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March 30, 1987

87-47

N-CO

Wrapup

Christian Life Seminar
Focuses On Family Issues

By Marv Knox & David Wilkinson

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptists must build stronger families by "consulting the Architect," Larry N. Baker urged at the conclusion of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's annual seminar March 23-25 in Charlotte, N.C.

Baker -- who was installed as the commission's fourth chief executive during the opening session of the seminar -- used the Bible as a "plumb line" to urge churches to provide a supportive, caring environment for building families according to God's design.

"Let the church be brave enough and bold enough to care for the family in all its seasons and circumstances -- and all who are in the family," Baker exhorted in the meeting's closing message. He urged the church "to be there" at the pivotal points for every family -- marriage, parenting, illness, death.

"When dreams are shattered and hopes are dashed, when the heat of life's midday toil and pressure beats insensely on the family, let the church be a 'rock in a weary land' and give its coolness and shade as gifts to weary travelers," Baker said. "Let the church walk with our people through life's calm and storm, and in the end our families shall stand together, singing doxology for the journey."

Baker's message wrapped up three days of addresses dealing with some of the thorniest issues confronting today's families: pornography, domestic violence, teenage suicide, homelessness, aging and various public policy concerns. More than 550 participants also heard a sobering description of the country's growing AIDS crisis from U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop and homespun depictions of family life from country humorist Jerry Clower.

During his installation service, Baker, who succeeded Foy Valentine a week earlier, proclaimed the Christian Life Commission stands on the threshold of a "grand new opportunity" during an age of moral crisis and dissatisfaction.

"The day in which we minister differs from others before," he said. "We will strike out in new directions in response to our call and under the impetus of God's Spirit. ... We will not be enslaved to a past; rather, we will do our best to live in faithfulness to God in our new day, to deal with issues current and to forge approaches that make it possible for Southern Baptists to respond effectively and to act responsibly in our world."

Baker's installation address was given by Bob R. Agee, president of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, who called for a "new agenda for the church" to correct the crisis of integrity that plagues America. He exhorted Southern Baptists to "renew our zeal, our commitment to be a strong, clear voice as representatives of our Lord in the midst of our nation's moral and ethical confusion."

Presenting the seminar's keynote address, "The Crisis in Today's Family," Joel Gregory pointed to two unique factors he said have destroyed modern American families: divorce and TV.

"Divorce is the one contemporary problem that didn't become major until after World War II," said Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. "The responsibility of our church is to sound as never before the clear teachings of Jesus concerning the marriage union," that it belongs to God's created order and is exclusive, effective and permanent.

After citing flaws of television programming and use, Gregory called for "absolute discipline in the lives of parents and children concerning the influence of television."

Surgeon General Koop enforced previous statements he had made regarding the need for AIDS education in American schools. AIDS victims are doubling annually and will number 250,000 by the 1990, he said, urging Americans to observe faithful monogamy with a faithful partner as the only certain precaution against the disease.

Koop challenged Southern Baptists to "write the definitive sex education curriculum. No one is better equipped to be in the vanguard of this important initiative than you are."

Humorist Clower called on Southern Baptists to "stamp out negativism," noting that malady "is the greatest culprit against the happy home." He advised them to put Christ first in their marriages and in their families, admitting his suggestion "is simple, but it sure ain't easy."

In other addresses on the American family:

Sen Bill Bradley, D-N.J., said parents "extend their own lives beyond the grave" as they raise their children and instill in them a set of opinions that will enable them to face the future. Consequently, "it is the parents who must take responsibility" for their families, he noted. Bradley admitted intense new pressures challenge families, but he urged parents to withstand those pressures and even emphasize duty to "the world beyond self."

M. Mahan Siler Jr. struck a similar theme when he outlined ways for parents to cultivate Christian values in their homes. The pastor of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., counseled parents to probe the question of what it means to be Christian: "What are the deep convictions of your life? What are your basic moral convictions, the fire in your bones, those things you live by?" The church can help pass these values to their children, he said.

Siler also noted family rituals, from mealtime gatherings and bedtime routines to holiday observances, can be important avenues for the transmission of Christian values to children. His words were echoed by Robert Bellah, professor of sociology at the University of California at Berkeley, who said, "The only way for the family to have a formative influence is for it to create a common culture with common symbols and practices."

"The family should understand itself as a cell in the body of Christ, mirroring the local congregation as the local congregation mirrors the whole of God's people," he added. Churches and families both should be "communities of interpreters" who discern "what is in Scripture, tradition and history (and) what that means to us here and now."

Merton P. Strommen, a Lutheran minister and research psychologist, also stressed young people — and ultimately their families — need a "sense of family" found within the fellowship of churches. He particularly emphasized the need for young people to have relationships with adults within their churches if they are going to develop "identification with the people of God" and become committed to Christ and the church.

The need for involvement of adults in the lives of young people was promoted again by John Q. Baucom, a Baptist layman and family counselor from Chattanooga, Tenn. A specialist in prevention of teen suicide, he stressed the need for involvement of adults in the lives of teenagers. "It takes more than two adults today to raise one healthy child," he said, especially urging parents to spend time with their children and provide them with unconditional love.

Carolyn Koons, a professor at Azusa Pacific University in Glendora, Calif., described what it was like to grow up without such love and concern. She told of life in the home of a violent, alcoholic father and prostitute mother and also warned the church is not exempt from domestic violence. Noting actions of caring Christians can "bring inner healing to the scars and pains of the past," she asked churches to extend their ministries to rebellious teens who may be striking blindly against authority, acting out of frustration with abusive parents.

Speaking to related topics:

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Sportscaster Kyle Rote Jr. urged Christians to help people -- especially youth -- who are consumed with success in sports. Recounting a list of top athletes whose personal lives have failed, Rote said: "The answer is not sports success, academic achievement or social adjustment; the answer is Jesus Christ. We've got to teach our young people that success isn't succeeding, but accepting Jesus Christ."

Millard Fuller, executive director of Habitat for Humanity, which helps construct and finance housing for poor people, urged Southern Baptists to practice the "economics of Jesus" and "get involved in a new mission field -- building houses for the world's poor and homeless."

Paul C. McCommon III, general counsel for Citizens for Decency through Law, emphasized distribution of obscenity has "never, ever been legal in this country" and urged Christians to be vigilant in urging local officials to enforce existing anti-obscenity laws.

Dan Blazer, professor of psychiatry at Duke University in Durham, N.C., said late life can bring "liberating freedoms" and encouraged churches to "secure these mental, social, physical and especially spiritual freedoms for our older persons."

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N-BSSB

Youth Ministers Looking To Parents
To Find Root Of Problem With Teens

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
3/30/87

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--While some Baptist youth ministers have felt like David slinging the proverbial stone at the Goliath problems of teen sex, drug and alcohol abuse, many now are standing back and taking a different aim.

Several people involved in youth and education ministry say they are loading their slingshots with get-tough programs aimed not only at solving problems with drugs and sex but with what may be their root cause, family life.

"We are really working with parents now as a viable part of our ministry to youth," says Jim Poole, minister of youth and education at Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala.

Poole says he believes drug and alcohol abuse, teen sex and rebelliousness are by-products of the breakdown of the family.

"The No. 1 problem area I'm seeing in youth today is the lack of a strong family life," Poole notes, adding substance abuse is an indirect result of a poor or unsatisfactory home life.

He says he believes a stronger family life, "with youth seeing Christ as a viable option," would lessen the need of young people to turn to drugs or alcohol.

His church is establishing parental support groups and holding seminars for parents who have teens with those types of problems. Cottage Hill programs also stress the importance of healthy home lives, he adds.

Through its "Youth Leadership" magazine, the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board suggests ways "to get parents and kids together to talk about controversial issues," notes Myrte Veach, manager of the Sunday school department's youth program section.

Youth-parent-worker dialogues can be an important forum for communication and understanding, she says.

Curt Bradford, youth specialist in the youth section of the board's church training department, reports church leaders are beginning to realize youth ministry "is not just entertainment-type programs."

"There is a growing awareness among our churches that youth ministry is not simply for youth, but for parents and youth leaders as well," Bradford says. "Churches are beginning to equip parents in parenting skills, communication skills and caring skills."

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Church training department resources "which attempt to get youth and parents together to work out their differences," Bradford says, include the Equipping Center module, Parent-Teen Relationships and the Convention Press book, "My Home Today, Tomorrow." Parenting by Grace, a Christian parenting guide developed by the board's family ministry department, also can help family relationships, he says.

Two counselors, one from Missouri and one from Arizona, agree the lack of communication and lack of quality time mothers and fathers are spending with their children adversely affects the young people.

"There is no substitute for quality and quantity time," says Steve Dowdle, director of the counseling center at Casas Adobes Baptist Church in Tucson, Ariz. "Strong families do lots of things together. They do a lot of sharing."

Dowdle and Julianne Thomas Auld, pastoral counselor from Kansas City, Mo., believe parents must make a concentrated effort to spend time with their children, especially during the child's first six years. Both say spending time with the children doesn't necessarily come naturally. It takes thought and planning.

"We come totally unprepared for parenthood," Dowdle says. "Being a parent doesn't come naturally."

He notes that because mother-and-child relationships usually prove to be the stronger, fathers need to step up their efforts at establishing a relationship with their children.

"I preach hard at fathers. They need to compensate for the lack of time spent with their children," Dowdle says. "It's never too late to build a relationship."

Auld says she thinks "it is 99 and one-fourth percent true a young person's behavior is an extension of his family relationship. Behavior is not the problem, but the result of a problem."

Jim Gibson, youth ministry coordinator at First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., says the present divorce rate and the resulting single-parent or blended family households are major sources of poor family relationships.

"Also, as moms get out of the house more, kids are on their own, making decisions before they are capable," Gibson says, adding to the list of problems he believes cause poor family relationships.

Gibson says his church also has established parent support groups and ministries to parents as well as youth.

"Kids just don't see stability in their homes, and the result is rebellion, teen suicide, teen pregnancy and alcohol and drug abuse," Gibson says.

"There is no doubt about it, we have been treating the symptoms and not the problem."

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Mission Team Commissioned
At National BSU Retreat

By Frank Wm. White

10-13550
Baptist Press
3/30/87

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Eleven students were commissioned as the first National Baptist Student Union summer missions team at the recent national BSU retreat in Birmingham, Ala.

The singing and witnessing team will work in Jamaica June 10-22, said John Corbitt, national director of the retreat.

The commissioning service was part of the 42nd annual retreat, primarily held for black Baptist students. This year the retreat was attended by 1,738 students from 144 campuses and nine churches.

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Students attending the retreat donated more than \$1,000 to fund the mission team. Corbitt said about \$7,000 will be needed for the project. Additional donations are being sought, and student groups will conduct fund-raising projects to sponsor the team.

Another 22 students were commissioned as BSU summer missionaries for involvement in summer mission projects through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Anthony Brittian from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, was elected National BSU Retreat president. Other officers elected are: Wilbur T. Purvis III, Grambling College, Grambling, La., vice president; Simpfronia Taylor, Dillard University, New Orleans, secretary; Shelia D. Ford, University of Texas-Arlington, treasurer; Lorenzo Cheatham, Morris College, Sumter, S.C., music director; and Freda D. Givens, Alabama State University, Montgomery, Ala., organist/pianist.

In the annual Miss BSU pageant, Deneen L. Robinson from the University of Texas-Austin, was crowned Miss BSU. In a new competition, Derick J. Larkin, also of the University of Texas-Austin, was named Mr. BSU.

Choirs from Bishop State Junior College, Mobile, Ala.; Memphis State University, Memphis, Tenn.; and Prairie View A and M University, Prairie View, Texas, won the small, medium and large divisions in the choir concert competition.

The six featured speakers and 60 seminar sessions centered on the theme "The Church: Renewing Our Commitment." Featured speakers included Avery Aldridge, pastor of Foss Avenue Baptist Church in Flint, Mich., and William M. Pinson Jr., executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The national student ministries department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and the department of black church relations of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board sponsored the retreat.

The 1988 retreat in Baton Rouge, La., March 24-27, will be sponsored by the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. Southern Baptists will continue to be involved in the retreat with the shift in sponsorship, Corbitt said: "For 42 years, Southern Baptists have sponsored the retreat. We still need their expertise and involvement. I'm looking forward to continued cooperation and involvement."

He said the retreat will continue to be an example of cooperation and excellent relations between the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

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American Indian Youths
Receive Mission Award

By Joe Westbury

N-HMB
Baptist Press
3/30/87

TAHLEQUAH, Okla. (BP)—Two American Indian college students have been honored for outstanding mission work among their ethnic group.

Annie Boyter, a Choctaw Indian and student at Dallas Baptist University, and Marvin Bear, a Creek Indian enrolled at the University of Oklahoma at Norman, are the first recipients of the B. Frank Belvin Award. The award was presented during the National Indian Baptist Youth Conference held at Northeastern Oklahoma State University in Tahlequah, Okla.

Belvin, a Choctaw Indian and retired home missionary with more than four decades of ministry with American Indians, presented the award on behalf of the group.

Boyter, who was concerned with the outbreak of suicide among Shoshone and Arapaho Indians in Wyoming, raised her own funds and traveled to the state where she counseled with youths of the two tribes. Bear was cited for helping launch the Indian Baptist Student Union and increasing mission involvement among American Indians at the University of Oklahoma.

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More than 500 American Indians attended the fourth national conference, geared primarily to college students. Participation jumped nearly 50 percent over last year due to increased Southern Baptist ministry with the ethnic group, which has resulted in more American Indians becoming involved in ministry to their own tribes.

"We are losing a great number of American Indian students because there are no ministries to them and they are being absorbed into secular society," said Russell Begaye, national consultant for American Indians for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"There are more than 22,000 American Indian college students in the nation, with as many as 500 to 2,000 on the larger state campuses. Many are not being reached with the gospel by any group," he added.

A purpose of the annual gathering is to motivate greater missions involvement among American Indians by their peers through Baptist Student Unions, summer missionaries or other innovative ministries by local churches.

Participants at the conference also elected four members to the National Indian Youth Council. The council works with the language missions division of the board in its ministry among youth of the ethnic group and with development of mission strategy.

Elected to the council were Denise Gonzales, a Cherokee student at Northeastern; Randy Colbert, a Creek student at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee; Morris Walters, an Eskimo student at Haskell Indian Junior College in Lawrence, Kan; and award recipients Boyter and Bear.

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Carson-Newman College To Launch
Nightly News Program On ACTS

N-10
(Tenn.)

Baptist Press
3/30/87

JEFFERSON CITY, Tenn. (BP)—This spring Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., will make the leap from local to nationwide television when "What's Happening," a half-hour nightly news program, premieres on the American Christian Television System (ACTS) satellite network.

Last fall Carson-Newman, a Baptist college with an enrollment of 1,700, broke into television production with a nightly cable newscast for 3,600 homes in the Jefferson City area. On May 18, the college will begin producing "What's Happening" for nearly 14 million potential viewers in homes across the country every evening.

Utilizing video clips, studio reports and phone interviews, "What's Happening" will focus on topics of national and international interest, with special emphasis on news about Christianity and the Southern Baptist convention. The program will be produced in studios on the Carson-Newman campus and will air on the ACTS satellite network at 7 p.m. EST every Monday through Friday. ACTS also will telecast repeats of the show at 12:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. EST.

"Our goal has been to create a family-oriented program which can provide national exposure for Baptists and their activities," Carson-Newman President Cordell Maddox said. "We are very excited to have this opportunity to work with the ACTS network."

"What's Happening" will be co-anchored by Deborah Tyler and Jamey Tucker, who have worked together on the college's nightly local newscast. Tyler, who also will be the program's news director, got her start in broadcast journalism as a researcher for Paul Harvey's ABC Radio news program and has had experience as a television reporter and anchor. She will continue to serve as news director for LCNC TV-10, the cable station operated by Carson-Newman.

Tucker, co-anchor and assistant news director, is a Carson-Newman senior from Springville, Ala., who will graduate in May with a degree in communication arts. He has worked as a radio announcer and has on-air television experience as sports features reporter for LCNC. Tucker also writes a column for the student newspaper and serves as secretary of entertainment in the Carson-Newman Student Government Association.

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A special features reporter, John Hartman, also will make regular appearances on the program. Hartman has more than 35 years of experience in corporate communications and most recently managed overseas communications for Westinghouse. After taking early retirement from Westinghouse, he became involved with L/CNC as a volunteer.

"What's Happening" Producer Jerry Brittingham reported the newscast will make use of several different news resources, including Baptist Press, NRB (National Religious Broadcasters) Net News Service and the Associated Press. The program's staff expects input directly from churches and other organizations.

"We want to encourage churches, associations, state conventions and Southern Baptist Convention schools, colleges and agencies to become involved in this venture," Brittingham said. "We have the potential to provide prompt coverage of stories as they develop. If we receive videotape on a story by 8 a.m. or written or phone information by 10 a.m., we could conceivably have the story on the air that same evening."

People who wish to submit announcements, news and three-quarter inch videotape or to coordinate personal interviews should write to Brittingham, Producer Director of External Affairs, P.O. Box 1986, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn. 37760, phone (615) 475-9061, ext. 203; or (615) 475-5146.

"I'm delighted that Carson-Newman College is committed to providing programming on a continuing basis to the ACTS network," said Jimmy Allen, president of ACTS. "The network has been designed as a telecommunications cooperative. It is our hope that we will be able to see fresh, creative, quality programming from various areas of the nation and from various segments of the Baptist family. We are looking forward to 'What's Happening' as a creative resource for Southern Baptists for communicating to the families of our nation."

ACTS, operated by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, will carry "What's Happening" into 31 states via 261 cable systems. The network reaches into about 5 million households with 13.5 million potential viewers.

Besides providing "What's Happening" to ACTS five times per week, Carson-Newman will continue to produce a live local news program each evening at 5:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday. In addition to her "What's Happening" duties, Tyler will continue to co-anchor this newscast with John Hartman.

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National Fellowship Of Baptist Men
Adopts Measure Of Effectiveness

By Bill Bangham

N-10
(B'hood)
Baptist Press
3/30/87

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The general council of the National Fellowship of Baptist Men, meeting March 20-21 at the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, Tenn., voted to establish a measure of effectiveness for their organization.

Bill Gurley, a businessman from Memphis, challenged the council to adopt witnessing for Christ as that measure.

"One of the yardsticks to measure the effectiveness of this organization has to got be how my people come to know Christ because of us," said Gurley. "I hope this organization has witnessing as its utmost priority."

Gurley shared his efforts, through a foundation he and his wife, Betty, have formed, to help finance Southern Baptist churches in new work areas with interest-free loans.

"God has given me the ability to make money, and I'm trying to channel it back," said Gurley. "But that isn't the real story. No amount of money can buy a soul. (One-on-one witnessing) is the greatest joy of my life, and you don't delegate that to anyone."

The council responded to his challenge by adopting a resolution that witnessing be the measure of effectiveness for the organization.

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"We are on the threshold of direct action rather than planning," said Ed Price, president of Fellowship of Baptist Men in commenting on the growing vitality of the new organization. Price is a businessman from La Grange, Ga.

The National Fellowship of Baptist Men was formed in 1983 and is sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission. Ed Bullock is executive director. Its purpose is to help laymen discover ways of utilizing their vocational skills, hobbies and interests in home and foreign missions through their state Baptist conventions.

Fellowships are organized around skills and interests in state conventions and administered by state Brotherhood departments. The general council of the national organization is comprised of representatives from state fellowships, members-at-large and denominational agencies.

State fellowships include agriculture, business, communications, construction, entertainment, education, health care, Hispanic men, law and government, lay evangelism, prison ministry, renewal, sports and recreation, transportation and veterinary medicine. More than 400 Southern Baptist laymen and pastors are members of the national fellowship.

In other actions, the council affirmed reports of ongoing activities, agreed to sponsor a national softball tournament in mid-September and to host the first triennial meeting of the national fellowship Nov. 20-22. Both events will be held in Memphis. The triennial meeting will convene at Bellevue Baptist Church.

Program personalities will include James Smith, president, Brotherhood Commission; Marjorie McCullough, president, Woman's Missionary Union; Adrian Rogers, president, Southern Baptist Convention; Bob Banks, executive vice president and interim chief executive, Home Mission Board; Ron Boswell, volunteer enlistment, Foreign Mission Board; Frank Pollard, pastor, First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss.; and Kellye Cash, Miss America 1986. It will be open to anyone interested in volunteer missions service.

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Rick Warren Got Church
Hard Way -- From Scratch

By Mark Wingfield

F-20
(SWBTS)

Baptist Press
3/30/87

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Some would say Rick Warren's ministry is out of step with his heritage.

The fourth-generation Southern Baptist pastor is anything but tradition-bound.

"Cut me and I bleed Cooperative Program," he quips. Yet his church schedules only an annual business meeting and sometimes skips that for a picnic.

Warren is related to Southern Baptist missions pioneer Annie Armstrong. And no Southern Baptist church can top his church's record for starting new churches.

Upon receiving the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1979, Warren immediately packed up to start a new church in Orange County, Calif.

He and his wife and 4-month-old daughter drove into Los Angeles during the afternoon rush one day in January 1980. He planned to start a church but had no money, no building and no members.

"God said go," he recalls.

Warren first located a real estate office. He told the agent, "I'm here to start a church and we need a place to live, starting tonight."

Within one hour they were signing the lease on a condominium, with the first month's rent free. The real estate agent became the first church member.

In January 1987, Saddleback Valley Community Church in Mission Viejo, Calif., celebrated its seventh anniversary. Average Sunday attendance is 1,400.

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The congregation still meets in a high school auditorium but hopes to have a permanent building within two or three years.

Furthermore, Warren's church has started one new church each year. And 70 percent of Saddleback's members were baptized in that church, he reports.

Warren has concentrated on reaching the non-Christian. From the beginning, "my heart was to reach the non-Christian," he says. "I wanted to go after the secular business person."

So he knocked on 500 doors to find out why people didn't go to church. None of the reasons were doctrinal hangups, he says. All were sociological.

Respondents told him most sermons were too boring. So Warren looked at all his sermons as a non-Christian would. "I threw out every message except two," he recalls.

"What most of our churches are offering is not what people are looking for," Warren says. "We've got to learn to think like a lost (non-Christian) person."

From his survey findings, Warren spent one month writing a philosophy of ministry. His church averaged five adult professions of faith in Christ per week in the first year.

The original home Bible study group of about 25 people hand-addressed and stamped 15,000 letters inviting nearby residents to Saddleback's first service on Easter Sunday.

They set a goal of 150 for the first service and got 205. Some misunderstood the letter and showed up on Palm Sunday for a "dress rehearsal" service. Five became Christians.

Most of Saddleback's non-traditional practices came about of necessity, Warren admits. The auditorium where the church first met had an orchestra pit at the front and no aisles. That made a come-to-the-front invitation to join the church impossible.

So Warren devised a system whereby all members and visitors sign cards which they drop in the offering plates. Decisions are recorded there and immediately followed-up by counselors.

Warren tried to have monthly business meetings, but his young, urban professional congregation wouldn't come. Now the church has an annual report.

"Structure is killing our churches," Warren says. Saddleback has no official committees but fields more than 30 lay ministries.

The Saddleback success didn't happen without planning. Warren first found an interest in church planting while doing Baptist Student Union summer missions. He proceeded to read every book in print on church growth. While in seminary, Warren wrote a book on Bible study methods. He presented the plan in churches across the nation. In each church, he made notes of what was working and what wasn't.

In his last year of seminary, Warren tacked a map of the world on his wall. He and his wife began to pray about where to go. He researched census statistics and wrote letters. They finally settled on the Saddleback Valley, which then was the fastest-growing area in the nation's fastest-growing county, Warren says.

He even planned his seminary studies to train him for church planting. "Growing churches require growing pastors," he explains.

When Warren first came to Southwestern, he knew he wanted to start a church. "Every class I went into I asked, 'How will this fit in?'" he recalls. "I took classes I knew I would never take any other time."

Now Warren shares his experiences in church planting with thousands of people around the world. His techniques are recorded on sets of cassette tapes and videos.

Warren says his mission is to relate the message of Christ to modern man. He quotes Acts 13:36, "For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep."

"That is the deepest desire of my heart," Warren says.

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N-343

Senior Adults, Arizona Church
Join Forces To Help Each Other

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
3/30/87

APACHE JUNCTION, Ariz. (BP)--Senior adults from Arkansas who wanted to do more than tour the West and an Arizona church that needed help canvassing its community found they could join forces and meet each other's needs.

Ten senior adults from Central Baptist Church in Magnolia, Ark., spent much of their week-long tour knocking on doors in Apache Junction, Ariz., rather than visiting the more popular tourist spots of the state.

"They wanted to perform a ministry rather than just take a tour," says Mark Overman, Central's minister of youth and activities, whose jet black hair distinguishes him from the members of the group which easily could include his grandparents.

Overman and Tommy Foster, pastor of First Baptist Church of Apache Junction, developed a plan for the senior adults to get to Arizona and, at the same time, help Foster's church. The result was a unique Sunday school revival/mission tour.

The senior adults helped the church locate younger families in the town, which traditionally has been a popular retirement community at the foot of Superstition Mountain east of Phoenix.

Church membership has reflected the retiree makeup of the community. Membership and attendance fluctuate as winter residents migrate with the seasons. July's average attendance will be about half the 165 average in February, Foster explained.

The people search focused on locating young families who have moved to Apache Junction with the spread of the Phoenix metropolitan area. "We need to reach out and involve people who are new in the community. We also need to get more year-round residents involved," Foster explains.

Canvassing started with a Saturday search involving more than 30 people who made 1,052 contacts. Other searches were planned for each day of the revival.

"Having the help has boosted the morale of the church," Foster notes. "Now they are more excited about looking for prospects."

Foster hopes church members will use the search as a springboard for contacting more people in the community in coming months. As the winter-season members return to northern states, the year-round membership will have the prospect list to work with during the warmer months.

The Arkansas visitors found unexpected benefits from the experience. "This was our first time to do church work outside our own community," says Cyrene Horne. "We learned we really could do it."

Zuma Aubrey, another senior adult from Magnolia, added, "Now that we've knocked on doors in someone else's town, we're ready to go back home and do the same thing."

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Retirees Build
Baptist Churches

By Orville Scott

ATHENS, Texas (BP)--The advent of spring with new life bursting out across the Texas landscape is accompanied by the staccato of hammers and the whirr of saws in the hands of youthful retirees at new church sites.

Constructing churches at a record pace in 1987, Texas Baptist men retirees already have completed buildings for five churches and will build four more in April and May.

Since beginning their church building ministry in 1978 under direction of Olen Miles, former president of Texas Baptist Men, the volunteer church builders have erected about 100 church buildings and related facilities.

Last year they constructed buildings for 14 churches and led in building the Huntsville Hospitality House, a 50-bed home-away-from-home for families of inmates in correctional facilities.

The previous year, Texas Baptist men retirees constructed a record 19 church buildings. In April, the mission action retirees will construct buildings for Dove Creek Mission about 16 mile southwest of San Angelo, and the Paulann Mission in San Angelo. Both missions are sponsored by First Baptist Church of San Angelo. In May, the volunteers will build new facilities for Baker Baptist Church, 12 miles south of Weatherford, and Westcliff Mission of First Baptist Church of Killeen.

More than a half-dozen other projects are lined up and ready to go, said Miles, the retirees' coordinator who will celebrate his 81st birthday in July, in all likelihood on a new church site.

A memorable highlight for Miles and several other retirees will come this year when they return to Knobbs Springs Baptist Church near Elgin in the picturesque hills of Central Texas, where they began their church building ministry nearly 10 years ago.

The rural Knobbs Springs Church, which had about 14 members when the retirees built new facilities there, has grown so much that the retirees have been asked to return to enlarge the auditorium and construct an educational building.

The retiree builders, whose numbers have grown steadily to include 176 retired couples, live at construction sites in travel trailers and normally complete a church building in two or three weeks, saving the church up to half the average construction cost.

They are readily identified by a sign at the construction site which reads, "This Church Being Built for the Glory and Honor of God by the Texas Baptist Men."

Typically, local citizens are overheard exclaiming, "I can't believe they could build a church so fast."

The only requirements by the retirees is that a congregation have a need for a new building that it cannot financially meet by itself and that the members provide one meal a day for the retirees, provide parking for their trailers and permit them to hold a revival during the project.

Often volunteers from the church under construction, and sometimes members of neighboring churches, are inspired to join forces with the retirees.

Miles said, "People are just waiting for an opportunity to use their time and talents for the Lord, and it's up to us to provide the opportunity."

"The retiree builders are an inspiration to us all," said Robert E. Dixon, executive director of Texas Baptist Men.

"They are leading out in meeting the goals of Mission Texas to reach people, develop believers, strengthen missions and begin 2,000 new churches by 1990."