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September 8, 1988

88-145

Vegas housing requests
to be postmarked Oct. 1

By Marv Knox

N-CO

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--Hotel reservations for the 1989 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting should be mailed Oct. 1, Convention Manager Tim A. Hedquist announced.

The meeting will be held June 13-15 in Las Vegas, Nev.

Housing request forms are available from the offices of Baptist state convention executive directors and the September issue of Baptist Program magazine, Hedquist said.

The forms provide complete instructions for filing, he said. They also list hotels in the 5,700-room Southern Baptist block, their rates, distances from the convention center and the amount of deposit each requires.

Requests postmarked Oct. 1 and 2 will be processed, but forms postmarked Oct. 1 will receive priority. Because of the chance that requests will exceed the number of rooms in the block, Hedquist urged registrants to mail Oct. 1.

Requests postmarked before Oct. 1 and after Oct. 2 will not be processed, he said.

The Las Vegas Housing Bureau will fill the requests Oct. 12, after all forms have had time to arrive in Las Vegas, Hedquist reported. Only people who are not Southern Baptists will fill the requests, ensuring impartiality in the process, he added.

Registrants may not submit more than one request per person, he said, noting the housing bureau's computer will cancel all copies of multiple requests by the same individual.

Multiple registrants may submit individual requests in the same envelope, he said. However, the housing bureau cannot guarantee all members of a group will receive rooms in the same hotel.

The convention's block of rooms is spread among 16 hotels, Hedquist reported. The block is 90 percent larger than the 3,000-room block reserved this summer in San Antonio, Texas. It is 42.5 percent larger than the 4,000-room average.

But the the SBC block is but a fraction of the Las Vegas hotel market, Hedquist said, noting the resort city has more than 50,000 hotel rooms. Many rooms that are not in the SBC block will be available through travel agents or direct from the hotels.

However, proximity is a prime benefit of hotels in the block. The Las Vegas Hilton, the convention headquarters hotel, is only 287 feet from the Las Vegas Convention Center, site of the annual meeting. Fourteen of the hotels in the block are less than three miles away, and seven are less than a mile. Free shuttle service will be provided between the hotels and the convention center.

Prices of hotels in the block range from \$32 to \$125 per night. Five are \$45 or less, five are in the \$50-\$60 range, three are in the \$70-\$80 bracket and three cost more than \$100.

Handicapped people and others with special needs should complete their forms and mail them to the SBC Executive Committee, 901 Commerce, Nashville, Tenn. 37203, by Sept. 26. The Las Vegas Hilton will be used to accommodate the handicapped, Hedquist said, but he stressed that arrangements should be made through the Executive Committee's Nashville office.

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Recreational vehicle parking is available within walking distance of the convention center, Hedquist noted. For more information, contact Circusland RV Park, 500 Circus Circus Dr., Las Vegas, Nev. 89109, attention: Jackie.

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Baptists minister to families,
survivors of Delta 1141 crash

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
9/8/88

F - Texas

DALLAS (BP)--As the families of Flight 1141 victims gathered at the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport Delta terminal alongside survivors of the jet's fiery crash Aug. 31, Southern Baptist chaplains were present to share their anxiety, their anguish and their hope.

G.L. Brown of Fort Worth, Texas, a Mission Service Corps volunteer and chaplain at D-FW Airport; James Lassiter, pastor of James Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth and Civil Air Patrol chaplain; and Ricky Hargrave, chaplain with the Plano (Texas) Police Department, were among those who counseled both family members and crash survivors at the terminal. The three Baptist chaplains serve with the endorsement of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Brown, a bivocational missions volunteer and part-time student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, helped supervise the family room at the Delta terminal and continued to minister to family members who later were housed at the nearby D-FW Hilton North.

"My job was to supervise ministry to the families of persons on that flight who were waiting for news, and -- in some cases -- to deliver the death notices," said Brown. "We also were there to support the Delta personnel because it was hard for them, too. They're sensitive to the needs of their passengers."

In the first 48 hours after the crash, Brown said he personally counseled 20 people, "not to mention cups of cold water here and there, along with various pats and hugs."

Naturally, delivering death notices to the family members of fatalities was the most difficult task for the chaplains.

"Of course, everyone dealt with the survivors first, and then it took awhile to obtain positive identifications of the fatalities. That wait just served to highlight the desperation felt by the families," Brown said. "At the same time, it helped to prepare them. When the news did come, deep inside they already knew it."

After offering comfort to the families and trying to ease the initial shock of losing loved ones, the chaplains' duties ranged from helping a young widow in her 20s make funeral arrangements, to shielding the grieving families from the media, to answering age-old questions about the nature of suffering.

Lassiter, a former two-year missionary in Colorado and Southern Baptist Foreign missionary to Vietnam and the Ivory Coast, said he had dealt with similar situations on a smaller scale in his capacity as a Civil Air Patrol chaplain.

"An underlying thing that hit me was the stark difference in reactions of victims' families between those who know the Lord and those who don't," he said. "Those who don't know the Lord tend to go to pieces. There's just something missing in the foundation of their lives. They reach down to the support base, and there's nothing there. In contrast, those who know the Lord are easy to minister to, even in the most difficult circumstances."

At the request of the passengers' families, Brown conducted a Sunday morning worship service at the D-FW Hilton, assisted by volunteers from Lassiter's congregation in Fort Worth. In his sermon, he dealt with the issue of why a God of love allows human suffering.

"I focused on what I called the four spiritual flaws," he said. "We looked at misconceptions like, 'If you become a Christian, you'll be immune from having bad things happen to you.'"

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"At the end of the service, I asked everyone to stand up and hug the persons next to them. It was beautiful. Families of survivors hugged families of fatalities. The most beautiful part was seeing the hope they gave to one another."

While family members and survivors received counseling at the Delta terminal and later at the D-FW Hilton, Texas Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers continued to serve law enforcement personnel, Federal Aviation Administration officials, airline representatives and reporters at the crash site throughout the long Labor Day weekend.

The Texas Baptist Disaster Relief Unit, a specially equipped 18-wheel tractor-trailer rig with mobile field kitchen, arrived at the accident site Aug. 31 and remained there through Sept. 6.

About 2,300 meals were served from the unit by volunteers from Dallas Baptist Association, First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, and Fielder Road Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas. Most volunteers worked four-hour, around-the-clock shifts for the first 48 hours and 12-hour shifts thereafter.

"Some of the security personnel said the experience of seeing the Baptist volunteers gave them an entirely new attitude toward church and Christian groups," said John LaNoue, on-site disaster relief coordinator. "One man said, 'It's wonderful to see somebody who lives their Christianity.'"

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Southwestern offers first-time
chaplaincy degree concentration

N- (CO
(SWBTS))

Baptist Press
9/8/88

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--More prisons, hospitals and businesses may be opening their doors to chaplains now that Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary is offering a new master of divinity degree concentration.

For the first time, the Fort Worth, Texas, school is offering a chaplaincy concentration this fall for students who will minister in institutional settings. The degree consists of eight hours of chaplaincy core courses and six hours of chaplaincy electives in addition to the basic 78 theology core hours.

Bill Donovan, director of institutional and business chaplaincy for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, said Southwestern's new concentration will help meet a growing demand for chaplains.

"In the past, there has been no preparation for chaplains except in the hospital setting," Donovan said. "This prepares students for a variety of chaplaincy ministries."

Donovan said the program also will set standards for expectations among institutions that will employ chaplains.

"Once institutions become aware of a specialized seminary program that trains students for chaplaincy, they will begin to expect more," Donovan said. "The degree program will enhance the professional image of chaplains."

Nearly 2,000 chaplains endorsed by the Chaplain's Committee of Southern Baptists serve the military, business places, health-care and counseling centers, correctional institutions and youth facilities.

The chaplaincy concentration was created in response to a study conducted by a 1984 task force, steered by Bob Brackney, Southwestern associate professor of social work. Some of the findings included:

- The need for chaplains to better understand correctional institution settings.
- The need for chaplains to have received a divine "call."

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-- The need for new chaplains to know how to develop religious programs within secular institutions.

-- The need for chaplains to know how to deal with conflicting authority structures.

Chaplaincy concentration courses prepare students to deal with these areas, Brackney said.

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Woman volunteer
directs missions

By James H. Cox

F-10
(KY)

Baptist Press
9/8/88

HARRODSBURG, Ky. (BP)--When Kay Trisler muses over her life, two overriding virtues seem to outweigh others: do it right, and respect leadership and authority.

Above all else, her years of training as an active participant in local Baptist church life have given her a desire to do her best while sustaining others.

Since February, Trisler has practiced her beliefs as volunteer director of missions in Mercer Baptist Association in Harrodsburg, Ky.

She acquired those benefits as a girl in First Baptist Church of Danville, Ky., particularly in Girl's Auxiliary and training union.

At 46, she continues to manifest an appreciation for what the leadership of her church did for her. She learned the Forward Steps in GA's and confirms there is a right way and a wrong way to do things. She admires people who painstakingly took time to be her role models.

As a wife and mother, she now attempts to put into practice those values to which she has been firmly committed from her roots. She does that at Harrodsburg Baptist Church, where she and her family are active members. She's also doing it as a missions director.

She began walking down the path to her appointment seven or eight years ago when the association considered creating the position. "I could do that job," she told herself.

More than two years ago, she began to question where she could put her talents into greater service. She had returned from a mission journey to eastern Africa during the Kentucky-Kenya partnership, and as a result, she had spoken in most of the churches of her association. She was completing a second term as statewide vice president of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union. She wondered, "What can I do in church work without a seminary degree?"

It would be "almost impossible" to achieve a professional position in church or denominational life without seminary training, suggested her pastor, W. Robert DeFoor. He encouraged her to consider studying at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Through prayer and the encouragement of family and friends, Trisler decided to return to school. This fall she entered her fourth semester in pursuit of a master's degree in Christian education. She hopes to receive the degree in 1990. She drives to Louisville, a distance of about 150 miles round trip, three times weekly.

As part of her studies, she is required to have two semesters of supervised ministry experience. Her initial thought: Volunteer as Mercer Association's first director of missions. After all, what better place to serve than one with needs never filled and so close to home?

She began work in February and is committed to the responsibility through December.

For at least 17 years, the association has operated with a centrally located office in downtown Harrodsburg, employing a part-time secretary. Its current \$21,700 budget, now supported by 19 churches with 8,411 members combined, hasn't been sufficient to provide a director. The addition of Trisler, without pay, fulfills some needs while helping her meet an obligation to her degree program.

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Of nearly 1,000 missions directors in the Southern Baptist Convention, Trisler is but one of five women. She is the second woman employed in Kentucky. Her counterpart in the Bluegrass State is Delores Baugh, who with her husband, Allen, shares the position in Severns Valley Baptist Association. They are the only husband-wife missions directors team in the SBC.

North Carolina has pioneered with female mission leaders. Three women, all married, serve Tarheel associations as missions directors.

Feelings in Mercer Association are mixed regarding the idea of a woman missions director.

DeFoor, Trisler's pastor, thinks she's probably had an easy time of it because she is a volunteer. "That might be different if she were paid," he says.

He believes she's done an outstanding job helping the association see the need for a director. Without speculating when, he thinks the association one day will employ someone.

He has not seen the existence of the "woman issue" and believes Trisler would be acceptable as a paid missions director to most people in the association. The real question, DeFoor is convinced, is not that Trisler is a woman, but rather, "Would we accept having a director of missions at all?"

Not everyone agrees with that assessment, however. Hopewell Baptist Church Pastor Barry Jude, who has been in Mercer Association about three years, maintains two concerns.

The overriding one, he emphasizes, is that Trisler would have difficulty being a "pastor to the pastors" with no experience as a pastor.

A secondary concern is the "gender issue." Jude cites several of Trisler's contributions to the association, including starting a pastors' wives' fellowship and a monthly newsletter. He also acknowledges she is gifted, loving, helpful and encouraging. Still, he believes the majority of pastors have difficulty accepting her as a permanent director.

Keith W. Murphy, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, differs. Murphy thinks Trisler would be a great full-time director. He doesn't see a problem should she continue on a paid basis beyond her seminary supervised ministry experience.

But he would have a problem with Trisler, he cautions, if she were to be ordained.

That's not in her thinking, at least for now. She hopes to prepare for some type of administrative capacity -- perhaps on a church staff -- but freely admits she would "love to be an associational missionary," where "so much of the action takes place in Baptist life."

She has no delusions or ulterior motives about a permanent position for herself in Mercer Association, either. Doing what she can now "to help people," she is convinced -- "when the time is right" -- God will have prepared a place for her.

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CORRECTION: Please note the following correction in the 9/7/88 BP story titled "Commentary writers meet to begin work":

Add to the 13th paragraph (which begins, "Other Southern Baptist-affiliated ... ") Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., which both are represented by one writer.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Cancer takes former
missionary beyond her call

By Scott Collins

F - (CO
(SWBTS))

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The cancer that invaded Marian Phillips' body more than 23 years ago causes her to speak softly these days. But the message she delivers is anything but weak.

Phillips is a former missionary to Nigeria. In 1965 she was diagnosed as having lymphoma. That's when she started looking for a miracle.

The miracle she received was not the one she expected.

"With some people, God is glorified because they have a miraculous healing," Phillips said. "My miracle is that I'm able to live with cancer."

Phillips had served one term as a Southern Baptist missionary when the cancer was discovered. And although she experienced a lower level of energy, "I was able to carry on," she said.

She "carried on" in Nigeria until 1977, when doctors told her the cancer was too advanced to control. After 21 years of enduring wars, famine, drought and lymphoma, Phillips finally was forced to relinquish her life-long dream of mission service.

But the end of her foreign mission career was not the end of life for Phillips, a 1955 graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"When God closes one door, he always opens another," Phillips said. "The doctor told me to go on and do things as though I didn't have cancer."

She did just that, and discovered a new place to serve God. "The Lord chooses the place where we can serve him and where he can use us best," she said. Her place the past 10 years has been as a volunteer at the North Carolina Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem.

Phillips works with other cancer patients, administering spiritual medicine.

"Whether it's listening or sharing or just being a friend, I have an open door," she said. "Because they know I have cancer, I can share not only my experiences with the disease, but how I am able to cope with it through my faith. I can say, 'The Lord is in this and gives us strength.'"

The experience has strengthened Phillips' faith.

"The key to living is confidence and trust in the Lord," she said. "I believe that everything that comes to me has come from the Lord. He has answered my prayer to serve him anywhere by giving me cancer, and I have grown in my trust and understanding."

Although Phillips knows she will not serve in Nigeria again, she noted God has given her grace to serve where she is. "I've come to accept that this is my place," she said.

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