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June 30, 1989

89-102

HMB staff finds unexpected  
ministries in missions plunge

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--The man sprawled in the gutter, head resting on the curb and feet stretched into the street. Bright red blood oozed from multiple wounds on his dirty face, the result of being beaten by a fellow street person.

Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, stooped at the curb to assess the man's condition. Lewis took the man's left hand between his own and began to calm him, while someone called for an ambulance.

As the man lay groaning, disoriented by the blows and dazed by drunkenness, he had no idea who was reaching out to help him. Lewis stumbled onto the stranger while walking through downtown San Francisco during a Home Mission Board urban training event.

The five-day trek was planned as a hands-on look at ministry in America's cities. However, the stop was not on the schedule.

Karl Ortis, director of missions for San Francisco Peninsula Baptist Association, joined Lewis in assisting the man, a Sioux Indian who lived in a tent village across from City Hall.

Seeing the efforts of Lewis and Ortis, another passerby stopped to help. He is an unemployed nurse, unable to work because he is dying of AIDS.

Lewis and Ortis held the injured man up while the nurse coaxed him to drink a cup of water gathered from a nearby Burger King.

While waiting for help to arrive, Lewis talked with the injured man, who dribbled saliva and blood every time he opened his mouth. With bare hands, Lewis held a napkin up to wipe away the fluid each time.

People passing on the sidewalk uttered disgust over the situation, proclaiming their dislike for the street people and the burden they caused society.

When the paramedics arrived, covered with long sleeves and rubber gloves to prevent possible contamination from AIDS, Lewis and Ortis stayed by the man. They offered comforting words about God's love, realizing the man was in no condition to understand an evangelistic witness.

Before the paramedics took the man away, Lewis wrapped his arm around the man's shoulder and the man reached out his arm around Lewis. Lewis hugged him and prayed with him, then placed a gospel tract in the man's pocket for him to find later.

Meanwhile, inside the Burger King the nurse had ordered a hamburger and fries and sat down next to Bob and Barbara Wiley. Wiley, HMB director of associational missions, also participated in the urban training event.

The man asked Wiley about Lewis and the group he was with. When Wiley explained he was a Christian, the man became defensive and attempted to shock Wiley.

"I'm gay and I've been diagnosed with AIDS," the man said.

"I'm sorry to hear that. I have a nephew who also is dying with AIDS," Wiley calmly replied.

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That built a bridge that allowed him to talk about Jesus with the man. The two bantered for about 15 minutes and then had to part.

"May I pray for you before we leave?" Wiley asked.

"If you'll let me hug you," the man replied.

Wiley prayed briefly for the man's physical and spiritual condition and then the two embraced in a warm, brotherly hug.

These unexpected encounters were just part of the five-day "plunge" into San Francisco by HMB personnel and students from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. Planned opportunities for observation and participation included feeding the homeless, visting a variety of churches, walking the streets of the inner city and observing the city's annual Gay Parade.

Conference coordinator Larry Rose said the annual event puts students and missions leaders in touch with the realities of urban ministry. The HMB has targeted San Francisco and 43 other U.S. metropolitan areas as Mega Focus Cities, where 51 percent of the nation's population will live by the year 2000.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press

Variety of methods required to reach cities, leaders observe

By Mark Wingfield

N-AMB

Baptist Press  
6/30/89

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--After a five-day plunge into San Francisco, leaders of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board emerged convinced they must use a variety of approaches to win America's cities for Christ.

The group, including president Larry Lewis, participated in an urban training event sponsored by the HMB's metropolitan missions department and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in nearby Mill Valley, Calif.

From early morning to late night each day, the group traveled throughout the San Francisco Bay area. They visited both Southern Baptist and non-Southern Baptist churches, walked the inner city streets and fed the homeless.

Larry Rose, director of the HMB's Mega Focus Cities program, said San Francisco is a microcosm of America's cities in lifestyle and ways of thinking. Learning what works in San Francisco will help Southern Baptists minister in areas such as New York City, Chicago, Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, Atlanta, Phoenix or St. Louis, he said.

"If one could learn to reach San Francisco, one could learn to reach all the cities of the world," Golden Gate president William Crews told the group.

Through the five-day tour, participants encountered at least eight specific challenges of the cities:

-- Closed doors. Most of the three-story row houses compacted into San Francisco's 46 square miles are guarded by iron gates and alarms. Visitors must gain permission to enter.

Pastors told the group this makes private homes off limits to strangers. Evangelistic visitation teams are likely to hear the response one pastor recently got through an intercom: "Nobody's home here."

-- Ethnic diversity. The 52 churches and missions of San Francisco Peninsula Baptist Association include six black congregations and 30 non-English-speaking congregations.

One of the association's churches, Nineteenth Avenue Baptist Church, ministers in six languages: English, Arabic, Cambodian, Cantonese, Japanese and Vietnamese. Another, First Baptist Church, counts 30 nationalities in its downtown congregation.

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-- High costs. Nineteenth Avenue Baptist Church boasts six congregations but only nine parking spaces because of high property costs. A simple house next door to the church is currently listed for \$350,000.

Cornerstone Evangelical Baptist Church, an independent Chinese congregation, has begun accumulating storefront property which produces income to support the church.

Some of the storefronts are rented to businesses. Others, including a multi-purpose worship area, are part of the church's day care center. "We can't afford to keep our property dormant during the week," explains pastor Chanson Lau. "We have to make use of every inch."

-- Transience. The Japanese congregation at Nineteenth Avenue, which averages 65 in attendance, lost 26 members due to relocation last year. Some go back to Japan; some move on to other American cities after getting initiated in San Francisco.

On the other hand, Nineteenth Avenue has become a training ground for missionaries, said pastor Tony Kuriyama. To date, 200 former members have returned to Japan, taking a Christian witness with them; 15 have begun full-time Christian ministry in that nation.

-- Social needs. "We could be a comfortable middle-class church, but God has called us to reach all the people. We are called to be Samaritans," explained J. Alfred Smith, pastor of Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland.

Smith recalled the physician who complained to him several years ago: "I'm tired of doing your job. I have all these people coming to me with AIDS, and I have to be both physician and priest because the church won't help them."

To meet the needs of its predominantly black community, Allen Temple fields a host of ministries.

-- Different lifestyles. San Francisco is well known for fostering the Flower Children of the 1960s and the ongoing Gay Rights movement. Participants in the urban training event observed the 20th annual Gay Parade, which drew an estimated 250,000 participants.

The parade route passed by First Baptist Church, which sits on the edge of a gay community known as Castro. Pastor James Higgs said his congregation includes about 25 former homosexuals on an average Sunday.

"At first I couldn't understand the gays," he told the study group. "Then I saw them as sons and daughters of people like me and realized someone needs to reach them with the gospel."

-- Religions. Although 85 percent of San Francisco's population is considered unchurched, the city is filled with churches. Every denomination, cult and self-proclaimed prophet has a preaching point here.

San Francisco is the city that produced Jim Jones and the Guyana Kool-Aid massacre in 1978.

The group visited Glide Memorial United Methodist Church near downtown, which draws large crowds of people. Southern Baptists have trouble reaching with the gospel -- the homeless, singles, homosexuals.

Pastor Cecil Williams preaches a message of self-help and social activism to these people, but distances himself from an evangelistic witness.

-- Competition of witness. Monsignor John O'Connor, the progressive pastor of the Roman Catholic Basilica of San Francisco, told participants that even evangelicals send conflicting signals to the unchurched. Although devoutly Roman Catholic, O'Connor preaches about a "personal relationship with Jesus Christ" and promotes home Bible studies.

"The division of the body of Christ is a great scandal," he said. "There's a tremendous hunger for authentic spirituality, but people don't know who to believe anymore."

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In addition to San Francisco, the metropolitan areas targeted by the HMB's Mega Focus Cities program are New York City; Los Angeles; Chicago; Philadelphia; Houston; Boston; Detroit; Dallas-Fort Worth; Washington; Miami; Atlanta; Seattle; Minneapolis; San Diego, Calif.; Cleveland; Phoenix, Ariz.; St. Louis; Denver; Baltimore; Tampa, Fla.; Pittsburgh; Cincinnati;

Milwaukee; Sacramento, Calif.; Kansas City, Kan.; Portland, Wash.; Providence, R.I.; Columbus, Ohio; New Orleans; San Antonio, Texas; Norfolk, Va.; Salt Lake City; Buffalo, N.Y.; Hartford, Conn.; Charlotte, N.C.; Indianapolis; Orlando, Fla.; Oklahoma City; Rochester, N.Y.; West Palm Beach, Fla.; Nashville; Greensboro, N.C.; Memphis, Tenn.

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Reaching cities is greatest  
challenge of our day-- Lewis

By Mark Wingfield

N- HMB

Baptist Press  
6/30/89

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--"The greatest challenge of our day is reaching our cities for Christ," Larry Lewis said after a five-day mission plunge into San Francisco.

Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, joined 13 other HMB leaders in an urban training event sponsored by the board's metropolitan missions department and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary Mill Valley, Calif.

Lewis made the statement after traveling with the group all over San Francisco -- visiting urban churches of various faiths, walking inner city streets, spending half a day feeding the homeless, observing the city's annual Gay Parade and listening to concerns of missionaries and pastors.

"The churches that are succeeding are the churches that are ministering. Through ministry, these churches are building bridges and drawing crowds," he said.

"We saw some churches that minister to people's needs but do little to impact the greater need of their spiritual condition. Other churches are faithfully preaching but are dying because they have made no real effort to minister to the needs of their communities.

"The churches that marry the two -- witness and ministry -- are the churches that are successful. My dream is that every Southern Baptist church will become a ministry center."

Other HMB leaders participating included Charles Chaney, extension section vice president; Darrell Robinson, evangelism section vice president; Ken Carter, Bobby Sunderland and Doc Lindsey of the evangelism section; Beverly Hammack, Gerald Hutchinson and Nathan Porter of the ministry section; Bob Wiley, Jere Allen, Larry Rose, Bob Moore and Ellis Pitman of the extension section.

Lewis donned white Reeboks and a blue-and-white paper hat on the day the group served lunch to homeless people. He and others spent nearly four hours carrying trays to those unable to walk through the serving line -- the handicapped and mentally ill, the young and aged.

Robinson put on an apron to work in the serving line, sloshing beef stew into the large compartment of each tray, next to chopped broccoli and tossed salad.

Like others, Robinson attempted to share his faith with those he served. During one break in serving, he talked with a man dressed in bell-bottom jeans and Army fatigue vest with a red bandana around his mussed hair and silver-spiked bands around his wrists.

"What's your name?" Robinson asked.

"John Daniel," the man replied.

"Well, you've got two biblical names," Robinson said, and led into a simple presentation of the gospel.

When they parted, the man said, "Would you pray for me?"

"I will," Robinson replied.

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On another day the group observed San Francisco's annual Gay Parade. This year's 20th anniversary parade drew an estimated 250,000 participants from around the world.

Male couples kissed each other, some men were dressed in drag, and female couples cuddled as they marched down the parade route. Some women pushed strollers or wagons with young children.

The procession included elected officials, AIDS support groups and various gay activist groups, such as "Dikes from Hell" and "Black and White Men Together."

"The extent of the decadence of humanity when sin abounds is illustrated vividly in the inner city of San Francisco," Lewis said afterward. "This affirms in my mind the desperate need the cities have for a prophetic voice, boldly teaching and witnessing the love of Christ, and doing so with a ministering spirit."

Lewis likened the church to a medical doctor treating a patient: "We need to tell people that they have a serious disease and how to cure it. Underdiagnosis leads to undertreatment.

"Those advocating the homosexual lifestyle are bold. They're not afraid to show their colors," Lewis said. "I wish Christians in San Francisco and every city would be just as bold to name the name of Christ."

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Collins named public relations  
director at Southwestern Seminary

N-CO  
(SWBS)

Baptist Press  
6/30/89

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Scott Collins, director of news and information at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been named director of public relations at the school.

Collins, 29, replaces Mac Sisson, who will leave Southwestern July 14 and return to Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., as assistant director of public relations. Sisson was on staff at Ouachita before coming to Southwestern, June 1, 1988.

Collins has worked at Southwestern since 1986, first as a newswriter for Southwestern News, the school's alumni newsletter, and since becoming director of news and information, as managing editor of the newsletter.

Prior to joining the staff at Southwestern, Collins was managing editor of a daily newspaper in Macon, Mo. He also was a missionary journeyman with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, working as director of media in Botswana, Africa.

Collins, a native of Missouri, is a graduate of Northeast Missouri State University in Kirksville. His wife, Judy, is a graduate of Southwestern and works in the student activities office of Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

Collins will continue editing the 47,000-circulation Southwestern News and direct the seminary's news office. In addition, he will be responsible for the school's public relations, including publication of brochures and other informational material.

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House panel approves  
child-care measure

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press  
6/30/89

WASHINGTON (BP)--Child-care legislation that differs significantly from that recently passed by the Senate is advancing in the House of Representatives.

The House Education and Labor Committee approved a bill sponsored by committee Chairman Augustus F. Hawkins, D-Calif., during an all-day markup session June 27.

Hawkins' Child Development and Education Act would authorize \$1.75 billion in fiscal 1990 and "such sums as may be necessary" in the following three fiscal years for:

-- An expansion of Head Start to provide year-round, all-day care for children of working parents and extend services to additional children from low-income families.

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-- School-based services that would include early childhood developmental programs and before- and after-school child-care programs. Funding for these services would be provided through state grants.

-- Day-care programs for infants, toddlers and children under age 13. This part of the package is similar to last year's House version of the Act for Better Child Care Services with funding going through the states.

-- Grants to help states coordinate their child-care services.

The measure is targeted to assist low-income families. Moderate-income families participating in the programs would pay sliding-scale fees.

The Senate-approved child-care package would authorize \$1.75 billion in direct grants for payments to parents and child-care providers, as well as almost \$2 billion in tax credits to assist low-income parents with young children.

Before approving the Hawkins bill, the House panel added language that would prohibit any sectarian activity, including sectarian education and worship, in any program receiving financial assistance under the measure.

Committee members refused to add a provision that would have required any religiously affiliated provider to form a separate board in order to be eligible for federal child-care funds.

The bill now is expected to go to the House Ways and Means Committee for consideration of adding a tax-credit package for parents.

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Nearly 1,000 professions of faith recorded in Nevada mission thrust

By Joe Westbury

N-HMB

Baptist Press  
6/30/89

ATLANTA (BP)--Nearly 1,000 professions of faith were recorded in Nevada during the evangelism emphasis held in conjunction with the 1989 annual session of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 13-15, in Las Vegas.

A week of statewide revivals and a one-day visitation of Las Vegas neighborhoods resulted in 978 professions of faith, according to information compiled by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

The effort, the largest ever held in conjunction with an annual meeting of the 14.8-million-member denomination, featured saturation visitation, lifestyle witnessing and simultaneous revivals, coordinated by the Home Mission Board, the Nevada Baptist Convention and the Southern Nevada Baptist Association.

Some 2,025 volunteers knocked on about 120,000 doors in Las Vegas neighborhoods in heat that pushed temperatures near 100 degrees, said Howard Ramsey, director of personal evangelism for the board.

Armed with an eight-point religious opinion survey, the volunteers from 38 states and the District of Columbia reported 471 professions of faith and 5,000 prospects for church membership in the city's 40 Southern Baptist churches and missions, he added.

Volunteers found about 50 percent of residents home for the Saturday visitation, said Stan Clark, Mission Service Corp volunteer who has coordinated the local planning for the past six months. Clark, from Toledo, Ohio, said Las Vegas Southern Baptists plan to contact the remaining 40,000 homes before the year's end.

Immediately before the convention, 86 of the state's 120 churches and missions participated in "Here's Hope" simultaneous revivals, which resulted in 507 professions of faith and 412 other decisions, according to Don Ledbetter, director of evangelism for the Nevada Baptist Convention.

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Many of the revivals were led by pastors or laypeople, but 34 full-time vocational evangelists were partially sponsored by the Home Mission Board, said Richard Harris, director of mass evangelism for the Atlanta-based missions agency.

By the time the convention closed, Harris reported, 15 of the 25 churches targeted to begin in the state this year had been started.

In a separate evangelistic encounter not sponsored directly by the denomination, nine professions of faith were recorded during an afternoon of sidewalk evangelism led by several hundred evangelists.

Jay Strack, president of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists, said the effort began at the conclusion of the group's annual Wednesday meeting and focused on an afternoon of witnessing along the Strip, an area of Las Vegas known for its elaborate casinos.

About 4,000 gathered for prayer shortly before the march began, but only 450 completed the three-mile walk in temperatures which approached 113 degrees, Strack said.

Strack, a vocational evangelist from Dallas, said more conversions may have been registered but no system was in place to record the decisions. A similar march already is being planned for New Orleans' French Quarter during the 1990 convention, he said.

In addition to the revivals and neighborhood visitations, Southern Baptists left their mark on the city in a variety of ways:

-- More than 90 television spots were purchased, 141 radio spots were aired, and 12 quarter-page ads appeared in local newspapers in Las Vegas and Reno.

-- Volunteers distributed most of the 26,000 "Here's Hope" marked New Testaments during their saturation of Las Vegas neighborhoods. A large portion of an additional 25,000 New Testaments previously had been distributed in the simultaneous revivals.

-- Four 48-foot "Here's Hope" billboards were placed in strategic locations in Las Vegas.

-- Southern Baptists prayed by name for every person in the city's telephone directory.

Louisiana Baptists and the Home Mission Board are planning a similar soul-winning emphasis in 13 Louisiana associations prior to the 1990 convention in New Orleans.

Bobby Sunderland, director of the direct evangelism division for the board, said Louisiana will provide overall coordination for the event with the board providing "One Day Soul-Winning Workshop" programs and trainers for one-on-one evangelistic encounters.

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President commends  
SBC mission efforts

N-CO

Baptist Press  
6/30/89

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Jerry Vines, Southern Baptist Convention president, has commended messengers to the 1989 annual meeting for the mission effort conducted in Las Vegas, Nev.

"The Lord used you to accomplish our purpose far beyond our hopes and aspirations," said Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla.

"Your conduct was exemplary. From every hand I have received words of praise from Las Vegas concerning your demeanor, your joyfulness and your gracious behavior. The organized and the lifestyle witnessing was certainly a success," Vines said in a statement issued through Baptist Press, the denominational news service.

Vines, who was re-elected to a second one-year term as president of the 14.8-million-member denomination at the 1989 annual meeting, said: "Only heaven will reveal how many more (people) came to Christ in lifestyle evangelistic endeavor on the part of messengers. To God be the glory, great things he hath done."

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Under sponsorship of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, the Nevada Baptist Convention and the Southern Nevada Baptist Association, the week preceeding the annual meeting featured simultaneous "Here's Hope" revivals. On the Saturday preceeding the convention, more than 2,000 Southern Baptists from 38 states and the District of Columbia fanned out across Las Vegas, visiting 130,000 homes.

Across the state, the evangelistic thrust resulted in 978 first-time professions of faith, and 412 other decisions. In Las Vegas it produced 5,000 prospects for church membership and 471 professions of faith, officials reported.

Vines, who has emphasized personal soul-winning as a theme of the first one-year term as president, also told Baptist Press:

"I am going to place a strong emphasis this coming year on building great soul-winning churches. I would encourage every pastor and layperson to join me in a renewed effort to build our local churches.

"As I understand it, New Testament evangelism has a two-fold focus: first, to win people to faith in Christ; second, to baptize them into the fellowship of a local church and help them grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This will be my emphasis in the coming year.

"Again, God bless you, Southern Baptists. Mission accomplished."

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Soviet Baptists call for  
exchange with Californians

By Mark A. Wyatt

N- (CO)  
(Calif.)

Baptist Press  
6/30/89

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--Soviet Baptists, pleased with a visit by a delegation of California Southern Baptists, are calling for an annual exchange of delegations to promote understanding and mutual encouragement.

In mid-May, leaders of the California Southern Baptist Convention made a 15-day tour of churches in the Ukraine. In November, Ukrainian Baptists will visit California. The visits were the first phase of a relationship between the two groups which has been in planning since 1984.

In addition to the visits, the new partnership may feature the California Baptists providing assistance to the Soviets in the form of literature, teaching aids and office equipment.

The idea for the relationship between the state convention and the Soviets was suggested in 1984 but did not come into being until 1989, when circumstances in the Soviet Union favored such an exchange.

"The fact that they want a continuing relationship shows we have been accepted," said John Jackson, convention president and pastor in Anaheim. The visit "broke down some barriers ... stereotype barriers. It went both ways," Jackson said, adding the visit also revealed the Ukrainians have a desire to reach their land for Christ, "get the word of God to the people, and to train and educate their children."

Rob Zinn, chairman of the convention's executive board and pastor in San Bernardino, said the emerging bond is "investing in people so that children can learn the Bible and people can be brought to Christ."

"The best way we can help that happen is to teach the children. The door has opened up. We need to go through. It is not an if; it's a must."

Jackson, Zinn and three other California Southern Baptist leaders, accompanied by their wives, visited more than a dozen churches in cities and villages across the Ukraine. Others taking part included C.B. Hogue, CSBC executive director; Anthony Ahaev, pastor of Slavic Evangelic Baptist Church, Hollywood; and Mark Wyatt, CSBC public relations director.

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During the visit, the Californians repeatedly heard requests for training and study materials, especially children's literature. They were told Soviet law forbids churches to provide religious instruction to children, although many did so despite frequent fines and other penalties. The law also prohibits publication of "religious propaganda" such as Bible study materials, they were told.

Vasily Logvinenko, president of the All Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, who greeted the Californians in Moscow, said Soviet Baptists are cautiously optimistic about prospects for greater religious liberty.

He said Soviet Baptists have asked the government to change the law to allow freedom of conscience in religious matters, but until changes come, the churches are trying to make the most of the new openness. "We don't know how long it will last," Logvinenko said.

He added: "The Lord has given us wide open doors for the gospel. It is being carried freely in our country. We freely have studies with children but there is a great demand for children's literature."

In Kiev, Ukrainian Baptist Superintendent Jakiv Doukhonchenko credited last year's observance of 1,000 years of Christianity in Russia with boosting interest in religion among Soviet citizens. "It has revived a hunger for Christianity," Doukhonchenko said. "People come daily asking for New Testaments and Bibles. These opportunities make us happy and we thank God."

Doukhonchenko displayed a newly published Ukrainian hymnal, one of 20,000 printed in Germany and now being distributed in the Soviet Union. By October, he said, a quarter million New Testaments in modern Ukrainian will be ready for distribution. "We have received a lot of literature, but we still have lot of need," Doukhonchenko said.

Soviet Baptists also said they need office equipment, including typewriters, copiers, and computers and software.

"We have surfaced needs in equipment and teaching aids," Hogue said. "Once the Russians have visited California, we will have a better opportunity to pinpoint their need and find ways to help. We will strive to discover resources to handle those needs."

Jackson, a trustee of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, said efforts are underway to get assistance for the Soviet Baptists, "not only in California, but through the Foreign Mission Board and the (Southern Baptist) Sunday School Board."

Zinn said he will make specific recommendations to the California convention's executive board after talking with Doukhonchenko when the Ukrainian Baptist leader visits California for medical treatment this summer.

The San Bernardino pastor said Californians have a unique opportunity, one he views as genuine missions.

"They (Soviet Baptists) call it a fraternal relationship," Zinn said. "We'll call it missions because it's starting new work, spreading the gospel. I see it as an opportunity to help fellow Baptists."

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Brazilians, Southern Baptists  
discover new hymnal parallels

N-55B  
By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
6/30/89

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--When Southern Baptist church musicians met during Church Music Leadership Conference with the editor of "The Baptist Hymnal" to be published by the Sunday School Board in 1991, one participant had a special reason for asking questions.

Clint Kimbrough, like Wesley Forbis, is a hymnal editor working toward a 1991 publication deadline. While Forbis is director of the board's church music department, Kimbrough is executive secretary of the music department for the Sunday School Board of the Brazilian Baptist Convention.

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Kimbrough, on furlough from his position as a Southern Baptist music missionary to Brazil, has found similarities in the two projects to be remarkable -- particularly since Brazilian Baptists have no recent hymnal publication experience.

"In many respects our plan of work is parallel," Kimbrough observed. "We developed a biblical basis for this music ministry much like the Baptist Faith and Message statement being used for "The Baptist Hymnal," though ours is particularly geared toward music."

Kimbrough works with a hymnal committee of 25 Brazilians and Southern Baptist missionaries. Forbis works with about 100 committee members, including pastors, laypersons, ministers of music and other church musicians. Subcommittee assignments within the two committees cover virtually the same subjects. Like Southern Baptists, Brazilian Baptists have conducted business by mail and conference telephone calls between face-to-face meetings.

Actual layout of both hymnals is the responsibility of each of the music departments. While Southern Baptists are using a computerized system for editing and layout, Brazilian Baptists are using traditional typesetting methods.

"We can typeset only three pages a day," Kimbrough said, but computerized typesetting was impossible for his staff "due to lack of equipment produced in Brazil. We needed Brazilian-manufactured computers to have proper technical assistance."

Brazilian Baptists, like Southern Baptists, conducted a survey to determine the preferences of fellow members. As a result of the surveys, Brazilian Baptists will keep approximately 200 of the 400 hymns from their previous hymnal. Southern Baptists will retain approximately 300 of the 512 hymns in Baptist Hymnal, 1975 edition.

Both editors anticipate better paper, cover boards and bindings than previous editions.

When Brazilians unveil their hymnal in 1991, they will mark the 100th anniversary of their previously published hymnal. Southern Baptists will present their new hymnal that same year, the 100th anniversary of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and the 50th anniversary of the board's church music department.

Kimbrough is most impressed that the similar plans and processes occurred without any discussion between the editors.

"I'm excited about what Brazilians are doing without even knowing of the expertise our Southern Baptist church music department has in producing such a work," Kimbrough said. "The Lord just showed us how."

Church Music Leadership Conference was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church music department.

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

Ballet dancer  
leaps into ministry

By Pat Cole

F-10  
(SBTS)

Baptist Press  
6/30/89

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--As a teenager, David Wirth trekked across the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary en route to his ballet lessons and a career as a professional ballet dancer. Today he walks through the halls of the Louisville, Ky., school on his way to a career in Christian ministry.

Wirth, who grew up less than a block from the seminary, was not a Christian and gave little thought to what went on inside the red-brick Georgian structures that dotted the beech-laden campus. "I thought it was some sort of Bible college," he recalled.

Wirth, 29, began taking ballet lessons at age 12 when his mother encouraged him to enroll for free classes. Not long after signing up for the lessons, he was cast for a role in the "The Nutcracker," and his interest grew. "The Nutcracker" performance was "the thing that really hooked me," he said. "It was very magical, and I enjoyed it."

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He finished high school in three years, and at age 16 enrolled at the University of Cincinnati's Conservatory of Music with the goal of becoming a professional ballet dancer. He spent three years at the conservatory and danced with the Cincinnati Ballet during his last two years there. After a summer of study at the School of American Ballet in New York, he danced for two years with the Louisville Ballet.

In 1981, Wirth auditioned in New York City and landed a position with Ballet West, based in Salt Lake City, and is one of the five largest ballet companies in North America. The opportunity to dance with a prestigious company fulfilled a long-held ambition.

Despite professional success, Wirth began to long for companionship after arriving in Salt Lake City. "I had loaded my car and driven 1,500 miles, and I realized I was alone," he said. "The only person I recognized when I drove into town was the guy who hired me."

Having grown up around the seminary and in a family that occasionally attended nearby Crescent Hill Baptist Church, Wirth decided to look for friends at a Baptist church. He chose Central Baptist, a small Southern Baptist congregation in Salt Lake City that averaged about 30 people in attendance.

"They kind of became my family," he said. "It was an awakening for me to walk in and find acceptance and to find a depth of relationships."

In that church, Wirth also found a relationship with Christ. Although his new friends in Utah had an impact on his decision to accept Christ, Wirth can see influences throughout his life that led to his becoming a Christian.

"When I look back, I can see God working in my life trying to get me to surrender my life to God," he said. "I wasn't really willing to do that until I was about 21."

Even though he had accomplished a long-standing career objective, Wirth sensed a spiritual vacuum: "My goal had been to get into a ballet company like Ballet West that had a good amount of prestige and paid well. I had worked hard and was accomplishing my goal, but I felt empty on the inside. Achieving my vocational goal and being successful in a career wasn't what it was cracked up to be."

At the church in Salt Lake City, he met his wife, Patty, a student at the University of Utah, who had grown up as a Baptist in a small, predominantly Mormon town in southern Utah. Wirth also found time in the midst of his busy schedule to complete a bachelor of fine arts degree at the University of Utah.

Wirth retired from ballet at age 27, which he said is a fairly typical retirement age for ballet dancers in America. Most dancers, he said, either go into teaching or start a second career after retirement. For Wirth, plans for his second career began about two years after his conversion, when he started to sense a call to ministry.

"Physically, I could have gone on (in ballet), but emotionally and spiritually I was ready to do something else," he said.

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