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October 11, 1989

89-145

Foreign board adopts  
\$174.9 million budget

By Marty Croll

N-FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board adopted a \$174.9 million budget for 1990 to support some 3,800 missionaries working in 116 countries.

The budget approved Oct. 11 represents a \$7.2 million increase over 1989. The increase is built on rising revenues from the denomination's annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

Projected expenditures for 1990 show, among other things, decreases in Southern Baptist subsidies to many seminaries, hospitals and churches overseas where national Baptist organizations are becoming more financially self-sustaining.

Projections also show an increasing percentage of the budget going to basic missionary support. Because of rising costs, about \$5 million of the net budget increase will be used to maintain the missionary force overseas, said Carl Johnson, vice president for finance. Expenditures for missionary travel and freight, medical costs, insurance payments, salaries and stipends rank as the greatest areas of increase over 1989.

"The hard realities are ... the cost to support missionaries continues to escalate, medical expenses are becoming almost unbearable, and the cost of schooling for (missionary children) has reached a point where it's taking such a heavy percentage of mission resources that we're looking for alternatives," said board President R. Keith Parks. "Housing, automobiles, travel -- everything's going up."

Overseas ministries claim almost 88 percent of the total 1990 budget. About \$109 million will support missionaries and their families. An additional \$31.8 million will pay for mission work programs, and \$11.3 million will finance capital needs such as missionary housing, churches, schools and medical facilities.

Although the Foreign Mission Board this year is expected to experience its first net loss in 17 years in the number of missionaries under appointment, the new budget sets aside support money for 1990 based on an expectation that the downward trend will be reversed. "We are of the opinion that the number of missionaries under appointment will increase in 1990," Johnson said.

Mission administrators are casting a wary eye on the \$13.5 million difference between projected receipts from the denomination's unified Cooperative Program giving plan and those from its annual offering for foreign missions. The 1990 budget projects \$67.5 million in receipts from the Cooperative Program and \$81 million from the Lottie Moon offering.

"If I had to pick out any one thing about this budget, it would be our concern about the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering playing an increasing role in our budget support, while the Cooperative Program is playing a decreasing role," said Johnson.

In recent years Johnson and others at the Foreign Mission Board have voiced growing uneasiness over the board's increasing dependence on the annual Lottie Moon offering, which generally is collected in local churches during the month of December.

Until 1961 the Cooperative Program supplied more money to foreign missions than the Lottie Moon offering. Since then, Lottie Moon giving has surpassed receipts from the Cooperative Program. The size of the gap has fluctuated, but Lottie Moon receipts have never been more than about \$6 million greater than income from the Cooperative Program.

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"Certainly we feel we're much more vulnerable as the gap is widening," Parks said in an interview. "It's been a moving target all along, but the sudden gap between last year and this year is quite striking, and I think this is a real concern to us."

The Cooperative Program is the vehicle through which Southern Baptists send money from their churches to support mission needs at the local, state, national and international levels. In recent years some churches have threatened to curtail their contributions to the Cooperative Program, citing displeasure with theological directions the Southern Baptist Convention has taken, or failed to take. But so far Foreign Mission Board officials see no significant indication of such reductions in mission giving, Johnson said.

Parks underscored to trustees the importance of the Lottie Moon offering to foreign missions. "It is a demonstration of commitment and cooperation that stands alone in denominational circles," he said. "If the confidence of Southern Baptists in the integrity of this offering's use is ever eroded, our efforts to reach this world will be severely crippled."

The board projects that \$7 million, or 4 percent of its budget, will come from gifts for hunger and relief ministries. It expects \$12 million, or nearly 7 percent, to come from investments and \$2.8 million from designated contributions.

Gifts for human needs are used entirely for hunger and relief projects. Domestic administrative expenses related to relief efforts come from general board funds.

The domestic budget for home office salaries, administration and promotion is about \$21.5 million, or 12.3 percent of the budget.

Another \$1 million is earmarked for unexpected needs overseas.

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High court opens new term,  
rejects church-state cases

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press  
10/11/89

WASHINGTON (BP)--Returning to the bench for its 1989-90 term, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected three church-state disputes.

The high court refused to hear appeals from a religious group that was ordered to return \$5.5 million in donations, a blind ministerial student who sought state vocational rehabilitation funds and a South Dakota man who asked for a religious exemption from a state insurance requirement.

In the first case, the Supreme Court left standing a 1st Circuit Court of Appeals decision that ordered The Bible Speaks, a fundamentalist religious community in Lenox, Mass., to return \$5.5 million in donations to Elizabeth Dovydenas, a former TBS member and an heir to the Dayton-Hudson fortune.

During a 12-month period beginning in late 1984, Dovydenas, then 34, gave the religious group more than \$6.5 million. After she left the church, she sued to have her donations rescinded, claiming TBS had placed undue influence on her.

A bankruptcy court judge ordered the ministry to return all of Dovydenas' donations. But the 1st Circuit allowed TBS to keep a \$1 million donation Dovydenas made in December 1984 and several smaller gifts she contributed during the following months.

The appeals court held the church made "secular statements of fact" -- such as that Dovydenas' gifts had cured the pastor's headaches -- that led to her later donations of \$5.5 million. Since those statements were not part of the church's religious beliefs, the court ruled, they placed an undue influence on Dovydenas. (88-1977, The Bible Speaks vs. Dovydenas)

In a case that already had made its way to the high court once, the justices refused to review a decision by the Washington Supreme Court that the state's constitution prohibits a blind student from receiving state vocational rehabilitation funds to study for the ministry at a Bible college.

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In January 1986, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment ban on an establishment of religion did not prohibit the student, Larry Witters, from receiving those funds to pursue religious training at Inland Empire School of Bible, a private Christian college in Spokane, Wash.

But the high court sent the case back to the Washington Supreme Court, informing the state court that it could decide to apply the state's stricter ban on any form of aid to sectarian institutions if it so chose.

In reviewing the case, the Washington Supreme Court held the state constitution's clause that "no public money ... shall be appropriated for or applied to any religious ... instruction" prohibits Witters from receiving the vocational rehabilitation funds because he is "getting a religious education."

The state court also rejected Witters' claim that the First Amendment's free exercise clause requires the state to provide him with the funds. Witters, the court held, "is not being asked to violate any tenet" of his religious beliefs. (89-94, Witters v. Washington Department of Services for the Blind)

In the third case, the Supreme Court rejected the appeal of Lindy D. Cosgrove, who was found guilty of violating South Dakota's motor vehicle financial responsibility law. Under that statute, every driver or owner of a motor vehicle in South Dakota is required to purchase liability insurance or post a bond, certificate of deposit or certificate of self insurance with the state.

Cosgrove claimed a religious conviction precluded him from purchasing the insurance and that the other three options would place a financial burden on him.

The South Dakota Supreme Court refused to grant Cosgrove a religious exemption from the law. The court held there was a compelling state interest in protecting citizens from uninsured drivers. It also held the law was not overly restrictive since it provided three options to purchasing insurance. (89-10, Cosgrove v. South Dakota)

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Daycare gives birth  
to mission church

By Mark Wingfield

F - HMB

Baptist Press  
10/11/89

PEMBROKE PINES, Fla. (BP)--Good Shepherd Baptist Church, a new Southern Baptist congregation in Pembroke Pines, Fla., features automobile parking in the front and tricycle parking in the back.

The mission was born out of a daycare center.

While it has become common for Southern Baptist churches to start daycare centers, this may be the first time a daycare center has started a church. And the daycare center pays the rent and utilities.

Good Shepherd is a mission of Pembroke Road Baptist Church in nearby Miramar, Fla. Both churches are situated north of Miami in Broward County where the population is booming with dual career families.

When members of Pembroke Road Baptist Church determined a Southern Baptist church was needed in Pembroke Pines, they faced two major obstacles, says Jim Sweet, the church's minister of missions.

First, the subdivision was so new that no public meeting places were available for rent. Second, the sponsoring church was already supporting five ethnic missions and a community food and clothing ministry, leaving no funds available for the new work.

John Hatcher, the church's former pastor, suggested daycare as a solution. Pembroke Road Baptist Church had been operating a successful daycare program in its own building for 16 years. A satellite daycare center would minister to the new community and provide a place for the mission to meet, he said.

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The satellite, Good Shepherd Child Development Center, opened in a strip shopping center in October 1988. In the first year, enrollment has grown from 20 to 55, just five short of the center's limit.

Once the daycare center was running smoothly, attention turned to the church start. The sponsoring church used telemarketing last July to contact 7,900 homes in the target area and invite residents to church.

On Sept. 10, 58 people showed up for the first service. The mission now averages 35 in weekly attendance. Three unchurched families with children in the daycare center are already attending the mission, said Sweet, the congregation's interim pastor.

The daycare center pays the \$2,300 per month rent and utility bills that the sponsoring church would have been strained to provide.

Interior walls in the 2,300-square-foot storefront were designed with a church in mind. Folding doors between classrooms open up to create a large room that seats 100 for worship.

And the mission benefits from ready-made nursery facilities. In the space behind the storefront where businesses would normally allow employee parking, church members built a fenced in playground. Five tricycles are parked by the back door.

"The exciting thing is that in a community where there was no other way to get a meeting place for a new congregation, they were able to accomplish two things: to minister to the needs of families and provide a meeting place for the mission," said Cliff Matthews, church extension director for the Florida Baptist Convention.

Both Matthews and Sweet believe Good Shepherd Baptist Church is a model that will work other places. "This could be the way of the future to reach urbanized families, especially where property is expensive or not available," Sweet said.

"We're excited to see what's going to happen in the next few months. We've had a chance to take the babies and tell them about Jesus. Now we're going to get the parents."

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Biographical sketches and photos of the 72 retiring missionaries mentioned in the following story are being mailed to Baptist state newspapers in the missionaries' home state and states in which they are living.

Retirees 'fought good fight,'  
worked 2,247 years in missions

By Art Toalston

A-FMB

Baptist Press  
10/11/89

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Ed Trott tapped the words of the Apostle Paul in reflecting on his retirement as a Southern Baptist missionary: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

Trott, a missionary to Brazil for 33 years, added words of his own: "There's only one good fight, and that's to take the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. Any other fight is not worthy of the name of Christ. And I hope Southern Baptists will be engaged in putting the priority on the good fight."

Trott was among 72 retirees honored for their careers in foreign missions during ceremonies in Richmond, Va., Oct. 9-10. The group worked for a combined total of 2,247 years on 40 different overseas mission fields, according to Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks.

Trott recounted various ways he has been a part of the "good fight," such as "seeing 400 people come down the aisles in a stadium in a driving rain ... to trust Christ as Savior through the power of God."

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"The good fight is like going to a home of a man who had never wanted to go inside a church door with his Christian wife," Trott said, explaining that the man had fallen ill and was ready to respond to the gospel. "For the next three days that he lived, this man only wanted his wife to read the Bible, to sing hymns to him and to pray to God. He died with a smile on his face."

For Trott and his wife, Freda, the "good fight" also entailed leading the Living Water Project, one of the largest hunger relief efforts ever undertaken by Southern Baptists. Irrigation, clean water systems, community centers, small factories, farms for the landless poor and home gardens -- all infused with evangelism -- have been a part of the project in Brazil's Pianco River Valley.

The retiring missionaries "represent nearly every facet of our work," Parks said, citing careers in evangelism, education, medicine, nutrition, agriculture, administration, church construction and journalism.

"These have demonstrated selfless love time and again in place after place," he said.

Doug Knapp, who helped baptize nearly 55,000 people during 26 years as a missionary in Tanzania, commented: "In Africa, it doesn't take long to get a work started, but it takes a lifetime to bring incarnation into the lives of people as they apply the gospel to their individual lives."

Knapp said the Tanzanian Baptist leaders "God has called forth" give him confidence "that we've left a lasting work." Knapp and his wife, Evelyn, chronicled their mission careers in the book, "Thunder in the Valley."

Carl Hunker voiced gratitude to Southern Baptists "that you freed my hands so that I could minister without any worry about any kind of support in prayer or in finances." Hunker's 40-year career began in China and later included work in the Philippines and Taiwan.

Betty Smith, who worked in Israel with her husband, Jim, for 34 of the nation's 41 years of existence, told of concerns they continue to feel -- "growth of fanaticism in the three great religions" rooted there (Judaism, Islam and Christianity), "extreme zeal to possess land" among Jews and Arabs, "the increase in secularism where people are so absorbed in gaining material possessions and power" and "a decline in moral standards for both of these great peoples."

Yet she experienced times of "splendor," Smith added, such as dialogue sessions the couple helped organize between Jews and Arabs. And she saw remarkable growth in the number of Jews who believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior. "When we went out in 1955, you could name practically all of them on the fingers of your two hands, but now there are over 3,000 Jewish believers in 30 congregations."

Two of the retirees, Lib Kirkendall and Jean Miller, grew up in the same congregation, First Baptist Church of Idabell, Okla. Only a vacant lot separated their homes.

"The education we received (at the church) opened our hearts to missions," said Kirkendall. "I remember learning that God had a plan for my life."

Kirkendall recalled making a commitment to full-time Christian service at age 15 or 16. "I had missions on my mind, but I couldn't see how I could get from Idabell to Nigeria or China. I learned later that you get there one step at a time."

Miller said their parents also nurtured their faith. "If there was anything going on at church, I didn't get permission to go anywhere else," she said.

Kirkendall and her husband, James, worked in the Middle East for most of their 26-year career. He was perhaps Southern Baptists' first itinerant foreign missionary, making monthly trips to Saudi Arabia from 1968 to 1973. Miller and her husband, Wes, were media workers in Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and southern Asia.

Among other retirees were:

- Jack and Doris Hancox, Southern Baptists' first missionaries to France and later to Haiti.
- Grayson and Betty Tennison, Southern Baptists' first missionaries to Portugal.
- Edwin and Joyce Perimon, Southern Baptists' first missionaries to the Turks and Caicos Islands in the Caribbean.
- Catherine Chappell, who founded House of Friendship in 1953, the first Baptist goodwill center in Brazil. It provides classes in adult literacy and various skills and offers Bible clubs and other activities in Rio de Janeiro.
- Leo Weatherman and Marshall Flournoy, who supervised the construction of 120 chapels in Brazil.
- James and Corinne Hollis, who helped operate a "gospel junk" (boat) for church-sponsored groups for several years while stationed in Hong Kong.

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

HMB's Rose urges Baptists  
to retool for the future

By Shari Schubert

N-CO  
(Mo.)

Baptist Press  
10/11/89

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--The 1990s will be characterized by drastic change, and the way in which Southern Baptists respond to change will determine their future as a denomination, according to a home missions specialist.

In a mid-October presentation to members of the Missouri Baptist Convention executive board staff, Larry Rose, associate director of the Home Mission Board's metropolitan missions department, emphasized the need for churches and denominational entities to "retool and regear" for the future.

Pointing out significant trends and their implications for Southern Baptists, Rose identified new church starts, attention to programming for senior adults, partnership missions to strengthen metropolitan work, and innovation in worship patterns and church programming as areas Baptist leaders need to address.

In a rapidly changing society, Rose said, what has happened to Southern Baptists is that "we got larger than we realized more quickly than we anticipated." In the 1980s, Southern Baptists have been confronted with their diversity, and are struggling to deal with it.

Southern Baptists are the most diverse Protestant denomination in America, Rose pointed out. But he added, "Most of us don't accept that. We're still Southern and we're still rural."

Change upsets people, Rose said. "Change, to an individual, is always seen as a loss." And in a changing world, people often want to believe the one thing that's not going to change is the church."

But efforts to conform churches and the denomination to a narrow pattern run counter to the direction of society and could spell decline, Rose warned, adding the issue is not theological, but sociological.

The business world has learned the best way to reach a market is through a segmented approach that identifies different groups and targets them with advertising and marketing designed to appeal uniquely to each one, Rose explained. Southern Baptists need to apply the same principle.

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For instance, he pointed out, if large numbers of unreached people are at work on Sunday mornings, consideration should be given to offering Bible study at an alternate time. "Is Sunday morning the issue, or is Bible teaching to people the issue?" he asked. "If we continue to put weight on Sunday morning, we are dealing with the past."

There are hundreds of ways to start churches, hundreds of ways to "do church" and hundreds of different kinds of churches, he said. Segmentation and cooperation are not mutually exclusive; in fact, diversity is necessary in order to have cooperation, he added.

Because people in today's culture are attracted to big events, super churches can play a needed part in reaching people initially, he said. But the super church usually does not meet the needs of people emotionally and spiritually as they get deeper into the Christian life. Effectively reaching a community calls for working through a community-based church, he said.

Rose discussed six trends and their implications for Southern Baptists:

-- Globalization. The United States is no longer an isolated society, Rose said. "Your world view is going to affect everything that you do."

Noting the strong interrelationship between world and national issues, he suggested the time may be coming when Southern Baptists need a Global Mission Board to develop a comprehensive mission strategy, instead of separate Home and Foreign mission boards.

-- Technology, education and employment. In this decade, the United States has changed from an industrial society to an informational society. Rose said, adding many societal structures and organizations have not yet made the shift.

For instance, the nation's job market and educational system "don't jive," considering projections that the "hottest jobs of the '90s" in terms of demand for employees, will be service occupations that don't require a college education: building custodians, cashiers, secretaries, office clerks and sales clerks.

Changes in the job market have resulted in "a lot of people in dire circumstances" who want to work, and want to succeed, he said. College graduates may find themselves working in jobs that will not pay enough to allow them even to own their own home.

-- New rural lifestyle. The family farm is "a thing of the past." In the future, only about 2 percent of the nation's work force will work in agri-related jobs. Some rural communities will gain new industries, resulting in an influx of people from different cultural, and perhaps different racial, backgrounds.

Rural churches -- as well as churches in changing city communities -- will find it hard to change, Rose predicted. If they can't or won't change to accommodate the needs of a new and different group of people, he added, it may be necessary to start new churches, with a different style of doing things, in areas where there already are churches.

There needs to be an understanding that this won't hinder existing churches, Rose said. He said he often suggests that churches make a pin map to determine who in their community is being reached and who is not, and then consider the reasons. In most cases, he added, it would take "a mighty innovative church" to reach the unreached segment. Usually, the answer is a new unit.

-- Urbanization. Currently, 51 percent of the nation's people live in 44 mega-cities. But only 18 percent of Southern Baptist churches are located in those 44 cities.

-- Age structure. In 1970, teenagers in the United States outnumbered senior citizens (age 65 and up) by about one third. In 1984, senior citizens outnumbered teens for the first time. It is projected that by 1990 senior citizens will outnumber teens by one third.

Despite the growing number of senior adults and their potential contribution to churches' ministries, many church leaders still want to approach the future by expanding the nursery or enhancing the youth program, Rose observed. But in many cases, they may not need a youth director as much as they need someone to work with senior adults.

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Senior adults don't want to come to the church to "play dominoes and knit ... and eat soup," Rose added. Programming for seniors needs to challenge them to develop and use their gifts in a meaningful way.

-- Immigration and migration. From 1960 to 1980, 80 percent of the immigrants coming to the United States came from Hispanic or Asian countries, Rose noted. There are more Jews in New York City than in Israel. The only city with more Poles than Chicago is Warsaw, Poland, and the only city with more Mexicans than Los Angeles is Mexico City. Buddhism is the fastest growing religion in the United States and Islam is second.

Immigration laws will be "the battle of the future for our government," Rose predicted. He added Christians must address that issue not from the perspective of politics, but from the perspective of the kingdom of God. "Who has the right to say who will have an opportunity and who will not?"

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Former Muslim details  
U.S. 'Islamization' drive

By Art Toalston

F - FMB

Baptist Press  
10/11/89

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--An "invitation" to Islam is being extended to the United States.

It's the first phase of a long-term effort to push the nation toward "Islamization," according to former Muslim activist Steve Johnson.

Johnson gave an overview of the Islamic movement in the United States to administrators at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., in early October.

Johnson was director of Da'wah (the Arabic word for "invitation") in the United States and Canada for the Islamic Society of North America from 1984 to 1987. Prior to joining the Muslim movement, he had studied for the Jesuit priesthood. He now is associate professor of English at Indiana University at Indianapolis.

To Muslims, Islamization is "a purification process to get rid of non-Islamic corrupting influences and to implement the entire way of life outlined in the Koran" and Islamic laws, Johnson said.

The Da'wah effort in the United States began in the mid-1960s, he said. About 4 million Muslims now live in the United States, but the Islamization thrust is not hinged to manpower alone. Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent each year on the endeavor, Johnson said, much of it coming from wealthy businessmen in Saudi Arabia. The money pays for production of literature, audio cassettes and videotapes extolling Islam as superior to other religions and ideologies.

One Saudi once donated \$200 million to the cause, Johnson said. "That's not atypical," he noted. "They're quite willing to make the sacrifice."

At current growth rates from immigration and conversion, the number of Muslims in the United States should reach 7 million by the year 2000, Johnson said.

Five major wings of organizations known as Muslim Brotherhood are at the forefront of U.S. efforts, Johnson said. He singled out the International Institute of Islamic Thought as the most influential. It was founded in the early 1980s and is based in Reston, Va., along with its financial arm, the SAAR foundation.

The institute has a staff of less than 100, but they are some of the most influential leaders of U.S. Islamization efforts, Johnson said. It controls a number of other U.S. Muslim groups, including the one for which he once worked.

Another of the five Muslim Brotherhood wings active in the United States is the Muslim World League, also operated by activists from Saudi Arabia, Johnson said. A third wing is operated by Muslim Brotherhood activists from the Sudan. Tunisians lead a fourth wing, and the fifth encompasses the Muslim Brotherhoods of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Malaysian Muslims and the Iranian interest section of Algeria's embassy in Washington also spearhead U.S. movements.

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A number of black Muslim organizations also promote U.S. Islamization efforts, Johnson said, such as the American Muslim Mission led by Warith Deen Muhammad and the Nation of Islam led by the controversial Louis Farrakhan.

Da'wah efforts also are under way throughout Europe and in Latin America, Asia, Africa and Australia, he reported.

Muslim Brotherhood activists are not followers of the late Ayatollah Khomeini. They belong to the Sunni branch of Islam, which claims the large majority of the world's Muslims. Khomeini was from the minority Shiite sect. The Sunni-Shiite split erupted in the early seventh century in vehement disagreement over Muhammad's rightful successor.

Still, the Muslim Brotherhood has a Khomeini-like belief that Zionists, Christians and "colonialist" westerners are in a conspiracy to destroy Islam, Johnson stated. These Muslims are committed to establishing what they regard as Allah's divine plan by the implementation of Islamic law.

As the ultimate end of Muslim Brotherhood labors, Johnson said, "people agree to live according to Islamic law or there's jihad, or armed struggle. Islam grants freedom, but only within very narrow confines."

The first Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 in Egypt and the movement since has spread to countries throughout the Arab world. No membership lists are maintained. "It's so secretive," Johnson said, "that an activist rarely knows who the leaders are the next level or two above him."

The secrecy is part of Muslim Brotherhood tradition, stemming from times when the movement suffered under repressive regimes in the Middle East, Johnson said.

In addition to distributing materials, public debates with spokespersons for other religions is another popular Da'wah method, Johnson said. Jimmy Swaggart, for example, agreed to debate a South African Muslim, Ahmad Deedat, at the University of Louisiana several years ago. In such events, Muslim speakers relish pointing out perceived inconsistencies, mistakes and immoral behavior in the Bible, Johnson said. They also call into question the logic of such doctrines as the Trinity.

Offering free Arabic classes is another Da'wah method. One mosque in Arizona reported that such instruction accounted for 20 percent of its converts to Islam.

The United States is becoming a key site for training Muslims in outreach, Johnson said. Perhaps the most intensive training occurs at the Islamic Society of North America's headquarters in Indianapolis, he said. About 50 Muslims attend each summer session. Da'wah training also is offered at Saudi Arabia's embassy in Washington and in numerous mosques.

Most of those trained are young Muslims from the Middle East and Asia intent on involvement in Da'wah efforts while they study at U.S. universities and when they return to their native lands, Johnson said. Most of the training, however, is not aimed at producing full-time workers. Da'wah is primarily a volunteer effort, "something that's done freely. You do not get paid for it," he said.

An exception to the volunteer approach is the Saudi-backed Muslim World League, Johnson said, estimating that it pays the salaries of leaders, or imams, at several dozen of the 600 U.S. mosques.

Of the 4 million U.S. Muslims, roughly a third are Arabs from the Middle East and North Africa. Another third are from Asia and a third are mostly black American converts, Johnson said. There may be as many as 75,000 white American converts, two-thirds of whom have married Muslims and nearly half of whom are former Roman Catholics, he said.

Because most Muslim Brotherhood activists are students, a person is most likely to encounter one on a college or university campus, Johnson said. But in the black community, an encounter with a black Muslim is far more likely at work or in the neighborhood.

Youth mission teams report  
life-changing summer work

By Mark Wingfield

F-HMB

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--While messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention gathered under the spotlight of national media attention last June, 25 Baptist teenagers from Oklahoma labored unnoticed on a sidestreet not far away -- teaching children about baseball and the Bible.

The youth group from First Baptist Church of Norman, Okla., was one of 539 from across the nation assigned to summer missions projects by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board this year.

Their trip wasn't planned in conjunction with Southern Baptists' annual meeting; they would have gone to Las Vegas regardless of where the convention met. In previous years the church has sent groups to Nebraska, Iowa and Hawaii.

Even though the Oklahomans weren't the largest Baptist group in town, they did hold the distinction of performing a unique summer missions ministry. They conducted a free sports clinic at a local high school as a means to introduce children to the gospel.

Youth minister Steve DeVoss got the idea about six years ago while on a youth mission trip to Lincoln, Neb. "We had backyard Bible clubs but the kids just didn't come," he recalled. "Where were the kids? They were at the park playing ball or at the pool.

"The next year we went back to Lincoln and rented the high school gym. We offered instruction in six sports and had about 140 kids. Sports finds people. It lets us reach people who won't come to us."

In Las Vegas, the sports clinic included instruction in baseball, tennis, softball, volleyball and basketball. Bright blue New Testaments imprinted with the words, "Here's Hope. Jesus cares for you," were scattered among the ball gloves, bats and tennis balls used each day.

Youth from the Oklahoma church mingled with the local participants, making friends and sharing their faith. By week's end, nine children had committed their lives to Jesus Christ.

The experience also changed the lives of the Baptist teenagers. "Back in Oklahoma, I just have the same life," said Greg Canter, a 16-year-old on his first mission trip. "I don't think about people living in slums.

"Now I'm going to be more appreciative of my lifestyle and have more confidence to talk to others about God. Usually, I've just been a spectator."

Whether they led sports clinics, built houses or worked in Baptist centers, youth from other Southern Baptist churches nationwide had similar experiences.

Carol Genua, youth director at Greenridge Baptist Church in Germantown, Md., reported that her young people "related to and encouraged each other more effectively than I've seen in 20 years." The Maryland group worked in Appalachia building a home for a poor family.

"For that week, it didn't matter if one was a junior high student or a senior in high school, slim or chunky, popular or not, a geek or cool. The kind of clothes they wore were not important; they didn't need to spend hours in front of a mirror. They were united in their common goal to serve Christ by helping someone else have a better life."

Youth from Westside Baptist Church in Titusville, Fla., "lived out the love of Jesus first hand," said music and youth minister Tim Shrader after the group's trip to New Orleans to work in a Baptist center.

"They found that God's love transcends geography, socio-economic status, culture and race. Yes, we presented the gospel verbally. But more than that, we lived the gospel, even under some difficult circumstances," Shrader said.

Youth mission teams ministered to people of all ages as well. A group from Arkabutla Baptist Church in Arkabutla, Miss., went to help start a new church in Martinsburg, W.Va. There they led an 81-year-old woman to faith in Christ.

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"She admitted she had never been saved. She said she often thought about it but no one had ever told her how in 81 years," reported Timothy Miller, minister of youth and music.

Charlie Bradham, youth minister at First Baptist Church in Greer, S.C., said a summer mission trip to Cleveland taught his youth group about prayer. One 14-year-old in the group, Ben Waters, was especially faithful in prayer, he said.

First Waters prayed for clear skies to allow the group hold backyard Bible clubs. As they pulled into town, the sun came out after three straight weeks of rain. "Then his backyard Bible club was having trouble finding kids," Bradham explained. "He prayed and the next day they doubled. They started with two and ended the week with 20."

Finally, Waters prayed for an opportunity to lead someone to Christ. By mid-week he had led an 11-year-old to profess his faith and had the opportunity to see him baptized.

The 14-year-old's summary of the trip: "Wow! Prayer is awesome."

Other groups encountered humorous events in the midst of their serious ministries. In a multifamily housing project in Kansas City, Mo., a 5-year-old Korean boy had been uninterested in events at Vacation Bible School. But the youth group from First Baptist Church of Providence, Ky., persisted in their witness.

By the end of the week, the 5-year-old had caught the spirit of those around him, raised his eyes and hands toward heaven and prayed, "Jesus, please come down here and help us!"

Another child attending that Vacation Bible School went home each day and told her mother that the disciples were at VBS, minister of education Sally Ensley said. "After the mother found out at family night that we had come all the way from Kentucky, slept on a gym floor all week, taught her child in the hot sun wanting nothing in return, she decided to tell her child she was right. The disciples were there."

Valerie Hardy, youth missions coordinator for the Home Mission Board, said she already is receiving requests from missionaries for high school mission groups to serve next summer and from church groups who want to serve. She will begin making the first assignments Nov. 1.

Although there are opportunities across the nation, Hardy said she especially needs groups willing to work in the western one-third of the country, in Alaska and in Florida.

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(Sarah Zimmerman of the Oklahoma Baptist Messenger contributed to this article.)

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High school Sojourners  
give summer to missions

By Mark Wingfield

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ATLANTA (BP)--At least 20,000 Southern Baptist high school students experienced home missions with youth mission groups last summer, but another 65 high schoolers struck out on a longer and lonelier path.

Those 65 were Sojourners, summer missionaries assigned by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Whereas mission youth groups average 20-30 people working together for one or two weeks, Sojourners serve as individuals. They are assigned with another Sojourner or with college-age summer missionaries for terms of four to 10 weeks.

When Ginger Smith of Westlake, La., was assigned to spend the summer working with missionary Mildred McWhorter in inner city Houston, she had second thoughts about being a Sojourner. And after finally going skeptically, she had to return home after two weeks because of getting chickenpox.

But having experienced those two weeks, Smith was eager to return to Houston when recovered from her illness.

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"I couldn't even begin to count all the blessings God gave me this summer," she said. "God taught me about love."

Children in neighborhoods around the Baptist centers are "hungry for love," Smith explained. "When you love them, then they see Jesus in you because they never get love at home. It's an indescribable feeling when five kids run at you at once screaming, 'I love you, Ginger!'"

"I guess I always thought it was someone else's responsibility to help these people. I was wrong."

Cynthia Etheridge from Warner Robins, Ga., served the summer at Johanning Baptist Center in Washington, and learned a similar lesson.

"I have found out that abuse and neglect are real," she said. "The way of life here in southeast D.C. was a far away news program for me. But now I cannot even hear the words poverty, abuse, neglect and hate without seeing what's around me."

"God truly changes hearts," added Nancy Ayers, a Sojourner from Bowling Green, Ky., who served in West Palm Beach, Fla. "I was not even very fond of children before this summer and now I am crazy about them."

"I never would have believed that I could love and keep loving even when I was so tired I could hardly keep my head up," she said. "But I realized it was not me doing the loving. It was God."