



**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee  
901 Commerce #75  
Nashville, Tennessee 3720  
(615) 244-235  
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director  
Dan Martin, News Editor  
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

**BUREAUS**

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 720-0550  
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300  
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151  
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hasteley, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

January 13, 1988

88-5

HMB Head Proposes  
Marriage To WMU

By Susan Todd

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis proposed marriage to Woman's Missionary Union Jan. 11.

In his first address to the executive board of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union since becoming HMB president in June 1987, Lewis said, "I want to propose today a relationship and a partnership between Woman's Missionary Union and the Home Mission Board.

"I'm not proposing a structural merger of our two agencies; rather, I'm proposing a partnership that is so close, so committed, so inseparable that it is like unto the marriage partnership.

"The stakes are too high for us to go it alone, each walking our own separate ways, promoting our own programs, doing our own thing. We must become partners, and do together what none of us can do alone."

He urged WMU to "accept my proposal, not for what it will do for WMU or for the Home Mission Board, but for what it will do for the cause of Christ."

Lewis emphasized that "this is the kind of partnership I believe WMU and the Home Mission Board can model for the whole Southern Baptist Convention."

Recognizing that many marriages today end in divorce and that the lifespan of the marriage might be questioned, Lewis said, "I believe the Apostle John gave the answer in the Scripture, 'Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his bride hath made herself ready.' I believe such a marriage partnership will last until Jesus comes again."

In his proposal, Lewis pledged himself to a marriage based on mutual love, trust, respect, equality and commitment.

Speaking of mutual love, Lewis said the marriage must be based on agape love. "It must be based on our mutual love for God as expressed most beautifully through the love of Jesus Christ."

He declared his love for Woman's Missionary Union and acknowledged WMU's love for home missions. "My proposal is an expression of that mutual love, so that we may join hands and link hearts and lives together in a partnership based on mutual love."

Lewis said the partnership would not be effective without a trust in God and in each other, and acknowledged WMU might not yet know him personally or fully understand him, and thus might not yet trust him implicitly. But he called WMU leaders to base their trust on the 100-year-old "foundation of knowledge, understanding and trust between our two agencies."

He promised to accept WMU "just the way you are, without trying to change you to fit my preconceived expectations." He asked WMU leaders to do the same, despite his weaknesses or shortcomings.

"That's the way God's love is. He accepts us, just the way we are. He loves us, and forgives us, and saves us. He wants us to strive to be our very best, to be all that he created us to be. But when we fail, he still loves and accepts us.

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"As president of the Home Mission Board, I may do some things and say some things that disappoint you. But I hope you'll accept me and work with me as a partner despite my weaknesses and shortcomings," Lewis said.

Mutual acceptance must be based on mutual respect, Lewis said. "I want you to know how much I respect Woman's Missionary Union as an organization, and you as leaders of WMU."

But acceptance and respect will be meaningless without the element of equality in the marriage, Lewis said. Although each partner has a differing role, "that doesn't mean one role is superior to the other."

In proposing marriage to WMU, Lewis committed himself to the main tasks of WMU: missions education, mission action, personal witnessing, and mission support.

He acknowledged WMU's significant historical role in the support of home missions, particularly through its promotion of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Lewis said he is happy about the 1987 increase in giving over the 1986 offering amount, but added that because the total fell short of the \$37.5 million goal, needs will go unmet. The 1987 offering raised \$30.2 million, or 80.6 percent of the goal.

He pledged complete commitment, both personally and corporately, to helping WMU reach the 1988 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering goal of \$37.5 million.

"It would be a terrible travesty to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Woman's Missionary Union, and honor the memory and work of your first executive director, if we failed to meet the 1988 goal of the offering named for Annie Armstrong."

Such mutual commitments are essential if the marriage is to be "effective and lasting," Lewis said.

Lewis said, "We must be committed first of all to God in Christ Jesus. We must be committed to the tasks to which God has called us. And we must be committed to each other."

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WMU Board Affirms Staff,  
Deals With Issues, Priorities

By Susan Todd

Baptist Press  
1/13/88

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--The executive board of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union unanimously affirmed national Executive Director Carolyn Weatherford and her staff, adopted guidelines for implementing social and moral issues as they relate to mission action and were told of the agency's priorities until 2000 AD.

The executive board also declined to consider any change in relationship between WMU and the Southern Baptist Convention. The request to consider changing from auxiliary to agency status came from a messenger at the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis.

The board met at the national headquarters building in Birmingham, Ala., Jan. 8-12. The meeting was characterized by little debate and many unanimous votes.

The national executive board, made up of elected state WMU presidents, voted to "affirm and support Carolyn Weatherford and the national WMU staff for the manner in which they represent Woman's Missionary Union," Marjorie J. McCullough, national WMU president, said.

The board heard a report that Weatherford is leading the national staff in the study of "Missions and the SBC," which includes the Baptist Faith and Message statement.

A paper was presented by the WMU staff outlining a plan for implementing social and moral issues as they relate to mission action. The request for clarification of WMU's role in social and moral issues came during the January 1987 board meeting.

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"WMU is concerned with meeting needs of persons. While not condoning the situation or circumstances which brought about the needs a person may have, WMU seeks to meet the need. WMU also goes further than just meeting surface needs. The organization seeks to get at the root of the problem. This is especially true in combating social and moral issues. ...

"Combating social and moral problems involves ministering and witnessing to persons who are victims of society's indifference and complexity, as well as acts to correct wrongs and to prevent persons from being victimized. ...

"WMU's intent is not to stop at putting a Band-Aid on the problem created by a social or moral issue, but 'to strike deep at the cause of human need.' ...

"Social and moral issues which victimize persons are target issues to be dealt with in mission action. Target issues may include family problems, gambling, pornography, obscenity, alcoholism, drug abuse, racial problems and economic and political problems."

Board members also were told of WMU's priorities for the years 1988-2000. They are: equipping women and girls for missions leadership in the 21st century; involving the total church in missions; encouraging tithing as a basic concept of mission support; enlisting members and enlarging organizations; confronting moral issues; communicating missions in new ways; and maintaining effective internal operations at the WMU national headquarters.

"We have set worthy and attainable priorities for Woman's Missionary Union," Weatherford said. "They will launch us into our second century with reinforced emphasis on our missions purposes and renewed zeal in our personal commitment."

Only through united efforts "unlike anything we have experienced before" will the goals be reached, she said.

Executive board members heard a report from the board of directors of Signal Services Inc., a recently established subsidiary corporation of WMU, SBC. Signal Services is a telecommunications company offering the services of a mobile uplink satellite transmitter.

Stan Hill, video specialist for WMU and president of Signal Services, reported on the work of the company during its first three months and described its possibilities for the future.

In other business, the board:

-- Heard a report from national WMU staff concerning the almost 2 percent decline since last year in WMU magazine subscriptions. Weatherford described the decline as "dangerous" not only because WMU is financially dependent upon sales of WMU magazines and products, but because the magazines are WMU's chief communications link to its members.

The staff is still unsure about the reasons for the decline, Weatherford said, although research is continuing into the matter. She urged state WMU staffs to join in reversing the downward trend.

-- Heard reports from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and Home Mission Board presidents and staff.

-- Adopted the 1990-91 Dated Plan, which outlines the activities, curriculum and products for WMU organizations in the churches for that year.

The theme for that year is "Empowered!" Throughout the year, WMU activities and programs will emphasize several key words -- "risk," "relevance," "imagination" and "commitment."

-- Heard the announcement of the 1988 Acteens national advisory panelists and the top teens. The panelists are chosen based on participation in church, associational and state WMU activities; communication abilities; and quality of school involvement.

Panelists will be pages at the WMU Annual Meeting and the Southern Baptist Convention. They also write for Accent magazine, the WMU magazine for Acteens, a missions organization for girls in grades 7 through 12.

The 1988 panelists are: Jessica Atteberry, Milton, Fla.; Sheri Edgington, Lebanon, Tenn.; Natalie Noles, Milledgeville, Ga.; Joy Smith, East Peoria, Ill.; Jennifer Tew, Hinckley, Ohio; and Brandy West, Moriarty, N.M.

-- Received the first information about just-released, updated WMU manuals for each age-level missions organization in the church.

-- Adopted revisions for Missions Adventures and Stuidact. Missions Adventures is the individual mission study plan for girls in grades one through six. Stuidact is the individual mission study plan for girls in grades seven through 12.

-- Heard reports on the 1988 WMU Annual Meeting, to be held in San Antonio, Texas, June 12-13; the National Acteens Convention, July 12-15, 1989, in San Antonio, Texas; and Missions Growth Strategy, a new missions study option for adults, which the WMU staff is developing.

The next meeting of the WMU executive board will be June 10-11 in San Antonio, Texas.

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Missouri Supreme Court Rejects  
Baptist Challenge In Lottery Case . . . By Trennis Henderson

Baptist Press  
1/13/88

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--Missouri Baptist efforts to have Missouri participation in a multi-state lottery declared unconstitutional failed in early January on a 5-2 vote of the Missouri Supreme Court.

The case, Tichenor v. the Missouri State Lottery Commission, was appealed to the state's highest court following a one-line ruling last November by Cole County Circuit Judge James McHenry which rejected the request for a restraining order and injunction against Missouri involvement in a multi-state lottery. The ruling was affirmed by the state Supreme Court.

In a 15-page majority opinion written by Judge Charles B. Blackmar, the court acknowledged a primary question was whether or not the phrase "Missouri state lottery" used in the state constitution "should be construed strictly because it represents an exception to the historic Missouri policy against lottery and gambling enterprises of all kinds" as argued by the plaintiff-appellant. The defendants' contention was that "the voters of the state showed that they wanted a lottery and that the constitutional authorization should be liberally construed to give effect to this authorization."

Noting "the words should be read in accordance with their plain meaning," Blackmar wrote, "We conclude that the phrase 'Missouri state lottery' should not be read as a limitation on the authority of the State Lottery Commission to enter into a multi-state lottery venture. . . ."

In one of two written dissents, Judge Warren D. Welliver declared, "I cannot join in the linguistic legal gymnastics which result in holding that the 'plain meaning' of the words 'a Missouri state lottery' is 'a Missouri state lottery and/or a multi-state lottery.'"

He emphasized that "the plain dictionary meaning of the words can lead to no other conclusion than that the plain and ordinary meaning at the time the people voted on the amendment is that 'a Missouri state lottery' means a lottery operated within this state."

Judge Robert T. Donnelly voiced similar views in a separate dissent. "Only a lottery conducted by and confined to Missouri is suggested" by the constitution, he wrote. "I find no reference to a 'multi-state lottery' or 'multi-state operated lottery' in the State Lottery Law."

He added that "the principal opinion is fundamentally flawed because it treats (the constitutional amendment) as a declaration of general public policy in Missouri when it is a mere exception. The general public policy in Missouri is against lotteries."

Despite the strong dissents, Blackmar was joined in the majority opinion by Chief Justice William H. Billings and Judges Edward D. Robertson Jr., Albert L. Rendlen and Andrew J. Higgins. The multi-state lottery, to be called "Lotto America," is expected to begin in early February with Iowa, Kansas, Oregon, Rhode Island, West Virginia and the District of Columbia joining Missouri in the venture.

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The Missouri case, filed on behalf of Missouri Baptist Convention legislative consultant Bart Tichenor, was funded through MBC contingency funds. Responding to the Supreme Court ruling, Tichenor, MBC executive director Don Wideman and attorney Duane Benton all expressed disappointment that two more judges failed to agree with their interpretation.

"The dissents demonstrate there was clear disagreement in the court," said Benton. "The dissenting opinions, by and large, echo the arguments we made."

Wideman emphasized that "we still think we made a good presentation in a right cause. We have no regrets. We feel it was the good and right thing to do."

Although "this is the end of the road for this lawsuit" with no plans to file for a rehearing, Benton added, "I think when we're right both morally and legally, we've just go to seek justice and see what happens."

As Blackmar's opinion noted, "The lottery did not produce as hoped and the commissioners were vexed because Missourians have continued to venture large sums in lotteries with more attractive prize structures sponsored by neighboring states."

In a statement Benton called "an accurate but sad commentary on the lottery," Judge Blackmar wrote: "The basic purpose of the Missouri state lottery is to lift money from the pockets of Missourians, not to reward them. The prizes are only a means to this end."

As the lottery commission finalizes plans to initiate the seven-member multi-state lottery, Benton warned, "You can't take seven losing lotteries and make a winner. Ask anybody who's played the lottery seven times."

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(Editor's Note: This is the first of two articles on Released Time for religious instruction for public school students.)

Released Time Programs Offer  
Religious Education Options

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press  
1/13/88

WASHINGTON (BP)--It's Tuesday afternoon and 12 third graders leave their public school classroom. They scurry across the school playground, cross a side street and climb the steps of a van that has been converted into a mobile classroom.

There they greet their teacher and spend the rest of the allotted school period studying a unit on caring for God's world. When the period is over, the children return to their regular classroom and resume their studies.

Those third graders, like other public school students throughout the nation, receive religious instruction each week through a program known as released time.

The constitutionality of such programs was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1952, when it held in *Zorach v. Clauson* that schools may release students for off-campus religious instruction. In an earlier decision, the high court had held such religious instruction could not be held on public school property. Although the *Zorach* decision allows school administrations to grant released time, it does not require them to do so.

While no exact figures are available, it is estimated released time classes are held in about 3,000 of the 16,000 school districts in the United States. Although some states have laws requiring public schools to allow students to participate in released time programs, most states leave the decision up to the local school administration.

Organizations sponsoring released time programs ask schools to allow students who present signed parental permission forms to be released for a short period of time on a regular basis to receive religious instruction at an off-campus site. The sponsors are responsible for obtaining parental permission, transporting students to and from off-campus sites, selecting curriculum, and providing teachers and needed supplies.

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A sponsoring organization may not ask the school to pass out permission forms, announce or otherwise promote the program, or give credits for the classes. Legally, a school's only role is to allow the students to leave campus without penalty and to arrange classwork schedules so as to accommodate the release.

According to a report by Ruth Correll, who conducted a study of released time programs in conjunction with doctoral work at New York University:

-- Most released time classes were begun by a group of pastors and/or laypersons. Programs are sponsored by Protestant, Catholic and Jewish groups.

-- Funding for released time programs comes from church budgets, individual donations, fund drives, and tuition and registration fees.

-- Although some programs use pre-packaged curricula, most programs develop their own curricula.

-- Most released time classes are held for children at the elementary school level, with grades three through five the most popular.

-- Parents usually have no relationship with the programs except to give permission for their children to attend.

-- Released time teachers and staff members range from part-time volunteers to full-time professionals.

-- The most frequently mentioned advantage of released time is the availability of large numbers of children on a regular basis for religious education; the main disadvantages are related to scheduling adequate periods of time and arranging transportation.

Many of the released time programs in operation today began before the Supreme Court's 1952 Zorach decision. An example is the Evansville, Ind., Area Council of Churches' Weekday Christian Education program, which is celebrating its 45th anniversary.

The Evansville weekday program conducts released time classes for third and fourth graders at 20 elementary schools. It uses three mobile classrooms and four local churches to house classes that are held during the regular school day for one class period each week throughout the school year.

Fifteen years ago, the Evansville program developed its own curriculum, which is revised yearly by a curriculum committee. Natalie Foster, the program's supervisor, said the curriculum deals with basic Bible themes, rather than specific church doctrines.

Terry Heck, secretary of the National Association for Released Time Christian Education, pointed to three major advantages of released time programs.

First, she said, about one-half of all students participating in released time programs never set foot inside a church. "For these children," Heck said, "God is the released time teacher. We recognize a real hunger in them to learn about God."

Second, released time programs undergird the morals, values and discipline students learn in public schools, said Heck, who also directs released time programs for the Cincinnati Council of Christian Communions.

Third, she explained, such programs give students the opportunity to talk about God with their schoolmates, who are usually their best friends.

Although Heck said the advantages of released time programs outweigh the disadvantages, she did mention such drawbacks as problems with discipline, inadequate time for instruction, and lack of follow-up in homes and communities.

Heck offered advice for interested churches or other organizations:

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-- Make sure the program is legal. Remember that the sponsor, not the school, has to do the work.

-- Build relationships with the schools and school boards. Few states require schools to release students.

-- Develop a broad-based support group for the program. Programs that appeal to a wide range of church affiliations are preferable.

-- Do not make students who do not participate in the program feel ostracized.

Echoing many of the same recommendations and warnings already cited by others, Correll concluded her report on released time by stating: "The viability of released time depends on a three-legged support system of home, church and school. If respect and acceptance of any one is lacking, released time is bound to be slanted or topple.

"Released time needs highly professional and articulate leadership to organize diverse religious groups. Spiritually alive, pedagogically and theologically trained teachers are a necessity. If released time excites the respect and spiritual imaginations of children in their daily school life contact, released time dare not be neglected as a vital option in religious education."

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Holcomb Leaves Southwestern  
Development Post; Nash Interim

Baptist Press  
1/13/88

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--James Holcomb, director of development at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has resigned to become vice president for advancement at Texas Wesleyan College in Fort Worth.

Stanton Nash, director of planned giving at Southwestern, has been named interim director of development. A permanent replacement will be secured as quickly as possible, said John Earl Seelig, vice president for public affairs.

Holcomb came to Southwestern in 1981 as director of the Vision/85 development campaign. He became director of development in 1984. Holcomb previously worked with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission and United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County, both in Fort Worth, Texas, where Southwestern is located.

During his time at Southwestern, Holcomb helped coordinate the Vision/85 campaign that raised more than \$25 million and launched the current Upward 90 campaign, which is projected to reach its goal of \$50 million.

Nash joined Southwestern's development staff in 1981 after retiring as vice president for development at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., where he worked for 16 years. He previously was executive secretary-treasurer of the Hawaii Baptist Convention.

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Foreign Missions Needs  
Seminaries, Parks Says

Baptist Press  
1/13/88

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Progress in the Southern Baptist Convention's foreign missions work would cease without the efforts of the denomination's six seminaries, SBC Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks told seminary representatives in early January.

Parks' affirmation came toward the conclusion of a three-day dialogue between 40 seminary teachers and administrators invited to the board's Richmond, Va., offices and some of Southern Baptists' leading missiologists. Discussion of ways to work together more effectively for world evangelization was a major activity.

Missiologists spelled out the realities they believe Southern Baptists must face as they pursue Bold Mission Thrust, the denomination's goal of helping to expose everyone to the gospel by the year 2000.

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Seminarians' responses centered on changes they might make in their schools to help better educate future Southern Baptist foreign missionaries. Tomorrow's foreign missions will involve working closely with Baptists of other cultures and with other evangelistic Christians to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ, missiologists said.

"We highly value you, ... and it may be that a lot of Southern Baptists don't know that," Parks told the seminary representatives. "Without what you're doing, we could not be in the missions business the way we are."

New missionaries frequently credit all kinds of seminary classes as being used by God to show them the needs of a bigger world and to lead them into foreign missions work, Parks said. He pointed out "the missions-hearted theological education" delivered through Southern Baptist seminaries has helped produce missionaries involved in a wide range of vocations throughout the 112 nations where they work.

During small-group discussions, the seminarians and board staff explored changes the schools could make to tailor their programs for the future world of foreign missions.

One possible change involved curriculum, to help prepare a corps of "professional volunteers" Parks said would be needed to supplement Southern Baptists' career missions force. He suggested seminaries could help students prepare themselves for foreign missions work by directing them to courses tailored to prepare them for regular planned volunteer service.

Seminary representatives took some of their open discussion time at the board to explore with missiologists how to identify and teach issues vital to overseas preparation.

They asked the board to help Southern Baptists understand the importance of teaching about such things as cultural anthropology, liberation theology and other ideologies missionaries encounter in some areas overseas. Just because they teach students about such subjects does not mean the teachers agree with the concepts being discussed, they said.

The seminary representatives agreed they are hampered in their ability to teach because "a new generation of students" comes to class already knowing what they believe they need to be taught about missions and with a theology they "do not want us to tamper with."

Throughout the dialogue, the seminary participants continued to ask board missions experts how they could help produce graduates ready to deal with the complexities of foreign missions. Early in the dialogue, Parks told the group he hoped the board and the theological community could come to a mutual understanding of what part each should play in future efforts at world evangelization.

The board and representatives of the six seminaries have scheduled regular times to share ideas, including dialogue among a similar group at the board in 1991, and missions emphasis weeks and dinner dialogues with faculty on campuses between now and then.

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Garden Of Hope To Help  
Teens Leave Prostitution

By Mary Jane Welch

Baptist Press  
1/13/88

TAIPEI, Taiwan (BP)--Leaving prostitution can be like getting off a moving Ferris wheel. There's only one place to get off -- and unless the girl has the guts to jump, someone else has to stop the wheel.

Planners of Garden of Hope think the halfway house they opened Dec. 14 in Taipei, Taiwan, may offer some girls the chance to get off that wheel and start new lives.

The idea for Garden of Hope grew from the frustrations of men and women already committed to doing something about the problem of child and teen prostitution in the Republic of China's capital city. Among them is Angie Golmon, Southern Baptist missionary from Jackson, Tenn., who was chairman of the committee that helped the idea of a halfway house for young prostitutes become a reality.

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Golmon started going to Taipei's rehabilitation center for young women arrested as prostitutes because the Taiwan Baptist Woman's Missionary Union asked her to teach English classes there. For 16 years, WMU women have been going to the center to talk with the girls, make friends, teach them skills for starting a new life and tell them about Jesus. About five years ago they realized the girls wanted to speak English and asked Golmon to teach them.

Besides teaching English, Golmon made a point of getting to know the girls. She went to their parties. She stayed after class to let the girls, who take beautician classes, wash and style her hair. She prayed for and found a Christian psychologist, Isa Wang, to go with her and offer the girls counseling. Together, they kept track of girls who had left the center. As much as they could, they tried to visit girls, see how they were doing, help them find jobs.

But the experience was frustrating. Sometimes the girls seemed to be ignoring her during class. Follow-up was difficult, often ending after three or four visits when the girl simply disappeared. Even the most promising cases could prove disappointing.

She worked with one girl who went to church several times and said she wanted to find a factory job. But when Golmon tried to help her find work, the girl threw up obstacles. Golmon took her to interview for a job with dormitory housing provided. The girl decided she didn't want to do that. She took her for another interview. The girl forgot her identification card, a necessity to apply for the job. Eventually Golmon lost touch.

The closer she got to the girls, the more of a burden the work became. She saw others, too, both professional staff and volunteers, pouring love and attention on the girls while they were at the center but unable to keep in contact when they left. There were times, Golmon admits, she wished she could quit, but "The Lord wouldn't let me, and I'm glad he didn't."

God seemed to be telling her it was his work, not hers, she says: "One day the Lord said to me, 'Angie, if you're going out there to see results, you're going for the wrong purpose. You're going to share my love with them.'"

When she began to see her work as planting rather than harvesting, she says, God began to turn her burden into a vision. When the girls, most of whom are school dropouts, didn't respond as she wished in class, she looked for ways -- a song, a game, a change of pace -- to keep them interested.

She realized her consistent weekly attendance, even when frustrating, showed them her love. Some days when she had struggled with not wanting to go, the girls would have made her a gift in one of their craft classes. She felt God was telling her to continue the work.

She knew the rehabilitation center got many girls on the right track. In counseling, many said: "I really don't want to go back to that old way of life. I would like a new life." And she believed they were sincere. But six months of rehabilitation didn't seem long enough for the kind of life changes they were making. She asked God what she and others could do to make a difference for the girls.

Somewhere in the process she began dwelling on a concept she had heard of in the United States, a halfway house -- a place where girls could stay when they left the rehabilitation center, a place where they would get emotional support for a changing lifestyle, a place where they would have the time so crucial for building self-esteem and changing ingrained habits.

Golmon wasn't the only one turning over the idea. The director of the rehabilitation center, Shu Chin Ling, also was painfully aware that six months was simply not long enough for the kinds of changes these girls were making.

When Golmon returned from furlough in August 1986, others in Taiwan were working to raise awareness of the prostitution problem. Thousands gathered for a march through the Wan Hwa district, where girls who have been forced into prostitution are held as virtual prisoners.

Both religious and government groups held seminars and conferences, informing the public that something needed to be done. One day, Golmon, Wang, Shu and Ingrid Hong, director of a project to help rural girls seeking work in the city, were involved in yet another discussion on the halfway house idea when Hong suggested they establish an official planning committee.

Eventually, the committee was comprised of these four plus representatives of four other organizations: World Vision of Taiwan, the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, the Taipei City Bureau of Social Affairs and the Christian Salvation Service, a Lutheran-related group.

Support fell into place. World Vision, the Presbyterians and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board offered financial assistance. The Rainbow Project, Hong's group, agreed to provide a telephone hot line for girls who wanted to get out of prostitution.

The Christian Salvation Service offered counselors and the time of one staff person to coordinate them. It also offered expertise gained in operating a home for unwed mothers and working with the court system. For security reasons, the phone for the halfway house will be in their offices.

The city's Bureau of Social Affairs and the national Ministry of Social Affairs expressed a willingness to provide rent, furnishings and equipment.

Golmon said she felt she was hearing herself talk when she heard the national minister of social affairs, who had seen and admired her work when he was director of the City's Bureau of Social Affairs, saying, "We need many more all over island." He wanted this halfway house to serve as a model for others.

Still two matters remained an object of prayer for the planners. They had no house and they had no house parent. But less than two months before the house was to open, both prayers were answered.

"I feel like we could have just sat down and waited for a building because God brought it to us," says Golmon. After she spoke during chapel at Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary, an Australian missionary who was at the seminary to sell Christian books came by to talk with her.

"You need a building. What about my house?" He described a four-bedroom house with all the facilities they had hoped for. It even had a fifth bedroom with a separate entrance that could be used for a counseling office.

And its location near a government official's home meant police provided extra security in the neighborhood. Security had to be a priority because of the likelihood that men who held contracts on some girls might try to kidnap them and return them to work.

Meanwhile Golmon found a woman who seemed to be just what they were looking for in a house parent. Fu Bi Rong had gotten her college degree and spent two years in the military in a supervisory position. The only Christian in her family, she then entered seminary to prepare for mission work.

"I'm dedicated to do mission work and spread the gospel," she says.

Fu hopes to be a mother or big sister to the girls at Garden of Hope. She wants to let them know she loves them but that the love of another human being is not enough. "The greatest thing is that God loves them and that their past can be written off by the Lord," she says.

Her vision meshes perfectly with Golmon's. "The overarching goal," says Golmon, "is for these girls to come to see themselves as God sees them, as people of worth, as people of worth with gifts and talents that can be used to help people rather than them continuing to be victims of an endless cycle of abuse of various kinds."

She believes the Garden of Hope just may be able to help some of these girls off the Ferris wheel.

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