

- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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NATIONAL OFFIC: SBC Executive Committe 901 Commerce #75 Nashville, Tennessee 3720 (615) 244-235 Alvin C. Shackleford, Direct Dan Martin, News Editc Mary Knox, Feature Editc

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. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

May 18, 1988

88-83

Colorado Baptists avert Dropping WMU director

By Marv Knox

DENVER (BP)--Financially troubled Colorado Baptists have stepped back from a proposal to drop the Woman's Missionary Union director from their state convention staff.

Instead, they have called for financial commitments from Southern Baptists across the state, seeking to eliminate their crippling debt.

In April, the Colorado Baptist General Convention executive board's finance committee made a motion to cut \$50,000 from the convention's 1988 budget, reported CBGC Executive Director Charles E. Sharp.

That budget is \$2.4 million, with Colorado Baptists expected to raise half and other sources, particularly the Southern Baptist Home Mission and Sunday School boards, expected to produce the balance.

The finance committee's motion was referred back to that committee and to the administrative/personnel committee. "They decided the only way to cut that much money was to cut personnel and some programs," Sharp said. "The suggestion was to cut some programming and to cut the Woman's Missionary Union director effective July 1."

The rationale behind the proposal is that Sharp and WMU Director Sydney Portis are the only CBGC staff members funded by Colorado Baptists, Sharp said. Other staffers' salaries are supplemented by the Home Mission and Sunday School boards.

But during a called meeting May 12, the executive board voted to cut some supplemental program functions and approved six immediate steps and three long-range proposals to ease the budget crisis without dropping the WMU position.

Four immediate actions proposed by Sharp were:

- -- That the Home Mission Board provide additional funding for the WMU director's salary and housing allowance.
- -- That every executive board member commit to ask his or her church to take emergency action to increase gifts to the Cooperative Program unified budget by 10 percent for 12 months.

Sharp calculated the executive board members' churches contribute \$34,277 per month to the budget, and the 10 percent increase would produce an additional \$3,427 per month.

-- That 1,000 Colorado members of WMU give \$5 more per month, designated to the CBGC Cooperative Program, for 12 months.

The \$5 gifts would be given above regular tithes and offerings and produce \$60,000 per year for Colorado Baptist budget needs, he said.

Colorado WMU involves 3,200 women and girls in missions education and missions action programs, Portis said.

-- That 200 pastors and church staff members also give \$5 more per month for 12 months to the Colorado Baptist budget.

Two other immediate actions added by the board were:

- -- That all 230 Colorado Baptist churches and missions, not just those who have members who are on the executive board, be asked to take emergency action and increase their Colorado Cooperative Program giving 10 percent for a year.
- -- That Colorado Baptists conduct a week of prayer, this year only, the last week of June, and and that churches receive gifts for the state budget.

The board also recommended the three long-term proposals:

- -- To investigate the possibility of selling the convention's office building and moving into leased facilities.
- -- To investigate the feasibility of selling 200 acres of unused land at Ponderosa Baptist Assembly, located between Denver and Colorado Springs.
- -- To merge the Baptist Foundation Church Loan Corp. under the CBGC. Within two to three years, the loan corporation would "be in the business of loaning money to Colorado Baptist churches and begin to repay a portion of the loans the CBGC has made on its behalf."

Three major factors have contributed to the Colorado convention's financial woes, Sharp said: A \$2.3 million loss incurred by the foundation four years ago, for which the convention is liable; previous convention budgets that were "way out of line with our income"; and the weak economies of Denver and Colorado Springs, the state's largest population centers, during the past 18 months.

Both Sharp and Portis expressed satisfaction with the apparent solution to their problems.

"I feel very good about the resolution," Sharp told Baptist Press. "We've already cut as much staff as we need to if we're going to be effective. To cut that (WMU) position would have left our missions organizations without a positive direction.

"At least we're giving our churches the chance to come in and say, 'We're going to turn this around.' This is what I have heard from our pastors, 'Give us a chance.'"

Portis added: "It's exciting and encouraging to know that the board members came together and felt that Woman's Missionary Union was a vital part of the church and that they wanted to explore the options -- to find other ways to get out of the financial crunch rather than cutting a program."

Portis, who completed 17 years as Colorado WMU director May 1, praised Sharp's leadership efforts and the flexibility and cooperation of the executive board. She said Colorado WMU may become stronger because of the current situation:

"The opportunity is certainly here, if we can make the most of it. I'm praying that the Lord will lead us to do just that."

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Southeastern dedicates
Graduation event to woman

N-(0 (SEBJS)

Baptist Press 5/18/88

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Against a backgroup of confrontations, resignations, elections and transition, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., conducted its 37th annual May graduation.

Although a new president took office April 1, the commencement was conducted by W. Randall Lolley, who resigned after 14 years as Southeastern's president following a confrontation with trustees over faculty selection. Lolley recently accepted a call to become pastor of First Baptist Church of Raleigh, N.C.

Lolley was joined in conducting the commencement by Morris Ashcraft, who resigned as dean of the faculty, but remains as a tenured professor of theology. Both also participated in a worship service on the evening before the commencement.

Lolley and Ashcraft also will conduct the July commencement, part of an agreement reached with trustees in the resignations.

The graduation eve worship service was dedicated by Lolley to Nancy Hastings Schested, and the congregation of Prescott Memorial Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn. When the church called Schested to be senior pastor, it was "disfellowshipped" by the Shelby Baptist Association.

In his sermon, "Finding a towel with your name on it," Lolley said actual ministry involves servanthood, and "a towel is the very best symbol of servanthood." He cautioned graduates to be aware of a variety of responses to the call, saying: "Servanthood comes hard, especially in our time when 'muscle Christianity' thrives on its authority figures.

"Christendom abounds with the mega-church peopled by the mega-tribe, led by the mega-chief. Southeasterners, have none of it."

He referred to the "gender issue," and said the "solution must be decided upon the whole sweep of biblical revelation," and said God worked through the gender lines of both Adam and Eve. "Moreover, within the life and ministry of Jesus there is not the slightest hint that he perceived Eve's gender-line to be any different than Adam's. ..."

"When it all boils down to the basics, the Bible is gender-neutral. So is the Gospel," Lolley added.

In his charge to graduates, Ashcraft told graduates that whatever their ministry -- pastoral, education, music, counseling -- they must preach the word. "You justify your Christian ministry only as you help them (people) to hear God's word for them."

He urged his audience to have a "serious regard for your hearers which takes priority over the flippant interests of the day. Our charge is to stick with preaching the gospel even when it is out of style."

Urging graduates to embrace both liberal and conservative outlooks, Ashcraft said: "Be critical in your study and examination of alleged truth, declared platforms and positive claims.

He contrasted the outlooks by saying, "This reluctance to accept as final the temporal and tentative insights of the present is a liberal outlook," and then adding, "The outlook of being faithful to that which has proved its truth and goodness is true conservatism."

Ashcraft said the Scriptures call for ministers to "hold fast what is good," but also instructs them to "test everything."

A five-member delegation from the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., joined the graduation, marching alongside the Southeastern faculty and administration.

Southern Seminary Professor and Dean William Rogers read a statement of support which was signed by 41 Southern faculty members. It noted the turbulence of the past year at Southeastern and commends the seminary community's "courageous stand on behalf of all who cherish spiritual and academic freedom."

The statement went on to "encourage the faculty and students ... to continue to stand together and pursue the quality theological education which is your tradition."

Rogers also presented a citation to Lolley for "14 years of outstanding leadership," which was presented on behalf of the administration, faculty, staff and student body at the Louisville seminary and was signed by President Roy L. Honeycutt.

The citation noted Lolley's leadership in theological education as well as his service "as a denominational leader and statesman who consistently demonstrated the courage of his convictions."

N-AMB

Churches alerted to beware of Woman acting as former Mormon

By Mark Wingfield

ATLANTA (BP)--A woman pretending to be a disillusioned Mormon missionary is traveling around the country allegedly trying to con Baptist churches into giving her money, Gary Leazer, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department has warned.

The woman, Bobbie Dintino, was last seen May 16 in Reading, Pa., where she was confronted with the allegations by the pastor of Berkshire Baptist Church and by police, reported Leazer. Because Dintino had not received money from the Reading church, police would not detain her.

Dintino, who allegedly escaped from a county jail in Utah, has been identified in incidents this spring with Baptist churches in Pennsylvania, Florida, Georgia, West Virginia, Kentucky and Indiana.

In each case, she apparently made contact with a Baptist church, claiming to be a former Mormon missionary who wanted to know more about becoming a Christian. In most cases, she made a public profession of faith during a worship service.

The woman usually did not directly ask for money, according to reports. Instead, she conned Christians into assisting her by appearing to be in need.

Lee Bolton, pastor of the Reading church, received a call from Dintino Saturday, May 14. After hearing her story, he picked her up at the bus station and arranged for her to stay with one of his neighbors, reported Bolton's wife, Joy.

Dintino attended Bolton's church the next morning and said she wanted to become a Christian, Mrs. Bolton said. But when two converted Mormons who are members of the church counseled with her that afternoon, they told the pastor they were skeptical of her story.

Just three weeks earlier, Mrs. Bolton had attended a Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union writers' conference in Birmingham, Ala., where she had heard Leazer tell about a similar situation. Leazer already had received several calls from churches about Dintino.

Because of Leazer's warning in Birmingham, Mrs. Bolton decided to call him for more information. Leazer put the Boltons in touch with Scott Burns, county attorney in Cedar City, Utah.

Through Burns' efforts, Dintino was convicted March 26, 1987, of theft by deception and sentenced to a short term in the county jail. In Utah, Dintino had received financial assistance by claiming to be interested in Mormonism, Burns said.

Dintino's claims to Baptists that she is a former Mormon partially are true. According to Burns, Dintino was baptized into at least 50 Mormon churches and received food, money, furniture, an apartment and medical assistance.

Because Dintino was only convicted of a misdemeanor, she cannot be extradited to Utah if found in another state, Burns said. Rather than prosecuting her for a relatively small theft, most counties simply will put her on a bus with instructions to leave town, he said.

Dintino has used at least five aliases, said Mrs. Bolton and Tal Davis, assistant director of the board's interfaith witness department. She has been known as Laurie Maxwell, Shelly Babbitt, Jennifer Dunn, Francine Jenson and Stephanie Andrews.

In Reading, Dintino left behind a suitcase full of Southern Baptist literature that included six Bibles and three "Survival Kits" for new Christians, Mrs. Bolton said. The Bibles and literature trace Dintino's path through several states and multiple conversion experiences.

Davis and Leazer offered three suggestions for churches who encounter strangers claiming to be disillusioned with a cult: Ask for identification, get as much information as possible and call the Home Mission Board interfaith witness department for resources.

Missionary invests In Panama's future

By Eric Miller

E.FMB

PANAMA CITY, Panama (BP) -- When Southern Baptist missionary Garry Eudy arrived in Panama, he faced two problems: churches without preachers and seminary graduates without jobs.

The solution looked simple, but cultural dynamics stood in the way of placing young preachers in those empty pulpits.

"There is not much willingness to give young people a chance," Eudy said. "Even seminary students are really held at a distance by some of our adult population."

Despite this, Panamanian Baptists have a goal to start 100 churches and 100 missions between 1987 and 1992.

Eudy wants young adults to help reach this goal. As a student worker, he has put the young people through grueling training, sending them on door-to-door witnessing sprees by day and helping them conduct Vacation Bible Schools and Bible club meetings by night.

He's taught many of them about the Bible and how to preach during courses at Baptist Theological Seminary in Balboa. He and his wife, Kathy, have opened their home to the young people for cook-outs, parties and counseling, providing a much-needed role model of a Christian home.

Finally, riding on the respect he has won as a pastor among older adults, he has put the young preachers behind the pulpit in his occasional absences. Older adults and leaders were amazed because "they did not know that these young men could preach like that," Eudy said.

Out of this effort, Eudy is seeing rise up a young man whom he refers to as "the future Billy Graham of Panama -- Ivan Guintero."

Guintero, one of Eudy's seminary students, said: "I have one goal in my life, and that is to touch every corner of my country with the gospel of Jesus Christ -- whether that's in evangelistic crusades, revival crusades, conferences or whatever. I don't know exactly what forms it will take, but I will reach my goal."

This is reassuring to Eudy, especially since he will move to Guatemala in June. In September 1987, he was named associate to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's director for Middle America and Canada.

Over the last decade in Panama, Eudy has been preparing to work himself out of a job by being replaced by young people he has trained. He knew he would leave someday, but didn't know when.

"I feel like my real value as a missionary is investing my life in the university students and the seminary students who will be the future leadership of Panama as evangelists or pastors," Eudy said. This is especially important because, like much of Latin America, the youth population continues to escalate. Even in Baptist churches, youth greatly outnumber adults.

And few churches have ministers to youth or ministers of music who specialize in youth music. Few established pastors have been to college, and many are ill-equipped to relate to university students. Some pastors are intimidated by students with education, Eudy said.

He has devoted much of his time to a summer missionary program for university students known as the "Brigados," or brigades. Students themselves began this program in 1981.

Brigados was started to strengthen weak churches and develop youth leadership. It is designed to train youth to help churches with Vacation Bible School and to provide youth workers for Sunday school and revival crusades.

Eudy began working with the Brigados in 1982. In 1983 he led in changing the approach to make it strongly evangelistic, with immediate follow-up and small group discipleship studies.

"What excites me about the Brigados is that it is a program that was born in the hearts of the Panamanian young people," Eudy said. "I feel like I've helped to give it some direction and stability, but they had the vision, and it's something completely indigenous."

Under Eudy's direction, the "brigadistas," or brigade members, prepare for their work by getting intensive training in personal evangelism. This is comparable to Southern Baptists' Continuous Witness Training program.

Brigadistas learn how to conduct immediate follow-up of new believers. They encourage and guide each other in daily devotions.

Each worker evangelizes 30 to 50 people through door-to-door visits. Each follows up on 20 to 25 people. They spend five hours in visitation during the day. At night, they lead home Bible studies and conduct Vacation Bible Schools and backyard Bible clubs.

Brigadistas read material on evangelism and discipleship while in the program. They meet daily to report on progress and share ideas.

Many also attend Eudy's classes at the seminary, giving him a chance to continue his relationship to those who have answered God's call to the ministry.

In addition to his student work and teaching, the Birmingham, Ala., native also has been an interim pastor at one of the churches and has been liaison between Southern Baptist missionaries in Panama and the Panama Baptist Convention.

Through these varied roles, Eudy believes he has helped bridge a gap between two generations of Baptists in Panama. Together, he thinks they can help win that part of the world to Christ.

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

Home Mission Board offers New toll-free number

By Mark Wingfield

NJHMB Baptist Press 5/18/88

ATLANTA (BP) -- Southern Baptists who have been wringing their hands over unanswered questions about home missions may now ring their Home Mission Board's new toll-free number instead.

By dialing 1-800-634-2462, callers may place orders for Home Mission Board products or receive information about any facet of Southern Baptists' mission work in the United States.

The service began Jan. 1 as an extension of the board's orders processing department. Four operators answer calls from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (EDST) Monday through Friday.

The toll-free number is for more than product orders, said Lesley Wetherington, manager of the customer service center. "We want this to be a real information point for the Home Mission Board," she noted.

Operators are trained to answer the most common questions, like how many home missionaries are serving or what the goal for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is. Questions that can't be answered right away will be researched and answered within 48 hours.

Callers also may use the new number to order any of the board's free or priced products, such as the "Eternal Life" booklet or "Real Life" tract. Priced products will be shipped within 48 hours.

Even if a caller needs a product not handled by the Home Mission Board, the operators will find out who does handle the product and how to get it. "We don't consider the need met until we find the answer," said Kitty Roberson, director of the board's marketing services.

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in San Antonio, Texas, this summer will be encouraged to try out the new service. The Home Mission Board's booth will feature a direct hook-up with the customer service center in Atlanta.

The new number is an additional expression of the Home Mission Board's commitment to service, Roberson said. "Our job is to put resources in the hands of Southern Baptists so they can do home missions work in their communities," she explained.

The response already is encouraging, Wetherington said. During the peak time before the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, operators took 100 calls per day.

"It makes you excited to see what's happening in the field," she said. "It feels good to know that behind all the numbers, the Lord is working."

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F-HMB

Church brings high hopes
To New Mexico mountain valley

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press 5/18/88

ANGEL FIRE, N.M. (BP)--Since the economic condition of Angel Fire, N.M., has fallen into a valley, the church Southern Baptists started in the mountain resort three years ago stands out as a towering symbol of hope.

The white spire of the country church building peeks out between the blue New Mexico sky and the groves of pine trees covering the Sangre de Cristo mountains. Seen from a distance at sunset, the mountain range appears blood red, which gives it the Spanish name meaning "blood of Christ."

But even people skiing, golfing or shopping on Angel Fire's mountainside are reminded of Christ by the white, wood-framed church given to the community by Southern Baptists. The church is nestled in a clearing off the resort's major highway, visible to everyone who passes by.

"This little church is the brightest hope in this whole valley," said Dann Masters, pastor of Angel Fire Baptist Church.

Hope has diminished for many residents in recent years. Their business rises and falls with the profits of tourists from Texas and Oklahoma. A recent decline in the oil business in those states has meant a decline in Angel Fire tourism.

Even those who still come to the northern New Mexico resort from other states now come with less money to spend. "Things here are probably the worst I've seen them," Masters said.

The light mountain air often mixes with heavy hearts, he said. Many people move to the mountains to escape the pressures of modern living or to "find themselves," he explained. After time, they face isolation, which now is compounded by layoffs and business failures.

The resulting "hard hearts" and a desire for privacy make evangelism difficult, Masters said. Some residents don't want Masters to visit, because they place a high value on privacy. And in the winter months, he couldn't get through the snowbound mountain roads to many of their homes if he were invited.

But because of the church's witness, locals feel free to come to him. Masters believes his greatest outreach comes through counseling. Since he is the only pastor in town, church members and non-members alike bring him their troubles.

As the economy has faltered, the number of people seeking Masters out for counseling has increased. Through this ministry, he shares the Christían gospel with people who might not allow an evangelistic visit in their homes.

Angel Fire's permanent and part-time residents include laborers, retirees, out-of-state executives and employees of the development corporation that created the resort. Few come from Baptist backgrounds, but all have spiritual needs, Masters said.

He compared the church to the oxygen tank he keeps in his office for elderly guests who might faint in the thin air. Visitors are glad to know the oxygen is available, even though they don't expect to need it.

"People need to know the church is here," Masters said. "They need to know that God is still alive and still cares for them. Our being here gives them that assurance."

Even people in the community who don't attend the church readily proclaim its value. Angel Fire Development Corp. thought it was important enough to donate 4.5 acres of land for the building.

Visitors often get a surprise when they step through the church door. Inside lies an evangelistic New Mexico Baptist church rather than the harmless chapel the picturesque setting suggests. Most of the 64 members carry journals or tape recorders to take notes on every sermon and Bible study.

This core group then influences others in the community, including hundreds of visitors each year.

Whereas most Southern Baptist churches expect half their members to attend, the Angel Fire church expects only half the people in attendance to be members. In peak seasons, the combined congregation of tourists and members has reached 250, Masters said.

Tourists helped New Mexico Baptists realize their dream for a church at Angel Fire. A group of laymen from First Baptist Church of Dallas, working with Texas Baptist Men, the Baptist Convention of New Mexico and the local Baptist association, constructed the building three years ago, before there was a pastor or congregation.

Now the Angel Fire congregation has a debt-free building with an upstairs apartment that will be used for additional classrooms when a new parsonage is built. The church receives continuing support from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and the Baptist Convention of New Mexico but already is contributing more back to missions than other churches of comparable size, Masters said.

Some may think the Angel Fire church was born with a silver spoon in its mouth. But Masters is quick to point out his congregation is an example of what can be done when Southern Baptists cooperate.

The result is an unusual but solid congregation. "These people are really learning to be the church," Masters said.

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Church training expands Discipleship training N- 95 B

Baptist Press

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LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--Discipleship -- equipping Christians for life as witnesses and servant ministers -- is the fuse to ignite church training enrollment figures, according to Southern Baptist church training leaders.

Roy Edgemon, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department, told state leaders meeting for mid-year planning in Las Vegas, Nev., he hopes to see the denomination's training program reach an enrollment of 2.5 million by 1995, a figure that equals where the program stood in 1958.

Tracing the history of the rise and subsequent decline of enrollment in church training, Edgemon said although the concept of a Sunday night program of training did not originate with the Sunday School Board, the institution did much to make it grow.

Enrollment in what is now known as church training escalated well into the 1960s after the Sunday School Board took on the Baptist Young People's Union program in 1918, he said. Enrollment jumped from 230,000 in 1918 to 2.7 million in 1963, when it began to fall steadily to 1.8 million by 1976. The 1987 enrollment is 1.95 million.

Edgemon attributed the enrollment decrease in part to Sunday night competition with television and other types of entertainment.

The key to reaching the 1995 Southern Baptist Bold Mission Thrust goal of 2.5 million is to renew Southern Baptists' interest in discipleship training, Edgemon noted. The church training department is continuing its emphasis on discipleship training through Equipping Centers, Lay Institute for Equipping courses, church study course award programs and Baptist doctrine studies.

"Doctrines Baptists Believe," written by Edgemon, will be the 1989 Baptist Doctrine Study textbook.

The department is evaluating and revising the total church training curriculum and continuing to use special projects to stimulate enrollment growth.

A "back to basics" emphasis, a three-year focus calling on churches to study Baptist doctrine, history, ethics, polity and discipleship, begins this October.

"Then, by 1990, the church training department will be doing everything under an umbrella strategy called DiscipleALL," Edgemon told state leaders.

The strategy of DiscipleALL "communicates the total theme of a balanced discipleship training program in the churches," said Henry Webb, program planning coordinator for the church training department.

"DiscipleALL will focus on helping pastors and church leaders accept responsibility to provide a balanced discipleship training program for all church members and their families. It will challenge all church members to become involved in discipleship training opportunities," Webb said.

Edgemon said he believes a new church training records system, due out in May 1989, will enable churches to more accurately tabulate their enrollment. "This new church training records system is a way of effectively measuring discipleship growth in a church's training program," he noted.

In 1990, the church training department will release a new periodical, Baptist Study Leader, which will provide additional content and training procedures for Baptist Adults and Baptist Young Adults magazines, both of which will be redesigned.

Likewise, Church Training magazine will undergo a new format developed almost exclusively around the discipleship theme, Edgemon said.

Church training curriculum for preschoolers and children will be provided in separate periodicals rather than incorporated into Sunday school materials, he said.

Retiree leads South Carolina Volunteer church builders

By Jim Burton F B hood Baptist Press 5/18/88

EASTOVER, S.C. (BP) -- Halfway between the South Carolina cities of Columbia and Sumter lies the community of Eastover. It's hard to see any resemblance of a community from the highway, but it's there.

A sign along the highway indicates that there on 54 acres Eastover will soon have a church, Grandview Baptist. It isn't there yet, but when Hubert Line walks through the tall pines, he already sees it.

As coordinator of volunteer ministries for the South Carolina Baptist Brotherhood department, Line has a vision for new churches.

This year, an estimated 5,000 South Carolina Baptist men and their families will become involved in church-building projects.

Their work could take them to Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, St. Thomas, Peru, Panama or Puerto Rico. In addition, they will conduct 13 volunteer church-building projects within South Carolina.

With nearly 1 percent of the state's Southern Baptists participating, South Carolina is a leader in volunteer church building.

"Missions involvement and missions support have been high among the priorities of South Carolina Baptists historically," said Ray P. Rust, executive secretary of the South Carolina Baptist Convention. "If it hadn't been for Hubert coming, this would not have been nearly so successful."

Not even Line could foresee the growing commitment to building new churches.

He worked as a contractor for more than 25 years in Kentucky while supporting a wife and seven children. He then came to South Carolina to work with the Federal Housing Authority and gained another valuable skill -- program planning.

"I know that the Lord was preparing me then to do what I'm doing now as a volunteer," said Line. "I wondered back then why it was so hard. I learned to be flexible."

About 10 years ago, Line began going alone to West Virginia to work on churches there.

As other Baptist Men learned about the West Virginia projects, they began to join him.

Then, in 1984, a tornado struck northeastern South Carolina, causing severe damage in McColl. Line coordinated the South Carolina Brotherhood department's disaster relief response. During the next year, Baptist men helped rebuild 70 homes and repaired 150 others.

The McColl tornado allowed Line to work with hundreds of Baptist men from throughout the state. That experience was the springboard leading to a state-wide volunteer involvement that now gives more than 20,000 man-days per year to church building.

Ben Connell, state Brotherhood director, said volunteer ministries gives the state's Baptist Men program a channel for missions involvement. But without a full-time volunteer coordinator, the ministry never would have grown this large.

"There has never been a question that this was absolutely providential," said Connell. "God just intervened here in South Carolina."

"Ben and I prayed for it," said Line. "We have been willing to stick our necks out, and we've stood behind it. The relationship between Ben and me is a great key. It's helped people believe in what I'm doing. The Holy Spirit has to lead ... This isn't something that you plan."

With about 50 church buildings in progress at any one time, the system of coordination and communication developed by Line has not only given the program credibility, it has resulted in additional savings for small congregations seeking to build.

Line estimated South Carolina volunteers save Baptist churches about \$1 million each year in construction costs alone. Savings on interest payments makes that figure even more significant.

At Highland Baptist Church in Orangeburg, S.C., Line not only helped save money, he prevented potential disaster. The church had signed a contract with a builder to construct a building with a 2,500 square-foot auditorium for \$125,000. The contractor was going to pour the foundation on fill dirt, which is equivalent to building on sand. Line got the church out of the contract and reworked the plans.

"We went down as much as 10 feet to get a solid foundation so the church doesn't shift and crack," said Line.

In addition, the church added another 3,500 square feet to the plans and built the church for less than \$125,000. An insurance firm later valued the facility at \$300,000.

Dallas Redding, pastor of Highland Baptist, watched his congregation grow from 33 members to more than 90 as the building was completed. As the congregation became involved in the construction of its own church, miracles began to happen as God supplied needs.

"It's better than a revival meeting," said Redding.

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(BP) photo available upon request from the SBC Brotherhood Commission.



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The finance committee's motion was referred back to that committee and to the administrative/personnel committee. "They decided the only way to cut that much money was to cut personnel and some programs," Sharp said. "The suggestion was to cut some programming and to cut the Woman's Missionary Union director effective July 1."

The rationale behind the proposal is that Sharp and WMU Director Sydney Portis are the only CBGC staff members funded by Colorado Baptists, Sharp said. Other staffers' salaries are supplemented by the Home Mission and Sunday School boards.

But during a called meeting May 12, the executive board voted to cut some supplemental program functions and approved six immediate steps and three long-range proposals to ease the budget crisis without dropping the WMU position.

Four immediate actions proposed by Sharp were:

- -- That the Home Mission Board provide additional funding for the WMU director's salary and housing allowance.
- -- That every executive board member commit to ask his or her church to take emergency action to increase gifts to the Cooperative Program unified budget by 10 percent for 12 months.

Sharp calculated the executive board members' churches contribute \$34,277 per month to the budget, and the 10 percent increase would produce an additional \$3,427 per month.

-- That 1,000 Colorado members of WMU give \$5 more per month, designated to the CBGC Cooperative Program, for 12 months.

The \$5 gifts would be given above regular tithes and offerings and produce \$60,000 per year for Colorado Baptist budget needs, he said.

Colorado WMU involves 3,200 women and girls in missions education and missions action programs, Portis said.

-- That 200 pastors and church staff members also give \$5 more per month for 12 months to the Colorado Baptist budget.

Two other immediate actions added by the board were:

- -- That all 230 Colorado Baptist churches and missions, not just those who have members who are on the executive board, be asked to take emergency action and increase their Colorado Cooperative Program giving 10 percent for a year.
- -- That Colorado Baptists conduct a week of prayer, this year only, the last week of June, and and that churches receive gifts for the state budget.

The board also recommended the three long-term proposals:

- -- To investigate the possibility of selling the convention's office building and moving into leased facilities.
- -- To investigate the feasibility of selling 200 acres of unused land at Ponderosa Baptist Assembly, located between Denver and Colorado Springs.
- -- To merge the Baptist Foundation Church Loan Corp. under the CBGC. Within two to three years, the loan corporation would "be in the business of loaning money to Colorado Baptist churches and begin to repay a portion of the loans the CBGC has made on its behalf."

Three major factors have contributed to the Colorado convention's financial woes, Sharp said: A \$2.3 million loss incurred by the foundation four years ago, for which the convention is liable; previous convention budgets that were "way out of line with our income"; and the weak economies of Denver and Colorado Springs, the state's largest population centers, during the past 18 months.

Both Sharp and Portis expressed satisfaction with the apparent solution to their problems.

"I feel very good about the resolution," Sharp told Baptist Press. "We've already cut as much staff as we need to if we're going to be effective. To cut that (WMU) position would have left our missions organizations without a positive direction.

"At least we're giving our churches the chance to come in and say, 'We're going to turn this around.' This is what I have heard from our pastors, 'Give us a chance.'"

Portis added: "It's exciting and encouraging to know that the board members came together and felt that Woman's Missionary Union was a vital part of the church and that they wanted to explore the options -- to find other ways to get out of the financial crunch rather than cutting a program."

Portis, who completed 17 years as Colorado WMU director May 1, praised Sharp's leadership efforts and the flexibility and cooperation of the executive board. She said Colorado WMU may become stronger because of the current situation:

"The opportunity is certainly here, if we can make the most of it. I'm praying that the Lord will lead us to do just that."

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Southeastern dedicates Graduation event to woman Baptist Press 5/18/88

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) -- Against a backgroup of confrontations, resignations, elections and transition, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., conducted its 37th annual May graduation.

Although a new president took office April 1, the commencement was conducted by W. Randall Lolley, who resigned after 14 years as Southeastern's president following a confrontation with trustees over faculty selection. Lolley recently accepted a call to become pastor of First Baptist Church of Raleigh, N.C.

Lolley was joined in conducting the commencement by Morris Ashcraft, who resigned as dean of the faculty, but remains as a tenured professor of theology. Both also participated in a worship service on the evening before the commencement.

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Lolley and Ashcraft also will conduct the July commencement, part of an agreement reached with trustees in the resignations.

The graduation eve worship service was dedicated by Lolley to Nancy Hastings Sehested, and the congregation of Prescott Memorial Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn. When the church called Sehested to be senior pastor, it was "disfellowshipped" by the Shelby Baptist Association.

In his sermon, "Finding a towel with your name on it," Lolley said actual ministry involves servanthood, and "a towel is the very best symbol of servanthood." He cautioned graduates to be aware of a variety of responses to the call, saying: "Servanthood comes hard, especially in our time when 'muscle Christianity' thrives on its authority figures.

"Christendom abounds with the mega-church peopled by the mega-tribe, led by the mega-chief. Southeasterners, have none of it."

He referred to the "gender issue," and said the "solution must be decided upon the whole sweep of biblical revelation," and said God worked through the gender lines of both Adam and Eve. "Moreover, within the life and ministry of Jesus there is not the slightest hint that he perceived Eve's gender-line to be any different than Adam's. ..."

"When it all boils down to the basics, the Bible is gender-neutral. So is the Gospel," Lolley added.

In his charge to graduates, Ashcraft told graduates that whatever their ministry -- pastoral, education, music, counseling -- they must preach the word. "You justify your Christian ministry only as you help them (people) to hear God's word for them."

He urged his audience to have a "serious regard for your hearers which takes priority over the flippant interests of the day. Our charge is to stick with preaching the gospel even when it is out of style."

Urging graduates to embrace both liberal and conservative outlooks, Ashcraft said: "Be critical in your study and examination of alleged truth, declared platforms and positive claims.

He contrasted the outlooks by saying, "This reluctance to accept as final the temporal and tentative insights of the present is a liberal outlook," and then adding, "The outlook of being faithful to that which has proved its truth and goodness is true conservatism."

Ashcraft said the Scriptures call for ministers to "hold fast what is good," but also instructs them to "test everything."

A five-member delegation from the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., joined the graduation, marching alongside the Southeastern faculty and administration.

Southern Seminary Professor and Dean William Rogers read a statement of support which was signed by 41 Southern faculty members. It noted the turbulence of the past year at Southeastern and commends the seminary community's "courageous stand on behalf of all who cherish spiritual and academic freedom."

The statement went on to "encourage the faculty and students ... to continue to stand together and pursue the quality theological education which is your tradition."

Rogers also presented a citation to Lolley for "14 years of outstanding leadership," which was presented on behalf of the administration, faculty, staff and student body at the Louisville seminary and was signed by President Roy L. Honeycutt.

The citation noted Lolley's leadership in theological education as well as his service "as a denominational leader and statesman who consistently demonstrated the courage of his convictions."

Churches alerted to beware of Woman acting as former Mormon

By Mark Wingfield

ATLANTA (BP)--A woman pretending to be a disillusioned Mormon missionary is traveling around the country allegedly trying to con Baptist churches into giving her money, Gary Leazer, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department has warned.

The woman, Bobbie Dintino, was last seen May 16 in Reading, Pa., where she was confronted with the allegations by the pastor of Berkshire Baptist Church and by police, reported Leazer. Because Dintino had not received money from the Reading church, police would not detain her.

Dintino, who allegedly escaped from a county jail in Utah, has been identified in incidents this spring with Baptist churches in Pennsylvania, Florida, Georgia, West Virginia, Kentucky and Indiana.

In each case, she apparently made contact with a Baptist church, claiming to be a former Mormon missionary who wanted to know more about becoming a Christian. In most cases, she made a public profession of faith during a worship service.

The woman usually did not directly ask for money, according to reports. Instead, she connect Christians into assisting her by appearing to be in need.

Lee Bolton, pastor of the Reading church, received a call from Dintino Saturday, May 14. After hearing her story, he picked her up at the bus station and arranged for her to stay with one of his neighbors, reported Bolton's wife, Joy.

Dintino attended Bolton's church the next morning and said she wanted to become a Christian, Mrs. Bolton said. But when two converted Mormons who are members of the church counseled with her that afternoon, they told the pastor they were skeptical of her story.

Just three weeks earlier, Mrs. Bolton had attended a Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union writers' conference in Birmingham, Ala., where she had heard Leazer tell about a similar situation. Leazer already had received several calls from churches about Dintino.

Because of Leazer's warning in Birmingham, Mrs. Bolton decided to call him for more information. Leazer put the Boltons in touch with Scott Burns, county attorney in Cedar City, Utah.

Through Burns' efforts, Dintino was convicted March 26, 1987, of theft by deception and sentenced to a short term in the county jail. In Utah, Dintino had received financial assistance by claiming to be interested in Mormonism, Burns said.

Dintino's claims to Baptists that she is a former Mormon partially are true. According to Burns, Dintino was baptized into at least 50 Mormon churches and received food, money, furniture, an apartment and medical assistance.

Because Dintino was only convicted of a misdemeanor, she cannot be extradited to Utah if found in another state, Burns said. Rather than prosecuting her for a relatively small theft, most counties simply will put her on a bus with instructions to leave town, he said.

Dintino has used at least five aliases, said Mrs. Bolton and Tal Davis, assistant director of the board's interfaith witness department. She has been known as Laurie Maxwell, Shelly Babbitt, Jennifer Dunn, Francine Jenson and Stephanie Andrews.

In Reading, Dintino left behind a suitcase full of Southern Baptist literature that included six Bibles and three "Survival Kits" for new Christians, Mrs. Bolton said. The Bibles and literature trace Dintino's path through several states and multiple conversion experiences.

Davis and Leazer offered three suggestions for churches who encounter strangers claiming to be disillusioned with a cult: Ask for identification, get as much information as possible and call the Home Mission Board interfaith witness department for resources.

Missionary invests In Panama's future

By Eric Miller

PANAMA CITY, Panama (BP)--When Southern Baptist missionary Garry Eudy arrived in Panama, he faced two problems: churches without preachers and seminary graduates without jobs.

The solution looked simple, but cultural dynamics stood in the way of placing young preachers in those empty pulpits.

"There is not much willingness to give young people a chance," Eudy said. "Even seminary students are really held at a distance by some of our adult population."

Despite this, Panamanian Baptists have a goal to start 100 churches and 100 missions between 1987 and 1992.

Eudy wants young adults to help reach this goal. As a student worker, he has put the young people through grueling training, sending them on door-to-door witnessing sprees by day and helping them conduct Vacation Bible Schools and Bible club meetings by night.

He's taught many of them about the Bible and how to preach during courses at Baptist Theological Seminary in Balboa. He and his wife, Kathy, have opened their home to the young people for cook-outs, parties and counseling, providing a much-needed role model of a Christian home.

Finally, riding on the respect he has won as a pastor among older adults, he has put the young preachers behind the pulpit in his occasional absences. Older adults and leaders were amazed because "they did not know that these young men could preach like that," Eudy said.

Out of this effort, Eudy is seeing rise up a young man whom he refers to as "the future Billy Graham of Panama -- Ivan Guintero."

Guintero, one of Eudy's seminary students, said: "I have one goal in my life, and that is to touch every corner of my country with the gospel of Jesus Christ -- whether that's in evangelistic crusades, revival crusades, conferences or whatever. I don't know exactly what forms it will take, but I will reach my goal."

This is reassuring to Eudy, especially since he will move to Guatemala in June. In September 1987, he was named associate to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's director for Middle America and Canada.

Over the last decade in Panama, Eudy has been preparing to work himself out of a job by being replaced by young people he has trained. He knew he would leave someday, but didn't know when.

"I feel like my real value as a missionary is investing my life in the university students and the seminary students who will be the future leadership of Panama as evangelists or pastors," Eudy said. This is especially important because, like much of Latin America, the youth population continues to escalate. Even in Baptist churches, youth greatly outnumber adults.

And few churches have ministers to youth or ministers of music who specialize in youth music. Few established pastors have been to college, and many are ill-equipped to relate to university students. Some pastors are intimidated by students with education, Eudy said.

He has devoted much of his time to a summer missionary program for university students known as the "Brigados," or brigades. Students themselves began this program in 1981.

Brigados was started to strengthen weak churches and develop youth leadership. It is designed to train youth to help churches with Vacation Bible School and to provide youth workers for Sunday school and revival crusades.

Eudy began working with the Brigados in 1982. In 1983 he led in changing the approach to make it strongly evangelistic, with immediate follow-up and small group discipleship studies.

"What excites me about the Brigados is that it is a program that was born in the hearts of the Panamanian young people," Eudy said. "I feel like I've helped to give it some direction and stability, but they had the vision, and it's something completely indigenous."

Under Eudy's direction, the "brigadistas," or brigade members, prepare for their work by getting intensive training in personal evangelism. This is comparable to Southern Baptists' Continuous Witness Training program.

Brigadistas learn how to conduct immediate follow-up of new believers. They encourage and guide each other in daily devotions.

Each worker evangelizes 30 to 50 people through door-to-door visits. Each follows up on 20 to 25 people. They spend five hours in visitation during the day. At night, they lead home Bible studies and conduct Vacation Bible Schools and backyard Bible clubs.

Brigadistas read material on evangelism and discipleship while in the program. They meet daily to report on progress and share ideas.

Many also attend Eudy's classes at the seminary, giving him a chance to continue his relationship to those who have answered God's call to the ministry.

In addition to his student work and teaching, the Birmingham, Ala., native also has been an interim pastor at one of the churches and has been liaison between Southern Baptist missionaries in Panama and the Panama Baptist Convention.

Through these varied roles, Eudy believes he has helped bridge a gap between two generations of Baptists in Panama. Together, he thinks they can help win that part of the world to Christ. --30-

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

Home Mission Board offers New toll-free number

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press 5/18/88

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptists who have been wringing their hands over unanswered questions about home missions may now ring their Home Mission Board's new toll-free number instead.

By dialing 1-800-634-2462, callers may place orders for Home Mission Board products or receive information about any facet of Southern Baptists' mission work in the United States.

The service began Jan. 1 as an extension of the board's orders processing department. Four operators answer calls from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (EDST) Monday through Friday.

The toll-free number is for more than product orders, said Lesley Wetherington, manager of the customer service center. "We want this to be a real information point for the Home Mission Board," she noted.

Operators are trained to answer the most common questions, like how many home missionaries are serving or what the goal for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is. Questions that can't be answered right away will be researched and answered within 48 hours.

Callers also may use the new number to order any of the board's free or priced products, such as the "Eternal Life" booklet or "Real Life" tract. Priced products will be shipped within 48 hours.

Even if a caller needs a product not handled by the Home Mission Board, the operators will find out who does handle the product and how to get it. "We don't consider the need met until we find the answer," said Kitty Roberson, director of the board's marketing services.

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in San Antonio, Texas, this summer will be encouraged to try out the new service. The Home Mission Board's booth will feature a direct hook-up with the customer service center in Atlanta.

The new number is an additional expression of the Home Mission Board's commitment to service, Roberson said. "Our job is to put resources in the hands of Southern Baptists so they can do home missions work in their communities," she explained.

The response already is encouraging, Wetherington said. During the peak time before the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, operators took 100 calls per day.

"It makes you excited to see what's happening in the field," she said. "It feels good to know that behind all the numbers, the Lord is working."

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Church brings high hopes
To New Mexico mountain valley

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press 5/18/88

ANGEL FIRE, N.M. (BP)--Since the economic condition of Angel Fire, N.M., has fallen into a valley, the church Southern Baptists started in the mountain resort three years ago stands out as a towering symbol of hope.

The white spire of the country church building peeks out between the blue New Mexico sky and the groves of pine trees covering the Sangre de Cristo mountains. Seen from a distance at sunset, the mountain range appears blood red, which gives it the Spanish name meaning "blood of Christ."

But even people skiing, golfing or shopping on Angel Fire's mountainside are reminded of Christ by the white, wood-framed church given to the community by Southern Baptists. The church is nestled in a clearing off the resort's major highway, visible to everyone who passes by.

"This little church is the brightest hope in this whole valley," said Dann Masters, pastor of Angel Fire Baptist Church.

Hope has diminished for many residents in recent years. Their business rises and falls with the profits of tourists from Texas and Oklahoma. A recent decline in the oil business in those states has meant a decline in Angel Fire tourism.

Even those who still come to the northern New Mexico resort from other states now come with less money to spend. "Things here are probably the worst I've seen them," Masters said.

The light mountain air often mixes with heavy hearts, he said. Many people move to the mountains to escape the pressures of modern living or to "find themselves," he explained. After time, they face isolation, which now is compounded by layoffs and business failures.

The resulting "hard hearts" and a desire for privacy make evangelism difficult, Masters said. Some residents don't want Masters to visit, because they place a high value on privacy. And in the winter months, he couldn't get through the snowbound mountain roads to many of their homes if he were invited.

But because of the church's witness, locals feel free to come to him. Masters believes his greatest outreach comes through counseling. Since he is the only pastor in town, church members and non-members alike bring him their troubles.

As the economy has faltered, the number of people seeking Masters out for counseling has increased. Through this ministry, he shares the Christian gospel with people who might not allow an evangelistic visit in their homes.

Angel Fire's permanent and part-time residents include laborers, retirees, out-of-state executives and employees of the development corporation that created the resort. Few come from Baptist backgrounds, but all have spiritual needs, Masters said.

He compared the church to the oxygen tank he keeps in his office for elderly guests who might faint in the thin air. Visitors are glad to know the oxygen is available, even though they don't expect to need it.

"People need to know the church is here," Masters said. "They need to know that God is still alive and still cares for them. Our being here gives them that assurance."

Even people in the community who don't attend the church readily proclaim its value. Angel Fire Development Corp. thought it was important enough to donate 4.5 acres of land for the building.

Visitors often get a surprise when they step through the church door. Inside lies an evangelistic New Mexico Baptist church rather than the harmless chapel the picturesque setting suggests. Most of the 64 members carry journals or tape recorders to take notes on every sermon and Bible study.

This core group then influences others in the community, including hundreds of visitors each year.

Whereas most Southern Baptist churches expect half their members to attend, the Angel Fire church expects only half the people in attendance to be members. In peak seasons, the combined congregation of tourists and members has reached 250, Masters said.

Tourists helped New Mexico Baptists realize their dream for a church at Angel Fire. A group of laymen from First Baptist Church of Dallas, working with Texas Baptist Men, the Baptist Convention of New Mexico and the local Baptist association, constructed the building three years ago, before there was a pastor or congregation.

Now the Angel Fire congregation has a debt-free building with an upstairs apartment that will be used for additional classrooms when a new parsonage is built. The church receives continuing support from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and the Baptist Convention of New Mexico but already is contributing more back to missions than other churches of comparable size, Masters said.

Some may think the Angel Fire church was born with a silver spoon in its mouth. But Masters is quick to point out his congregation is an example of what can be done when Southern Baptists cooperate.

The result is an unusual but solid congregation. "These people are really learning to be the church," Masters said.

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Church training expands Discipleship training

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press 5/18/88

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--Discipleship -- equipping Christians for life as witnesses and servant ministers -- is the fuse to ignite church training enrollment figures, according to Southern Baptist church training leaders.

Roy Edgemon, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department, told state leaders meeting for mid-year planning in Las Vegas, Nev., he hopes to see the denomination's training program reach an enrollment of 2.5 million by 1995, a figure that equals where the program stood in 1958.

Tracing the history of the rise and subsequent decline of enrollment in church training, Edgemon said although the concept of a Sunday night program of training did not originate with the Sunday School Board, the institution did much to make it grow.

Enrollment in what is now known as church training escalated well into the 1960s after the Sunday School Board took on the Baptist Young People's Union program in 1918, he said. Enrollment jumped from 230,000 in 1918 to 2.7 million in 1963, when it began to fall steadily to 1.8 million by 1976. The 1987 enrollment is 1.95 million.

Edgemon attributed the enrollment decrease in part to Sunday night competition with television and other types of entertainment.

The key to reaching the 1995 Southern Baptist Bold Mission Thrust goal of 2.5 million is to renew Southern Baptists' interest in discipleship training, Edgemon noted. The church training department is continuing its emphasis on discipleship training through Equipping Centers, Lay Institute for Equipping courses, church study course award programs and Baptist doctrine studies.

"Doctrines Baptists Believe," written by Edgemon, will be the 1989 Baptist Doctrine Study textbook.

The department is evaluating and revising the total church training curriculum and continuing to use special projects to stimulate enrollment growth.

A "back to basics" emphasis, a three-year focus calling on churches to study Baptist doctrine, history, ethics, polity and discipleship, begins this October.

"Then, by 1990, the church training department will be doing everything under an umbrella strategy called DiscipleALL," Edgemon told state leaders.

The strategy of DiscipleALL "communicates the total theme of a balanced discipleship training program in the churches," said Henry Webb, program planning coordinator for the church training department.

"DiscipleALL will focus on helping pastors and church leaders accept responsibility to provide a balanced discipleship training program for all church members and their families. It will challenge all church members to become involved in discipleship training opportunities," Webb said.

Edgemon said he believes a new church training records system, due out in May 1989, will enable churches to more accurately tabulate their enrollment. "This new church training records system is a way of effectively measuring discipleship growth in a church's training program," he noted.

In 1990, the church training department will release a new periodical, Baptist Study Leader, which will provide additional content and training procedures for Baptist Adults and Baptist Young Adults magazines, both of which will be redesigned.

Likewise, Church Training magazine will undergo a new format developed almost exclusively around the discipleship theme, Edgemon said.

Church training curriculum for preschoolers and children will be provided in separate periodicals rather than incorporated into Sunday school materials, he said.

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Retiree leads South Carolina Volunteer church builders

By Jim Burton

Baptist Press 5/18/88

EASTOVER, S.C. (BP)--Halfway between the South Carolina cities of Columbia and Sumter lies the community of Eastover. It's hard to see any resemblance of a community from the highway, but it's there.

A sign along the highway indicates that there on 54 acres Eastover will soon have a church, Grandview Baptist. It isn't there yet, but when Hubert Line walks through the tall pines, he already sees it.

As coordinator of volunteer ministries for the South Carolina Baptist Brotherhood department, Line has a vision for new churches.

This year, an estimated 5,000 South Carolina Baptist men and their families will become involved in church-building projects.

Their work could take them to Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, St. Thomas, Peru, Panama or Puerto Rico. In addition, they will conduct 13 volunteer church-building projects within South Carolina.

With nearly 1 percent of the state's Southern Baptists participating, South Carolina is a leader in volunteer church building.

"Missions involvement and missions support have been high among the priorities of South Carolina Baptists historically," said Ray P. Rust, executive secretary of the South Carolina Baptist Convention. "If it hadn't been for Hubert coming, this would not have been nearly so successful."

Not even Line could foresee the growing commitment to building new churches.

He worked as a contractor for more than 25 years in Kentucky while supporting a wife and seven children. He then came to South Carolina to work with the Federal Housing Authority and gained another valuable skill -- program planning.

"I know that the Lord was preparing me then to do what I'm doing now as a volunteer," said Line. "I wondered back then why it was so hard. I learned to be flexible."

About 10 years ago, Line began going alone to West Virginia to work on churches there.

As other Baptist Men learned about the West Virginia projects, they began to join him.

Then, in 1984, a tornado struck northeastern South Carolina, causing severe damage in McColl. Line coordinated the South Carolina Brotherhood department's disaster relief response. During the next year, Baptist men helped rebuild 70 homes and repaired 150 others.

The McColl tornado allowed Line to work with hundreds of Baptist men from throughout the state. That experience was the springboard leading to a state-wide volunteer involvement that now gives more than 20,000 man-days per year to church building.

Ben Connell, state Brotherhood director, said volunteer ministries gives the state's Baptist Men program a channel for missions involvement. But without a full-time volunteer coordinator, the ministry never would have grown this large.

"There has never been a question that this was absolutely providential," said Connell. "God just intervened here in South Carolina."

"Ben and I prayed for it," said Line. "We have been willing to stick our necks out, and we've stood behind it. The relationship between Ben and me is a great key. It's helped people believe in what I'm doing. The Holy Spirit has to lead ... This isn't something that you plan."

With about 50 church buildings in progress at any one time, the system of coordination and communication developed by Line has not only given the program credibility, it has resulted in additional savings for small congregations seeking to build.

Line estimated South Carolina volunteers save Baptist churches about \$1 million each year in construction costs alone. Savings on interest payments makes that figure even more significant.

At Highland Baptist Church in Orangeburg, S.C., Line not only helped save money, he prevented potential disaster. The church had signed a contract with a builder to construct a building with a 2,500 square-foot auditorium for \$125,000. The contractor was going to pour the foundation on fill dirt, which is equivalent to building on sand. Line got the church out of the contract and reworked the plans.

"We went down as much as 10 feet to get a solid foundation so the church doesn't shift and crack," said Line.

In addition, the church added another 3,500 square feet to the plans and built the church for less than \$125,000. An insurance firm later valued the facility at \$300,000.

Dallas Redding, pastor of Highland Baptist, watched his congregation grow from 33 members to more than 90 as the building was completed. As the congregation became involved in the construction of its own church, miracles began to happen as God supplied needs.

"It's better than a revival meeting," said Redding.

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(BP) photo available upon request from the SBC Brotherhood Commission.