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87-31

'Bulls On Eggshells'  
Manage SBC Stock Funds

By Marv Knox

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Imagine a bull walking on eggshells. That's the predicament of Southern Baptist investment managers.

Wall Street is on an unprecedented "bull" run: The overall value of stocks on the market is going up steadily. The current run began in August of 1982 and has continued without any substantial downward correction. Since that time, the Dow Jones Industrial Average -- the numerical indicator of the strength of the stocks -- has climbed 1,500 points, to a record 2,245.

And not only has the bull bucked to new heights, but the end of the ride is nowhere in sight. Buyers have climbed on. The smart ones are corralling herds of dollars.

But what if the bull stumbles? The riders -- investors who have counted on a higher market climb -- could take a tumble. The careless or slow could lose, big.

Therein lies the predicament of Southern Baptists whose jobs are to manage denominational funds, such as endowments, annuities and reserves. Stewardship demands that they make the money work, earning the best returns possible. But millions could be lost in a market crash. Consequently, stewardship also demands that they keep the money safe.

Baptist stock managers admit they're like bulls on eggshells -- aggressive yet cautious.

"We're bullish," says Hollis Johnson, president of the Southern Baptist Foundation. His agency manages funds, primarily for other Southern Baptist agencies and state conventions.

But Johnson and other managers say security is the harness that keeps the bull in check.

"We emphasize conservative growth and preservation of capital," reports Don Early, director of financial and technical services for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. Early oversees management of the board's reserves and the annuity program it operates for its own employees.

"We want to maximize growth without undue risk," Early explains. "Every dollar we make can support (Sunday School Board) programs. If we lose it, that would be painful."

Both Johnson and Early, as well as managers from other Baptist financial institutions, note security is a primary concern. Despite the huge profits to be made from the bull market, the agencies continue to balance their assets between the stocks or equities and more stable funds, such as bonds, Treasury bills and short-term loans.

For example, only 30 percent -- or \$18 million -- of the Southern Baptist Foundation's assets is in stocks, with 35 percent in short-term loans and 35 percent in bonds. About 30 percent -- or \$120 million -- of the Baptist Foundation of Texas' common trust fund is common stock. The Southern Baptist Annuity Board holds about \$500 million in common stock, out of more than \$2 billion in assets.

But diversification -- and consequently the limitation of equities to a fixed percentage of each institution's assets -- is just one element of the security of Southern Baptist money.

"Our emphasis is on quality," Johnson explains. "The big stocks are leading, and that's our kind of stock." The Southern Baptist Foundation ignores "junk bonds," the high-rolling but high-risk stock that makes both princes and paupers overnight. It instead deals with blue-chip stocks such as those on the Dow-Jones Industrial Average.

This practice gives the foundation a more stable base from which to operate. Granted, the prices will not escalate as rapidly as other types of stock, Johnson admits, but they are not likely to drop precipitously, either.

"The minute you have assets, you become a steward," Early reasons. "Our position has been to aggressively manage funds. That takes everyday management. You've got to be on your toes all the time. Historically, the market value has been underpriced. We will remain fully invested.

"But with each account we are prepared to preserve assets," Early adds. "In some accounts, we can go back to Treasury bills in a day. We want to be nimble. We don't want to lose money."

The key to success in Southern Baptist fund management is to capture the gains made on the stock market, says Tal Roberts, executive vice president of the Baptist Foundation of Texas. As with other Southern Baptist financial institutions, the Texas foundation works to "capture the gain" of rising stocks.

Rather than watch stocks climb and eventually fall, the foundations' goals are to sell stocks at their highest safe point and then add the proceeds back into the permanent Southern Baptist funds, such as reserves, endowments and annuities.

"We have realized several million dollars each year on the sale of common stocks," Roberts says. "And we have plowed that money back into the institutions' funds so they can make more money. Asset growth is meaningless unless you convert it into more realized profits, which give a bigger capital base and increase earning."

All the talk about stocks is more than just theory for SBC ministers and denominational workers whose retirement funds are managed by the convention's Annuity Board. Actually, less than one-third of the board's assets are in equities, and only annuitants whose retirement accounts are in the board's variable and balanced funds are involved in stocks.

However, people who have put their annuity money in the variable fund have enjoyed a 12 percent to 14 percent increase in unit value since Jan. 1, reports Thomas Miller, the board's vice president for communications.

Miller stresses the board does not advise individuals regarding investment funds, noting most annuitants place their money in the fixed fund, which has a guaranteed rate of return and does not involve equities. "We don't give advice," he says. "We tell the philosophy of each fund and give its performance record. Each member has to make his own decision."

Individual annuitants as well as SBC institutions that have had money in the market have done well in recent months, but no one is certain about the future.

"Historically, stocks move from being undervalued to overvalued," Johnson says, explaining the current bull market. "During the 1970s, stocks were terribly undervalued. We've been moving to a fair value, which is where we are now. Stocks still are not overvalued, but they will come down; we just don't know from what point."

The bull market probably will take another two years to make another major correction, he adds, forecasting it could reach the 3,500 mark, up another 1,255 points.

"Nobody knows where it's going," says Roberts, a sentiment echoed by Miller, "Nobody knows the future."

But that fact urges Southern Baptist investment managers to do their best. "We don't know the future," Johnson says. "But if hard times come and enough money doesn't come in, we'll need big reserves to carry us through."

And that means the bulls can't afford to break any eggshells.

Mississippi Twister  
Kills Baptist Boy

By Don McGregor

N-CO  
(MISS.)

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)—At least one Baptist died and probably more than 25 Baptists were injured when a tornado swept through rural Jones County, Miss., Feb. 28, reported Maurice Flowers, director of missions for Jones Baptist Association.

The one known Baptist death was a 14-year-old boy, Dale Smith, a member of Highland Baptist Church. The boy had gone to spend the night with a friend who lived in a mobile home in the Glade Community. When the storm hit, the boys left the mobile home and went to a car parked outside. The car was thrown into a tree, and the Smith boy was killed.

Two Baptist churches, Glade and Lawn Haven, both about six miles from Laurel, were damaged. The parsonage at Bethlehem Baptist Church was destroyed, and the homes of the pastors of the other two churches also were damaged.

The two church buildings are repairable, Flowers said.

At least seven people died in the storm, and more than 100 people were injured. Since Baptists comprise 25 percent of the local population, Flowers estimated 25 of the injured were Baptists.

Before the storm, the two damaged churches both had four pillars holding up the roofs, Flowers said. After the storm, each church had one pillar remaining. The roofs were propped up, however, and remaining in place, he said.

The damaged churches probably will be able to hold services in other parts of the buildings, Flowers reported. The steeple was torn off of Glade Church, and the steeple was damaged on Lawn Haven Church.

The Glade Church pastor is Charles Davis; and, ironically, the Methodist pastor in the Glade area has the same name. The Baptist Record spoke with the wife of the Methodist minister. The Lawn Haven pastor is Evon Ingram. At Bethlehem the pastor is Valton Douglas. He has moved into a vacant house on the church field until the pastorium can be rebuilt.

Services were held at Bethlehem, which had little damage, but not at Glade and Lawn Haven on the Sunday following the storm. Services could have been held at the two damaged churches, but there was so much damage to members' homes that services were not practical, Flowers noted.

He said that 680 homes in the area were damaged, and of these about 400 were destroyed.

Some Eastview Baptist Church members sustained damage to their homes, but that church was not damaged. All of the damage was in rural areas.

"There was lots of damage," Flowers said. "Some big pine trees were clipped off about 20 feet from the ground where the wind was that far off the ground," he said. "When the wind was closer to the ground, the trees were blown over."

The Mississippi Baptist disaster unit was not called into service because Red Cross officials believed that the need could be met without it, Flowers said. At least 100 Baptist men from over the state were on the scene on March 1, however, to begin clean-up operations.

The Red Cross was feeding victims. Women in the area were preparing meals, he said.

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Texans Join In Australia Baptists'  
First Evangelism Conferences

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press  
3/5/87

N-Texas

SYDNEY, Australia (BP)—Texas Baptists reached across 10,000 miles to join hands with Australia Baptists in the first statewide evangelism conferences in the "land down under."

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The conferences in Melbourne and Sydney Feb. 19-25 drew about 1,200 people with about 200 of them making public commitments to share their faith in Christ and to lead their churches to experience revival.

Only about one in four Australians attends church weekly. "There are about 60,000 Baptists among the national population of 16 million," said Bill Gray, Texas Baptist coordinator of Partnership Missions, "but they are determined to reach their country for Christ and have invited Texas Baptists to be their partners." He called the response at the first evangelism conferences "outstanding."

Australia Baptist leaders said the evangelism conferences helped prepare church members for the partnership crusades in the state of New South Wales July 20-Aug. 2, 1988, for which 1,000 Texas Baptist volunteers have been requested.

On Jan. 1, Texas Baptists began their second three-year partnership with Australia Baptists coordinated through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

About one-third of all Australians — 5.4 million — live in New South Wales. Sydney, with about 3.4 million people, is the state's largest city. Australia Baptists said the 1988 conferences will help lay the groundwork for Crossover Australia, a goal to reach every person in their nation with the gospel.

Harry Monro, coordinator for Crossover Australia, said the effort parallels Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust to reach every person on earth by the end of the century.

John Robinson, general superintendent for the Baptist Union of New South Wales, told the 16 Texas Baptists who traveled about 10,000 miles to help conduct the conferences: "We're one with you in our love for Jesus Christ and in that we stand alongside you. We're much the same in that we live and work among people with tremendous needs in our day."

Paul Powell, president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, one of the speakers at the conferences, warned, "We must have revival for survival."

Powell, pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas, said, "Revival depends more upon the condition of our people than upon conditions of society." He also warned that Baptists are in danger of deserting the priority of prayer, saying, "The secret of every great life is prayer."

The priority of prayer also was emphasized by Monro, who said: "The work of evangelism is not the work of pastors only but the work of praying people. Satan laughs at our toil and mocks our wisdom but trembles when we pray."

The priority of prayer and repentance by Christians was underscored throughout the conferences. Carlos McLeod, director of the Texas Baptist evangelism division, admonished, "Until you and I get right with God, there won't be any harvest."

Another key speaker, Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, said: "If we're going to have a harvest of souls, we're going to have to pray for God to do something mighty in us. What we need in our hearts is a fog-lifting, mountain-moving faith."

Other speakers included Duane and Iris Blue of Rye, Texas, who told how God transformed their lives when they became Christians. The Blues will remain in Australia for about three months sharing their testimonies in churches and schools.

Mrs. Blue had served seven years in prison and was running topless night clubs. Through the prayers and witness of Christians, she was persuaded to accept Christ in front of one of her clubs. "I can't forget the night I knelt down a tramp and stood up a lady," she said.

Norman Nix, director of evangelism and new church growth for the Baptist Union of New South Wales, expressed appreciation for the numbers of people who attended and called the conferences, "a fitting conclusion to what we've been leading up to."

Nix said the best year of growth in New South Wales in 19 years was in 1985, the year 400 Texas Baptists came at their own expense to serve with the Australians in evangelistic crusades. The churches in New South Wales reported nearly 1,000 decisions for Christ during the effort.

Tony Cupit, general superintendent of the Baptist Union of Victoria, said he feels the partnership has enhanced the work of the gospel in both Australia and Texas. He said the evangelistic partnership in Victoria in 1984 strengthened homes and underlined and shaped the evangelistic emphasis.

John Simpson, director of church life and ministry for Victoria, reminded Australia Baptists that "anything less than influencing the entire world for Christ is undershooting what Christ has for us." He said Victoria Baptists before the end of the century should plant 76 new churches and secure 10,000 new members.

Already the partnership has had a significant influence in starting new churches. Phil Bryant, who began work Feb. 1 as Victoria's first church planting field worker, was chairman of a task force which mapped a strategy similar to Texas Baptists' Mission Texas new church plan.

Bryant said seven new churches were begun during the 15 years before the 1984 partnership crusade. Since 1985, Victoria Baptists have started 10 new works, with two more scheduled to begin in March.

The partnership has continued to be felt said Jack Meacham, pastor of Fenwick Memorial East Geelong Baptist Church near Melbourne. Recently, he baptized a couple who came to Christ as a result of the partnership in 1984.

After the woman accepted Christ during the partnership, her husband was antagonistic, but eventually her witness impressed him to give his life to Jesus last December, and they were baptized together.

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Southwestern Seminary Bestows  
6 Distinguished Alumni Awards

N- (CO  
(SWBTS)

Baptist Press  
3/5/87

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Two pastors, two professors and two denominational workers will be named 1987 Distinguished Alumni of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Jimmy Draper, Leon Marsh, Charles McLaughlin, Frank Pollard, Mary Essie Stephens and William B. Tolar will be honored at the national Southwestern Reunion June 17 at the Sheraton Hotel in St. Louis.

Southwestern's alumni association gives the annual honors to former students of the Fort Worth, Texas, school who have distinguished themselves in denominational service and vocational ministry.

Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, is the third generation of his family to graduate from Southwestern. He previously was associate pastor at First Baptist Church of Dallas and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla. Draper served two terms as Southern Baptist Convention president and currently is a Southwestern trustee.

Pollard returned as pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss., in 1986 after three years as president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He was pastor of the Jackson church from 1974 to 1980. In 1979, TIME magazine named him one of the "seven most outstanding Protestant preachers in America." He has been preacher for the "Baptist Hour" on radio and television host for "At Home With the Bible."

Tolar is in his 27th year on Southwestern's faculty, where he is dean of the School of Theology. He taught 10 years at Baylor University before coming to Southwestern and speaks often in Southern Baptist churches and conferences. He has studied and lectured in 52 countries on five continents, including 33 trips to Israel as a lecturer.

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Marsh retired in 1986 as distinguished professor of foundations after 31 years on Southwestern's faculty. He also taught five years at Hardin-Simmons University. He was instrumental in developing the seminary's foundations department in the School of Religious Education. He also helped develop the doctor of education program and wrote the first textbook on educational psychology from a Christian perspective.

Stephens gave her entire career as executive director for the Alabama Woman's Missionary Union from 1954 to 1984. A native of Alabama, she graduated from Judson College. She currently lives in Montgomery, Ala.

McLaughlin served Texas Baptists for 23 years as director of the state missions commission. He also was as director of the missions division in Texas from 1960 to 1964. Before joining the Baptist General Convention staff, McLaughlin was superintendent of missions for the Tarrant Baptist Association in Fort Worth for eight years. He also was minister of music and education for Queensboro Baptist Church in Shreveport, La.

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Stop Cringing, Start Witnessing  
Missions Strategist Challenges

By Susan Shaw

N-CO  
(SBTS)

Baptist Press  
3/5/87

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Too many Christians "cower" in their churches rather than witness boldly to persons of other religious backgrounds, a veteran Southern Baptist missions strategist claimed.

Wendell Belew, associate vice president for missions strategy interpretation at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, told Southern Baptist Theological Seminary students Christians must overcome fears spawned by religious, cultural and language differences if they are to communicate their faith effectively.

"We cower in our churches, hiding behind our pews and cringing in our pulpits because we are afraid," Belew said. "We have not remembered that we are chosen to proclaim the good news."

Not every witnessing effort will be successful, Belew added, but the challenge is to be faithful to the biblical mandate to share one's faith. "The Spirit has anointed me to proclaim the gospel; he didn't ask me to count the scalps," he explained.

Belew and Norman Langston, regional director of the Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department, addressed issues related to interfaith witnessing during home missions emphasis week at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Both missions leaders stressed the growing challenge facing Christianity within the context of other world religions. Belew noted that Islam, not Christianity, is the fastest-growing religion in the United States today. Christianity, he added, is growing faster in Africa and Indonesia than in the United States.

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Institutions For Mentally Handicapped,  
Churches Must Share Resources To Work

By Terri Lackey

N-BSSB

Baptist Press  
3/5/87

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Government agencies working with mentally handicapped people are becoming more receptive to help from churches and neighborhood networks as money from "above" dwindles, an expert said.

"Service systems (government institutions) thrive on money from above. They say, 'If the feds let us down, we'll die,'" said Robert Perske, a freelance writer from Darien, Conn., and author of several books about social issues associated with mental retardation.

"On the other hand, churches and neighborhood networks can do a lot with time, telephones, mimeograph machines and a struggle for justice," Perske added. "Communities and churches may have few resources and little or no money. But they have lots of time and energy, comradeship, a strong determination to help and a fierce hunger for honesty and fair play.

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"Now that's what you have that service systems can never have," Perske told a group of church and civic leaders attending a seminar on mental retardation sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's special ministries department.

Perske defined neighborhood networks as small handfuls of people who mobilize on behalf of a person or group in trouble.

Gene Nabi, consultant in ministry to exceptional persons in the special ministries department, said churches harbor a myriad of resourceful people who could help families with a mentally handicapped member obtain what is rightfully theirs.

"There are so many families that just don't know what resources are available to them," Nabi said. "Church members are needed to inform families of these services."

Also, he said he believes churches could have a direct involvement in developing, endorsing or supporting a lifelong care facility for mentally handicapped persons.

Churches and neighborhood networks are needed as a support system to government-run facilities for the mentally handicapped, Perske said. When money began to trickle rather than flow to government institutions, "it was amazing how parent organizations started moving across the country like a wave." Many of them started meeting in churches, and many pastors got involved. All of a sudden the pros have really discovered the value of these organizations."

Twenty years ago, service system officials would not even dream of soliciting outside help from neighborhood organizations, Perske said: "I worked in the service system when we believed we were the only solution for all people with developmental disabilities. At that time we tried to protect people with disabilities from the community."

But later, as service systems started sending mentally disabled citizens out in the community, Perske noticed some of the "first down-to-earth educational workshops for developmentally disabled citizens were started by parents and quite often backed by pastors."

"Institutions began discovering that out there in the community, and mostly around churches, strange little powerful operations were going on."

Perske and Nabi agreed that while government agencies and church support systems are working cooperatively, each also has a unique contribution to make to meeting the needs of mentally retarded people and their families.

Perske compared initial efforts at working together to a blind date: "When these two entities get together for the first time, they probably don't understand each other. I hope the day comes when service systems and churches begin to see they have a common mission."

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'Open Windows' Success  
Based On Simplicity

By Frank Wm. White

F. B. S. B.  
Baptist Press  
3/5/87

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—After 50 years of growth and success, it is unlikely that the Sunday School Board's most widely circulated periodical will change much in the next 50 years.

Editor Louie Wilkinson believes simplicity and relying on basics have been essential elements in the success of "Open Windows" since it first was published in April 1937.

Wilkinson cites as true today a purpose statement in the first issue of the personal devotional guide pledging that the magazine will provide a "message for every day in the month to deepen and strengthen the spiritual life of every person everywhere."

The 50-year-old format includes a daily Scripture verse, devotional thought and prayer thought. But the magazine continues to be fresh because "the Bible itself is always fresh," Wilkinson said.

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Two of the most significant changes in the publication have been shifting from monthly to quarterly publication in 1941 and adding a large-print edition in 1976. Combined quarterly circulation of the two editions is 1,050,000, with 546,000 of the regular edition sold and 504,000 of the large-print editions.

"I was convinced we were missing much of our audience by not having a large-print edition," said Sam Brents, who was editor of the magazine when the large-print edition was started.

A prayer calendar was added in 1948 listing foreign missionaries on their birthdays. Home missionaries were added in 1959. Wilkinson said about half the mail received by "Open Windows" mentions the prayer calendar.

Missionaries frequently write to say they appreciate the prayer support generated by the calendar listing, Wilkinson pointed out.

While simplicity is a key element of the devotional magazine, planning for it is anything but simple, Wilkinson said. Outlines are developed years in advance with weekly topics developed around an annual theme.

"It may appear that someone sits down and writes a devotional on whatever comes to mind, but that's not the case. They are following a careful plan," Wilkinson said.

But to keep the devotional thoughts interesting to a general audience, writers must take care in writing from a broad perspective, Wilkinson pointed out.

"We try to have writers who are in touch with people and can help readers see God's blessings and provisions in all situations," he said.

Wilkinson makes a point of answering letters from readers and occasionally calls someone who took time to write. The correspondence and conversations give Wilkinson opportunities to share information with readers about ways to further their Bible study and devotional time.

Wilkinson points out that "Open Windows" is a devotional guide and is not to take the place of more in-depth Bible study.

A schedule for reading the Bible through in a year was added to the devotional reading outlines in October 1974.

In the 50 years of publication, "Open Windows" has printed 18,262 daily devotionals.

"'Open Windows' is simple and brief. We don't try to do Bible exposition. We try to focus on the joys as well as the crisis situations to meet people's needs," he said.

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

Ling Jumps Ship In  
Mississippi River

By Breena Kent

F- (10  
(NOBTS)

Baptist Press  
3/5/87

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Peter Ling, a Chinese seaman persecuted for his Christian beliefs, jumped ship in the Mississippi River. Now he wants to train for the ministry and return to his homeland as a pastor.

In September 1986, Ling's ship was anchored near New Orleans when another crewman threatened his life. The "second engineer ... wanted to kill me because I continued to preach the Good News to my countrymen," Ling recalls.

On Saturday morning, Sept. 28, as the second engineer attempted to kick down Ling's locked door, "I opened my window, and jumped into the river."

Speaking in broken English, Ling says, "Before I jumped, I prayed three times to the Lord, and I feel if I jump into the river, I will be protected by the Lord. Everything he will prepare for me."

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During all the years that Ling had been a seaman, he had never received training in swimming. On this particular ship, however, the crew was required to have swimming lessons before the voyage.

The training proved profitable as he fought the rough current of the Mississippi River for half an hour, until two Vietnamese fishermen caught him: "The fishermen asked me, 'Do you have any money?' I said, 'No, I'm penniless. I only have my Bible and an English-Chinese dictionary.' They said, 'If you have no money, you will live a very painful life here.'"

Once on shore, American police handcuffed Ling. Since he just jumped ship to escape threats on his life because of his Christian beliefs, Ling quickly told them: "'I am a Christian. I should be free here.' The police told me, 'Don't be afraid. This is the United States, and we try to protect you.'"

He was brought to the immigration office, "and after they asked me some questions, they told me I can live in the U.S., and I can look for a job," he reports.

Because Ling was a Christian, the police took him to the home of a Catholic Vietnamese family, who, through their church, arranged for him a place to stay. "They gave me clothes and \$60, and after I recieved a Social Security number, they introduced me to a restaurant to work," he says.

When Ling told the people who helped him he was Baptist, they brought him to Elysian Fields Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans. The pastor, Jimmy Dukes, who is on the faculty of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, found him a job at the seminary.

Ling now is studying to pass the high school graduation equivalency test so he can begin studies at the seminary. The first time he was tested, he scored high in mathematics but at the third grade level in other areas. One month later, he had risen to the sixth grade level.

Ling hopes to someday obtain an associate of divinity degree at New Orleans Seminary and return as a pastor to China, where his wife and child remain.

He grew up in a Christian family in China, "so when I was very young, they taught me how to worship the Lord."

Ling accepted Christ while aboard ship in Indonesia. He was listening to a Christian radio broadcast when "I told God I want to offer all my life to God."

Two years ago, he was baptized in his village in Dashabu, China, and 38 other Chinese were baptized with him.

"When I was in China, the Christian church in China was increasing rapidly, but no pastor, and so I want to be a pastor," Ling says. He notes for every 600,000 people in China, there is only one pastor, and "many, many village churches."

The main reason for the lack of pastors, he explains, is a lack of theological training, especially among people in rural villages.

Four years ago, there were only two Christians in his village; now there are 150. "So I want to get wisdom here and then go back to China and start a Christian training class at the Christian theological seminary," he says.

The threats of one man forced Ling to jump ship in an attempt to save his own life. But Ling is using the circumstances to gain theological training so he can return as a pastor and help train other pastors in his homeland, where, he says, "I want to follow God's will."

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Union University  
Gets Endowed Chair

N- (O)  
(TENN.)

Baptist Press  
3/5/87

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)—The Hammons Memorial Chair of Pre-Medical Studies has been established at Union University as a part of a recent \$10 million endowment campaign.

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The chair was endowed by contributions of Dr. and Mrs. Otis Parnell Hammons and their son Edward Parnell Hammons, all of Forrest City, Ark. The elder Hammons are members of the 1928 graduating class of Union University.

"This is the first endowed chair in our history," said Larry Stewart, vice president for development. "It has come from an alumni family with long, long ties to Union. Five generations of the Hammons family attended here. Dr. Hammons worked his way through college cleaning off tables."

Union University, a 1,500-student liberal arts college, is affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

The elder Hammons is a retired school teacher, school principal, superintendent and farmer. He also served a number of years in the Arkansas State Legislature. His son is a medical doctor specializing in family practice in Forrest City.

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Union Campaign  
Nets \$10.1 Million

N-EO  
(Tenn.)

Baptist Press  
3/5/87

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)—The most successful financial campaign in Union University's history was officially concluded at the regular meeting of the school's board of trustees in late February.

The final official total of gifts and pledges to the endowment campaign is \$10,146,619.20. That total includes the first two \$1 million gifts in school history.

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Pastor Embarks On Journey  
To Encourage His Young 'Timothys'

By David Reid

F-EO  
(SWBTS)

Baptist Press  
3/5/87

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Al Jackson carries the Paul-Timothy relationship to great distances.

Every year the Alabama pastor treks to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, to encourage his Timothys — eight seminary students who have come through his church.

Just as the Apostle Paul saw a need to nurture young Timothy's ministry, so the pastor of Lakeview Baptist Church in Auburn, Ala., wants to share his experiences with young ministers.

Jackson was on Southwestern's campus this winter for his annual visit. But his concern for ministerial students begins before they ever make it to Fort Worth.

In 1980 Jackson began weekly meetings with ministerial students in his church.

"We have a lot of students in our church who come to Auburn University for whatever reason and then are called to vocational Christian ministry while they're there," Jackson says. "Many of them don't really know what the ministry is all about."

So Jackson attempts to prepare them. "We talk about things out of my own experience — the kinds of practical things that happen in church life that often aren't covered in the classroom," he says. "I'll say, 'Let me tell you what happened during deacons' meeting,' or someone will ask why something was done a certain way during a service, and we'll discuss that."

The meetings also are an indirect way of fulfilling Jackson's desire to serve as a missionary. "When I was a student at Southwestern, I always attended the chapels and conferences during Missions Week and was a bit disappointed when it became clear God wasn't calling me to missions," he recounts.

"I see my involvement with students as the primary way I can impact the world with the gospel beyond my own church."

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