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January 30, 1987

87-13

Missionaries In Lebanon  
Weep Over Order To Leave

By Art Toalston

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--If the U.S. Department of State refuses to soften its stance that Americans must leave Lebanon, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board expects its personnel to obey the order.

"We intend to abide by the laws and restrictions of our government," said Isam Ballenger, director of Southern Baptist work in Europe and the Middle East.

However, Ballenger said, "We are uncertain whether this (order) means that all Foreign Mission Board personnel will have to leave. On the surface, that appears to be the case. But we're still seeking clarification. It could be that some exceptions might be made."

The Jan. 28 order bars Americans from entering or traveling within Lebanon, according to State Department spokesperson Dona Sherman in Washington. She said a 30-day "grace period" has been extended to Americans currently in Lebanon. Those remaining beyond 30 days face prosecution by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Sherman said exceptions to the order will be considered on an individual application basis.

Southern Baptist representatives have worked in Lebanon, now a country of 2.7 million people, since 1948.

Among missionaries in Lebanon, "the mood has been one of shock and sadness," said Frances Fuller in a telephone interview from Beirut. "We've done a lot of crying today," upon hearing of the State Department order. "It's like a nightmare come true for us. We never imagined ... that our government would tell us to leave.

"None of us wants to go," said Fuller, who has worked in Lebanon 16 years. "We all want to stay." Two cables to that effect from missionaries in Beirut have been sent to the Foreign Mission Board's home office in Richmond, Va.

Three Lebanese co-workers "collapsed in my arms and cried," Fuller said. "Our departure is going to be demoralizing to a lot of people. I think (Lebanese Christians) feel very hurt, very bewildered, that they somehow are being punished for something they didn't do. They seem to be asking, 'Is the rest of the world deserting us?'"

Fuller and other missionaries are urging that a distinction be made between West Beirut, which has been the scene of much chaos during Lebanon's 12-year-old civil war, and East Beirut, which is predominantly Christian and relatively peaceful.

Several missionary women learned of the State Department order while aboard a ship to Cyprus, en route to a conference for Southern Baptist missionary women in the Middle East.

At the hotel, the women were met by other conference participants and Dale Thorne, assistant to Ballenger for Middle East work. A spontaneous prayer meeting and sharing session soon was under way.

"There was a lot of emotion," Thorne said. "There was concern, shock, but still (they) evidenced a lot of faith and calmness."

The women's major concern was for the Lebanese Baptists they might have to leave behind, Thorne noted.

The Baptist sector of Lebanon's Christian community encompasses seven churches in the Beirut area and four in other locales.

Well over 100,000 people have died since 1975 in warring between militias of Maronite Catholics, Shiite and Druse Muslims and Palestinians. Troops from Syria and Israel also have occupied Lebanese territory and engaged in fighting.

More than 230 U.S. Marines in a multinational peacekeeping force were killed in October 1983, when a terrorist rammed a truckload of explosives into their four-story command center in Beirut.

Eight Americans still are held hostage in a wave of kidnapping dating back to early 1984. More than a dozen other foreigners have been kidnapped -- as well as hundreds of Lebanese.

War also has taken a toll on Lebanese Baptists. Several churches have been scattered by the conflict, and one prominent layman was kidnapped and murdered several years ago.

"The fact that our missionaries have remained thus far has been applauded by Baptists in Lebanon and by Lebanese dignitaries," Ballenger said.

"The crisis in Lebanon has brought, without question, new and unprecedented opportunities for service in media, publications and educational work," he said. "Physical safety is not always their first consideration. They do not want to be foolish, and they do not want to break the laws. But they would first ask, 'Where is the highest service to be rendered and the highest value to be gained?' Here is where it's hard to judge."

Ballenger picked the word "suffering" to describe the missionaries: "They're suffering because they love Lebanon. They love the people and the land. They're suffering because the Lebanese people are suffering.

"The masses of Lebanese are not the types of people who are publicized by the media. The terrorists, the kidnapers, the warring factions are a small minority. The masses of Lebanese people -- Muslim and Christian -- are suffering people."

"I think some of the missionaries would say, 'I would just as soon face death as to leave Lebanon,'" he added.

"I think of Nehemiah in the Old Testament who said, 'I am doing an important work and I cannot come down,' when he was building the walls of Jerusalem. Our missionaries have exhibited that. They feel they're making a contribution to the kingdom of God, and they cannot stop."

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Georgia Baptists Help  
Defeat Pari-mutuel Bill

Baptist Press  
1/30/87

ATLANTA (BP)—Georgia Baptists and Methodists played key roles in defeating a proposed constitutional amendment which would have legalized pari-mutuel gambling on horse races in Georgia.

The House Industry Committee of the Georgia General Assembly voted 18-6 against the bill, in effect killing it for the 1987 legislative session.

Thousands of Baptists and Methodists wrote letters opposing the legislation to their representatives and senators and to members of the House Industry Committee.

Opposition to the bill was led by the Georgia Council on Moral and Civic Concerns, an organization of Baptists and Methodists in Georgia established in 1943 by the late Louie D. Newton and Bishop Arthur Moore.

Emmett Henderson, executive director of the council, attributed defeat of the bill to an outpouring of letters, phone calls and public outcry from concerned Christian citizens in Georgia opposed to legalized gambling.

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"To my knowledge, at no time in recent history has there been a greater public response in Georgia that changed the course of legislation so quickly," said Henderson, a former Georgia Baptist pastor for 25 years.

Henderson said the chairman of the House Industry Committee, Rep. Sonny Watson of Warner-Robins received almost 1,000 letters against the bill, including at least 200 from his home district. Most of the letters were hand-written messages "from truly concerned people."

Henderson especially praised the roles of the Christian Index, the Georgia Baptist state paper; the Wesleyan Christian Advocate, the state paper for United Methodists; and the leadership of Clark Hutchinson, president of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Hutchinson, pastor of East Side Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., wrote a personal letter to all Georgia Baptist pastors encouraging them to urge church members to write letters to their representatives opposing the bill. Hutchinson made a similar appeal to pastors attending the Georgia Baptist state evangelism conference in Savannah just one week before the subcommittee was to consider the bill.

In January, the Christian Index and the Wesleyan Christian Advocate each carried a series of front page articles, editorials and two full-page ads urging Baptists and Methodists to oppose the legislation. "This was probably the major factor leading to the defeat of the bill," Henderson said.

"This demonstrated what concerned Christian citizens can do when they really want to affect legislation," he added. "It was citizen participation by Christians in the best possible way. And it worked."

Although Henderson said there is a possibility the bill might come up again in the Senate, the defeat in the House committee was so overwhelming he feels the bill is dead for this year in Georgia: "Most folks wrote to their senators as well as to their representatives, so I doubt it will come up again this year. But it probably will again next year."

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Baptists Aim Radio Waves  
At Less Responsive Indians

Baptist Press  
1/30/87

BANGALORE, India (BP)—Southern Baptist missionaries and national Baptists have begun a plan to reach a group of people in India who have shown little interest in the gospel message.

Baptists began broadcasting a daily radio program, "Voice of Truth," from the neighboring island of Sri Lanka Jan. 5. National Baptist convention leaders are planning to send church starters and evangelists to work with those who respond.

Targeted are about 40 million Kannada-speaking Indians in the southern state of Karnataka. The radio audience, expected to be primarily rural village people, will need only an ordinary transistor radio to hear the voices of local Kannada-speaking pastors and musicians. The program airs for 15 minutes at 7 p.m., when family members are in their homes before their evening meal.

Funds from Southern Baptists' Lottie Moon Christmas Offering will pay for the entire program, including buying air time from Trans World Radio. Baptist churches in Karnataka state began promoting and praying for the program's success early last year. National church development leaders expect response in each of the 19 districts of Karnataka.

Listeners who want more information are invited on the broadcasts to write a letter with a return address to Trans World Radio, which will send materials and tracts to them. Trans World also will send Karnataka Baptists a list of the names and addresses it receives.

Serious planning for a radio program began more than three years ago with the completion of a recording room adequate for taping messages and Kannada music. Actual planning for the program began in December 1985.

Five Kannada-speaking pastors contributed to the messages, and 68 Kannada-language songs were recorded for the first 90 programs. The first series is entitled "New Life in Christ."

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Drunk Driving Report  
Calls For Diligence

By David Wilkinson

WASHINGTON (BP)--Fortified legal sanctions are making a difference, but a new report contends the battle against drunk driving never will be won without fundamental changes in America's social attitudes.

That conclusion dominates the 1986 progress report of the National Commission Against Drunk Driving, established in 1983 to monitor nationwide efforts to combat drunk driving.

"The laws that have made a difference in saving lives are in place as never before," the report says. "However, the unfulfilled need is the most difficult, and that is to change behavior patterns and social attitudes."

The commission's report underscores some encouraging changes in the continuing campaign against drunk driving. For example, in 1980 an estimated 28,000 of the 51,091 people killed on America's highways were involved in alcohol-related accidents. By contrast, in 1985 an estimated 22,360 alcohol-related victims were among the year's 43,795 fatalities.

The report notes the substantial reduction in deaths as well as in the percentage of alcohol-related fatalities occurred during a period when both highway travel and the number of drivers increased.

Another sign of progress cited in the report is that fewer teenagers are driving while intoxicated. From 1982 to 1985, the greatest rate of decline among all age groups in the percentage of intoxicated drivers involved in fatal crashes was among teenagers. In fact, the decline among 15- to 17-year-olds exceeded that of any other age group.

Nevertheless, alcohol-related crashes remain the No. 1 cause of death for U.S. teenagers.

The report also gave a mixed review on law enforcement and other "countermeasures" against drunk driving. On the positive side, it pointed out 44 states now have age 21 minimum drinking age-laws. On the other hand:

— Only 17 states have enacted "open container" laws prohibiting possession of an open container of alcoholic beverage in the passenger compartment of an automobile.

— Only 28 states have "dram shop" laws relating to some form of servers' liability.

— Only 22 states provide for administrative suspension or revocation of the driver's license for driving with an illegal blood-alcohol content.

— Only 13 states exclude plea bargaining from driving under the influence offenses.

Foy Valentine, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, welcomed the report as "a call to persistence."

"The tide of public opinion is turning, thanks to the faithful efforts of committed individuals, families, churches and community groups," Valentine said. He noted a recent Harris survey showed that 72 percent of drivers say they never drink and drive, a dramatic turnaround compared to a 1983 Gallup study which found that 80 percent of American motorists would not hesitate to drive after drinking.

"If public attitudes are to be translated into changed behavior, then churches must redouble their efforts to provide intervention and education, especially among young people," Valentine added. "The best way to end the problem of drunk driving is to end the problem of alcohol abuse."

Missouri Educators Feel  
Heat Of Mission Fervor

By Carolyn Brandt

BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP)—A winter trip to Brazil stirred the flames of missions zeal among Southwest Baptist University educators. They hope the heat of their fervor will warm students to missions commitment.

Fourteen of the Missouri Baptist school's administrators, faculty and staff began 1987 in South America on a volunteer mission project conducted in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. The group joined 58 other Americans to work in the city of Salvador. The 72 volunteers were divided into 25 groups that held evangelistic services each night and made visits to homes during the day.

The result of the project was more than 900 professions of faith in Jesus Christ and thousands of rededications to Christianity.

Trustee Harold Finch said he believes that by getting faculty and staff excited about missions, the excitement will be caught by students. Finch and his wife, Peggy, provided the orientation as well as encouragement, background information and some funding for the university group. They are members of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Overland Park, Kan., and co-founders of Wellspring Mission Volunteers Foundation, designed to help mission groups.

Since 1980, Southwest Baptist has sponsored from five to seven student mission projects annually. Students have worked in the United States, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, Bermuda, Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. A November missions emphasis week resulted in 50 student commitments to career missions.

On this trip, William Hooper, dean of SBU's Geneva Casebolt School of Fine Arts, was impressed with the openness of the Brazilians in sharing their faith: "They're not afraid to live it and share it. It's an everyday thing for them."

Hugh Smith, professor of education, echoed Hooper's observation, noting, "They don't take being a Christian lightly — they really get with it (living a Christian lifestyle and telling others about the source of their faith)."

The excitement of youth in the Brazilian churches was noted by several team members. "The youth assumed all kinds of leadership roles — there was an 18-year-old who was a Sunday school director of a church that had 400 to 500 in church attendance," reported Twila Smith, professor of education. She also recalled situations when small children were misbehaving and the youth would move to sit among them and calm them down.

Rod Oglesby, vice president for financial affairs, trained several young people to use tracts in telling people on the streets and in their homes about Jesus. The church leaders recognize many of the decisions made from reading a tract or from hearing a brief explanation of how to be assured of eternal life are shallow. Further teaching and training are required for new converts before they are members of the church.

Art professor Sandra Brown was moved by the apparent lack of resources and yet the tremendous accomplishments of Baptist congregations in Salvador.

This was the first mission trip for some members of the SBU group. While they have always encouraged students to participate in missions, they feel that now they are better examples or role models.

Several in the group have been involved in other mission trips. Among those are the Smiths, who have led groups to Mexico and have gone independently to Korea. Twila Smith said this trip made her more aware of how career missionaries function with the added demands of teaching and administrative duties. She also saw firsthand the result of world hunger funds. "They trained men to be wood workers and they build church pews. This training provided not only work but a trade," she added. "We learned, and teachers should keep learning."

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(Carolyn Brandt is director of public relations at Southwest Baptist University.)

'Nurses Must Share Christ,'  
Nursing Fellowship Head Says

By D'Lesia Carroll

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Baptist nurses should "walk through doors" which God might open for them challenged Baptist Nursing Fellowship President Mary Lou Causby of Shelby, N.C.

"If you see that the Lord has a door open for you, go through it, because it could be one of the most fulfilling experiences you could ever have," Causby said during a Baptist Nursing Fellowship meeting held in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union executive board meeting.

Causby, who said she accepted a call to nursing "late in life," told the women: "The Lord works through doctors and nurses. Their primary function must be to share the gospel."

More than 20 states were represented at the meeting. Some of the women are planning to begin Baptist Nursing Fellowship chapters in their states. The fellowship has reached a record 589 members, including active and retired registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, student nurses and missionary nurses.

The organization's missionary nurses educational trust fund, established to meet educational needs for missionary nurses on the field and on furlough, now totals more than \$13,000. The fellowship also has a general contribution fund, which provides transportation and housing for missionary nurses to attend Baptist Nursing Fellowship annual meetings.

The Woman's Missionary Union will host a breakfast for Baptist Nursing Fellowship members during the WMU annual meeting June 15 in St. Louis. The Fellowship's annual meeting is set for Nov. 12-15 at the Sheraton Music City Hotel in Nashville, Tenn.

WMU sponsors the fellowship by providing financial support, office space and office support staff.

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Paraguayan Leader Finds Riches  
In Relationship With Great Physician By Scott Collins

Baptist Press  
1/30/87

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—A relationship with the Great Physician caused the president of the Baptist seminary in Paraguay to earn a doctorate in philosophy rather than medicine.

As a young man growing up in Asuncion, Paraguay, Dionisio Ortiz wanted to be rich.

"We were poor. The only man with a car and nice home was the physician. I wanted the same life he had," notes Ortiz, national guest professor last fall at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

But God had other plans for Ortiz.

Through the efforts of missionaries at the Baptist hospital in Asuncion, Ortiz decided to become a Christian at age 16. He became involved in Villa Morra Baptist Church, which grew out of the hospital.

During his senior year in high school, Ortiz worked 40 hours each week at the hospital and became active in the church. He then enrolled at the national university in Asuncion to study medicine.

"I always prayed for the Lord to call my friends into the ministry because they were so intelligent," Ortiz recalls. "But I soon learned that the Lord was calling me."

Ortiz changed his studies from medicine to philosophy. After completing studies in Paraguay, Ortiz came to Southwestern, where he received the master of divinity degree in 1968 and the doctor of philosophy degree in 1977.

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While at Southwestern, Ortiz married Rozanne Eubank, a religious education graduate from Pine Bluff, Ark. They have two sons.

Ortiz was pastor of several Paraguayan churches before becoming president of the seminary. Although the Paraguayan seminary was begun by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1956, it has been operated by the national convention since 1967. The seminary enrolls about 30 full-time students and another 110 students in extension programs.

As national guest professor at Southwestern, Ortiz taught missions classes and contributed to the programs of the World Mission and Evangelism Center.

Ortiz says he found "an even higher commitment to missions" at Southwestern than when he was there before. He stressed that commitment in his classes by telling students he is evidence "the giving, praying and sending are not in vain — the Lord honors."

Ortiz says he wants to teach students what he learned at Southwestern — to become servants. "I learned from my professors at Southwestern that the goal of academics is to serve people," he explains. "Dr. (John) Newport used to say, 'Always remember the people you're ministering to.'" He notes that advice made it possible for him to return to his native country and relate to his own people.

Ortiz says a need for more leaders in theological education exists in Paraguay. "The more people respond, the more training we need to do," he emphasizes.

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Southwestern Seminary Student Prepares  
For Return To Venezuelan Seminary

By Elizabeth Watson

Baptist Press  
1/30/87

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The National Baptist Convention of Venezuela's version of "Bold Mission Thrust" launched Alirio Eustache into a new life at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Part of the "Million Plan" to enlist 1 million Baptists in Venezuela by the year 2000 includes equipping national leaders for the Venezuelan Baptist Seminary.

Eustache was the first Venezuelan selected to further his graduate studies at Southwestern. In 1984 he received the master of divinity degree. Next year he will become the first Venezuelan seminary professor to earn the doctor of philosophy degree.

But knowing Venezuelan Baptists have entrusted him with the future of their seminary is a weighty responsibility, Eustache admits noting, "Because the doctor of philosophy program is demanding, I often battle fears of failing and letting the convention down."

Eustache already has overcome several barriers. "Meeting all the entry requirements was really tough," he says. And Eustache must work in English rather than his first language, Spanish.

"It isn't enough just to be knowledgeable of English. I have to be able to express myself well in English," Eustache relates. "I have studied English so much I honestly think I could publish my own grammar book."

Like all doctor of philosophy students, Eustache must master two other foreign languages in addition to English.

Despite his struggle with the language, last year Eustache was listed in Who's Who Among American Students. He currently teaches theological Spanish at Southwestern.

Eustache and his wife, Astrid, both teach Sunday school at Fair View Baptist Church in Grand Prairie, Texas. She received a marriage and family counseling degree last year and currently is pursuing a religious education degree.

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"The doctor of philosophy program has been everything I expected it would be -- and more," Eustache says. "It has challenged me even more to develop my own analytical approach. To be successful in this program, one must have a searching, critical mind and be able to communicate thoughts clearly. It will all make me a better professor when I return to Venezuela."

Eustache is considering writing his dissertation about the connection between existentialism and liberation theology: "Existentialism and Marxism are of interest to almost every university student in Venezuela. Hopefully my study in that area can help Christians understand how to interpret liberation theology, which is sweeping South and Central America, in light of Scripture."

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Ex-convict Leads Mission  
For Fellow Ex-offenders

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
1/30/87

DALLAS (BP)--Eight years ago, Don Dennis was serving time in a West Coast prison. Today, he is serving God as pastor of a Dallas-area mission for ex-convicts.

Dennis is pastor of Beautiful Gate Baptist Church, a mission of South Park Baptist Church in Grand Prairie, Texas. The mission, designed to meet the specific needs of ex-offenders, meets on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights in a temporary building behind the sponsoring church and on Sunday nights in the facilities of North Dallas Baptist Church.

"Churches in general just haven't looked in depth at ministry to the needs of ex-convicts," claims Dennis. "When I first tried to go to a typical church, I didn't fit in. Men there were talking about problems with insurance, problems with business. My problem was trying to find a warm place to sleep and a minimum-wage job."

When Dennis visits prisoners or recently released ex-offenders, they sense that he has walked in their shoes. Brought up in a Christian home by Baptist grandparents, Dennis rebelled as a teenager and began a criminal career. He was convicted and sentenced three times for writing bad checks, twice for committing armed robbery and twice for escape from prison.

After serving time in -- and escaping from -- some of the toughest prisons on the West Coast, he was classified as "an incorrigible, habitual criminal" and sentenced to life in a federal prison in Walla Walla, Wash., in 1977.

In 1979, while serving five and one-half months in solitary confinement, someone succeeded in passing a note to Dennis. The note asked if he wanted to make peace with God and suggested he read "the Roman Road" -- verses in the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Romans that present the plan of salvation in Christ.

"I managed to get ahold of a Bible and read how to be saved. I got down on my knees right there in my cell and asked Jesus to come into my heart," Dennis recalls.

Three months after his conversion, courts ruled the "incorrigible, habitual criminal" label improper grounds for a life sentence. He was credited for time served and released.

Upon returning to his home town, he was received coolly by local churches who were skeptical of his conversion. Without the support of other Christians, Dennis began to slip back into his old lifestyle of alcohol dependency. An individual associated with Charles Colson's Prison Fellowship who recognized his problem helped him to relocate in Texas and find a church home there.

In 1982, Dennis and his wife, whom he met at Northside Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, began a prison ministry. Although he took the Gospel into jails and prisons, his main emphasis was on after-care for recently released ex-offenders. Eventually, he began a Bible study in his home for former prisoners, and it grew into a house church.

In April of 1986, James Weir, Dennis' former pastor at Northside Church and now pastor of South Park Church, approached Dennis and suggested the house church become a mission of South Park.

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One major ministry of Beautiful Gate is counseling for families of prisoners and ex-offenders, particularly during the crucial period of transition immediately before and after release.

"We try to build family relations through group counseling, working with families of ex-offenders to prepare them, to help them find jobs, food, housing and transportation," says Weir. "We also bring groceries to prisoners' families and Christmas gifts to children whose fathers are in prison."

Finding a job is one of the greatest hurdles each ex-offender must conquer, notes Weir. "Without a means of financial support, the ex-offenders are likely to fall back into their old pattern of doing what they know how to do."

Since beginning his ministry to ex-convicts in 1982, Dennis has helped about 250 to them find jobs, although he says it has been "really tough" since the downturn in the Texas economy.

In addition to helping prisoners after their release, Dennis also is working with Derrel Watkins, associate professor of social work at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, to develop a pre-release Bible study program to prepare prisoners for Christian life in the world outside prison.

Dennis also operates a preventive prison ministry. Two mornings each week are spent with inner-city children at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Dallas, and he frequently speaks at Fellowship of Christian Athletes meetings, encouraging young people to resist the temptations of drugs and alcohol.

In the future, Dennis and Weir hope Beautiful Gate can start its own Christian halfway house for recently released ex-convicts, possibly in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Attendance at Beautiful Gate currently averages about 25 for Sunday services, although as many as 50 have attended at one time. Dennis baptized eight ex-convicts in 1986 and led to Christ another eight who moved out of the Dallas area soon after their conversion.

Although they are committed to seeing Beautiful Gate continue for years ahead, neither Weir nor Dennis expects Beautiful Gate to become a self-supporting church. Almost by definition, the congregation is transient and in a constant state of transition.

"As the ex-convicts get better jobs, start wearing better clothes and get adjusted to life outside of prison, they feel comfortable moving on to a regular church setting. They get to where they have more in common with people there than with recently released prisoners here," Dennis explains.

"Basically, we're providing a way-station for the ex-convicts. But as far as we can tell, it's something no one else is providing."

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Professor Creates  
Baseball League

By Breena Kent

Baptist Press  
1/30/87

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A love affair with baseball led one professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary to create a game. Now he "owns" his own team of National League players.

James Reed, assistant professor of history and philosophy of religious education at the seminary, calls the game "The Bidder's Baseball League."

Each person who plays is an "owner" and is given \$10 million in imaginary money with which to bid for and buy the 11 National League players of his choice -- three pitchers, three outfielders, a catcher, a first baseman, a second baseman, a third baseman and a shortstop.

"The most fun is trying to out-bid each other," Reed says.

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Once players have been chosen, the Bidder's League is won by the team whose players perform best during the actual baseball season.

For example, if Dwight Evans of the Atlanta Braves hits a home run in an actual game, the "bidder's" team which possesses him would receive 10 points. A stolen base is worth two points; a single, two points; a strike out by a pitcher, two points; and so on. The bidder's team with the most points at the end of the season is the winner.

Reed came up with the idea as a means of fellowship and fun, he says. This past season, eight "owners" from as far away as California, Georgia and Missouri played the game.

"We only play the National League," says Reed. "That's the only league, in our opinion."

The idea for the game "came out of my love for baseball," Reed explains. He grew up across the street from a semi-pro baseball field, where he met players such as Willie Mays and Hank Aaron. Often they would give him money, tell him what they wanted from a nearby Dairy Queen, and he would buy the food and bring it to them.

Reed's own experience playing baseball includes playing, as a child, "on the worst baseball team ever assembled," he says. The team won only one game, "and that was because the other team didn't show up." But that did not put a damper on Reed's love affair with America's pasttime.

Now he coaches his son David's baseball team at a playground in New Orleans. His "deepest moments" are spent hitting balls with the 10-year-old boy.

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John Allen Resigns  
As Alaska Executive

Baptist Press  
1/30/87

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (BP)—John H. Allen has resigned effective Feb. 28 as executive director of the Alaska Baptist Convention, to become director of cooperative missions and stewardship for the Colorado Baptist General Convention.

Allen, 55, has been with the Alaska convention since 1976, serving first as director of missions and since 1982 as the chief executive officer.

Bill Duncan, director of evangelism, Brotherhood and stewardship for the convention, will be interim executive director.

Allen, a native of Texas, told Baptist Press: "I have been in direct missions all of ministry, and, in fact, came to Alaska as director missions. My first love is missions. I felt I wanted to return to the 'lower 48' and thought that at my age, I have one move left. I believe I would rather spend the remainder of my career doing missions than administration, budgets, working with real estate agents and attorneys."

Allen added: "I have always seen the ministry of the Lord to be opportunities for service more than stairsteps up and down."

Prior to going to Alaska, Allen was associate director of church extension for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. He also was an area director of missions in South Dakota and a pastor in California, Texas and Virginia.

He is a native of Fort Worth, Texas, and a graduate of Wayland Baptist University; Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.; Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif.; and the Medical College of Virginia.

Duncan, a native of Stuttgart, Ark., has been in Alaska since 1967 after serving as pastor of churches in Nevada and Arizona. In Alaska, he has been pastor, director of missions, convention president and now state staff member.

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