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March 18, 1987

87-40

Check-Writing Changes
Alter February CP

N-CO

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Modifications in the way several state Southern Baptist conventions write their Cooperative Program checks continue to play havoc with the denomination's monthly unified budget totals.

National Cooperative Program receipts for February were \$10,030,797, or \$852,617 below receipts for the same period last year, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

February receipts were 7.83 percent behind receipts for February 1986, Bennett said. However, receipts for the first five months of the current year are almost \$54.1 million, or 2.5 percent over receipts for the same period of the 1985-86 fiscal year.

The Cooperative Program is a stream of funds used to finance Southern Baptist missionary, evangelistic and educational endeavors worldwide. The money is passed from individual Southern Baptists to and through their churches and state conventions and on to convention-wide causes.

The February monthly deviance primarily is the result of changes in Cooperative Program check-writing procedures in several state Baptist conventions, Bennett explained. In January, some states started writing bi-monthly checks to the national Cooperative Program, rather than the monthly checks that had been the norm.

The positive aspect of this change is that the national Cooperative Program will receive funds based on actual receipts by the state conventions, rather than estimated receipts, he said. The negative aspect -- which came about in February -- is that until the system gets on-line, some of the conventions' second checks each month do not arrive at the Executive Committee in time to be tabulated with that month's totals.

That was the case in February, when a check from one of the denomination's largest state conventions did not arrive at the Executive Committee that month, producing a 75.3 percent decrease for that state, compared to the previous February.

Despite the unevenness of receipts caused by implementation of the new check-writing procedures, the system "should even out this month," predicted Tim A. Hedquist, Executive Committee vice president for business and finance.

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Robertson Appears Ready
To Replant Baptist Roots

By Kathy Palen

F-BJC

Baptist Press
3/18/87

WASHINGTON (BP)--Pat Robertson, whose family roots run deep in Southern Baptist life, appears on the verge of replanting himself into a more traditional relationship with the nation's largest Protestant denomination after years of less-than-active participation.

The great-grandson of one of the first Southern Baptist Home Mission Board corresponding secretaries, the potential presidential candidate grew up watching his grandfathers, both of whom were Southern Baptist pastors. As a child, he was baptized in Manly Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington, Va., where he was active in Sunday school and Royal Ambassadors.

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Following a conversion experience as a young adult, Robertson resubmitted himself for baptism at First Baptist Church of Flushing, N.Y. During a 15-month tenure as minister of education at Freemason Street Baptist Church in Norfolk, Va., he was ordained as a Southern Baptist minister.

But by his own description, Robertson has "not been active" in his local church — Freemason Street — "for many years," citing a busy travel schedule that prohibits his participation.

The former pastor of that congregation, William L. Lumpkin, said while Robertson has continued on the church roll, he "has not been active at all." Lumpkin, who also was Robertson's pastor at Manly Memorial, said Robertson only attends the church on special occasions, such as a major anniversary celebration.

"His testimony is that he is afraid to go into mixed groups like this lest harm be done him," Lumpkin said. "And so he doesn't go into open assemblies freely without some protection around him."

The church's current pastor, Donald J. Dunlap, said Robertson has not attended Freemason Street in the two years he has been pastor.

During an interview with Baptist Press, Robertson said he is "in the process of moving" his church membership.

"I think I may do what Billy Graham did and take a major national church," he said, adding he has considered Second Baptist Church in Houston. "I'm torn between that and First Baptist (in Norfolk, Va.) where my wife attends and where I go now when I'm home and have a chance."

Despite his lack of local-church involvement, Robertson has close ties with a number of Southern Baptist Convention leaders, several of whom have appeared on "The 700 Club," Robertson's television program. Two former SBC presidents — James T. Draper Jr., pastor of the First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, and Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta — voiced their support of Robertson's presidential candidacy during a nationally televised rally last September.

Robertson has said he will seek the 1988 Republican presidential nomination if 3 million registered voters will sign petitions pledging their prayers, work and donations toward his election by next September.

When asked why he thought such Southern Baptist leaders would embrace a self-proclaimed charismatic, Robertson responded, "I think they recognize that I am a leader who has been bridging denominational lines." Through his books and television program, Robertson has emphasized the practice of charismatic gifts, including faith healing, speaking in tongues and words of wisdom from God.

He added: "I have always tried to emphasize the points of unity we have in the body of Christ rather than the points of division, and I think these great men — such as Billy Graham, Charles Stanley, Adrian Rogers, Jimmy Draper and Paige Patterson — recognize that we stand together on virtually all the major points of Christian doctrine. In a society as torn as ours is and as lacking in faith as ours is, it's no longer possible to quibble over some differences that may not go to the heart of our faith. In any event, we all agree on the Bible as the word of God. We may interpret it a little differently, but we have essential agreement on that point."

During Robertson's rally, Draper praised his "fellow Southern Baptist" for his understanding of the relationship between church and state. "He understands that separation of church and state does not mean separation of God and government," explained Draper, who said he spoke "with and for many Southern Baptists."

But some Republican leaders have expressed reservations about Robertson's views in that area.

In a letter dated Sept. 23, 1986, Secretary of Education William J. Bennett wrote to Robertson that "I am not alone in sensing some ambiguity in your position on the role of religion in politics." Bennett also wrote he is "troubled by anyone who celebrates electoral success by writing, 'The Christians have won,' or 'What a breakthrough for the Kingdom!' This is just the sort of statement that I think should be avoided in political contests."

Robertson contended his views represent "the historic American interpretation of separation of church and state," not "the tortured interpretation of the First Amendment ... given by the courts in the last 20 years."

He said he believes:

-- The United States has been "profoundly Christian" and it is "hard to separate the history of this nation from its religious roots."

-- When the signers of the Constitution used the words "in the year of our Lord" they referred to Jesus Christ since "there is only one Lord."

-- The First Amendment does not need "tampering with" since it provides "all the protection we need."

-- When the president of the United States takes the oath of office "he is engaged in an affirmation of theism."

-- Schoolchildren should be allowed to pray, but "saying a little five-second prayer at the beginning of school ... doesn't mean anything."

-- Public school textbooks should not have "all references to God and religion expunged from them" and history should not be "rewritten to take out the religious significance."

-- The Republican Convention of 1984, when compared with the Democratic Convention of the same year, reflects "a stronger emphasis on traditional family values."

-- There is now a great deal of persecution against "traditional religious values."

Robertson said he cannot conceive of the nation's government "ever manipulating people in relation to their faith" or "establishing a religion which denied the rights of minorities or tried to force some sectarian point of view on the other people." He added, "Christianity has to be an act of volition of people's individual hearts, and any attempt by the state to Christianize people would destroy the state and destroy the church."

But Robertson said he strongly disagrees with a recent statement that evangelicals should not attempt to "dictate their own interpretation of morality on the rest of society." He said that statement -- made by Vice President George Bush during the National Religious Broadcasters annual meeting -- was "a code word for saying evangelical Christians -- those who have faith in God -- shouldn't get into politics because they'll make trouble."

Robertson charged members of Bush's presidential campaign in Michigan with distributing flyers "urging people to resist strongly the efforts of evangelical Christians to be good citizens and to get into the precinct party structure in Michigan." A Bush spokesman denied the charge.

"That's just not the case," said Ed Rogers, a member of the George Bush for President staff. "Nothing done by this committee and by this campaign was done to discourage evangelicals involving themselves in the Republican Party and in the political process. The vice president has made it clear that he thinks evangelical participation in the party is a good thing."

Although the vice president's spokesman predicted a Bush victory in Michigan -- the state with the first party contest to have direct bearing of the allocation of delegates to the 1988 Republican National Convention -- other indicators point to a strong showing by Robertson. By his own count, Robertson holds a clear majority of precinct delegates in seven of the state's 18 congressional districts and a plurality in four others.

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Robertson also predicted that by early summer he will reach the goal of 3 million signatures he set as the prerequisite for his running.

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F-FMB

Missionaries Say Lebanon
Should Remain A Priority

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
3/18/87

LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)—Wayne Fuller's Lebanese Baptist friends didn't exactly say goodbye.

The missionary says he was told over and over, "We pray the Lord will cause you to return very soon."

The hope voiced by Lebanon's Baptists makes it impossible for Fuller to envision anything less than returning to their land, where he has worked 17 of his 24 years as a missionary.

Twenty-three other Southern Baptist missionaries had much the same experience in leaving Lebanon.

One Lebanese Baptist urged Fuller's wife, Frances: "Please don't let the mission board forget about Lebanon. Make them fight (for you) to come back." Another friend placed a note in her purse urging: "Write to everybody in America and tell them not to quit praying for Lebanon because the missionaries left. Tell them they need to double their prayers."

Among many if not all of the missionaries, a sense of divine call to Lebanon remains. "I may not be vital to Lebanon," says Russ Futrell, "but Lebanon is vital to me." Futrell worked there under the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's journeyman program from 1978 to 1980 and was appointed as a missionary in 1983.

"The shock has not really gotten to us," notes Pete Dunn, a missionary in Lebanon since 1968. "We've just not had time to say our ministry could be finished in Lebanon. We've not come to that. When we do, it'll be a sad day."

Many of the missionaries want the Foreign Mission Board and Southern Baptists to continue seeking a change in the U.S. State Department order barring Americans from Lebanon for at least a year.

Such efforts have begun. Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks wrote to three State Department officials in mid-March requesting the name of "the person with whom we need to keep in contact ... in order to know the earliest possible time to return" to Lebanon.

Parks expressed respect for the State Department's authority to refuse exemptions for missionaries, but noted, "We, along with the missionaries and Lebanese Baptists, would make a different decision based on our perspective and experience."

"We feel there is urgent need to return as soon as possible," Parks wrote. "The value of the humanitarian and spiritual contribution that could be made in this critical time cannot be overstated."

Isam Ballenger, the board's vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, acknowledges that the missionaries "might want a more aggressive policy on our part" for re-entering Lebanon. But, he says, "Our interests are the same: When the time comes that the ban could be lifted, we want to know."

Missionary Dunn would like "total pressure" exerted. The pressure should "not be in a derogatory fashion," he qualifies. But he hopes Baptists will contact "everybody with whom we have a right to express a view. I'd love to see a blitz by every state Baptist paper."

"We work to bring about change in a lot of other areas," adds Futrell. "Why should we limit ourselves in this area?" He doesn't want "protest for the sake of protest." Rather, he wants to resume "the work we've had to leave behind, sharing the love of Christ in a needy land."

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The missionaries ache over leaving Lebanon's Baptists and other Christian and Muslim friends with whom they've weathered the country's 12-year civil war. At times their emotions break forth into tears and sobbing.

And there's deep concern for the future of Beirut-based gospel publishing, mass media, Bible correspondence and theological education aimed at Arabic-speaking people throughout the Middle East.

At issue, Frances Fuller believes, is the question, "Are we serious anymore about the gospel?" Do Christians have the courage to carry the gospel to a world full of danger?

The danger is great in West Beirut and other areas of Lebanon controlled by Muslim extremists, where kidnapers hold eight Americans, more than a dozen other foreigners and numerous Lebanese. But kidnapping hasn't yet spread to the Maronite Christian stronghold of East Beirut and the surrounding region, where most of the missionaries lived and worked.

"I fear not attempting to do God's will more than I fear being kidnapped or dying by an explosion or sniper fire," says Emmett Barnes, a 20-year missionary in Lebanon.

"It's not my nature to try to live dangerously," he adds. But at the core of his motivations are "what I know of God, a realization of his love, a desire to do his will."

The government can command its soldiers to risk their lives in battle, Ballenger notes. The missionaries "would like to take the weapons which they have ... the Bible, the proclamation of a way of peace and love and reconciliation ... and stay in the battle and take the risk."

A number of the missionaries sense an urgent need, in Futrell's words, "to get the message out about Lebanon, that it is not just a terrorist country, that there are many Christians there working to serve the Lord and, in general, a lot of good people whether they're Christian or not."

Lebanon has become "sort of the dumping grounds for the Middle East conflicts," Futrell says. "The Lebanese have, in many respects, a large share of responsibility" for the civil war, he acknowledges. But other parties — Syria, Iran, the Palestinians, Israel, Libya, the United States and the Soviet Union — have used Lebanon to advance their agendas in the Middle East. "They keep the pot boiling."

"These forces are of such an overpowering nature that the Lebanese find themselves unable to get out of the quagmire," Futrell says. "Lebanon is not really free to handle her own problems."

"What can we do?" and "What can I do?" have become the standard expressions of frustration among the vast majority of the 2.7 million Lebanese. Dunn calls the warfare a "rape of the people" by no more than several thousand gun-toting combatants.

"The average Christian and the average Muslim have done nothing to warrant ... the hardships of war," Dunn says. "They want to work. They want to educate their children."

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

Wellspring Mission Foundation:
 Making A Difference In The World By Trennis Henderson

F-60
 (Mo.)

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (BP)--A successful volunteer missions organization that doesn't solicit funds? How about one that flat-out refuses even unsolicited financial gifts?

Wellspring Mission Volunteers Foundation, based in Overland Park, Kan., fits both descriptions.

Founded in 1984 by Harold and Peggy Finch, Wellspring Foundation is a self-perpetuating organization which funds trips for first-time, short-term mission volunteers in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The foundation's three-point statement of purpose explains the goals of Wellspring: "To help spread the gospel; ... to enable 'ordinary' Christians to spend up to two meaningful weeks on the foreign mission field; and to generate increased interest and support in the local church for foreign missions."

Wellspring encourages Christians who desire to serve as overseas mission volunteers to apply for services. After certification by the foundation, applicants apply for specific mission projects. When those applications are approved, volunteers pay a small commitment fee and begin orientation classes. The foundation then provides all major expenses -- travel, food and lodging -- related to the trip.

During 1984, the organization's inaugural year, the foundation sponsored eight volunteers. In 1985, Wellspring's first full year of operation, 156 volunteers went overseas. That number rose to 164 last year, and 180 volunteers are projected for 1987.

More important than the number of participants sponsored, Finch points out, "We're approaching 10,000 professions of faith (in Christ) as a result of Wellspring."

Finch, a businessman, recalls groundwork for Wellspring actually begin in 1977. At that time, he was executive vice president of Johnson County Community College in Overland Park. He and George Robertson, a fellow deacon of Emmanuel Baptist Church decided to found a company specializing in business training.

Establishing goals at the beginning of their venture, Finch says he and Robertson had one common goal -- "Within five years, we wanted the business to develop where it could release us from its operation and support us in full-time ministry."

With that goal, Padgett-Thompson, Inc., was founded in 1978. "The business prospered," Finch acknowledges. "It became the largest training firm in the nation." By the time Finch and his partner sold Padgett-Thompson to H&R Block in 1985, annual sales had hit \$30 million.

"I sincerely feel the Lord knew we were going to keep our commitments and allowed the business to be blessed," Finch says. "At the end of five years, my wife and I began to pray about what we should do. I felt the Lord very clearly speak about what we should do. I felt compelled to get involved in foreign missions. Peggy had been convicted almost identically."

With that assurance, the Finches decided to invest profit from the sale of Padgett-Thompson in their newly established Wellspring Foundation. "We've never solicited or accepted gifts," Finch emphasizes. "We return what we receive and tell them it goes to the local church." He notes the amount of available missionary-sending funds is based solely on income from his family's investments.

Finch, his son Greg and one other volunteer went on Wellspring's first mission trip in May of 1984. Spending two weeks in India, Finch recalls: "We found out it was a life-changing experience. It gave us all the affirmation we needed."

Even with Wellspring's success, Finch is quick to note the foundation's close working relationship with the Foreign Mission Board has been a key to effective ministry. FMB officials share requests with Wellspring for specific trips and then assist in orientation for volunteers.

Ron Boswell, director of the board's volunteers in mission department, says Wellspring is "providing us with manpower for some very key projects around the world."

"The uniqueness of what Harold is doing is that Wellspring is not competing with (Southern Baptist) Cooperative Program funds," Boswell continues. "It's complementary rather than competitive."

With Wellspring providing an average of more than \$1,500 in expenses for each of its 328 volunteers during its first three years of operation, Boswell says, "It's made overseas missions possible for hundreds of folks who wouldn't have dreamed of it otherwise. Harold had not only a dream, but the resources and structure to make it work."

Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks says one problem the board often faces in working with volunteer organizations is the tendency for organizational leaders to capitalize on that relationship for their own fund-raising purposes. "Harold has solved that problem in a beautiful way by insisting they don't raise funds," Parks notes.

Parks commended Wellspring personnel for being "very cooperative in fitting into needs that are field-generated rather than planning a trip and trying to make needs on the field fit into their plans."

Finch's pastor at Emmanuel, Carl Garrett, is equally affirming. Pointing to the foundation's close work with local congregations in conjunction with the Foreign Mission Board, Garrett says, "This puts the emphasis where it really belongs — in the local church. It gives our people a greater awareness of what we as Southern Baptists are doing."

Garrett, has experienced Wellspring's effectiveness firsthand. He and Finch were among 80 volunteers from Emmanuel who spent two weeks ministering in Buenos Aires, Argentina, last October. That trip, composed of the largest number of members from one church to go on a single Foreign Mission Board partnership mission project, resulted in more than 900 professions of faith in Christ.

"We've seen personal spiritual growth among our members" as a result of that trip, Garrett says. He notes church members "saw people saved as a direct result of their efforts. That's a step of growth a lot of church members never experience."

Garrett also emphasizes that Wellspring "is not in competition with any church or Southern Baptist program in any way. That's of extreme importance. It keeps it in the channel that has worked so well for Southern Baptists to take the gospel around the world. People's money is not siphoned out of a local church."

In addition to the impact made on foreign mission fields, Wellspring's ministry also is designed to make a difference among Christians in the United States. Although Wellspring trips are open to any interested Christian as space permits, first priority is given to members of Southern Baptist churches in the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists.

Pointing out that Kansas-Nebraska often is itself considered a home mission field, Finch explains most members of churches in the two-state convention have missed "the joy of being involved in foreign missions."

"The Lord told me to plant seeds -- to help some of these people go," adds Finch, currently vice president of the Kansas-Nebraska convention. "We try to start little brush fires throughout the convention. Volunteers come back soul-winners, and it pumps life into their home churches. Many have gone back (on subsequent mission projects), paying their own funds."

Dick Ungerbuehler, Wellspring's full-time administrator since mid-1985, says as volunteers return home and share their experiences in their own churches and surrounding congregations: "We gain an even greater harvest on the home front. We're trying to encourage soul-winning and overcoming fears in that area. If you do it in Venezuela, you can do it in America."

Strangeness Opens Bible,
Craddock Tells Preachers

By Susan Shaw

N- CO
(SBTS)

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Preachers must always find a certain "strangeness" in Scripture "lest they come to possess the Bible and use it as their own," warned preaching authority Fred Craddock.

"Whoever feels ownership of Scripture inevitably uses Scripture," Craddock said during the second Conference on Biblical Preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. "You don't want to leave this place using the Bible, but hearing it."

More than 130 Southern Baptist ministers from 18 states attended the March 2-6 conference.

Craddock, professor of preaching at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, warned familiarity can close the ear, shutting out new insights into the biblical message.

He suggested a distance must be created which again will make the Bible strange to its listeners. "When the familiar becomes strange," he said, "it can become a teaching moment."

Jesus opened the minds of his disciples by injecting new ideas and applications into familiar teachings, Craddock noted. Today, he added, "the living Christ has to open up the Scriptures for us."

He emphasized the historical-critical method of study can contribute to new insights into Scripture. On the other hand, he cautioned that studying about the Bible should never replace reading and studying the Bible itself. While the Bible's message may sometimes be painful to hear, "if you live in these pages, it will bring you face to face with God," he said.

He also stressed that the Bible itself teaches Scripture is adequate for generating faith. "If the Bible is not sufficient, then nothing is sufficient," he said.

Craddock, who delivered the E.Y. Mullins lectures on preaching, was joined on the conference program by five other plenary speakers: Raymond Bailey and Kenneth Chafin, professors of preaching at Southern Seminary; Warren Hultgren, pastor of First Baptist Church of Tulsa, Okla.; Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz.; and Daniel Vestal, pastor of First Baptist Church of Midland, Texas.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second of a two-part series.

Lifestyle Differences Create
Potential Church Conflicts

By Linda Lawson

F - BSSB

Baptist Press
3/18/87

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Involvement, input and communication are three keys to achieving a spirit of unity and sense of common direction in churches where members approach decision-making, goal-setting and leadership from different perspectives, according to three leaders who have studied recent adult lifestyles research.

While 82 percent of Southern Baptists fall into two of nine groupings of adult American lifestyles, the researchers note conflict about what a church should be and do is an almost inevitable byproduct of differences, even between two groups.

Of nine lifestyle groups identified by the Values and Lifestyle Program, a research service in Menlo Park, Calif., 53 percent of Southern Baptist adults are "belongers," 29 percent are "achievers" and the remaining 18 percent fall in various percentages in seven other groups. The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board subscribes to Values and Lifestyle Program as part of research efforts to plan materials, outreach strategies and programs to meet the needs of Baptists and unchurched persons.

Belongers, the majority of Southern Baptists, are active, evangelistic and tend to belong to small and medium-size churches relatively close to their homes, said Cliff Tharp, planning research specialist in the board's research services department.

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About 56 percent of leaders in Southern Baptist churches are belongers. As leaders, they are conscientious and hardworking, Tharp said, but they also tend to be indecisive, apprehensive and undemanding. Belonger leaders operate best in situations where personal relationships are important, the environment is structured, rules are clear and where crucial decisions are not required or can be passed on to someone else.

On the other hand, achievers, almost one-third of Southern Baptists, are evangelistic, active and attend medium and large-size churches a medium distance from home.

Thirty-two percent of Southern Baptist church leaders are achievers who tend to be driving, efficient, decisive and pragmatic. They know how to lead a group to accomplish its task and measure success by outward results, Tharp said.

Southern Baptist achievers and belongers agree the Bible is fully inspired by God but differ somewhat on the method of inspiration, according to a national study conducted for the board.

From four theories of inspiration, 22 percent of Southern Baptist belongers selected the so-called dictation theory that "God gave the Scripture word for word." Another 39 percent of Baptist belongers chose the statement, "God inspired writers in such a way that even though they used their own words, they were so completely enlightened, guided and empowered that the whole of what they wrote was without any error."

Many Southern Baptist achievers -- 39 percent -- also chose this second theory. Another 44 percent of Baptist achievers chose the theory that "God worked in the lives and minds of writers to give them inspired ideas so that what they wrote expresses the revealed truth of God in words drawn from the writers' own backgrounds and experiences."

As a group, belongers are middle-aged, two-thirds are female and they tend to be slow to change, Tharp said. Achievers are older, three-fifths are male and they support progress while opposing radical change.

Alan Tungett, adult Sunday school consultant, said a believer teaching a Sunday school class or chairing a committee "would tend to be satisfied with the status quo on numerical growth. Achievers in the group would want to know the direction the class was moving and what they were trying to accomplish."

An achiever leader would be more likely to have goals and emphasize external results, Tungett said. "Belonger members of the group might not have goals themselves but might question whether the leader's goals came from God or him- or herself," he added. "Achievers are almost always going to press for growth and advancement. When belongers find something they like, they're going to stick with it."

To achieve unity, Tungett recommended forums "whereby members share information and ideas about directions they believe the church needs to go. People need to be given a chance to express needs and identify what they believe should be done to meet those needs."

James Williams, Sunday School Board executive vice president, said the differences among groups found in churches show that leaders must exercise care not to make assumptions about what people's needs are.

"While Southern Baptists have in common such things as conservative theology and a strong belief in biblical authority, there are also many differences. It is not possible to draw a composite picture of a typical Southern Baptist," said Williams. "Through sharing and involvement, we must identify real needs rather than deal with perceived needs."

"Being aware of differences is the first step toward educating church members toward a better understanding of one another," he said.

Tharp said the term "values," as used in Values and Lifestyle Program research, includes the "attitudes, needs, aspirations, beliefs, priorities, prejudices that form the basis of a person's way of life." Religious and theological issues are addressed through the study as they relate to moral and social issues.

Seminary Students Challenged
To Reach Beyond Themselves

N- CO
(66BTS)

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)—The church is not effectively reaching out because "people are not convinced the world is lost," or non-Christian, students were told during the 1987 Mission Emphasis Week at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

William Affolter, director of Christian social ministry in St. Louis, challenged the students to reach beyond themselves in ministry.

Speaking on "The Mission: Christ's Great Commission in Today's World," Affolter said: "We must depend upon the strong hands of God. He can get along without us, and if we're not careful, he will."

"Stand By Me: Global Partnership in World Evangelism," Affolter's second emphasis, stressed the partnership aspect of missions. He pointed out several roadblocks in this partnership, including Baptists' "flair for organization, and our thinly disguised prejudices."

"We are lead from the stance of servant. The servants always end up being exalted in the Kingdom of Heaven," he said.

The theme was further interpreted by "A Room With A View: The Local Church With a Global Perspective," in which Affolter said, "We've had such tunnel vision, we need to teach people to see." He emphasized the church needs to see beyond itself, noting, "People want to see Christ lived out in the flesh."

Mission Emphasis Week concluded with "Witness: The Significance of One Life in the Plan of God." Affolter admonished, "The world wants to hear, and they won't unless people tell them."

He claimed nothing can stop a person with a purpose. "God takes what you have and uses it gloriously," he said.

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'Grandma' Works In Summer Missions
With Rio Grande River Ministry

By Ken Camp

F-Texas

Baptist Press
3/18/87

DALLAS (BP)—Many college students say their experiences serving as summer missionaries with the Rio Grande River Ministry are the kinds of stories they hope to tell their grandchildren someday. But one summer missionary already is telling her grandchildren about her days on the Texas-Mexico border.

Florence Garcia, a 57-year-old grandmother from Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary in San Antonio, Texas, is preparing for her fifth term as a summer missionary with the river ministry.

When Garcia enrolled in 1982 at Hispanic Seminary, her roommate introduced her to the river ministry and the summer missionary program for students. As a former hospital operating room technician, Garcia thought her skills might be useful in medical missions along the Texas-Mexico border.

She applied for a summer missionary assignment, completed the interview and appointment process and has served the last four summers on the Rio Grande. This year, she will work at an orphanage at Piedras Negras, Mexico.

The summer missionary program and the river ministry are funded by Texas Baptists through the Cooperative Program unified budget and the Mary Hill Davis Offering for State Missions.

"I've gained a lot of spiritual blessings from serving as a summer missionary. I've learned a lot about patience. I've learned more about love. I've learned more about compassion," she says.

Although Garcia graduated from Hispanic Seminary last May, she has remained on campus as coordinator of dormitories. She continues to take seminary classes, and she is considering a second career in the chaplaincy.

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Even though she is about 35 years older than the average summer missionary, Garcia never has experienced any serious problems working with the younger student missionaries.

"There's no generation gap there," says Elmin Howell, coordinator of the river ministry for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. "The college kids all love her."

"I've never had any problem with young people. I'm one of the most popular people around here," she said at a recent river ministry training retreat. "I know nearly everybody here."

Garcia delights in sharing her experiences as a summer missionary with her five grown children and 11 grandchildren. And she has no intention of slowing down in her ministry.

"I love to tell my grandchildren about being a summer missionary. Some of them write to me and ask me to tell them about my adventures," she reports.

"I'll be involved in the river ministry until the Lord tells me to quit. I'm more excited every year than I was the year before."

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Stott Declines Division
Of Evangelism, Action

By Susan Shaw

W-CO
(SBS)

Baptist Press
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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—The ongoing debate among evangelicals about whether Christians are called to social ministry as well as evangelism is an "unnecessary and sterile" division of Christian ministry, theologian John R.W. Stott told a Southern Baptist conference on evangelism.

Stott, a speaker at the fifth annual congress on evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said social action can be a bridge to evangelism as well as a natural outgrowth of Christian witness. "Are we proclaiming the authentic Jesus in our evangelism when we don't embody loving concern?" he asked.

Stott said evangelism is the means by which God brings people to new birth, and this new life is in turn marked by good works. Social action, he said, is a "sign of being an authentic believer."

Stott insisted love for neighbor is more than sharing the gospel: "A human being is more than a soul. The Bible doesn't tell us to love souls but to love our neighbor. If we love our neighbor, we have to be concerned with material, spiritual and social well-being."

Quoting an African proverb, "empty stomachs have no ears," the British minister noted Jesus often performed works of mercy before he proclaimed the gospel.

If Christians "turn a blind eye" to the sufferings of the poor and hungry, "we should not be surprised if they turn a deaf ear to our message," he said.

Stott returned to the same theme during a seminary chapel address on "the marks of a Spirit-filled church." He pointed out the first century church in Jerusalem was characterized by sacrificial generosity.

"The church ought to be the first worldwide community in which poverty is abolished," he said. He urged Christians to embrace "solidarity with our poor brothers and sisters" by accepting a lower economic lifestyle in order to share their resources with the less fortunate.

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