Ethiopians in the highlands.

"John Lawrence was a tower of strength in Ethiopia," one firsthand observer noted. "A lot of people are alive in Ethiopia today simply because he stayed. He made it possible for three career missionary couples and two volunteer nurses who arrived to set up an operation which has made a tremendous impact."

Lawrence is much more modest about his own heroics, giving God the credit for the work he did and the lives he helped save.

He was a practicing veterinarian and active member of First Baptist Church, Minden, La., about two years ago, when Biblical verses relating to following God's will began to "haunt me," and he "began to question whether I was where God wanted me."

When a friend asked him what he would most like to do, he heard himself saying he'd like to be a short-term missions volunteer and a teacher in a veterinary school. She encouraged him to check out the possibilities, and he wrote to Southern Baptist missionary veterinarian Jerry Bedsole in Addis Ababa.

"I began to tremble when the answer came," he recalled. Bedsole needed a volunteer to spend a year teaching at the school and assisting in veterinary clinics.

It wasn't easy to leave family, friends and business half-way around the world, but Lawrence felt he had no choice. "I had to be obedient; God just opened up too many doors for me to turn my back," he said.

Lawrence taught internal medicine and clinical diagnosis to Ethiopian veterinary students and also helped Bedsole six days a week with public clinics for the animals of local farmers.

He also stayed actively involved in MasterLife discipleship training with the Baptist Mission of Ethiopia. The faith of Ethiopian Christians, he said, taught him more than he taught them. "Theirs is a simple, deep faith, which really costs them something to maintain."

Perhaps the faith he witnessed gave him the strength he needed to extend his stay twice in Ethiopia, where his rigorous schedule caused him to drop from 185 pounds to 150 before returning to Louisiana in April.



The decisions to extend seemed only natural to Lawrence, who "learned a great deal about obedience" in Ethiopia. He said he realized whatever he could give to God and the Ethiopian people would be far less than what he would receive in return.

One of God's special gifts, he said, is his bride-to-be. He met Mary Lou Jackson, a two-year missionary journeyman from Amsterdam, Mo., in Ethiopia. Her term of service ended in June, and they will marry in October in Missouri.

Because of their experiences, their marriage may have different priorities than most U.S.A. relationships. For example, they learned a lesson about materialism. Lawrence said he "learned to appreciate not only what I have, but what I can do without. I have three or four pairs of blue jeans, but to a person without decent clothing, I'm very rich."

Another strong belief which remains with Lawrence is faith in the power of God. "God is in control," he explained, "even when I can't see it."

Lawrence is not certain where God will lead—probably private veterinary practice, maybe teaching. He and Mary Lou "don't feel called to full-time missions right now," he said. "But we're still interested. We're open to God's will. We wouldn't mind going back."

In the meantime, Lawrence will have much to remember and think about. He admits he still has problems with Americans who "worry about how much they can get," and he misses the spiritual depth of Ethiopian Christians.

He has a strong appreciation for the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program of missions support and the Foreign Mission Board personnel who dedicate their lives to reaching the world for Christ.

But when Lawrence thinks back on Ethiopia, one image stands out.

He remembers Arage (pronounced Arah-gay). The emaciated 11-year-old boy and his family had walked eight days in the mountains to get to the feeding center. By the time they arrived, they were too weak to call for help.

Arage was too feeble to move and was so frail workers could "see his heart beating through his chest and count every rib and vertebra." He had diarrhea and was dangerously dehydrated.

"He had no hope in his eyes," Lawrence recalled. "He kept clinging to his mother and crying, 'rabonyal,' his word for 'I'm hungry.' We got him some medication for his diarrhea and gave him some rehydration fluid, but I didn't think he would make it through the night."

"I didn't sleep well that night, because all I could think about was that pathetic little boy. At about 4 a.m. I woke up and felt I must pray for Arage."

The next morning, Lawrence had breakfast with two nurses working at the center. "They asked how I slept, and I told them I hadn't slept well and that I woke up at 4 a.m. and prayed for the boy," he said.

"When I told them that, they just looked at each other. They, too, woke up at 4 a.m. and felt they should pray God would save Arage's life.

"When we went to check on him, we found Arage had made it through the night. I had only one thought: 'The Lord is in control.' I'm convinced the Lord woke us up to pray for Arage, and I know God spared that child for something special."

Observers in Rabel say Arage grows stronger every day. He also exhibits a wisdom beyond his years and a knack for leadership which promises to make him stand out as an adult.

Perhaps one day Arage will be a leader among his people. If there's justice mingled with the mercy he's received, he'll remember that a man named John Lawrence helped save his life.

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(Marv Knox is associate editor of the Baptist Message, Louisiana's state Baptist newspaper.)  
(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Singing Scripture Is Routine  
For Aunt Pearl Collinsgrove

By Charles Willis

POLO, Mo. (BP)—"If any man will come after me, if any man will come after me, Let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me, and follow me. Luke 9:23," Pearl Collinsgrove sings in a clear, strong voice.

Singing Bible verses from "MasterLife Scripture Songs" has made a difference in her life, perhaps more than in the lives of many others who memorize Scripture through singing. For Pearl Collinsgrove is 81, has been blind for 23 years and is a relatively new Christian.

Having spent much of her life in Vaudeville and night clubs, Aunt Pearl, as she is known by her friends in Polo, Mo., didn't have much contact with church. Without a permanent home for many years, Collinsgrove's on-the-road life meant an unstable spiritual life as well. "I joined a Church of God in Birmingham one time for three months," she recalled.

But four years ago in a Methodist church in Polo, Collinsgrove heard the minister tell the story of Joseph. "I had thought I couldn't get saved," she said, "but that day I thought, 'If Joseph could make it, I can make it.'"

While attending the Methodist church on a regular basis, a friend invited Collinsgrove to play the guitar and sing at First Baptist Church, Polo. She found such friendliness, warmth and acceptance there that she began to attend the Baptist church where she made a public profession of faith and was baptized two years ago.

It was at First Baptist Church she discovered MasterLife, produced by the Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department. Captivated by the materials she heard Pastor Duane Tindall present, she determined to attend all of the MasterLife sessions. "I wanted to learn about the Bible," she said. "One woman put MasterLife materials on tape for me--all 26 weeks!

"Memorizing was no problem for me because I was in drama for years," she said. "Some things I put in Braille. MasterLife taught me to study instead of just read and it helps in so many ways to be a good Christian. It taught me how to interpret different Scriptures...to make them come alive and to realize Christ is alive now."

As a self-appointed salesperson for MasterLife, Collinsgrove uses invitations to sing in churches as an opportunity to share her discovery.

"I tell them about my life," she said, "and use the presentation of the cross, the hand and heart and the armor from MasterLife. Then I sing a song to show how to sing the verses of the Bible. If you memorize enough verses, you can witness anywhere—even without a Bible. I call it my routine," she laughed, "because that's what it is to me in show business language."

Collinsgrove is working through the tapes a second time, and she encourages other senior adults to study the materials. "It helps older people keep their minds alert," she said. "If you want to be a good disciple of Christ, you have to put the good things in your mind. It's harder for some older persons to memorize than it is for others, but singing Scripture helps."

Collinsgrove practices what she preaches, having memorized about 60 Scriptures. "I don't have an unhappy moment now," she said. "I always have things to do. I do Proverbs, one each day," she reminded, "there are 31."

As testimony to the change in values she has found in recent years, Collinsgrove observed, "A lot of people don't want to give up worldly things to follow Christ, but when you study the Bible you see there are greater treasures in heaven than worldly treasures.

"I went through three or four fortunes in my lifetime," she confided. "I had plenty of money. I had five homes at one time. None of that has done what knowing God and studying MasterLife have done for me. The more you put into it, the more you get out of it.

"God does for you if you'll recognize him," she said. "The Lord put me here to do what nobody else can--to reach people and help them find the happiness I have found."