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Churches Attending "M" Night
Learn Importance Of Discipling

By Terri Lackey

BSSB-F

SYLVA, N.C. (BP)--Teaching new church members about basic biblical and Baptist beliefs is the number one task of church training and what is needed to keep churches alive and growing, said Roy Edgemon, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department.

Speaking to 300 persons attending Tuckaseegee Baptist Association's "M" Night in Sylva, N.C., Edgemon said he believes Baptist churches have not properly trained their new members in intrinsic Baptist beliefs.

"We have taken new members into our church without offering them any training," he said. "We must learn how to evangelize our people in modern ways. If we don't learn to disciple (teach biblical beliefs), our winning will be fruitless. There will be no church left if we do not train our people."

The auditorium at Sylva's Lovedale Baptist Church was nearly filled to capacity with people from the 50-church association who traveled many miles to participate in an event expected to be observed in more than 900 of the denomination's 1,200 associations.

"M" Night, or Mobilization Night, is an effort by associations of the Southern Baptist Convention to inspire, motivate and inform church members that church training is alive and well, Edgemon said, noting, "Church training is uniquely a Baptist concept."

In 1880, young people began meeting on Sunday evenings, calling themselves the Baptist Young People's Union, he said. Then in 1895, those members held a convention in Atlanta, launching the concept of a national organization for church training for all ages.

"Baptists bought into the church training concept," Edgemon said, "and church training in the SBC has become a part of our life and growth."

Enrollment in church training along with other Baptist organizations, took a plunge in 1963, he said. But in recent years, Sunday night training has begun to grow again.

During the years of the decline of church training, church membership continued to climb to its present 14.4 million, Edgemon said. However, at the same time, the number of non-resident and inactive church members also increased, with about one-half of today's Southern Baptists falling into the non-resident or inactive resident categories.

"We can't find 29 percent, or 4 million, of our Southern Baptists. They have moved off or joined another church somewhere," he reported. "Every year that figure grows higher." Another 21 percent of resident members have not attended church within the last 12 months, he added.

Edgemon attributed the burgeoning problem of inactivity to failure to emphasize church training and helping persons grow in their faith.

New members must be trained in biblical beliefs for churches to survive, he emphasized. Baptists "need to get a program of discipleship and train boys and girls and other generations. We cannot continue to take new members into our churches without training."

Susan Warren Is Convinced
Libraries Strengthen Churches

By Jim Lowry

BSSB
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BRANDON, Fla. (BP)—To minister to people and be a vital part of the church, the ministry of a media library must get outside its four walls, meeting people where they are, a veteran librarian insists.

Susan Warren, director of the church media library at First Baptist Church of Brandon, Fla., is convinced libraries can strengthen every program of the church by providing resources to support the efforts of church members in areas where they work.

Warren began as media library director in her church five years ago. At that time, the library's annual budget was \$250. In 1987, the budget for the media library will be \$12,000, and plans are complete to begin building a new facility within the next few months.

Growth for the media library has not been accidental but a result of planning, promotion and development of the interests of different groups within the church, Warren says.

"When I started in the media library, there were three volunteers, and our church members generally didn't comprehend what the media library was," she recalls. "We started working to get people to utilize the library.

"As the library has grown and lives have been touched by the materials, people have seen the benefits. In the last two years, people have begun to see the media library as a partner in the common task of the church instead of a separate organization. I'm convinced the media library can reach people just like the music program or any other organization of the church."

Because of the determination of Warren and the other 11 people who comprise the staff of the media library, it has become an active "meeting place," especially on Wednesday nights.

"We have as many materials as possible, but if someone comes in and requests an item we don't have, we make every effort to obtain it for them," Warren continues. "We can help new church members understand Baptist history and then help them become more competent workers in church programs."

Warren had high expectations for the potential of the media library when she started. However, a series of personal problems made her realize the successes of the media library ministry happened not because of her but because God touched lives.

Her problems began shortly after the birth of her third child when both she and the baby were hospitalized with pneumonia. Next her new home sustained severe water damage from a faulty icemaker hookup. Soon after the repairs were completed, the house was destroyed by a tornado, although she and the three children were unhurt.

During the rebuilding period, the house was vandalized, which further slowed their return. After they finally moved back into the house, a heavy rain one afternoon brought rising waters to within one inch of flooding it again.

"I got upset and nervous when things were going wrong," Warren says. "But I leaned on God and trusted in him. The Lord tempered me and strengthened me. Because of that, lives have been touched through his ministry, not mine."

All of the promotion, plans and work boil down to ministry, she stresses. How many books, how much space and how many tapes are only important because they translate into how many lives have been touched in Jesus' name.

Families in crisis can be soothed. Frustrated parents can find advice from experts in books and on tapes. Children can find resources for school projects. All of this is possible and is happening, she says, because the resources of the media library were used by people to make a difference in their lives.

Youth Concerns Turn
Two Jobs Into Calling

By Jim Lowry

BSSB
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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—As both a consultant and a minister to youth, Richard Ross spends a lot of time trying to help Southern Baptist churches build successful, ongoing youth organizations.

Ross, youth ministry consultant in the church administration department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, also serves as minister to youth at Tulip Grove Baptist Church in Old Hickory, Tenn., a suburb of Nashville.

About a year and a half ago, Ross was called as minister to youth at the church where he had been a member for almost a year. Even though he estimates he spends 15 to 25 hours per week, he says it is worth it, because youth ministry is a calling for him.

He came to the Sunday School Board from Royal Haven Baptist Church in Dallas where he was youth minister for 12 years. After a year as a consultant, he says, he just couldn't resist the possibility of working again with youth on a weekly basis. In September, the number of youth in the program at Tulip Grove Church reached 100, which is almost double the number involved when he became minister to youth.

During the average week, he participates in a weekly workers meeting, visitation, counsels with youth and talks with parents of youth.

Working with parents of youth is an area of concentration that has only recently become a major focus of youth ministry. "The most significant way to impact the life of teenagers is to affect the life in that teenager's home," he explains. "Sometimes you can make a greater difference in the life of a teenager by working through significant adults in his life than if you spend time working directly with the teenager. Consequently, I try to give one-third of my time ministering to parents of youth, one-third ministering to the adult leaders who work with youth and one-third working with the youth themselves.

"I try to channel all youth activities through the organizations in the church, rather than organizing everything around the minister of youth. When you involve youth and adult leaders through the organization, they can support it because they had a part in planning it."

A primary reason the ministry with parents presently is being emphasized is because of several ministers of youth who have experienced success by planning a well-balanced youth program that includes parents of youth, he notes.

Sometimes Ross finds that a scheduled event or commitment related to the Sunday School Board must take precedence over something he would like to participate in at Tulip Grove, but he is convinced the ministry at the church will continue uninterrupted because of the team approach in the youth ministry there.

"I know that if I'm out for a week, a quality ministry can continue through the trained leaders at the church," he says.

Ross notes he is called to be a youth minister and is dedicated to training ministers to plan better programs for youth in local Southern Baptist churches.

In both of his responsibilities, his foremost goal is to lead young people to make a personal commitment in their lives to Christ.

"As a youth minister, another of my goals is to try to establish a personal relationship with teenagers which is characterized by unconditional love and affirmation," he says. "I also try to lead other adults to build that same kind of relationship with teenagers."

Ross, who is author or contributor to three books related to youth ministry, says at 36 years old he feels closer to youth than he did at 25 because of close relationships developed through love and affirmation.

"Age does not close doors to deeply meaningful relationships with teenagers," he insists.

"I serve as a minister of youth because I am called to do it," he adds. "However, as a sidelight of my direct involvement with youth in a church, it has turned out to be an advantage in my role at the Sunday School Board.

"Serving as a minister of youth keeps me fresh in my understanding of the same issues faced daily by teenagers and youth ministers. Ministers of youth I have met this past year have responded very positively to one who shares and understands their struggles."

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

Hospitality House Offers
Ministry Of Reconciliation

By Ken Camp

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HUNTSVILLE, Texas (BP)—When a West Texas woman's car broke down while driving across the state from Odessa to Huntsville, she thought it was the end of the road for her marriage.

Her husband was serving a prolonged prison sentence in the Ellis II unit near Huntsville and she had been left with the responsibility of bringing up their eight-year-old son. After months of lonely labor, the woman felt all of her emotional, financial and spiritual resources had been depleted.

She had worked for months as a substitute teacher, saving her money. Finally, she set out for East Texas to save a troubled marriage—to renew family ties with a husband she hadn't seen in far too long.

When she started her trip, she knew it would take every penny she had saved. Visiting hours at the prison were short, and it wouldn't be easy making the 450-mile journey. But she believed it was her last chance for a reconciliation.

It looked as if a broken-down car would rob her of that chance. The unexpected expense of getting the aged vehicle running again left her nearly penniless, and by the time she and her son crossed the Walker County line, visiting hours for the weekend were over.

Fortunately, the West Texas woman had heard about Hospitality House. Sponsored by the State Missions Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Texas Baptist Men and Tryon-Evergreen Baptist Association, Hospitality House is a temporary home for the visiting families of inmates in Texas Department of Corrections facilities in the Huntsville area.

At Hospitality House, the woman met director Bob Norris. She told him her story and asked if he could do anything to help. Norris called the chaplain at the Ellis II unit and explained the woman's predicament.

"After I called to try to set up the visit, we prayed together," says Norris. "Before long, the chaplain called back. The prison had agreed to let the family have a four-hour contact visit. They had a long visit together, and the couple made reconciliation."

Making reconciliation and strengthening family ties is part of the ongoing ministry of Hospitality House.

"The two greatest rehabilitating forces in the correctional system are the strong ties of the earthly family and the eternal ties to our heavenly family," insists W.J. Isbell, Texas director of Baptist Men. "We need to visit those in prison, taking the gospel to them that they might be brought into a right relationship with God. We also need to help families visit their loved ones in prison in order to keep their family ties strong. The Hospitality House helps us to accomplish both objectives."

Helping to keep those family ties strong sometimes means service above and beyond the call of duty for Director Norris, such as one recent morning when his phone rang before dawn. On the line was a woman from Dallas whom he had never met, asking him for help.

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Norris responded, rising from bed to meet the woman and her young son at the Huntsville bus station. There he learned she and her boy had used all the money they had to get to Huntsville in the hope of visiting her husband at the Ellis II prison unit.

Norris brought the woman and child to Hospitality House. As the woman stepped inside the doors of the building, tears streamed down her face and she cried out, "I didn't think there was anybody in the whole world who loved us enough to do something like this for us."

"We're here to show the families of prisoners that they are loved by God and by us," says Norris, who lives in a four-room apartment at Hospitality House along with his wife, Nelda.

The house, the second of its kind in the United States and the first sponsored by Southern Baptists, is capable of accommodating up to 48 overnight visitors in dormitory-style rooms and includes a common kitchen where guests are able to prepare their own meals.

Each visiting family is asked to pay no more than \$5 per night to help defray the costs of laundering linens and to give them a sense of helping to pay their own way. Since its opening in mid-August, Hospitality House has hosted about 150 families. Seventeen persons have made professions of faith in Jesus Christ as a direct result of Hospitality House ministry.

"There are so many stories we could tell," says Norris. "There's one woman who had come up to Huntsville from Corpus Christi every other weekend for five years to visit her husband in the Eastham Unit. She and her son, who had Down's Syndrome, slept at a roadside park all that time because they couldn't afford a motel room.

"The Lord led her to one of our brochures at the prison when she was visiting her husband. Now she has a home here during their visits."

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Romanian Preparing For Ministry
Although His Country Still Closed

By Elizabeth Watson

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Timotei Marza hopes he can someday help Christianity flourish in Romania as it did in the first century.

Early church tradition says the Apostle Paul visited Romania. "Many seeds were planted and Christianity grew," Marza says. But today Christianity struggles to survive in the fallow Communist country, he adds.

Before Marza returns to Romania, he wants to get all the theological training he can at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he is enrolled in the master of divinity program.

"I prayed and waited 15 years for God to open the door for me to leave Romania so I could obtain a seminary education," Marza relates. "Now that I have finally passed through that door, I want to fully appreciate my seminary experience."

The Romanian government allows only 10 students every four years to attend that nation's sole Baptist seminary. There are no biblical commentaries and no textbooks. For this reason Marza is translating the Broadman Bible Commentary series into Romanian. "As far as I know, this will be the first set of commentaries published in my native tongue," he says. Only 170 pastors serve more than 1,000 Baptist churches in Romania.

Marza wants to help Romanian Christians, but right now he cannot. "My feeling for Romania parallels the feeling the Jews had for Judah when they had been taken captive in Babylon," he explains. "They loved their country and wanted to return home to restore it, but there was nothing they could do."

Marza holds to the missionary call he heard as a young boy in Deva, Romania. One day he hopes to return to Europe to "work 25 hours a day for the Lord."

Even though missionaries cannot freely work in Romania "the people's hearts are still receptive to the gospel," he insists.

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Ministry To Cities
Termed Cross-Cultural

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--People in urban areas "will never be reached by the existing churches unless the existing churches become cross-cultural and pluralistic," said Raymond Bakke, urban church ministries consultant to the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Bakke, who addressed faculty and students of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, said 87 percent of the world is non-white. Ministering in the city would mean Christians "would have to accommodate to that reality--that the city would be ... in many ways a cross-cultural experience."

The professor of ministry at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Chicago said, "Most of us are taught in seminary ... to pastor churches of people like us. But we're a minority in most of these places."

Urban ministers must have "some sense of identity and security" or they would not be able to handle the fact that they are a minority, he said.

According to Bakke, "Jesus was a mestizo," because in the geneology of Jesus in Matthew at least four foreigners are listed. "He not only shed his blood for the world, he got his blood from the world," he said. "That's when I began to see that around Matthew there's a parenthesis of ethnicity. 'Go ye into all the world and disciple the nations.'"

"We still have about 1 billion unreached people geographically distant from the existing church. But a far larger group, growing four times faster, is what I call the culturally-distant unreached peoples," he noted.

Bakke suggested urban churches have "ministry around the clock. The urban church, like the police and the hospital, must work 24 hours." His reasoning was that a large number of people in cities sleep during the day and work at night.

Bakke said Christians should look for a "situation of misery" out of which to make a ministry. While researching the church of the first century, he found Christians of the "early church" would go door-to-door, knocking and asking if there were any sick there. If so, the Christians would offer to move in with the sick person and care for him until he was well.

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Hardin Tells Baptists:
'Unleash The Laity'

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Church leaders should not be afraid to release their lay members to perform 'marketplace evangelism;' they will be amazed at how effectively the Holy Spirit will use them to reach non-Christians, a Southern Baptist lay leader told a Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary audience.

Reid D. Hardin, director of the evangelism support department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, challenged Southeastern Seminary students and spouses to consider the cities and careers in urban evangelism. Hardin was the guest speaker for Southeastern's Urban Evangelism Banquet at the Wake Forest, N.C., campus.

"Thus far we've only provided a skeleton for urban evangelism by providing pastors," said Hardin. "We need to mobilize the laity to flesh out the 'ameoba force' that can then penetrate all of our society."

Hardin said he sees Pat Henry, chief pilot for Ford Motor Company's jet plane fleet, as a prime example of lay ministry in action: "Pat Henry followed the call of God to Detroit, rather than return to the relative comfort and ease of his Florida home upon leaving military service. Today he has a vast ministry with corporation heads, airline personnel and contacts worldwide as he flies Ford executives to the four corners of the earth."

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Hardin calls these ministries "marketplace mission fields" and adds the cities are the major mission fields of the world. "The cities are pools of Bethesda, where the hurting of our world, the wounded and brokenhearted await a healing touch," he explained. "Lay ministries are one of our best hopes for touching those lives. At the New Mount Olive Branch Church in Denver, nearly 2,000 members are reaching out in small-group meetings in their homes, at their job sites, in their social settings or elsewhere in their community to meet needs such as these.

"What real impact are your churches having in the real world?" Hardin asked the future ministers. "We have to open our churches to the hurting people in this world, and at the heart of such missions is God's call to people in all walks of life to their own individual ministry under the leadership of the Holy Spirit." He emphasized the laity are not "amateurs" but are instead "first-class Christians," just like the clergy.

The Home Mission Board will promote "The Year of the Laity" in 1989, announced Hardin, adding the board is beginning now to plan ahead for that year by also promoting lay awakenings in all Southern Baptist churches. "Ultimately," he said, "we hope to emphasize the laos, or the whole people of God, including both clergy and laity in united ministry.

"What is the Holy Spirit saying to the churches?" asked Hardin. "The Holy Spirit is saying to dream together, ... sounding the call to ministry and evangelism."

Hardin emphasized two ways in which local churches can help mobilize their own laity. He urged all churches to have weekly "missionary report, sharing times" when all members of the church can give testimonies and receive feedback on one another's ministries in the marketplace. Additionally, Hardin encouraged all churches to release their laity to go out to mission fields elsewhere and in this way free them up to God's service with power.

"This call to ministry for both clergy and laity in urban evangelism is a call to excitement on the cutting edge," he insisted. "God's power and promise are there to meet the challenges before us. Find out what the Holy Spirit is saying to you and your laity and do what God is telling you to do. Don't leave God alone out on the street corners of our cities while untold millions walk by daily."

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Sharing Ministry Helps
Church Deal With Needs

By Frank Wm. White

BSSB
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MOBRIDGE, S.D. (BP)—Mobridge Southern Baptist Church is increasing in membership, Sunday school enrollment and attendance despite a sagging economy, critical unemployment, a declining population and established religious traditions in the South Dakota community.

Meeting the needs of people and involving church members in ministry have been key factors in the church's growth, even as it has sponsored four missions amid difficult circumstances, explains Pastor Bill Agee.

When Agee moved to Mobridge from Oklahoma 10 years ago, he and his wife were the only ones who attended church services for several months. When people began to join the church, Agee immediately began to share leadership responsibilities. The church now averages 160 in Sunday school and had 31 baptisms last year.

"At first I wore all the hats. I began to give those hats away," Agee says. Members took over responsibilities for driving the bus, leading music, teaching Sunday school, shoveling snow and other duties.

Members are using their abilities for the church and to minister to the community. Cosmetic clinics, cake decorating classes, fellowship activities and high school equivalency classes meet particular needs.

"Those are all chances to present the gospel and make people aware of the church. We meet needs, and it pays off in the community. That's what Jesus did," Agee reports.

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Meeting immediate needs also is a primary focus of a mission started last February in Wakpala, a Sioux Indian reservation community about 10 miles from town. Although Wakpala is the fourth mission started, two others did not survive after mission pastors left.

"Sharing Christ at the reservation would have been empty unless we gained respect and met physical needs," Agee notes. Church members lead Bible study, skills training and worship services in the Wakpala community center on Tuesday nights.

"We began with training to help them learn skills to earn an income and develop self-respect," he explains.

The pottery and sand painting talents of two church members provide the basis for skills training. "We saw that they were artistic. We found something they enjoyed and got them interested in it," says Larry Taylor, a professional potter.

A sand painting by one Indian woman has been sold for \$125 in Rapid City, S.D., with requests for more. Other results of the mission include about 30 professions of faith, Taylor says.

Acceptance at the reservation is coming slowly. The Indians begin to open up when they see interest rather than prejudice, notes Steve Ford, Bible study teacher at the mission. The same has been true for Mobridge where, Agee says, acceptance of the new denomination is far from complete.

But because the church has developed a reputation for helping people, social service agencies and other churches call on members to meet needs.

Last summer, the church served more than 15,000 meals to families hurt by the economy and unemployment.

Vital industries have closed recently, and the community's population has declined from 4,500 just a few years ago to 3,800. Agee estimates six out of 10 church members are without jobs.

Even though the church is seeing financial difficulties as the economy falters, the ministry is growing.

"We're reaching three times as many people with half the money we had three years ago because our people are committed and they follow the Lord's guidance," he explains.

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

Church Discipleship Emphasis
Grows Out of Pastor's Concern

By Terry Barone

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DALLAS (BP)—Out of a deep conviction to nurture and grow its congregation, First Baptist Church of Garland, Texas, annually sponsors a weeklong discipleship emphasis.

This in itself is no revelation to churches, but the method by which the church came to its decision is: On the 10th anniversary of Pastor Roger McDonald, the congregation wanted to do something significant for him, but he asked members not to do anything for him personally. Instead, he asked them to set up a trust fund to be used to sponsor a discipleship emphasis for years to come. The church honored McDonald's request and began a trust fund with \$100,000 to sponsor an annual discipleship emphasis.

McDonald says he came to this idea out of his own growth as a Christian, noting, "When examining my life, I asked myself how I wanted to spend the rest of my ministry, including the direction I wanted the church to take." That meant heeding his call to do something to "nurture my people."

A Southern Baptist by conviction, McDonald believes Southern Baptists have the best opportunity and format for conducting discipleship emphases. "We (Southern Baptists) have the resources," he says, "and we have the mindset to do it."

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McDonald also believes in a strong devotional life, which gives Christians "the ability to relate the Bible to everyday situations. I want my members to have a walk with God and Scripture to make them better employees, employers, citizens. This will help them impact the totality of who they are. This can only come from a discipling approach to ministry."

Unless the church begins to move in a discipleship direction, McDonald believes, it will lose a whole generation of people: "The church has become more lay leadership oriented. The congregation needs the training. The pastor is the coach, but he can't play every position."

One of his favorite authors defines the reformation as a "deeper plunge into the meaning of the gospel." McDonald explains, "this is what I want for my people." He wants more members of his congregation to discover their spiritual gifts and wants them to be exposed to persons committed and involved in discipleship. "This can be accomplished with this kind of emphasis," he insists.

The church recently conducted the Institute for Christian Discipleship, jointly sponsored by the church, Dallas Baptist Association, the Texas Baptist Church Training Department and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

McDonald says the easiest way to assure that the institute was perpetuated was to begin the trust fund. By doing this, the funds needed to host such an event annually would not have to be a church budget item. And since McDonald wanted to invite people from the local community and from other denominations, "We did not want to make a strong emotional appeal for money."

In such a relaxed atmosphere, McDonald says, the goals of the institute could be accomplished. The purpose of the institute is to heighten the discipleship awareness of people who will multiply themselves and their churches in order to change people's lives.

The week featured discipleship program classes during the day and motivational and inspirational rallies each evening. Discipleship programs offered during the week were MasterLife, MasterBuilder, DiscipleYouth I and II and "How to Put LIFE Into Your Church." A workshop for discipleship coordinators—people who have responsibility for discipleship ministries in their churches—also was included.

McDonald believes the institute was as effective as many revivals. "During the week, many people made decisions. Their lives won't be the same," he explains.

During the institute, McDonald made a personal commitment to witness to members of the cleaning crew at his church. "These people come in here day in and day out, and I have yet to talk to a single one of them," he admits. "I need to share with them and let them know that they are important for something besides pushing a vacuum cleaner up and down the hall. We all have a mandate to witness.

"I have an honest desire that my church be a church where the New Testament gospel is preached, understood and applied in the most effective way through people who have a daily walk and understand that the church is not just a building, but people."

McDonald also wants his congregation to understand the kingdom of God is bigger than the Southern Baptist Convention. "I want my people to have an awareness that we are not the only tigers in the jungle," he explains.

A prayer of McDonald's is that his congregation will appreciate Christians of all faiths and have an understanding that faith transcends denominational lines. "They need to realize there is a unity in Christ with Christians throughout the world," he says.

A strong supporter of Bible study and prayer, McDonald also believes in practical applications of the gospel: "Discipleship principles work. They have worked in my marriage and my personal life and are evidenced in the closeness of my family and the positive attitude of the congregations I have served."

Job Skills Plus Faith
Equals More Volunteers

By Joe Westbury

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ATLANTA (BP)--A plan to channel more volunteers into missions gained momentum as representatives from three Southern Baptist agencies explored new avenues for involving laity through job skills.

"Laypeople for years have wanted to be a part of the total world missions enterprise of the Southern Baptist Convention but haven't known how to participate. Now they have that opportunity through use of their vocational gifts," explained James Smith, president of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

Representatives from the Brotherhood Commission and Southern Baptist's home and foreign mission boards met for a think-tank session and pledged mutual support for the venture. The consultation on specialized volunteer ministries attracted nearly 200 participants from around the nation.

The recruitment of volunteers for home and foreign missions will be coordinated through the recently formed National Fellowship of Baptist Men, Smith said. Although the two mission boards have endorsed the fellowship and pledged \$50,000 each during the next two years, leadership will remain with the Brotherhood Commission.

The commission, which does not send missionaries, will recruit volunteers according to vocation and channel them to the home and foreign boards for short-term and long-term assignments.

"The challenge of evangelizing our nation cannot be met by pastors of 37,000 churches or 3,700 home missionaries. It will be volunteers from the pews who will share a radical kind of love with a lost nation," said Robert Banks, acting president of the Home Mission Board.

"All the people who are going to help Southern Baptists reach their Bold Mission Thrust goal (of reaching the world for Christ) in the next 14 years have already been born," Banks added. "God always does his part--he calls them. Our part is to go, and to help them go."

While volunteer response is higher than ever, Banks said 25 percent to 30 percent of the board's requests for help cannot be met because of lack of funds and personnel.

R. Keith Parks, president of the Foreign Mission Board, stressed the need for linking job skills with mission needs on an international basis.

"There is a Southern Baptist presence in 108 of the world's 243 nations, but more than half of those remaining countries will not allow us in through the traditional missionary context," Parks said. "I am praying that more Southern Baptists will begin to study a second language and develop cross-cultural relationships so they will be prepared when a missions opportunity presents itself. We may not always be able to share the gospel as traditional missionaries, but we will as agriculturalists, veterinarians or dozens of other professionals."

The National Fellowship of Baptist Men is the first nationwide effort to organize Baptist laity according to skills and interests, said Executive Director Ed Bullock.

The first 15 fellowships to be organized include the vocations of construction, agriculture, law and government, transportation, education, business, communications, veterinary medicine, entertainment, sports and recreation, lay evangelism, church renewal, medical-dental, health care and disaster response. A nursing fellowship is coordinated through the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, Bullock added.