

BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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89-15

'88 volunteers
top 10,000 goal

N-FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists have accomplished one of their objectives in a strategy to help reach the world with the gospel -- and they did so 12 years early.

One of the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust evangelism campaign goals, adopted more than a decade ago, called for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to send 10,000 volunteers overseas each year by the end of the century. In 1988, about 10,800 Southern Baptists worked as volunteers on foreign fields, board officials reported.

Volunteers working in 1988 were spending anywhere from several days to two years overseas. They participated in projects ranging from providing medical care and drilling wells to spreading the gospel door-to-door and speaking at evangelistic crusades. Nearly all of them came home reporting their lives had been changed through their experiences, board leaders said.

Volunteerism changes not only lives but whole churches, said Ron Boswell, director of the board's volunteers in missions department. "It comes from getting in on what the Father is up to," Boswell said. Anytime a Christian makes a personal effort to reach someone who does not know the gospel, "the Spirit of God blesses him," he added.

During the past decade, initial fears about volunteers working overseas have dissolved, Boswell said. Missionaries have learned how to absorb volunteers into their plans for evangelism, he explained, and churches now know that the money spent on volunteer missions will not lower tithes and offerings or the strength of existing programs.

Missionaries now sometimes ask for more volunteers than the board is able to locate, said Boswell, and churches find volunteerism often leads to an increase in giving. Volunteers' new excitement for evangelism and missions has become a factor in the spiritual growth of churches across the country, he said.

Volunteers' firsthand reports about what is happening overseas have sent ripples throughout the denomination, touching other churches that have not yet experienced volunteer missions, board leaders said. Based on conversations with missionaries, Boswell said an increasing number of Southern Baptists are deciding to become career missionaries after first experiencing life overseas as a volunteer.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is the third of a three-part series on child sex abuse.

Pastor helps boy unravel
family's secret of abuse

By Barbara Denman

F-CP
(FID.)

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DELRAY BEACH, Fla. (BP)--For two days, David Lindsey Jr. slept on the beach with no place to go. After being thrown out of his house, he considered two choices -- begging his father to let him return or committing suicide. Instead, made a call that would explode the guarded secrets of his bizarre childhood.

He called his pastor.

When Neil Hickem, pastor of First Baptist Church of Delray Beach, Fla., picked David up on that spring day in 1987, the 18-year-old told his pastor he could not return home. His father had become incensed that he had gone to a high-school prom with his girlfriend and demanded that the boy leave home, David said.

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"All of a sudden, it occurred to me that something wasn't right here," Hickem recalls. He asked if David and his brothers were being abused sexually.

The young man's affirmative answer came with details that have shocked south Florida. For years, David said, he had been manipulated and molested by his adoptive father. His father's jealousy over David's girlfriend finally had brought the boy's seven-year odyssey of abuse to a head.

At that point, Hickem knew he had to report the abuse to the authorities. "Legally, ethically, morally, there was no choice," he said. Hickem didn't realize the effect the decision would have on not only David but also his own ministry, church and family.

Hickem knew well the father, David Lindsey Sr., and his family of adopted boys, although the family attended church only on Sunday mornings. But then, many people in south Florida had heard of the senior Lindsey, one of the first single men in Florida permitted to adopt children. In all, he adopted 11 boys, troubled kids no one else wanted.

In 1981, a newspaper story on Father's Day proclaimed Lindsey "No.1 Dad." Apparently no one suspected the secret the young boys were guarding.

In later sworn statements made to police, David alleged that soon after each adoption, Lindsey made sexual advances toward the newly adopted son and led him through a progression of sexual acts. By the time each boy turned 16, Lindsey seemed to lose interest in one and began the process with a younger one, police said.

As Hickem drove David from the beach to the church, he heard this story for the first time. Only then could he piece together other parts of the puzzle -- why the Lindsey boys never attended Sunday school; why the family never mingled with other people; why David Lindsey Sr. appeared "scared to death" when another son ran away from home earlier. "It never occurred to me that he was scared to death because he was afraid the boy would go to police," Hickem says.

Once at the church, Hickem's wife, Cathy, a clinical social worker, stopped by the office. The couple encouraged David to seek help from the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services. Mrs. Hickem called the HRS child-abuse hotline.

From her experience as a social worker, she knew some ministers would not see the choices as clear-cut as the Hickems. They consider this an "in-house problem" that they should handle, she says.

This surprises Mrs. Hickem, she explains: "The fact is, it is against the law. And each of us as citizens of this state and country have a legal responsibility, in addition to what I would consider a spiritual, moral and ethical responsibility, to be involved as an advocate for a child who's being victimized."

That night, the couple arranged for David to spend the night with a deacon in the church. The next morning, Mrs. Hickem drove him to the Boynton Beach police station.

Detectives began what was to become a long and extensive investigation. They began by expressing appreciation for the Hickems' involvement in the case.

Now, 20 months later, the case still has not come to trial. David Lindsey Sr. has been charged with 13 felony counts that include sexual activity with a child and sexual battery of a child. After several postponements, the case is expected to go to trial soon.

The other brothers refused to testify against their father, although at one time they verified David's allegations. Now the older boys are living on their own, and the younger boys have been sent to foster homes.

Although the circumstances of abuse within the Lindsey family are shocking even to child-abuse professionals, many of the typical patterns of abusive families were played out in the Lindsey household as well. Abuse workers say they hope such bizarre examples don't obscure the more "ordinary" cases of child sexual abuse that happen all too frequently.

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While covering up the abuse in the Lindsey household was not an option for the Hickems, their involvement has come with a price. They both will be called to testify at the trial, and they anticipate being on the witness stand for at least an hour and a half.

For two weeks after David went public with his story, the Hickem family received annoying phone calls, saw prowlers in their yard and noticed an increased flow of cars driving by their home, they remember. In response, men in their church stationed an all-night watch in their yard.

"At times, we really felt our lives were in danger. We did not know what we were dealing with," Hickem says. He admits this may be why fewer pastors are willing to become involved in such a situation.

"When these crises happen, they are so time-consuming," he adds. "You have to almost drop everything."

Hickem estimates his involvement in David's crisis has taken more than 100 hours, including time spent with David and prosecutors. Mrs. Hickem has spent even more time on the case. They have refused almost all requests for media interviews about their involvement for fear of distortions.

After counseling David during the initial crisis, Mrs. Hickem referred him to other professionals. Both she and her husband believe David will need years to reverse the effects of the emotional abuse and manipulation.

But David, who declined to be interviewed on the advice of his lawyers, is trying to put his life together, Hickem said.

"Let's face it, though. Any young person, who has been through that is going to have to deal with emotional issues surrounding that. He was living in a very abnormal situation. When you live in an abnormal situation for any length of time, it's a struggle to carry on a normal life," Hickem says.

David has been working and living in West Palm Beach, so he has not been active in the church. But, according to Hickem, David misses the church and wants to become more involved.

Hickem continues to have lunch with David on a periodic basis. The couple has cared for him when he's been sick and taken him to the hospital.

The Delray Beach congregation has responded to David's needs too. They have helped find him jobs, which he has kept for only a short time. They have housed, fed and clothed him. One family invited him for Thanksgiving dinner.

The Hickems say they also have a responsibility to people like David's father, who still is a member of the church. "We as ministers need to be aware that there are times that we will be called on to minister to both sides of the issue," Hickem says.

While many church members would like to think they are immune to such aspects of life, Hickem admits: "Things that used to happen just with unchurched people are now more common in the families of church members. Any problem in the world also can be found in Christian homes."

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(BP) photo available upon request from the Florida Baptist Witness

Expert delineates
abuse warning signs

By Greg Warner

F-10
(F12)

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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Because sexual abuse is harder to detect than other kinds of child abuse, victims often are dependent on concerned adults to spot and report the problem, said Barry Jones, program administrator for the Florida Baptist Children's Homes.

In most cases, physical and behavioral evidences of the abuse are visible to perceptive adults -- teachers, Sunday school teachers, parents or relatives, he said.

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If a child demonstrates several of the following symptoms frequently during a relatively brief period of time, Jones said, the concerned adult should consider consulting a physician, pastor or other helping professional:

- Difficulty in urinating.
- Spots on underclothing.
- Sexually transmitted infections or diseases.
- Irritation of genital areas.
- Regressive behavior, such as wetting the bed or thumb sucking beyond normal age.
- Discomfort or fear of being left alone with a particular adult or teenager.
- Child acts uncontrollably or is overly compliant.
- Child is unable to express feelings or is dramatically affectionate.
- Inappropriate sex play and knowledge of adult sexual acts.
- Nightmares or sleep disturbances.
- Disturbances in eating patterns.
- Disturbances in use of the toilet.
- Dramatic behavioral shifts of child, such as a quiet child becoming hyperactive.
- Onset of school problems.
- References to self indicating poor self-esteem.
- Withdrawal from peers.

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New SBC budget
plan proposed

By Al Shackelford

N-CO

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Executive Committee will consider a new approach to convention budget planning at its February meeting, said William Harrell, chairman of the committee's program and budget subcommittee.

Using the new approach, Harrell said, the basic budget goal each year will be based on the amount of Cooperative Program receipts in the last budget year completed. The Cooperative Program is the denomination's unified budget, which finances missionary, evangelistic, educational and church-starting endeavors around the world.

"This takes the challenge of an increased budget away from a committee and places it on people of the Southern Baptist Convention, who will determine by their gifts what will be the Cooperative Program budget goal for the following year," said Harrell, pastor of Abilene Baptist Church in Martinez, Ga.

At its Jan. 18-19 meeting, the program and budget subcommittee responded favorably to a request for change from the SBC Inter-Agency Council, composed of the executives of convention entities. "As chairman of the subcommittee, I am extremely thankful for the leadership and statesmanship demonstrated by the Inter-Agency Council in its presentation of a suggested means to eliminate the problem we are facing with our budgeting," Harrell said.

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"The dilemma came because during years of high inflation the SBC set growth goals that could not be maintained when the economy slowed down and "our receipts and overall growth did the same," he said. "Our problem began when we did not fully recognize this slowing process, and we continued to budget as if inflation was still at the double-digit rate."

Consequently, the subcommittee's recommendation will be to change from a "goal-oriented" budget to a "performance-oriented" budget, he said.

"We have been budgeting based on a goal set by our committee and then recommended to the SBC by the entire Executive Committee," Harrell said. "Now we will be recommending budgets based on past performance by the entire convention.

"This coming year, we are going to have to 'bite the bullet,' but it will be worth it in the long run as we work toward a positive, realistic approach to budgeting which will be fiscally sound," he added.

Hollis Johnson, chairman of the Inter-Agency Council and president of the Southern Baptist Foundation in Nashville, said, "I feel the IAC came together in addressing the situation with the best possible recommendation. In the process, the IAC solidly reaffirmed and recommitted to supporting and promoting the Cooperative Program.

"The IAC appreciated being asked for our observations."

Harrell responded, "It should be noted that the very people who most will have to 'bite the bullet' are the same ones who are recommending this approach. I commend the IAC for their unselfish attitude and for their contributions as we work together to solve the problems surrounding our budgeting process."

Keith Parks, president of the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., said he joined with the IAC in recommending the new Cooperative Program budgeting approach. "In the past we have had an unrealistic basic budget," he said.

The president of the Seminary Presidents' Council, Roy L. Honeycutt, said: "The new format for the operating budget assures fiscal stability in operating funds and in the best sense is 'a unified budget' characterized by growth, balance and fairness." Honeycutt is president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

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Three new professors join
New Orleans Seminary faculty

By Debbie Moore

N-CO
(NOBTS)

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Three new professors joined the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary faculty in January, having been elected by the board of trustees at their December meeting.

Benjamin Harlan was elected assistant professor of church music following four years as minister of music at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Shreveport, La.

Harlan, a native of Winnfield, La., received both bachelor and master of music degrees from Baylor University and the doctor of musical arts degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Harlan and his wife, Connie, are the parents of Katie Elizabeth, 6; Emily Lynn, 5; and Christopher Garrett, 1.

Don Wilton, a native of South Africa, was elected assistant professor of preaching. He has been a contract teacher at the seminary since 1987.

Wilton is a graduate of Rhodes University, with the bachelor of arts and master of education degrees, as well as a higher education diploma. At New Orleans Seminary he earned the master of divinity degree in biblical studies and became the first recipient of New Orleans Seminary's doctor of theology degree in evangelism in 1987.

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In addition to being a teacher, Wilton also is vice president of the Leonard Sanderson Evangelistic Association, Inc. He has preached more over 300 revivals in the past six years. Before becoming a full-time evangelist, Wilton was pastor of First Baptist Church in White Castle, La.

Wilton and his wife, Karyn, have two sons: Robert, 7; and Gregory, 6.

Wayne VanHorn, a 1983 recipient of New Orleans Seminary's Outstanding Master of Divinity Student Award, was elected assistant professor of Old Testament and Hebrew. He has been a contract teacher at the seminary since January 1988.

VanHorn, from Columbia, S.C., received the bachelor of arts degree from Christopher Newport College, and both the master of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from New Orleans Seminary.

VanHorn has been pastor of Hebron Baptist Church in Vaiden, Miss., and Norwood Baptist Church in Norwood, La. He and his wife, Terri Leigh, are the parents of Erin Nicole, 6; and Nathan Wayne, 3.

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Two church builders injured
in central Texas tornado

By Ken Camp

N - Texas

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DALLAS (BP)--Two construction workers at First Baptist Church of Troy, Texas, were injured slightly and the church's educational building was damaged when a tornado swept through central Texas Jan. 25.

Two days after construction was begun on a new sanctuary administrative wing at the church, the tornado overturned and blew the top out of a trailer parked at the building site where the superintendent of the building crew and one laborer were meeting. The two men were treated at a Temple, Texas, hospital and released the same day, said First Baptist Pastor Mark Bumpas.

"Our architect is concerned that the air pressure changes caused the roof to rise on the educational buiding," he said, noting bend awnings around the eaves of the building and disturbed acoustical ceiling tiles indicate that possibility.

No other churches were known to have sustained damage other than broken tree limbs. No other serious injuries and no fatalities were reported.

In nearby Belton, Texas, a car was overturned and trees were severely damaged at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. The administrative complex also sustained minimal roof damage, according to a spokesman at the Baptist school.

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