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January 18, 1989

89-8

Race relations conference
stirs new commitments

By Louis Moore

N-CO
(CLC)

NASHVILLE (BP)--About 190 black, white and brown Southern Baptists meeting in Nashville for a race relations conference marking the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday committed themselves to working harder to eradicate vestigages of racism within the Southern Baptist Convention.

In speeches, through applause and in a series of six challenges adopted by the group, the Baptists called for resurrecting the goal of improving race relations within the denomination.

The Southern Baptists and Race Relations Conference was sponsored by the SBC Christian Life Commission, Jan. 16-17.

Spearheading the effort to revive race relations as a primary concern in the convention were Richard Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission; Lloyd Elder, president of the SBC Sunday School Board; Foy Valentine, former director of the CLC; Nashville pastor Jerry Sutton; Louisiana Baptist newspaper editor Lynn Clayton; and Woman's Missionary Union executive Carolyn Weatherford.

In his keynote address, Land issued a challenge to Southern Baptists to stimulate greater representation of blacks at every level of Southern Baptist life. He urged Southern Baptist leaders to fight racism "whenever and wherever it occurs."

"As Southern Baptists, we have not always stood for these things, but God has, his word has, and with his help, we do now and we shall in the future," Land said.

Southern Baptists should "witness both here and abroad to racism's devastating impact on both its victims, the persecuted and the persecutor," he said.

Elder said the Sunday School Board is moving ahead in multiple ways to support a multiethnic denomination.

"If we are ever to realize our Bold Mission Thrust goals of sharing the gospel with every person in the world, we must be multiethnic in the United States and around the world," said Elder.

He cited efforts to increase visibility of ethnic groups in art used in Sunday School Board periodicals as an indication of the ways the board is supporting improved race relations within the denomination.

Racism contradicts biblical Christianity, Sutton told conference participants.

"We must refuse to judge people by the externals of skin color, or the content of their wallets or their achievements or lack of achievements," said Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church. "The only criteria is this: 'Is he -- or she -- a new creature in Christ?' Any and all forms of racism and prejudice are incompatible with biblical Christianity."

Clayton, editor of the Louisiana Baptist Message, and Sid Smith, manager of the black church development section in the Sunday School Board's special ministries department, both urged specific Baptist action against racism.

"How long before a black is president of the Southern Baptist Convention?" Smith asked. "How long before there is a rainbow of God's people on SBC boards and agencies? How long? How long?"

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Clayton challenged the Christian Life Commission "to demonstrate by tangible example its dedication to race relations by hiring a black professional staff member and support staffers."

In response, Land said he "would be happy to accept the challenge and already is soliciting resumes of qualified men and women of differing ethnic groups for staff positions."

Valentine urged Southern Baptists attending the meeting to "work the issue of racism from every angle possible, seize it by every handle available, grind it from every facet conceivable and challenge it whenever it rears its ugly head."

Harold Branch, pastor of St. John Baptist Church in Corpus Christi, Texas, said: "Personal relationships built upon a common faith in Jesus Christ provide the key to racial reconciliation.

"We have not passed through the crisis. We're still in the crisis."

During the panel discussion, several speakers and members of the audience criticized CLC Commissioner Curtis W. Caine Sr. of Jackson, Miss., who has called the late Martin Luther King Jr. "a fraud" and said apartheid in South Africa "doesn't exist anymore and was beneficial when it did because it meant separate development."

While stopping short of calling for Caine's resignation, several conference participants predicted the Southern Baptist Convention, which meets in Las Vegas, Nev., in early June, likely will take some action on Caine.

"It is right for the SBC to ask Dr. Caine to resign," said Clayton.

Most speakers said they are optimistic about the convention's ability to repent of past racial prejudices and move forward toward racial equality.

Civil Rights legislation in the 1960s forced Christians to abide by laws that should have already been written in their hearts, said Joel Snider, pastor of Crieewood Baptist Church in Nashville.

"If Southern Baptists do not turn from their sins against races, God could bypass them and use others to do his work," Snider said.

Charles Page, pastor of Nashville's First Baptist Church, said the convention must go further than the laws of government to attain racial reconciliation.

And black pastor Frank Thomas of New Faith Baptist Church in Matteson, Ill., closed the conference by saying change can come in Baptist attitudes on race.

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Greater black representation
in SBC urged by CLC director

By Dan Martin

N-CO
Baptist Press
1/18/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--Greater representation of blacks at every level of Southern Baptist life has been urged by the new executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Richard Land, elected to head the SBC's moral and social concerns agency in September, issued six challenges, including one for greater representation during the Southern Baptists and Race Conference in Nashville Jan. 16-17.

His challenges were adopted on a standing vote by the 175 black and white participants at the conference, held on the holiday commemorating the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., the slain civil rights leader. The conference was the first planned by Land after he took over direction of the agency in October 1988.

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Land, former academic dean at Criswell College in Dallas and special assistant to the governor of Texas, issued his challenges:

-- "We call upon Southern Baptist Christians to resolve to stand publicly and privately for racial justice and equality and to speak out against racism whenever and wherever it occurs.

-- "We call upon individual Southern Baptists and Southern Baptist churches to reach across racial boundaries, establishing friendships, fraternal rather than paternal relationships, through mealtimes, prayer times and recreational times.

-- "We call upon Southern Baptist churches to observe Race Relations Sunday with various activities, such as pulpit exchanges with churches of differing ethnic and racial composition.

-- "We call upon Southern Baptists to urge their agencies and institutions to seek diligently to bring about greater African-American representation at every level of Southern Baptist institutional life.

-- "We call upon Southern Baptists to repent of past bigotry and to pray for, and minister to, those still within its deadly clutches, either as persecuted or persecutor.

-- "We call upon Southern Baptists, out of our own incessant past experience with, and intermittent present experience with, racism to witness both here and abroad to its devastating impact on both its victims, the persecuted and the persecutor."

Land concluded his call for action for racial justice by pledging, "As Southern Baptists, we have not always stood for these things, but God has, his word has, and with his help, we do now and we shall in the future."

In his address, Land cited "a widespread sense that racial conflict is on the rise in our land. It would seem that eternal vigilance, ceaseless education and persistent courage are needed to ensure progress toward healthier racial attitudes."

He diagnosed the "nature of the enemy we confront ... as an enemy within as well as without. Racial bigotry is woven into the very warp and woof of our society because it is an integral part of humanity's fallen nature.

"Prejudice is at its most basic a sin problem. It is a spiritual problem, a consequence of the fallen, sinful human heart.

"In this secularly dominated age, Christians have a unique responsibility to remind our society that racism, as well as many other problems, will not be solved without the spiritual dimension."

Land noted, however: "The fact that racism is at its foundation a spiritual problem and will be vanquished ultimately only by spiritual means, does not mean that legislative and judicial remedies should not be, must not be applied to racial discrimination and bigotry.

"Legislative and judicial remedies altered the status of 'de jure' segregation and legally institutionalized racial discrimination in our society. ... But what about 'de facto' segregation and discrimination?

"Here we are dealing with attitudes, not actions. When you enter the realm of the mind and of the heart, you are moving beyond the power of restraint.

"If elimination, not restraint, of racial prejudice and bigotry is the goal -- and as Christians it must be -- then we must move beyond legislative and judicial answers to spiritual ones."

Land told of his own pilgrimage, recounting how at age 16 he moved beyond "mere passive belief in racial equality," when he heard King's "I Have A Dream" speech.

As he read portions of that address made in 1963, Land drew a chorus of amens from participants.

"We must draw encouragement from the progress that has been made. We must remember and realize that things can change. Seemingly insoluble obstacles can be overcome. But our encouragement and inspiration that change, significant change, revolutionary change, has occurred must always be tempered by the knowledge that much remains to be done," he said.

The Christian, in order to bring about improvement in race relations, "must endeavor with God's help to win the battle for people's minds," Land said. "We must proclaim our Heavenly Father's message of equality and justice.

"However, we must also endeavor to win men's hearts. It is God's victory in their hearts which will really change their lives and the lives of those around them."

He encouraged participants to "allow God to change our minds and our hearts until our actions are transformed. We must show the world we really believe what we say we believe and that God will really do what we say he will do.

"We must pray that God will give us passion as well as compassion. We must really care about racial equality and justice. And we must act."

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Supreme Court lets Virginia
child-care exemption stand

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press
1/18/89

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected a challenge to a Virginia law that exempts church-run child-care centers from state licensing.

By refusing to review the dispute, the high court let stand a ruling by the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals that the state statute does not violate the First Amendment's prohibition against an establishment of religion.

The contested law, which was passed in 1979, allows any religiously affiliated child-care center exemption from the minimum standards required of licensed centers. The statute does require church-run centers to meet basic health and safety standards.

The challenge was brought by three non-exempt child-care centers, which are not associated with religious institutions.

A district court struck the exemption down as unconstitutional, but the 4th Circuit reversed the ruling last May.

In appealing to the Supreme Court, John Vanderstar, attorney for the non-exempt centers, said exempting church-run child-care centers from religiously neutral standards constitutes an establishment of religion.

"If a state may now exempt ... activities from licensing and other health and safety regulations simply because some churches want to be free of such regulation, the delicate balance between the two religion clauses will be severely distorted," Vanderstar wrote. "Neither religion nor the health and safety of the people will be advanced by such a rule of constitutional law."

But the counsel for the state argued that forcing church-run centers to be licensed would violate the First Amendment's free exercise clause. Attorney Anthony F. Troy said that requiring such licensing would force churches to place the state's authority over that of Jesus Christ. (88-730, Forest Hills Early Learning Center v. Jackson)

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More student volunteers needed
to fill home missions requests

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

ATLANTA (BP)--At least 130 student home missions positions could go unfilled this summer unless the number of applicants increases from previous years, two volunteer leaders said.

Bill Berry and Valerie Hardy of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's volunteer division said they have received more requests for high school and college volunteers than can be filled if recent trends continue. The number of students applying for summer volunteer positions has been decreasing gradually for the past five years, they said.

This year Berry has more than 1,500 requests for college students to serve as summer missionaries. Last year he filled 1,412 positions. Hardy said she anticipates about 80 requests for high school students to serve as Sojourners this summer. Last year she filled 48 positions.

"Unless we have a major turnaround, I anticipate falling short of this year's needs," Berry said. "For the first time in a long time, I've had to turn down requests for summer missionaries not just for financial reasons but because we don't anticipate enough applications to fill the requests."

Berry attributed the decrease in summer missionary applications to three factors.

First is a smaller pool of traditional college students to draw from. More people than ever are enrolled in America's colleges, but fewer of them are 18- to 24-year-olds fresh out of high school, he said.

Second, college students have more opportunities for missions involvement through other channels than ever before, Berry said.

The third restraint is finances. "Students are spending their summers more in vocational experiences so they can be more marketable when they graduate," he said. "Also, as federally funded student loans have been cut, students have found an increasing need to work summers to raise money for school."

While student missions volunteers have been decreasing gradually, the number of adults volunteering for home missions work has increased. In 1988, the Home Mission Board assigned 41,581 volunteers of all ages through its programs.

Berry and Hardy said time remains for high school and college students to apply for 1989 summer positions. The deadline for college students is March 10, and the deadline for high school students is March 15.

Some college-age summer missionaries are supported by their Baptist Student Unions or state Baptist conventions, while others are supported directly by the Home Mission Board. All summer missions assignments are coordinated through the Home Mission Board.

Those supported by the Home Mission Board receive transportation to and from the field, housing, meals and a \$60-per-week stipend during their 10 weeks of service. Applicants do not have to be Baptist Student Union members but must be mature members of a Baptist church who have completed at least the freshman year of college.

High school juniors and seniors appointed as Sojourners must provide their own transportation to and from the field and receive no salary. However, the Home Mission Board does provide housing and meals during the four- to 10-week terms.

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CORRECTION: Please replace the second paragraph of the 1/11/89 Baptist Press story titled "Brotherhood expands hours to improve accessibility" with the following:

Starting Monday, Jan. 30, Brotherhood Commission offices will be open 50 hours every week, from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Central time, Monday through Friday.

Thanks
Baptist Press

Enrollment up for 7th year
at Southern Baptist colleges

By Tim Fields

N-
(Ed Down)

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist colleges and universities showed an overall increase in fall enrollment for the seventh consecutive year, according to figures released to the Southern Baptist Education Commission.

Enrollment figures for the 1988 fall semester show 104,846 students attended Southern Baptist junior and senior colleges, a 3.6 percent increase over the 1987 total of 101,159.

The enrollment figures include both full-time and part-time students in college credit courses, but do not include students enrolled in non-credit courses.

A compilation of the figures shows that 37 of the 47 senior colleges had an increase in enrollment, ranging from 16.6 percent to 0.1 percent, and all four junior colleges had increased enrollments, ranging from 6.6 percent to 0.7 percent. The fall 1988 total does not include the 368 students attending the former Baptist Bible Institute in Graceville, Fla., which became a four-year senior college in November 1988, and changed its name to Florida Baptist Theological College.

Mobile College in Mobile, Ala., had the largest percentage increase, with 16.6 percent, followed by Virginia Intermont College, Bristol, Va., 15.7 percent; Southern Baptist College, Walnut Ridge, Ark., 15.6 percent; and Union University, Jackson, Tenn., 14.6 percent.

Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., showed the largest numerical increase from fall 1987 to fall 1988, with 284 additional students, followed by Campbell University, Buies Creek, N.C., 280; Gardner-Webb College, Boiling Springs, N.C., 263; and Union University, 257. Increases for all other schools fell below 200 students.

The last time overall enrollment in Southern Baptist colleges and universities decreased was in 1981, when enrollment was 91,602, a drop of less than 1 percent from the previous year.

The seven consecutive years of increased enrollment mean that 13,244 more students attended the 51 Southern Baptist junior and senior colleges during the fall 1988 term than attended in fall 1981, for a net increase of 14.5 percent.

The steady increase in enrollment over the past seven years has been in spite of dire predictions a decade ago, which projected severe declines for non-state-supported schools, said Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Education Commission.

"A majority of the Southern Baptist-related institutions has been able to offset the results of the decline in birth rate of those who are now of traditional college age," Walker explained.

"There is no question that Baptist-related institutions have been able to increase their enrollment by attracting non-traditional students who are returning to college because of an interrupted education or because of the desire for additional training.

"Baptist institutions have also attracted students who want a quality education undergirded by strong moral values, which form the foundation for education at these colleges and universities.

"Baptist colleges and universities collectively have been able to show not only the will to reverse circumstances which could lead to decreased enrollments, but also they have demonstrated the commitment which has allowed them to survive and grow."

Baylor University in Waco, Texas, remains the largest Southern Baptist university, with 11,789 students, followed by Mercer University, Atlanta/Macon, Ga., with 6,103 students, and Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C., with 5,317 students. All three schools showed increases in their fall 1988 enrollments.

Wayland Baptist University showed the largest percentage decrease in enrollment, with a 10.8 percent loss of 209 students.

The 1988 fall enrollment figures and the percentage of increase or decrease at all Southern Baptist junior and senior colleges by state are:

Alabama -- Judson College, 594, (Judson's fall '88 enrollment reflects a change in reporting procedures. Enrollment now includes independent study students who were not counted in the fall 1987 total.); Mobile College, 1,053, (16.6); Samford University, 4,089, (3.9).

Arizona -- Grand Canyon College, 1,813, (10.5).

Arkansas -- Ouachita Baptist University, 1,352, (-5.3); Southern Baptist College, 592, (15.6).

California -- California Baptist College, 666, (1.1).

Florida -- Palm Beach Atlantic College, 1,135, (-1.6); Stetson University, 2,975, (4.7).

Georgia -- Brewton Parker College 1,472, (9.1); Mercer University, 6,103, (2.7); Shorter College, 831, (10.8); Truett-McConnell College, 1,488, (0.7).

Kentucky -- Campbellsville College, 726, (8.2); Cumberland College, 1,904, (-1.4); Georgetown College, 1,471, (4.3).

Louisiana -- Louisiana College, 1,017, (-0.6).

Mississippi -- Blue Mountain College, 333, (6.7); Mississippi College, 3,540, (1.5); William Carey College, 1,931, (-4.4).

Missouri -- Hannibal-LaGrange College, 812, (-0.1); Missouri Baptist College, 905, (0.2); Southwest Baptist University, 2,712, (11.7); William Jewell College, 1,984, (-2.8).

North Carolina -- Campbell University, 4,195, (7.2); Chowan College, 974, (6.6); Gardner-Webb College, 2,189, (13.7); Mars Hill College, 1,345 (2.0); Meredith College, 2,124, (4.9); Wake Forest University, 5,317, (2.1); Wingate College, 1,729, (2.6).

Oklahoma -- Oklahoma Baptist University, 1,967, (10.8).

South Carolina -- Anderson College, 1,045, (1.4); Baptist College at Charleston, 1,926, (0.1); Furman University; 3,205, (4.1); North Greenville College, 532, (4.5).

Tennessee -- Belmont College, 2,580, (-3.6); Carson-Newman College 1,995, (4.9); Union University, 2,017, (14.6).

Texas -- Baylor University, 11,789, (1.1); Dallas Baptist University, 2,018, (8.1); East Texas Baptist University, 809, (13); Hardin-Simmons University, 1,928, (3.3); Houston Baptist University, 2,434, (-5.1); Howard Payne University, 1,247, (12.9); University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, 1,511, (12.7); Wayland Baptist University, 1,726, (-10.8).

Virginia -- Averett College, 993, (2.9); Bluefield College, 366, (5.2); University of Richmond, 4,948, (4.5); Virginia Interment College, 450, (15.7).

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First SBC relief teams begin
rebuilding Jamaican churches

By Bill Bangham

Nr (O)
(B'hood)

Baptist Press
1/18/89

MONEAGUE, Jamaica (BP)--In the wake of hurricane Gilbert, Southern Baptists are responding to the needs of Baptists in Jamaica. The first of 800 to 1,000 Southern Baptist volunteers currently are on the Carribean island at the invitation of the Jamaica Baptist Union.

Construction materials bought with Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board relief funds arrived on the island the week before Christmas. Volunteers enlisted through the board and the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission arrived after the first of the year to begin repairs on more than 100 churches damaged by the hurricane.

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Gilbert roared ashore last September, rocketing west across the island-nation with 160 mile-per-hour winds. Crops were lost and communities devastated. More than 80 percent of the housing on the island sustained damage. Relief poured in from across the globe.

"Amongst the first to respond, as usual, was the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention," said Cawley Bolt, executive director of the Jamaica Baptist Union.

Within days, a damage assessment team from the Foreign Mission Board and Brotherhood Commission was on the island. As a result, the Jamaica Baptist Union requested Southern Baptist help in recovery, particularly for damage sustained by church properties.

Initial efforts focused on supplying food to the island. But food distribution ended Jan. 1, and now efforts are aimed at helping Jamaican Baptists rebuild their churches in a cooperative project between the board, commission and the Jamaica Baptist Union.

The board released \$172,000 for building materials from a contingency fund of the global strategy group. Another \$67,000 was released through the human needs department. And John Baxley of St. Augustine, Fla., was appointed on-site coordinator for the rebuilding efforts. Commission personnel have been active in locating materials and enlisting volunteers.

Baxley, a member of Anastasia Baptist Church in St. Augustine, has been a missions volunteer conducting Vacation Bible Schools on Jamaica over the past 11 years. He also is a Mission Service Corps volunteer assigned to Florida Brotherhood and a trustee of the Brotherhood Commission.

Baxley noted the effort is a Jamaican Baptist project. Yet he also said it is an opportunity to develop closer relations with Baptists in a country where Southern Baptists do not have a missionary presence -- especially at a time of critical need. The Jamaican government is concentrating efforts on rebuilding homes and businesses. No funds exist for churches, he said.

"The big wind came and took their roofs away, and their crops," he said. "And when they turned to their church for solace, its roof was gone, too."

"People are struggling to rebuild their homes. This is an agricultural economy, and their crops were destroyed. There just isn't any money left over to repair their churches."

Jim Peck, a member of one of the first relief teams, said the project is vital: "It's important because a lot of these people won't be able to do it themselves. I understand that the government here will rebuild houses, will rebuild schools, they might even rebuild businesses, I'm not sure. But I know they will not rebuild churches."

"And so that's up to the Christians. And since we seem to have the wherewithall, we're going to be the ones to do it."

Peck came to Jamaica with eight other volunteers, the Baptist Men's unit of Bethel Baptist Church in Baldwinsville, N.Y. Mack Bixby, pastor at Bethel, said the church paid for the trip and commissioned the men in a special service before they left.

"Yes, you're seeing our church," said Bixby. "That's what I told our church -- it wasn't just nine men going to Jamaica -- it was a church going to Jamaica."

Bixby described their willingness to fund the trip as an important step in the life of Bethel Baptist. "It's important to me that our men, our women, our church be involved in missions because we're in a missions area in New York," he said. "We have been mostly on the receiving end."

"My desire is for my church and for the Northeast is to be on the giving end. And this is just the beginning of that."

Jamaicans also said the project is significant. Jeremiah Panton, 68, a deacon for 42 years at Dalvey Faith Baptist Church on the east end of the island near the spot Gilbert came ashore, summed up many of their feelings.

"When we heard you folk are coming to us, we were so glad and happy" he said. "We were so glad. Because the worship is not so strong since the hurricane, and the building was destroyed."

Baxley, working under the direction of the Jamaica Baptist Union, said teams are beginning on the east end of the island and working west. He anticipated needing 800 to 1,000 volunteers during the next six to 10 months to complete the project. Both agencies are seeking volunteers to fill that need.

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(BP) photos available upon request from the Brotherhood Commission

Time is 'now' for world
evangelization, leaders say

By Art Toalston

F-FMB

Baptist Press
1/18/89

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The time to act is now, many Christian leaders agree, to reach the oft-stated goal of spreading the gospel to the world's population by the year 2000.

"Decisions are urgent in the next two to three years," says R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Ralph Winter, general director of the U.S. Center for World Mission, concurs, noting, "If going all out for a short period will ever be fully justified, it is now."

Heightened awareness of the urgency may be one of the fruits of the Global Consultation on World Evangelization by AD 2000 and Beyond, held Jan. 5-8 in Singapore.

Participants say increased momentum for cooperation among Christians worldwide resulted from the meeting of 314 leaders of denominations and mission organizations. More than half the participants were from Third World nations.

Decisions, they say, will not come from any one committee or organization but from each denomination and agency committed to the cause. The consultation's "Great Commission Manifesto" calls for a balance between "appropriate autonomy of churches and ministries" and "significant partnership."

"The opportunity to work together is ours," the manifesto states, to offer every population "a valid opportunity to hear the gospel in a language they can understand." Christian influences are negligible among more than one-fifth of the world's 5.1 billion inhabitants, according to mission researchers, who use such measures as churches, Scripture translations and religious broadcasts.

The Foreign Mission Board already has made decisions, such as the deployment of "nonresidential" missionaries to help evangelize people groups in countries and regions where Christian work is severely restricted. This new breed of missionary will live outside the targeted area but work to develop ways of advancing the gospel there.

Five Southern Baptist couples have been assigned as nonresidential missionaries. Foreign Mission Board goals call for appointing 25 more in 1989 and 35 in 1990.

Other Christian groups are embracing the concept, and several of them have turned to the Foreign Mission Board for help in launching their own nonresidential missionary programs.

Many forms of cooperation may flow from the work of nonresidential missionaries, Parks says. Once they have begun to master languages spoken by unreached people groups, for example, they may work with Bible societies in doing Scripture translations and with radio ministries in developing special broadcasts.

A direct outgrowth of the Singapore consultation itself is the AD 2000 Global Service Office, which opened Jan. 9. It resulted from a meeting convened immediately after the consultation to assure ongoing contact among the participants and others committed to world evangelization.

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The office is being staffed by Jay and Olgy Gary, who helped organize the Singapore meeting. Gary is a former executive editor of World Christian magazine. Mrs. Gary develops mission education materials. They plan a monthly newsletter. The office's initial address is P.O. Box 129, Rockville, Va. 23146.

Denominations or organizations desiring to participate in the AD 2000 movement, Parks says, must begin a "strong, intensive push within the next three years at most."

"You can't make a decision to start reaching a people group in 1999 and reach them by the year 2000. You've got to make that decision by, say, 1991 in order to have the time frame to carry it out," he explains.

Foreign Mission Board researchers have divided the world's unreached people into 3,030 segments encompassing 30 countries, 1,000 cities and 2,000 ethnolinguistic people groups. Evangelizing all the segments, Parks says, is "impossible for any of us to do alone."

Parks predicts the AD 2000 consultation will enhance the principle of cooperation in missions and help make it a general pattern.

If Christian groups can work "in awareness, in coordination, in a networking stance with other groups, all of the peoples of the world can have a chance to hear the gospel," he says. "Working individually, in isolation, in ignorance of what others are doing, it's highly unlikely that it will happen. Unless there is consultation, 10 Christian groups may end up working with one unreached population segment, while there are nine other segments nobody is touching."

The years ahead in missions, FMB Executive Vice President Bill O'Brien hopes, will be a time when Southern Baptists "reaffirm and strengthen our commitment to who we are and what we're doing" in the Bold Mission Thrust world evangelization emphasis, yet grasp "the reality that others are being used as well."

Those "others" may not agree with Baptists on all points of doctrine, O'Brien acknowledges, yet all can find common ground on "the ultimate priority -- the Lordship of Jesus, a personal relationship to him and obedience to his command to proclaim his gospel to all people." As Christian groups assess each other's evangelistic plans, O'Brien says, a key question should be, "Is the Spirit of God using them?"

Organizations, like individuals, seem to be gifted with special abilities, Parks says. "The distinctive approaches of different groups all mesh together and provide a stronger witness than could possibly come if we all had the same approach," he notes.

The Foreign Mission Board's journey into global cooperation began with a June 1985 consultation of Baptist mission leaders from 20 countries. Two years later, Parks initiated a meeting with leaders of North American denominations and evangelistic organizations. Representatives of about 20 groups attended. A subsequent meeting last February was attended by representatives of 29 groups.

The board will take another step Feb. 7 when it meets with leaders of about 20 mission organizations operated by individual Southern Baptists.

Such organizations raise funds in local churches. These same churches undergird the Foreign Mission Board and other denominational causes. Working to resolve the possible competition in fund raising, O'Brien says, is better than "operating in an isolated, turf-protection kind of way." None of the organizations are in conflict with the Foreign Mission Board "in terms of wanting people to hear about Jesus and come to know him," he notes.

Elsewhere, the U.S. Center for World Mission and Global Mapping International will sponsor an Adopt-A-People Symposium March 13-17 in Pasadena, Calif., to help link mission agencies targeting unreached people groups with churches willing to offer prayer and other kinds of involvement.

The 50-member North American Renewal Service Committee, which met in Orlando, Fla., Jan. 16-17, has decided on an AD 2000 focus for its August 1990 Congress on the Holy Spirit and World Evangelization, expected to draw 50,000 people to the Hoosierdome in Indianapolis. "The overall purpose of the congress," says Vinson Synan, committee chairman, "will be to mobilize, equip and send forth evangelizers for the decade of the 1990s." The committee represents Pentecostal denominations and renewal movements in Catholic and mainline Protestant churches.

A number of Singapore consultation participants also are planning a number of meetings focusing on the evangelization of their respective continents.

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Seminary student picks up
pieces after his world crashes

By Scott Collins

F (CO)
(SUBS) Baptist Press
1/18/89

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The last thing Ron Thompson remembers is memorizing 1 John 5:11-12 with his wife while they drove to the tiny church in rural Arizona where he was pastor.

When Thompson opened his eyes, paramedics were hovering over him. He was lying on the grass. Cuts and abrasions mutilated his body. The car was a crumpled mass of steel. It was 3:45 p.m., May 14, 1988, just outside Phoenix.

"What's happened? Where's my wife?" Thompson asked. A paramedic replied, "Someone else is taking care of her."

Today, the words of 1 John 5:12 mark Darla Thompson's tombstone: "He that hath the Son hath life."

Sometimes, when Thompson is concentrating, studying for a test at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary where he is a student, flashes of his wife come into his mind. It's hard to think about anything else.

When the Thompsons were married in 1982, they committed themselves to God.

"We told him, 'God, we're giving you our marriage because we know that's the only way it's going to work,'" Thompson said.

They lived in Vernal, Utah, where he was a surveyor when "God retouched my life in January of 1984. He called me to the ministry," Thompson said.

When he told his wife, she smiled and said: "I knew that a long time ago. I'm so glad he (God) finally told you."

The Thompsons packed up, moved to Phoenix and enrolled at Grand Canyon College to complete undergraduate degrees.

In June 1987, Burton Baptist Church in Show Low, Ariz. -- 175 miles from Phoenix -- called him as pastor.

On Saturdays, the couple would load their car and drive to the church for the weekend. Usually, he drove. But the day of the crash, he needed to put the finishing touches on his sermons. He asked her to drive. He doesn't remember anything else except memorizing the Scripture verse.

Thompson enrolled at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, last August, just three months after the accident.

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