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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 15, 1988

88-26

Drummond Recommended  
For Southeastern Post

N-CO

By Marv Knox

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Lewis A. Drummond has been recommended to be the next president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Drummond, 61, is the Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism and administrative director of the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Drummond was the unanimous choice of Southeastern's 12-member presidential search committee, which met Feb. 11-12 in St. Louis, announced Chairman Robert D. Crowley, pastor of Montrose Baptist Church in Rockville, Md., and chairman of the seminary trustee board.

The search committee interviewed three "very, very serious candidates" for the presidency during the St. Louis meeting, Crowley said. In addition to Drummond, they were Charles L. Chaney, assistant to the chancellor and dean of the Courts Redford School of Theology and Church Vocations at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., and Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas.

"After the interviews of all three, the committee discussed all three very carefully, had a period of prayer and conducted an open vote," Crowley reported. "Dr. Drummond was the unanimous choice."

The search committee's deliberation following the interviews lasted about two hours and 15 minutes, the chairman said. Members expressed "strong sentiment for all three" final candidates, with some initially voicing support for Patterson and some for Chaney. However, the committee apparently reached a consensus reflected by the unanimous vote, he added.

"Actually, it was a difficult choice," he said, noting one search committee member said he wished the seminary could be led by a triumvirate of all three candidates, who had surfaced from a field of more than 25 nominees. "All (three) were eminently qualified, but you have to elect one person, and Dr. Drummond was that person," he noted.

Crowley told Baptist Press, "The search committee wanted to move to a spirit of peace and reconciliation, and the committee felt Dr. Drummond was the person to bring this spirit."

Drummond's recommendation comes during a turbulent period in the seminary's history.

Last October, a new conservative majority of trustees voted to change the school's faculty selection process, ensuring that only people who adhere to biblical inerrancy will fill future teaching positions. The meeting featured a closed session with Southeastern President W. Randall Lolley and protests from the seminary community.

One month later, Lolley resigned during a special called meeting of trustees. He was joined by academic Dean Morris Ashcraft and three presidential assistants: Jerry Niswonger, student development; W. Robert Spinks, financial development; and Rodney V. Byard, communications.

The resignations were to be effective July 31, 1988, for Lolley, Ashcraft and Niswonger, Dec. 31, 1988, for Byard; and June 1, 1988, for Spinks. Ashcraft will stay on the faculty as theology professor; Spinks has taken a vice presidential position with Colgate-Rochester Divinity School/Exeter Hall/Crozer Theological Seminary in Rochester, N.Y.; and Niswonger took early retirement. Lolley and Byard have not announced their plans.

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If Drummond is elected the full board of trustees when they meet March 14-15, his tenure will be effective April 1, Crowley said, adding Drummond currently is on sabbatical and would be available immediately.

"We have asked Dr. Lolley to be there (at Southeastern) through the graduation ceremonies this spring," Crowley added.

He praised Drummond's qualifications for the Southeastern presidency: "He has deep Christian commitment and outstanding ability to communicate and interact with people. His diverse background reflects his theological and biblical insight. He has shown leadership in theological education and exhibited participative management skills.

"Dr. Drummond meets every criterion expressed in the presidential profile developed by the presidential search committee of the board of trustees in consultation with the advisory task force composed of students, faculty, alumni and staff at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary."

Crowley described Drummond as "a genuine Christian ... who understands the culture of the Southeast and the Mid-Atlantic States," who also is comfortable in the academic environment of a Southern Baptist seminary. He also noted Drummond is "a subscriber to the Baptist Faith and Message Statement and very conservative in his theology."

"We feel he is very prepared to lead Southeastern Seminary to very, very great days ahead," he added.

Drummond is a native of Dixon, Ill. He joined Southern Seminary as Billy Graham Professor in 1973 and was appointed director of the Billy Graham Center in 1981. He taught at Spurgeon's Theological College in London from 1968 to 1973, holding the chair of evangelism and practical theology, the first full professorship of evangelism in Europe.

He is a graduate of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and earned a doctor of philosophy degree from King's College of the University of London. He has done post-doctoral study at Oxford University in Oxford, England, and Spurgeon's College.

He was ordained by Headland Avenue Baptist Church in Dothan, Ala., the hometown of his wife, the former Betty Rae Love. He has been pastor of churches in Alabama, Texas and Kentucky.

Drummond has been a member of the committee on evangelism and education of the Baptist World Alliance since its inception in 1975. He also was associate evangelist with the Billy Graham evangelistic team during the Polish and Australian crusades, and has led crusades in other parts of the world and spoken at Southern Baptist Convention annual meetings.

He has written numerous books, including "Evangelism: The Counter-Revolution," which has been translated into Polish, Rumanian, Spanish and Korean, and "The Awakening That Must Come" and "Charles G. Finney: The Birth of Modern Evangelism." He edited "What the Bible Says," which was rated by Christianity Today as the best book on systematic theology in 1976.

He is a member of the Royal Institute of Philosophy and the Evangelical Philosophical Society. He has been president of the Academy of Professors of Evangelism.

Of the presidential search, Crowley said: "I couldn't feel better about it. The Spirit of God led us in a great way, evidenced by the fact we elected him unanimously on the first ballot. That, to me, was a real answer to prayer."

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Baptists, Other Evangelicals  
Sharing Data In Global Efforts

By Art Toalston

N-FMB

Baptist Press  
2/15/88

DALLAS (BP)--A 20th century milestone in world missions was reached by leaders of 29 denominations and Christian organizations during a Feb. 9-11 meeting in Dallas.

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They decided to put their computers to better use, to cooperate in sharing information about 1.3 billion people around the world who have never had opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ sufficiently to accept or reject it. The missions leaders also grappled with the fact the vast majority of their missionaries cannot go where most of the unevangelized people live.

"This is a historic moment in cooperation in evangelical research," said Samuel Wilson, senior research associate for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.

In the past, missions agencies sometimes concealed their plans from one another, competing to be the first to launch work in various countries or regions, said Wilson, who also directs the Zwemmer Institute of Muslim Studies in Pasadena, Calif. "Now there is a totally different kind of spirit, a healthy spirit that says, 'We will share information and we will cooperate with one another,'" he noted.

Clark Scanlon, director of research and planning at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., said he envisions a day when "Christian missionary organizations are not just sending more and more missionaries to fewer and fewer countries that are more and more highly evangelized, but they are taking a portion of their forces and beginning to concentrate on those places where the light is dim."

China, India, the Soviet Union and Islamic nations of the Middle East are among 53 countries that have closed their doors to most foreign missionaries.

Ed Dayton, vice president of World Vision International in Pasadena, predicted "subnetworks" would emerge from the meeting, new relationships among the various organizations focusing on ways to help one another. Dayton described the subnetworks as an "undercurrent that is not necessarily going to be very apparent, but which will have a major impact on the task of world evangelization."

Among denominational representatives in the meeting were Southern Baptists, Conservative Baptists, Assemblies of God, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Church of the Nazarene and Mennonite.

In addition to World Vision, other Christian organizations represented were Wycliffe Bible Translators, Youth With a Mission, Campus Crusade for Christ, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, Navigators and three international radio ministries, Trans World, Far East and HCJB.

Numerous other interdenominational conferences on world evangelization have been held, said Warren Webster, general director of the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society in Wheaton, Ill. But he noted, "This was the first time there's been a combination of researchers and computer specialists meeting with mission strategists and mission administrators to combine thinking and energies to forward the cause of world evangelization."

Wilson commended Southern Baptists for making a unique contribution to the emerging spirit of cooperation, initially by calling a meeting of missions-oriented groups last September.

In the subsequent February meeting, Foreign Mission Board officials announced an extensive computer database of information would be shared with like-minded organizations, as well as with Southern Baptist seminaries and other interested Southern Baptist agencies.

The example of Southern Baptists is one of the strongest kinds of stimuli for world evangelization, Wilson said, adding, the task is so massive and so complex no one organization can do it all. Now, groups are saying, "Together, we can do a lot more than we thought we could," he reported.

The Foreign Mission Board database contains a listing of the world's ethno-linguistic peoples, people with a common ethnic and language background, and the extent to which they have been evangelized, judging from two dozen-plus factors such as the number of Christians and churches in each culture, whether the Bible or a portion of it has been translated into the language and whether suitable gospel broadcasts are made.

Similar information also has been compiled on each country and more than 3,000 cities around the world.

The Southern Baptist database is the result of several years of work by missions researcher David Barrett and various Foreign Mission Board staff members. Barrett, an Anglican and native of England, came to the board in mid-1985 under a contractual arrangement. He is the author of the World Christian Encyclopedia, a 1,010-page country-by-country survey of Christian strength published in 1982.

Scanlon, in an interview, underscored the importance of research: "To have an effective strategy for world evangelization, you must know where the people are, what language they speak and how they're to be reached. Research helps to answer those questions, so you can make meaningful decisions."

Worldwide, 10,800 people groups exist, and 530 of them have no churches, according to Foreign Mission Board research. One group with only several hundred Christians is the Kurds, who number up to 24 million people, most of them spread among seven Middle Eastern countries. The Uygurs (pronounced WEE-gers), 6 million people mostly in China, have never had a Bible or Bible portion in their language.

The world has 66 cities with more than 100,000 people in which less than 0.1 percent of the people are church members. Two such cities are in Turkey -- Ankara, with 3.6 million people, and Andana, with 1 million. Baghlan, Afghanistan, discloses no indications of any Christian influence among its 200,000 people.

Southern Baptists are not alone in researching the world's spiritual needs. According to data gathered by the three radio ministries, no Christian broadcasts exist in the Awadhi-Bagheli language of 38 million people in India and Nepal or the Marwari language of 32.8 million people in India and Pakistan.

India's 100 million Muslims comprise the second-largest number of Muslims in any country of the world, according to Partners International, a ministry based in San Jose, Calif.

Worldwide, the largest numbers of unreached people are those who cannot read, noted Marv Bowers, director of Harvester Project, a ministry in Apple Valley, Calif., developing discipleship programs to circumvent the problem of illiteracy. For example, less than one-third of Africa's 400 million people can read and write, Bowers said, citing World Bank statistics.

Even so, Webster said, "We discovered (during the Dallas meeting) that there are more tools, technology and information available than ever before, and that it's not 'Mission Impossible.'"

Participants discussed taking responsibility individually or jointly for various segments of the unevangelized population, either a people group, country or city, while working with yet other groups in uncovering the best avenues for evangelizing each segment.

In a consensus statement, the groups endorsed the concept of nonresidential missionaries, workers who would live outside countries closed to traditional missionaries yet research various ways of spreading the gospel nevertheless. The Foreign Mission Board already plans to appoint 10 such missionaries during 1988.

Several organizations agreed to coordinate several areas of research. Global Mapping, a research-oriented ministry based in Etna, Calif., will keep track of which missions agencies are working among which people groups. OC Ministries of Milpitas, Calif., which does church planting in 16 countries, will incorporate information from other groups into its data base of missions organizations in developing, or "Two-Thirds World," countries. And Triune International, a communications technology ministry based in Columbus, Ohio, will gather information about the various kinds of Christian databases worldwide.

"We certainly do not have all the information we need to effectively communicate the gospel to every unreached segment of every country, every people, every city," the consensus statement noted. "But we do have the information we need to identify each unevangelized, unreached segment and to direct the most appropriate personnel and the most appropriate means to the task.

"The task before us is immense," the statement said, but participants also voiced "a quiet confidence of the possibilities."

University President Committed  
To Cutting Paths To The Future

By Bill Bangham

F.O.  
(B'hood)

BUIES CREEK, N.C. (BP)--If Norman Wiggins is correct, the next generation of young Americans pouring out of colleges and universities should be different than the generations before them.

"They've been to the edge of the cliff and seen where their predecessors have been," he said. "And they don't want any part of it."

Wiggins, president of Campbell University in Buies Creek, N.C., and recently elected president of the National Fellowship of Baptist Men, keeps in touch with the direction that next generation is taking.

Campbell University is affiliated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. The National Fellowship of Baptist Men is a ministry of the adult division of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, designed to help laymen use vocational skills and avocational interests in Southern Baptist mission endeavors.

Through the university, Wiggins provides education for Southern Baptists. Through the national fellowship, he hopes to help them find ways of using that education in missions service.

In his estimation, they're more than willing. They've seen the hollowness of American materialism, and "they're wanting to serve," he maintains.

And he'll cite examples, chapter and verse.

During a recent evangelistic crusade on his campus, between 900 and 1,000 students attended each night.

And last year, between 150 and 200 Campbell students gave their summer to missions projects of varying lengths, types and geographical locations.

"If I'm reading the signs right," said Wiggins, "we're turning the corner with our young people."

Wiggins' presidency has added a new pharmacy school, graduate programs in law and education, and international centers of study in Singapore and Cardiff, Wales, to the Campbell program.

And it's not just for his students that he's done this. "Maybe they can turn us toward the city-on-the-hill America was envisioned to be," he explained.

But for them to do that, this generation needs to do some things, he believes.

That means ensuring a quality education for future generations, while taking a hard look at the shifting direction of modern culture so education continues to have relevance for its time. It also means beating out a path ahead of them that doesn't end at the edge of a cliff.

The future promises an increasingly secular society, a society with few religious values, Wiggins predicts. Yet a society bereft of religious values is an empty place, he maintains.

"We can easily keep the Ten Commandments up in the Supreme Court," he says. "But we also have to pull them down into the classroom.

"We have no ethics without religion. Yet we ask our teachers to do just that ... to teach ethics without religious values."

It's a situation Wiggins can't buy. And neither, he insists, can the young people around him. "I see in the young people I'm dealing with a desire to work for change," he notes.

He admits change is difficult, but he sees hope in those who already are attempting to mark a different path for his students to follow. To him, it's the first step in laying down that needed road.

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"I see in the work of the Brotherhood Commission and the National Fellowship of Baptist Men a desire to go into the communities of America, render aid, and say that we care," he says.

Wiggins is one of the ramrods developing a National Fellowship of Law and Government for laypeople with expertise in those areas to participate in missions endeavors.

He feels perhaps too long Baptists have ignored the potential of a ministering laity: "We have a resource of people in our denomination that have a desire to serve. Now the National Fellowship of Baptist Men is getting into position to give focus and direction to that desire."

From his perspective, that's more than good. It's a tangible part of that path to the future he's looking for.

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Student Builders Learn Stewardship  
Of Resources At Southwestern

By Scott Collins

F-10  
(SWBTS)  
Baptist Press  
2/15/88

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Regardless of how bright the professors think he is, Jeff Moore feels like he has earned an A plus every time he turns on the lights in a classroom at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Moore is part of a crew of more than 60 students who have renovated Scarborough Hall on the Fort Worth, Texas, campus in the last two years. He has installed lights, switches and outlets in most of the rooms where he attends classes.

Scarborough Hall is one of two buildings housing the seminary's School of Theology. Fleming Hall, the other theology building, also was renovated with student labor.

Like most of the students who worked on the Scarborough renovation between classes, Moore put to use the trade skills he learned before coming to seminary. He is a journeyman electrician. Other students who worked on the \$2.2 million project are architects, plumbers, carpenters and electricians.

Hubert Martin, vice president for business affairs, said about 90 percent of the work was done by students under the leadership of the seminary's full-time supervisors.

The seminary's crew completed each phase of the job on schedule so no classes were disrupted. Most classrooms were renovated during summers, with the first day of fall classes being the firm deadline for completion.

"It is a minor miracle to be able to get the renovation done in the time frame we did," Martin said. "Most institutions don't have the kind of talent we have here at Southwestern."

Knowing the expertise of the student labor force allows seminary planners the luxury of designing complicated projects they would never give outside contractors, said James Lowe, director of architectural and engineering services. "We've tackled some jobs that people outside would not even attempt," he noted.

Lowe drew the plans for the Scarborough renovation, working with three students who had backgrounds in engineering, drafting and architecture. He drew rough sketches of the plans and gave them to the students, who made the blueprints.

Lowe's goal is to save the seminary at least 35 percent on every job he supervises.

The final product is probably better than most, Lowe said, adding, "Contractors will tell you in a minute that the work they see here on campus far exceeds the work of many contractors."

Lowe attributes that success to the pride student craftsmen take in their work. "They give us a first-class job," he said, because they continue to see the results of their work.

The students needed every bit of their skill to tackle a project the scope of the Scarborough renovation. The three-floor building houses 52,000 square feet of office and classroom space. Most of the building's interior was gutted and reconstructed.

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Moore noted that prior to the Scarborough job the biggest wiring project he had worked on was a 48-room motel. That job "doesn't even compare to the Scarborough renovation," he said.

The seminary isn't the only one to benefit from the project. In addition to saving money, Martin said, seminary labor also provides employment for many students who need the work. And seminary supervisors are more understanding of students' flexible schedules.

In the process, students develop a comradeship that one worker described as a family atmosphere. The future ministers learn to work together and build friendships which will last for years.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southwestern Seminary

Seminary Graduate Will  
Do Deaf Work Overseas

By Pat Cole

F-10  
(SBIS)

Baptist Press  
2/15/88

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Lin Wilson will communicate the Good News in Trinidad and Tobago without uttering a word.

Wilson is the first person the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has assigned specifically to work with the deaf. She will leave Feb. 29 to serve a two-year special assignment to the Caribbean nation.

Her selection fulfills a call to missions she first sensed at age 12 while growing up in Columbia, Miss. In Trinidad and Tobago, Wilson, 33, will work in a nation where sign language has been used by deaf people for only about 12 years. Lack of space in the schools has put many children on a waiting list.

"In many cases they (the deaf in Trinidad and Tobago) are illiterate and cannot sign," said Wilson. "They have no way to communicate. So I expect to have a holistic ministry."

When Wilson entered Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., many of her friends discouraged her from pursuing her goal of deaf ministry overseas. They advised her to pursue something more realistic, but Lewis Cobbs, director of the Foreign Mission Board's personnel selection department, encouraged her. !

"He said the board had requests in the past (for deaf ministers), but nobody responded to them," recalled Wilson, who graduated from Southern Seminary in December. "He told me not to give up."

Wilson was a music therapist before enrolling in seminary. She has a bachelor's degree in music therapy from William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Miss., and a master's degree in psychology from Ball State University in Muncie, Ind.

At one time she "ran" from the missionary call she received as a child, but she now believes God used her experience to lead her into overseas deaf ministry.

"Without my background in music therapy and psychology, I doubt I would have ever been going (to the mission field as a deaf minister)," said Wilson. "I would have never realized their potential. I would have probably been too paternalistic."

Wilson first became interested in deaf ministry while working with the deaf at Broadmoor Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss. However, her skills in deaf ministry and sign language were honed while she was a seminary student working with the deaf at Louisville's Lyndon Baptist Church.

"The deaf at Lyndon taught me sign language, and I think that's the best way to learn the language is from the deaf themselves," she said, noting the deaf have their own nuances of sign language that aren't included in textbooks.

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Her call to deaf ministry and foreign missions was reinforced during a 1985 medical missions trip to Honduras. Using money she had won from a local history-writing contest, Wilson paid her way to the Central American nation to assist Southern Baptist physicians who were conducting short-term medical clinics. "Before I went, I prayed God would show me if there was a need for a deaf ministry (in foreign countries)," she said.

While working at the clinic, she attempted to talk with a little girl who wouldn't respond to her. Wilson asked the girl's mother why the little girl wouldn't talk, and the mother replied that her daughter was deaf. "I knew then there was definitely a need for a deaf ministry," she said.

In her experience in deaf ministry, Wilson said, she has found hearing people are reluctant to become involved in deaf work. Some, she noted, think the deaf are mentally retarded. "That's a misconception that people have, but deaf people are just as brilliant as hearing people, and they need the same Savior as hearing people," she emphasized.

She stressed deaf ministry must be led and sustained by the deaf themselves. "I think they need to be enabled to lead themselves instead of being dependent on a hearing person," she said.

Wilson cited a crucial need to expand deaf ministry with children. "Deaf ministry to children is one of the most critical needs because generally they don't have a Sunday school," she said.

Bill Damon, the Foreign Mission Board's associate area director for Brazil and the Caribbean, said deaf people in developing nations frequently are viewed as outcasts of society. "They are often ostracized, and sometimes their families are ashamed of them," he explained.

Some existing deaf ministry exists in Trinidad and Tobago, but he said other duties prohibited the career missionaries from devoting sufficient time to the ministry.

Wilson said she hopes she will have a lasting imprint on deaf ministry in Trinidad and Tobago.

"I want to train enough people, both hearing and deaf, so that when I leave the ministry will continue and grow," she said.

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Sunday School Board  
Offers 1-800 Ordering

By Jim Lowry

*N-SSB*  
Baptist Press  
2/15/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--Ordering materials from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board will be as simple as 1-800 after March 1.

On that date, churches and individuals will be able to dial 1-800-458-BSSB and order church literature materials and almost any other item in any Sunday School Board catalog.

The toll-free expanded order system is being offered as a response to church requests as part of a new emphasis on customer service, said David Wilkins, manager of the customer services center. The new system has been made possible because of the development of a corporate order entry system that enables customer service representatives, using computers, to place an order and determine availability for shipping at the time the order is placed.

Items which will be available on toll-free ordering include Vacation Bible School materials, Convention Press books and materials, January Bible Study materials, Broadman books and supplies and all dated and undated church literature items.

Some custom-made items -- such as choir robes, church signs or steeples -- which require technical product knowledge to order and price accurately will not be available on the toll-free number, Wilkins said. Callers interested in these items will be referred to another number.

Churches also may use the toll-free telephone number to ask questions about orders or correct problems with literature orders received in churches, he said.

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The number will be for ordering materials and resolving problems only, Wilkins emphasized. Calls with questions about other matters still will need to be made directly to a program component at the board. Only customer service representatives will be available at 1-800-458-BSSB.

The toll-free order system has been requested for several years, Wilkins said, and is part of the board's new church programs and services marketing department plan to provide more information to churches and easier ordering of materials.

Another part of the new marketing effort is the "easy church order system," a software program for churches for use on IBM or compatible computers to order literature or other materials that are available on the toll-free lines.

The easy church order system is available to churches for no charge and is also offered to customers in Baptist Book Stores. Churches using the easy ordering system can use a telephone modem or mail the disk to the customer service center.

The biggest difference between toll-free ordering and the easy system is that easy orders that are mailed to the customer service center still receive a 5 percent discount on the price of church literature materials, since the payment will be attached to the order, Wilkins said. The 5 percent discount does not apply to any other materials.

Both new ordering systems are expected to cut the time required to send orders to churches.

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(BP) graphic mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press

Southwestern Grad Ministers  
On 'Other Side' Of Track

By Mark Wingfield

F-10  
(SWBTS)

Baptist Press  
2/15/88

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Trusting Jesus Christ is life's only sure bet, Chaplain Jim Watson tells workers at New York's Belmont Race Track.

Watson ministers to 4,000 men and women who work on the "backside" at Belmont as horse trainers, groomers and caretakers. Many of these people, Watson said, spend their lives searching for something as unflinching as a relationship with Jesus.

Backside employees form a "closed community not reachable by most churches," Watson said. As many as 1,000 of the employees live at the track and seldom venture into adjacent communities.

Because the track employees are poor and work in an "unclean" profession, they often are rejected by others, Watson said, noting, "They are particularly shunned by church people and made to feel unwelcome."

So while preaching Christ to the racing industry, Watson also must preach acceptance to the churches.

Baptists traditionally have opposed all forms of gambling. Consequently, finding a Baptist minister mingling among the help at a race track raises questions both inside and outside the church.

Watson bases his work on the example of Jesus. "Looking at the Scriptures, I see these are exactly the kind of people Jesus ministered to," he said. "Christians have spent all our time trying to woo the Pharisees and have ignored the publicans."

Just two years ago Watson was on the other side of the track himself. He had no intention of ministering to employees of a gambling-related industry. But a call for help from a nearby track helped remove the blinders from his eyes.

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Watson, a 1977 graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, was a bivocational pastor in Pennsylvania when he got a call from the Erie Downs track about becoming part-time chaplain. When he went to investigate, "the Lord just kept opening the doors," he said. "I found people who had needs. Some of those needs were spiritual. We have to realize we have a responsibility to share with everyone that God loves them, regardless of who they are."

From Erie Downs, Watson moved to a track in Cleveland and then to his current full-time position in New York. His salary is paid by Race Track Chaplaincy of America, a non-profit, interdenominational agency that has placed chaplains at 30 thoroughbred tracks in the United States.

Watson's goal is to win the track employees to faith in Jesus. He begins by meeting physical needs. And his success as a social worker grants him an open door for witnessing.

Watson meets members of his flock in the track kitchen about 5:30 most mornings to assess the needs of the day. From there he forms a schedule of contacts to make the rest of the morning.

Most afternoons Watson transports someone to an appointment with a doctor or a social service agency. He also performs normal pastoral duties such as hospital visitation, funerals and weddings.

To avoid isolating track employees from other Christians, Watson decided not to hold church services at the track, although he does teach a weekly Bible study there. Rather, he works to get people under his care involved in established churches.

Watson's own congregation, Washington Avenue Baptist Church, plans to begin a mission near the track this year. That's just one sign of the understanding Watson has fostered between outsiders and the closed community on the track.

Now when someone asks Watson what a Southern Baptist is doing at the races, he can readily explain, "Trying to reach people for Jesus."