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December 12, 1989

89-176

Life in El Salvador back to 'normal,' missionaries say

By Mary E. Speidel

N-FMB

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (BP)--For the first time since leftist guerrillas attacked San Salvador Nov. 11, combat is beginning to subside and life is returning to "normal," said a Southern Baptist missionary there.

Fighting between government troops and rebels is sporadic and concentrated in small groups throughout San Salvador, missionary Bill Stennett said in an interview. "I know of no large movement like we've had the previous 15 days or so," said Stennett, who lives in San Salvador, the nation's capital. Stennett is from Richmond, Va. His wife, Libby, is from Washington, D.C.

Travel throughout the city is normal and food supplies are adequate, he said. A 12-hour nightly curfew has been cut in half.

"Life is about as normal as it's been the past ten years," said Stennett, who has worked in El Salvador throughout the decade-long civil war.

The Stennetts live in a section of San Salvador not as heavily hit as some areas of the city. "No area is completely protected when missiles are flying around, but we just have not felt the need to leave," he said.

Missionaries John (Rusty) and Peggy Alums, who also live in San Salvador, will begin a furlough in the United States following a brief vacation in Guatemala. After intense combat broke out near their home Nov. 29, the Alumses left San Salvador for Guatemala City Dec. 1. The day before, several hundred other Americans left San Salvador's western neighborhoods aboard a U.S.-chartered aircraft headed for the United States.

The Alumses are from Mobile and Birmingham, Ala., respectively. Alums is responsible for the retail division of the three Baptist book stores in El Salvador. Stennett will handle those duties in his absence.

For missionaries Samuel and Margaret Drummond, life has been fairly calm in Santa Ana, about 50 kilometers from San Salvador, where fighting was concentrated.

The first night the guerrillas attacked the capital (Nov. 11), fighting broke out in Santa Ana, "but since then the army has kept things pretty much under control," said Mrs. Drummond, of Louisville, Ky. Her husband is from Camden, Tenn. Some skirmishes have been reported outside the city but "our life has been very calm here," she said. "Of course, in wars like this, things are very changeable."

In recent weeks, leaders of several Protestant denominations have expressed growing concern following arrests of church workers in El Salvador. Since the violence began in early November, between 20 and 50 foreign church workers have been arrested or expelled from the nation, according to press reports. Eight are U.S. citizens.

One of those under arrest includes American Baptist volunteer Jennifer Jean Casolo, of Thomaston, Conn. Casolo, 28, pleaded innocent Dec. 6 to charges that she hid weapons for leftist guerrillas.

Casolo and two Salvadoran women were arrested Nov. 26 after security forces raided her San Salvador residence and found hundreds of explosives and more than 80,000 rounds of ammunition buried in the yard. Casolo works with Christian Educational Seminars, a San Antonio, Texas-based Organization that arranges fact-finding tours of El Salvador for Americans.

Officials of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., of which Casolo is a member, charged she was framed by the Salvadoran government. But Salvadoran and U.S. officials have said considerable evidence of Casolo's involvement with the rebels exists. American civil rights leader Jesse Jackson announced Dec. 10 he would go to El Salvador to ask for an end to the civil war and seek Casolo's release.

Southern Baptist missionaries in El Salvador do not anticipate any harassment from government forces, said Stennett.

As Salvadorans try to recover from the latest violence, Stennett urged Southern Baptists to pray for the protection of the people. "Pray that the armed conflict will end and people will be able to get back to a more normal life," he said.

Besides helping with refugee needs, the Stennetts have worked with Baptist churches in San Miguel to help repair homes damaged in the fighting. They are using Foreign Mission Board relief funds for the project. San Miguel, El Salvador's third largest city, was the second hardest-hit area in the combat, Stennett said. "We're just trying to make emergency repairs so that people can move back into their homes and feel safe living," he said.

Since the rebel offensive began, 54 civilians have died, according to reports. In addition, 1,850 guerrillas have died and 1,183 have been wounded. The army has reported 457 deaths of troops and 1,341 wounded.

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McConnell: Turn on headlights in fight against drunk driving

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press 12/12/89

WASHINGTON (BP)--Americans have been asked to turn on their car headlights in an effort to turn off drunk driving.

Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., invited people across the nation to join him Dec. 31 in symbolizing their resolve to fight drunk driving.

"From noon to 3 p.m., turn your headlights on when you drive," McConnell, a Southern Baptist, said during a Dec. 11 press conference. "This procession of headlights will be a reminder to other drivers not to drink and drive as we ring in the New Year. And it will be a memorial to all those victims of drunk driving who will not be with us to celebrate the dawn of the new decade."

During a White House briefing that preceded the press conference, President Bush called drunk and drugged driving "one of America's largest health and public safety problems."

Each year, almost 25,000 Americans are killed and another 500,000 injured in alcohol-related accidents, he said. And for individuals ages 16 to 35, he added, drunk driving is the leading cause of death.

"Drunk driving is a grave crisis," Bush said. "Drunk driving is a continuing crisis. And I agree completely that drunk driving is a national crisis."

But the president also commended "one of the most amazing success stories of the 1980s -- the all-American campaign to reduce the awful toll of drunk driving."

In the last six years, he said, drunk driving deaths fell an estimated 20 percent even though total miles traveled rose more than 25 percent. He credited tougher state laws and enforcement, a uniform national drinking age and an increase of effective citizen groups.

While federal efforts are important, real success in fighting drunk driving depends "not on what happens inside the White House, but what happens inside your house," Bush told the people attending the briefing.

"We must teach our children that alcohol is a drug and any irresponsible drug use is wrong, that driving drunk is a crime, a violent crime. And we must teach them that choices have consequences and that some of life's worst consequences can be avoided."

During McConnell's press conference, two other Southern Baptists made statements.

Robert M. Parham, associate director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, called for an increase in the federal excise tax on alcoholic beverages and restrictions on alcohol advertisements and promotions.

"The federal excise tax on beer and wine has not been raised since 1951," Parham said. "An increase is long overdue and much needed to save lives, especially young lives."

On restricting advertising, he said: "Alcohol ads often imply a link between drinking and athletic, social and sexual success. Ads often target vulnerable populations, especially those who are under the legal drinking age. Ads fail to alert consumers to the ill-health and safety consequences associated with the use of alcohol."

Also appearing at the press conference was D.L. Dan Ireland, president of the American Council on Alcohol Problems and executive director of the Alabama Citizens Action Program.

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18-inch crawl space hides missionaries from danger

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press 12/12/89

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--Their hiding place wasn't deep, but it was wide enough to hide Don and Mary Alice Dolifka from the men ransacking their home.

The Dolifkas, veteran Southern Baptist missionaries in East Africa, had little time to hide from a gang of 10 to 15 men who attacked and ransacked their house about 50 miles south of Nairobi, Kenya.

The attackers apparently intended to kill the couple as they robbed their rural home, said the Dolifikas, who were still dealing with the trauma weeks after the October incident.

"We were awakened (about 2 a.m.) by the noise of two kitchen windows shattering and seconds later ... huge rocks started bouncing off one of the outside doors of the house," recounted Dolifka, of Flagler, Colo. "The noise woke up our two (house) workers, who heard the men yelling they were going to kill us. So they slipped out the windows of their houses and ran for help."

Thinking only two or three men were outside, Dolifka attempted to fight them off by jabbing a spear through the holes that had been battered in the door. But he changed tactics "when they started pounding on the doors and breaking out windows all around the house at the same time."

The bandits demanded money, but when Mrs. Dolifka, a Gatesville, Texas, native, threw her husband's wallet outside, they got even madder, "probably because it was a typical missionary's billfold and had a lot more receipts than money in it," Dolifka said.

The gang then spread around three sides of the house. Almost simultaneously, big rocks crashed through four windows. Several more rocks sailed through the rapidly enlarging holes in the door.

Realizing the gang was much larger than they had thought, the Dolifkas fled to their bedroom, locked the door and scurried through a trapdoor leading to a shallow crawl space underneath the floor. Dolifka pulled a rug over the opening and was still fitting the trapdoor back in place when the men smashed through the bedroom door and rushed into the dark room.

"They were definitely looking for us, but I guess they thought we'd locked the door and gone out the window or something," Dolifka said. "Months earlier we'd talked about the crawl space as a good hiding place but had never looked to see how big it was or what was down there." That night they had 45 minutes to learn it was about 18 inches deep and as wide as the house foundation.

They could hear the men ripping items off the walls and crashing things to the floor. Some of the gang took a television, stereo, camera, a suitcase filled with mementos and other items and escaped. Others found the keys to the Dolifkas' mission pickup truck, loaded loot in it and were preparing to leave when the manager of the ranch where the Dolifkas' rented house is located arrived with the workers who had awakened him.

"He was still in his pajamas, but when he fired his shotgun in the air four or five men jumped out of the pickup and ran," Dolifka said. "He and his wife and the four workers with him started calling my name as he circled the house. I didn't answer since I thought it might be a trick to get us to come out, and we could still hear gang members walking around right above us."

But when the ranch manager went to the other side of the house, the remaining gang members fled and the Dolifkas answered the calls. They were so well hidden that rescuers couldn't find them at first. The attackers had piled furniture over the rug atop the trapdoor and the Dolifkas couldn't get out until the rescuers found it.

The full extent of the missionary couple's trauma didn't show up until later. "We've been robbed before but this was the first time we had people coming to hurt us," Dolifka explained. "But we kind of cleaned up and went on with our work and slept pretty well for the first week."

But later they started having trouble sleeping as emotions of terror resurfaced. "Finally, almost three weeks later, I slept through the night for the first time, so I think we're dealing with it now," he added. "I think we were already under so much stress as we were trying to wrap up our work so we could go on furlough. We'd already started packing to go home when the gang hit, and we're finalizing plans to move to a new area after furlough to work with several unreached people groups in northern Kenya."

"Through the whole experience, we felt the presence of the Lord, added Mrs. Dolifka. gave us clear minds to know how to protect ourselves and take advantage of an escape route which had been built into the house by Italian prisoners of war during World War II. Material things become rather unimportant when one is faced with a life-threatening situation. We realize what a wonderful, caring God was with us all the time."

The Dolifkas were scheduled to leave Kenya December 11 for a furlough in Arlington, Texas. --30--

Alliance board calls for full participation in SBC

12/12/89

By Marv Knox N- CO

Baptist Press 12/12/89

WASHINGTON (BP) -- Leaders of the Southern Baptist Alliance have voted to express their support for denominational workers and to urge members of their organization of moderate Southern Baptists to "participate fully" in all levels of the convention.

The 38-member Alliance board approved the motion with only two dissenting votes during its early-winter meeting in Washington, Executive Director Stan Hastey said. It also approved a motion to invite a representative from another moderate organization, Baptists Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention, to attend Alliance board meetings.

The motion on support for denominational workers and convention participation was presented by H. Stephen Shoemaker, pastor of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky. It states:

"We express our deep regard and support for all those in Southern Baptist Convention agencies and institutions who are seeking to serve Christ and our denomination with integrity. In the interest of upholding Baptist freedom, we encourage our members to participate fully in local, state and national decision-making processes, shaping the future of Southern Baptists."

The motion speaks to the destiny of the Alliance, Hastey noted. The organization was created by moderate Southern Baptists not quite three years ago in the midst of theological/political controversy that has rocked the Southern Baptist Convention since the late 1970s.

Some critics have charged that the Alliance is the embryo of a new denomination. Most supporters and leaders, meanwhile, have denied that claim, insisting the Alliance is a lifeline of support for moderates who might otherwise leave the denomination.

"My sense in our meeting was that the whole issue about the identity of the SBA was right under the surface," Hastey said. "The SBA and its board of directors are comprised of people with a wide variety of viewpoints about the hopefulness and lack of hopefulness that the institutions of the Southern Baptist Convention can be salvaged. There are some who are quite hopeful and some who have given up hope that the SBC can be salvaged."

The motion contains two equally significant parts, Shoemaker said.

The first half expresses Alliance members' "deep care and regard" for people who work for the Southern Baptist Convention, he explained: "Often they interpret SBA actions as a kind of repudiation of what they are trying to do. We want to say, 'We're in there with you.' All of us want to be the best Baptists and Christians we can be in these difficult times."

The second half calls Alliance members to responsibility, he added: "Although we are not a political organization, we do believe responsible activity at all levels of Baptist decision-making is part of our calling. We are not withdrawing, but encouraging responsible actions at all levels to defend Baptist freedom and preserve a broad spectrum of theological persuasions and mission strategies which enhances Christ's mission around the world."

The purpose of the motion was not to chart a new course for the Alliance but to define the course it already has set, Shoemaker noted: "It does not denote a new direction for the SBA. It clarifies a broader position that we actually represent and that is sometimes obscured by actions which may suggest otherwise in people's minds."

The motion "faithfully reflects the sense of the group," Hastey confirmed. "The SBA cannot leave the Southern Baptist Convention; we're not a part of the structure of the SBC. The Alliance is something of an interest group in the SBC. Our interest is to preserve the historic Baptist emphasis on personal freedom.

"So to talk about the SBA pulling out of the convention demonstrates a lack of knowledge of our polity; it is churches that withdraw from the SBC or the state convention or theological associations. Obviously, the Alliance could urge churches to withdraw, but we're not doing that. That's not our objective."

No more than "a handful -- a half-dozen" Alliance members would vote to leave the convention, Hastey predicted: "The sense of Alliance people is that we're not at that stage. We're at a perilous moment. Everything is up for grabs concerning the future shape of the SBC, and it is that future shape of the SBC that will determine the shape of the Alliance."

The motion to invite a representative from Baptists Committed to attend the Alliance board meetings was offered by Bill Puckett, a Raleigh, N.C., travel agent and one of the Alliance's 22 founding members.

The invitation is not a step toward a formal coalition between the two groups, Hastey said.

"David Currie (Baptist Committed's field coordinator) and I communicate with each other often, but never once have we discussed a union," he said. "I've not heard that coming either from our organization or Baptists Committed. Both groups comfortably agree we have different functions to play in the midst of a very unsettled situation in the convention."

He discribed those functions: "Baptist Committed's purpose is to elect a president of the convention to turn the convention around to some sense of moderation. The Alliance is to be the kind of organization to pick up the debris left by the takeover and help people who are hurt by it."

Currie said Baptists Committed's executive committee would have to decide whether to accept the Alliance's offer. "As field coordinator, I appreciate their offer very much," he added.

Jimmy Allen, chairman of the Baptist Committed executive committee, echoed Currie, noting, "As a matter of policy, our executive committee would have to look at anything that looked like an official interaction."

In other actions, the Alliance board:

-- Agreed to fund some mission projects "that go to recipients who are no longer eligible for Southern Baptist Home Mission Board assistance or who have been denied Home Mission Board assistance," Hastey said.

-- Voted to earmark \$10,000 for a foreign mission project yet to be chosen. The Alliance has discussed possible projects with representatives of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, he noted.

- -- Adopted a proposal to conduct a special offering every February -- to coincide with the date of the Alliance's founding in 1987 -- as a challenge budget. The 1990 goal will be \$100,000, Hastey said, noting the appeal "will be made only to Alliance churches and to individual members of the Alliance." The entire offering will go to ministry projects and the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Va.
- -- Heard a report that the provisional board of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond probably will meet in February to decide whether to open the school next fall. The board has said it will not open the seminary until "sufficient funds are available," and Hastey said that amount is expected to be \$500,000 in contributions and \$100,000 from the Alliance budget for the first year.
- -- Received a membership tally dated Nov. 22, 1989, which said the Alliance has 54,512 members. That includes 2,795 individual members and 51,717 members who comprise 97 member churches.

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Record gains top foundation's year

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Baptist Press 12/12/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--Record assets and income highlighted the Southern Baptist Foundation's 1988-89 fiscal year, SBF trustees learned during their annual meeting in Nashville Dec. 6.

The market value of assets managed by the foundation grew to \$95,892,090, a new record total, said SBF President Hollis E. Johnson III.

The total was boosted by an annual gain of \$28,076,440, an increase of 41.4 percent over the previous year, he said, noting the size of the growth equals the foundation's entire asset base at the end of 1981-82.

The foundation also managed \$2,224,004 in undistributed income, for an asset total of \$98,116,092.

The foundation produced a record \$6,090,470 of income, Johnson reported. That amount is \$1,444,888, or 31.1 percent, more than the income total for the previous year, he said. The income gain followed a 22.6 percent increase in 1987-88 and was 60.7 percent greater than the total for 1986-87.

"All of this has been accomplished, despite more than two and one-half times the number of assets to manage, with the same number of employees," Johnson said. "The time has come ... to add staff in order to continue the same level of service which Southern Baptists have come to expect. ...

"In order to accomplish these tasks, additional revenue is required. Considering the near-term outlook of a modest reduction in operating funds provided by the (Southern Baptist) Cooperative Program (unified budget), the executive committee of the foundation approved in May a system of cost recovery to provide additional operating funds. This was approved following a five-year projection of anticipated growth and staff."

The action was historic, since the foundation has depended entirely on the Cooperative Program for its operating funds, Johnson noted. In fact, during the 1988-89 fiscal year, the foundation contributed \$398,552 to the Cooperative Program from funds for which it is trustee and received \$297,297 from the Cooperative Program.

"Therefore, the foundation actually was a net provider of funds to the convention for the Cooperative Program through trusts established by individuals as a part of their stewardship commitment," he said.

In 1988-89, the foundation generated \$20.49 for each dollar of Cooperative Program money it received, he reported.

Foundation trustees re-elected their officers during the meeting. They are Chairman Gorman J. Roberts, an investment banker and member of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky.; Vice Chairman Clarence Edmonds, an accountant and member of Brentwood Baptist Church in suburban Nashville; and Recording Secretary Osta Underwood, an attorney and member of Belmont Heights Baptist Church in Nashville.

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Tim Hedquist leaves Executive Committee N-(0

Baptist Press 12/12/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--Tim A. Hedquist, 48, has resigned as vice president for business and finance of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee to accept a position at Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn.

Hedquist has been on the staff of the Executive Committee since 1977. In addition to responsibilities for business and finance, he also has been manager of the annual meeting of the SBC.

At Bellevue Baptist Church, where former SBC President Adrian Rogers is pastor, Hedquist will be assistant pastor, staff administration, a position established to oversee the growing responsibilities of administration and support ministries of the nearly 19,000-member congregation.

Prior to joining the Executive Committee, Hedquist was minister of education at First Baptist Church of Nashville. Previously, he held staff positions at First Baptist Church, Lenoir City, Tenn.; Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas; Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, Texas; and Stadium Drive Baptist Church, Fort Worth.

He is a graduate of California State University, Hayward, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

He and his wife, Rita, have two daughters, Melinda and Jamye. In Nashville, Rita has been secretary to the pastor of First Baptist Church since 1978.

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Millican sells mistletoe for Lottie Moon Offering

By Ken Camp

F-Texes

Baptist Press 12/12/89

DALLAS (BP) -- Millican Baptist Church in Brazos County, Texas, plans to spread a little goodwill this year and raise money for the Lottle Moon Foreign Missions Offering at the same time.

While seated at the window of his study looking at the mistletoe hanging from trees in the yard, pastor Dan Bates had an idea about raising funds and heightening missions awareness.

"The trees are loaded with mistletoe, so I thought maybe we could put small amounts of it in plastic bags labeled 'Greet one another with a holy kiss,' sell them and give the money to foreign missions," Bates said.

"It's a natural for the College Station area," he added, noting the Texas A & M football tradition of cadets kissing their dates following every touchdown. "I wish I'd thought of it in time for the game with the University of Texas."

The proposed sale of mistletoe for foreign missions is in addition to the normal Lottie Moon Offering that will be taken throughout December at Millican Baptist Church.

"We didn't set a corporate, churchwide goal this year. Instead, we just asked individuals and families to prayerfully consider what we should give to missions instead of spending money buying junk for each other that ends up broken or forgotten within a few days after Christmas," Bates said.

In addition to giving through the Co perative Program and through offerings for state, home and foreign missions and world hunger relief, Millican Baptist Church also is involved in a year-round "Stamping Out Hunger" emphasis.

The church collects used, postmarked United States and foreign postage stamps and sells them to stamp dealers and collectors. The money raised is used to buy food for needy people in the Millican area.

Bates developed the "Stamping Out Hunger" program while he was serving as pastor of Westside Church, Florala, Ala., and brought it to Millican when he was called as pastor two years ago. He began the ministry by selling stamps from his own sizeable and valuable collection, which he started at age nine.

"I got under conviction about the stamps just sitting there. They were gaining in value, but they weren't doing anyone any good," he said.

Bates estimates that at least \$5,000 worth of food has been distributed to hungry people as a result of the "Stamping Out Hunger" program. But more significantly, he believes the people of his church have become sensitized to the needs of others.

"This kind of thing isn't for everybody, but when your church is small, you have to be creative," he said, noting that average Sunday School attendance at Millican Baptist Church is about 50.

"We're a small church. We're not wealthy people. But this is something we can do. It has motivated our people to get our eyes off ourselves and to see the needs of other people around us."

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Coping with holiday depression: counselors offer survival tactics

F- (O Baptist Press 12/12/89

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP) -- The warmth of Christmas is mere fantasy for many people, mental health experts admit. For some people, the holiday season means only depression, unwanted memories, having their loneliness intensified or having to spend time with people -- often family members -- they would rather not see.

While most do "survive" the holidays, many do not. Statistics show that the rate of suicide is highest between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

Fortunately, many seek help before their emotional states deteriorated that far. Christian counselors confirm that this time of year is the busiest for them.

"I am always busiest this time of the year," said Ed Broyles, a licensed professional counselor and member of First Baptist Church, of Sedalia, Mo. "Many people have trouble dealing emotionally with the holiday season. There is too much pain in their lives to find any joy. They tell me: 'I hate this kind of season. I hate Christmas.'"

Church members aren't immune to these feelings, he stressed: "It's not just the down-andout. It touches people in every avenue of life -- even the church.

"There are many people in our churches who struggle to survive the holidays. We assume that being a Christian immunes us, but that is not true. It is one of the most overlooked areas of need in many congregations."

The reasons for the emotional misery created by the holiday season are many. For some, it is a recent death, divorce or stress over some other deep hurt that makes the holidays difficult. For others, being alone -- such as a single adult or a senior adult -- or living away from family make the holidays almost unbearable.

Whatever the reason, many people need help dealing with the holidays. Broyles and two other counselors offered tips for "survival" as well as ways other people can help.

One of the groups of people most affected by the holiday season is people who have lost loved ones during the past year.

"The holiday season is most difficult for people dealing with the loss of a loved one," said Ron Kemp, a member of First Baptist Church of Bolivar, Mo., and director of Family Institute of the Ozarks. "The pain of that loss becomes more intense during this time of the year. People are more sensitive because of the family emphasis during the season."

Because the grief process is different for every individual, the holiday season doesn't create the same emotion for everyone, pointed out Mary Ann Conaway, minister of education for Concord Baptist Church in St. Louis who is working toward a doctorate in family counseling.

The grief process involves several stages including denial, crying, anger and finally awareness -- acceptance of the loss, she said. Depending on an individual's movement through the stages, the holiday season can create many emotions.

"For individuals who have reached the awareness stage," she said, "the holidays may evoke guilt. They feel guilty because they are starting to build a new life for themselves that doesn't include the person who died. Because they don't feel intense grief over the loss of the person, they believe there is something wrong with them.

"Many times this leads to dysfunctional grief. They try to create grief. Crying somehow seems more appropriate than remembering the good times they had with the deceased family member.

"Grief is a normal part of life, and how we deal with it is individualized although we do share some things in common with others.

"The first thing I try to help people do is recognize where they are in the grief process. Then I encourage them to give themselves freedom to feel whatever they need to feel. Repressed feelings do more harm than good."

Holidays also are difficult for people who have a critically ill family member, Conaway added. Their struggle lies in whether or not to plan to celebrate Christmas.

"I say to them: 'Yes. Celebrate Christmas. Be as normal as possible. Don't put your life on hold waiting for your loved one to die. Besides, he or she may live for months,'" she said.

Divorce also creates a difficult situation for people. Conaway noted that the grief cycle for these individuals is similar to that following a death, except rejection is added: "Divorce, like death, is the loss of a relationship. The extra pain comes in the rejection the individual must endure.

"The greatest stress for these families is deciding where to spend the holidays. Especially for adult children whose parents recently have divorced, the decision about which parent to spend the holiday with or trying to schedule equal time with both parents creates a lot of tension.

"I encourage people to decide where and who will be together, and not to use the time together as an opportunity to confront someone. The pain is already great enough without causing more."

For many people, the holiday season will be difficult because of pain resulting from some other family scar, such as sexual abuse.

"Being around an abuser is a traumatic experience," emphasized Broyles. "The individual who has discovered within the past year that the things that happened to him or her as a child can be defined as sexual abuse will have a hard time being with family this holiday season. In some cases, they will not be able to be with them at all."

While every situation is different, the three counselors noted several general suggestions that can help individuals survive the holidays.

-- Have realistic expectations. "Don't set your expectations too high," Kemp said.
"Unrealistic expectations always result in disappointment, and sometimes severe disappointment.
If you don't expect too much, you won't be hurt as much."

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-- Plan ahead. "Planning is the most important thing a person can do to survive the holidays," said Broyles. "I tell people to make detailed plans for the holidays. Write them down even. Then follow through, whether you feel like it or not.

"And they often don't feel like doing it, but it is necessary that they follow through on their plans."

-- Plan time with others. Whether it is with one other person or a group of people, contact with others is very important. "I often ask a client, 'Who is one person or family you know that you could spend time with?'" said Broyles. "Once I get a name, I give the client an assignment to ask the person or family for an opportunity to spend time with them."

Kemp agreed with Broyles, adding that volunteering to work in a food shelter or some other activity is a good way to get involved with others. "Involving themselves in giving to others takes the focus off of their pain," he said.

- -- Accept others' help. "I tell clients that if the person offering help wasn't sincere, he or she wouldn't make the offer," Broyles shared. "I remind them that they are doing a service for that person by accepting the offer. Both the giver and receiver benefits."
- -- Find someone to talk with openly. "This may be a pastor, friend or even a counselor," Broyles said, "but they need someone they can be open and honest with about how they feel."
- -- Make spiritual preparation. "For Christians, the real joy of Christmas is found in their relationship with God," noted Conaway. "Focusing on the secular definition of Christmas enhances one's depression, but if they can focus on God and their relationship with him, they can find encouragement and strength.

"Spiritually uplifting music is important, too. Music is always good therapy."

-- Recognize responsibilities. "You are only responsible for yourself," Conaway emphasized. "No matter how much we want to change others, we cannot. We can only change ourselves.

"The only thing we can do for others is to forgive them. Forgiveness is not condoning a person's actions. It is leaving the justice in God's hands."

The counselors also pointed out several ways churches and individuals can help people who may be facing a difficult time during the holidays. Those ideas include:

- -- Involve them in family activities.
- -- Recognize their pain, giving them an opportunity to talk or just cry. Sending a card or note is also a good way to express concern for someone.
 - -- Contact the individual on Christmas day, even if it means making a long-distance call.
- -- Provide opportunities for these individuals to minister, such as preparing and delivering Christmas baskets or going Christmas caroling.

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Love, liberality, liberation define season, Leavell says

By Breena Kent Paine (NOSTS)

N-(0 (NOBTS)

Baptist Press 12/12/89

NEW ORLEANS (BP) -- Christmas means love, liberality and liberation, Landrum P. Leavell II told students and faculty at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary during a chapel service.

"In an incomparable manifestation of love defying human understanding, God laid Emmanuel on the world's heart in the form of a baby," the seminary's president said. "Love is a manger, for Jesus was not cradled in some regal palace but in a feed trough.

"His love is also a miracle. A child was born to a woman who had no husband and who had never known a man sexually. This basic truth is not to be ignored with some false modesty or explained away through scientific reasoning. ... It was a miracle.

"This mystery can deepen our faith, and it can add to the meaning of Christmas when we stand in childlike wonder and awe at what God has done in Jesus."

Second, Christmas means liberality, he noted. Many people like to dream about how liberally they would give if they were in a better financial position, he said, adding: "If you don't tithe on \$10 a week, you wouldn't tithe on a million a week. It's all in the heart of the giver. If you haven't the heart for it when you're impoverished, or when you're living on social security, or when you're on starvation wages, if you're not faithful to God then and liberal in your giving then, then you wouldn't be if you were the richest man on earth.

"You have never found the principle of liberality until you can give without remembering and receive without forgetting."

He stressed: "The needs of humanity are not seasonal; they're constant. Spiritual depravity is universal, it's not localized and focused during one month of the year. Christmas is not going to have much meaning for any one of us until we respond to God's liberality" by giving to others.

Third, Christmas means liberation, he said: "There are multiplied millions more people unsaved today than there were ten years ago. Christmas ought to be a time when these things begin to come into sharper focus.

"Because of Christ we can begin to love other people in spite of their sins. It ought to be a time of improved human relations, when we're liberated from jealousy and hatred and animosity and hostility and all of those other things that distort our lives and mar the image of Jesus Christ in us."

Also, Christians are liberated because "the promise of Jesus for all of us who meet his conditions is eternal life," Leavell said. "Our liberation depends on obedience to his commands.

"There's a great deal of cynicism today about Christmas. Many people wish that it was all over with already. Others say, 'Well, we really are not certain that December the 25th is the actual day when Christ was born in Bethlehem.' True, we do not know that absolutely. But the day is not nearly so important as the observance.

"The fact is Christ was born; whether it was in December or in the spring of the year really is not the important emphasis. The important emphasis is that we pause and rejoice to give thanks to God for his goodness."

(BP) photo available upon request from New Orleans Seminary

Elder urges biblical model for growing churches

By Linda Lawson

N- 55B

Baptist Press 12/12/89

NASHVILLE (BP) -- "These could well be our best days" in spreading the gospel around the world and in growing churches based on the New Testament model, Lloyd Elder, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, told state convention leaders attending annual planning meetings at the board.

Tracing the spread of the gospel and the growth of churches in the book of Acts, Elder said the account is replete with references to the number of disciples increasing, the Word of God spreading, churches enjoying peace and growing in numbers.

"The overall context is the growth of churches through the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrument of disciples," Elder said.

Southern Baptists have experienced many kinds of growth since 1952, Elder said. The number of churches has increased 30.1 percent, from 28,865 to 37,567. Total membership has grown 94.1 percent, from 7.6 million to 14.8 million. However, the number of baptisms in 1952 was 354,382 compared to 346,320 in 1988, a decrease of 2.3 percent.

The answer to a comprehensive pattern of church growth in the Southern Baptist Convention is not in methods but in looking to "the beginning of the story," the biblical model, said Elder.

He listed 10 characteristics of growth evident in New Testament churches.

Growth must always begin with personal conversion, he said.

New Testament churches also were characterized by numerical increases and geographical expansion. "We thank God we are no longer a Southern Baptist Convention couched only in the South," he said.

New Testament churches reached out to varied racial and ethnic groups, said Elder. "And Churches started churches."

Other characteristics were organizational development to better carry out ministry and witnessing, financial support, societal penetration and behavioral and ethical transformation, said Elder.

"They did not get sidetracked into arguing doctrine. They focused on the gospel message," he said.

Finally, spiritual power was evident in New Testament churches, he added.

"These could well be our best days if we go back to the beginning of the story and ask God to help us with the rest of the story until he finishes the story," said Elder.

Reporting on the state of the board, Elder said the focus of a recent reorganization is on "results in the local church and allocating resources within the board to bring that about." --30---

Reaching singles, seniors said to help churches grow

By Terri Lackey N-55B

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP) -- Southern Baptist churches must try harder to mainstream single adults and senior adults into total church ministry, a leader in the field said.

Churches are not providing adequate activities for these groups, and they are losing them to denominations that do, said Doug Anderson, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's family ministry department. Anderson spoke to state family ministry leaders who were in Nashville for annual meetings Dec. 1-2.

"Churches tend to think the best way to grow a church is to go after families," Anderson said. "With the rising population of single and senior adults, the best way to grow a church is to go after single and senior adults."

The single-adult population "is not really investing in church as we (Southern Baptists) have been doing church," Anderson said.

Many churches are not even aware single adults exist, he said.

"The average church is not doing much intentionally to reach out to or invite the single adult," Anderson said. "Attitudinally, single adults are not that different from other groups. Churches really know them better than they think they do."

Likewise, senior adults can no longer be reached only by offering them games and roadtrips, Anderson said. "Churches have to be intellectual in what they are doing for senior adults."

The role of state family ministry directors and associational leaders is to "call our churches into being intentional," he explained. "We need to catch a bigger vision of what it means to do church."

Many churches don't expand their traditional ministry techniques, Anderson said, because it could mean offering help that might be controversial.

For instance, divorce adjustment workshops r seminars on AIDS are needed by many members of Southern Baptist congregations, but "both f these things confront a church with its mission and identity," Anderson said. "Churches must learn to be proactive in their approach to ministry."

John Howell, professor of Christian ethics at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., said churches need to focus on preventive ministry rather than corrective ministry.

Tapping the needs of the congregation and meeting those needs by offering special programming is the church's present challenge of family enrichment, he said.

For example, Howell said, college students and single adults need career or vocational guidance; young married couples need help in making it through their first year of marriage; mature married couples need opportunities to learn how to grow together; and senior adults need guidance in the retirement years.

Parents with an unmarried pregnant teenager, non-wed couples who live together, a divorcing man and wife, and middle agers experiencing the empty-nest syndrome are other examples of people with needs that churches could meet, Howell said.

Churches must evaluate and prioritize the needs of the congregations to determine where enrichment activities are needed, he stressed. "Far too few churches are being challenged to use their resources. Let's do family enrichment preventively and not always be in a corrective mode. Family ministry through enrichment does help, and it works."

Howell received the Family Ministry Award of Excellence from the family ministry department following his presentation Dec. 1. The award is presented annually to a person who has advanced the cause of family enrichment. Howell wrote the 1989 theme book for Senior Adult Chautauquas, "Transitions in Mature Marriage."

The family ministry department reported its 1990-95 theme will be "Families Touching Families."

Through its five-year plan, the family ministry department hopes to provide leadership, program design, program support, materials and leadership training that will result in Southern Baptist churches achieving a church membership of 20 million, Anderson said.

The family ministry department target audiences include unchurched families, single adults and senior adults; blended families, married again couples and single parents; and families, single adults and senior adults in crises.

During the next five years, the family ministry department hopes to "become partners" with state and associational family ministry leaders to expand family enrichment and single- and senior-adult conferences now offered only at Ridgecrest (N.C.) and Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist conference centers, Anderson said.

"We want our events (Single Adult Labor Day, Senior Adult Chautauquas, Fall Festivals of Marriage) to move beyond national settings and into the states." Anderson said.

By moving family ministry events into states or regions, he said, local leaders can pattern the events to meet the needs of the area.

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Church buildings may reflect trends in demographic change

By Charles Willis

N-SSB Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist church buildings of the future are likely to be different from those of today because of the changing statistical makeup of the United States population.

Gwenn McCormick, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church architecture department, said longer life expectancy, a low birth rate and the aging of baby boomers will affect church programs, ministries and facilities.

He told state building consultants in their annual December planning meeting that the United States no longer is a nation of youth. For the foreseeable future the number of persons over age 55 will continue to increase, he said, while the number of persons below age 18 will begin to decline.

According to projections of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the number of people over 55 will double in the next 60 years, while the number under 18 will decrease by 7 percent.

The implications for church growth are significant, he said.

"For decades, biological growth has been the bread and butter for many of our churches. They have grown by baptizing the children of their members," he observed. "The general mindset has been that a growing church required an emphasis on reaching young couples with children."

The time has come to expand our mindset for growth by reaching older adults, McCormick said.

"In the future some of our churches will be overwhelmed by growth potential in these areas," he said. "It will be unfortunate if church leaders miss completely the challenge of reaching an increasing group of persons older than 55. Perhaps we need to rediscover the fact that winning older adults to Christ is just as much a part of our mandate as winning young adults and children."

Church leaders need to understand demographic shifts and respond to them creatively to develop a relevant emphasis for reaching a changing population, he added.

Both physical and church program needs accompanying demographic change will require church building adjustments, he said.

"Many churches will have to redesign existing space to provide for more adults. For decades now we have designed for growth in preschool and children's areas," he said. "Some churches will need to continue to do this, but others will need to monitor trends and adapt as the shift comes in their community.

"Increasing numbers of senior adults will make program accessibility all the more imperative."

Elevators, increased lighting levels and a larger number of restrooms for women than for men will be required," he continued.

"I expect to see churches building senior adult day care facilities during the next few decades. A related concern will be senior adult housing and retirement centers. More churches and associations will get involved in meeting these needs."

But, he cautioned, "this is an area churches will be well-advised to enter only after comprehensive study and evaluation of financial and operational issues."

"The church that continues to do business as if ours were still a nation of youth," he declared, "will find itself out of step with the realities of the future."

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Southern Baptists top goal for cradle roll starts

N-55B

Baptist Press 12/12/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist churches started 1,053 Cradle Rolls during the 1988-89 church year, topping the goal of 1,000.

Cradle Roll is a Sunday school outreach department which focuses on families with infants. A department worker visits the home of each member at least monthly to provide Sunday school material and other literature that will be helpful to the family.

The idea is to get the child and other family members enrolled and participating in Sunday school, explained Ann Liles, consultant in the preschool Sunday school program section at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Since a renewed emphasis on Cradle Roll as an outreach department began in 1971, more than 14,000 churches have started ministries, Liles said. In the past three years, 4,820 churches have started Cradle Rolls.

For 1988-89, Texas led all state conventions with 119 new Cradle Rolls. Oklahoma was second with 117 starts.

Other top states were Georgia, 65; North Carolina, 61; and Kentucky and Virginia, 60 each.

Liles said some smaller state conventions had significant numbers of Cradle Roll starts. She cited Pennsylvania/South Jersey with 12; Indiana, 14; Maryland, 12; Michigan; 12; Ohio, 13; and Wyoming, 6.

Churches that start a Cradle Roll department may receive free material from the Sunday School Board. Included in the free offer are record keeping forms, calling cards, and copies of "Preschool Leadership," "Home Life," "Open Windows," "Living With Preschoolers" and "Beginning".

Dallas couple gives \$1 million to HSU N-C0

Baptist Press 12/12/89

ABILENE, Texas (BP)--Glen and Virginia Burroughs of Dallas have made a \$1 million gift to Hardin-Simmons University in recognition of the university's centennial celebration.

The Burroughses have established a charitable lead unitrust for the benefit of the Abilene, Texas, Baptist school to be used as a scholarship fund. The unitrust is projected to generate more than \$1 million for scholarships. The Baptist Foundation of Texas will be trustee of the fund.

Mrs. Burroughs, the former Virginia Randel of Wichita Falls, Texas, is a 1950 HSU graduate and currently is an HSU trustee. She also is a teaching leader of Bible Study Fellowship at First Baptist Church of Garland, Texas.

Burroughs is retired president of Sun Exploration and Production Co. and is a consultant for the Baptist Foundation of Texas. He is a 1949 HSU graduate and received the master of arts degree from HSU in 1950. While at HSU, he played on the varsity basketball team and was a leader in student activities.

He was an HSU trustee from 1976 to 1984 and has been a member of the HSU board of development for 16 years. He received a Distinguished Alumni Award in 1978 and the John J. Keeter Award in 1983, the highest award bestowed on an HSU graduate by the university.

Prior to the Centennial Campaign, the Burroughs established the Glen and Virginia Burroughs Endowment for Student Scholarships and the James L. Randel Endowed Athletic Scholarship in memory of Mrs. Burroughs' father, who graduated from HSU in 1921.

HSU will be 100 years old in 1991.

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Hugo's aftermath -- Tennessee Baptists help South Carolinians rebuild

By Lonnie Wilkey

N- (0 (Tenn.)

Baptist Press 12/12/89

MACEDONIA, S.C. (BP) -- Though he vowed not to, Dave Tracy wept.

A big man, Tracy could not hold back the tears as he recalled the events following Hurricane Hugo's attack on the coast of South Carolina and surrounding areas in late September.

"On the 21st day of September, God showed Dave Tracy his power," he recalled.

After that display of power came "God's grace, his love and his mercy" in the form of Tennessee Baptists, continued Tracy, a deacon at Providence Church in Macedonia, S.C., a small community about 35 miles from Charleston.

And just as Tennessee Baptists responded within hours after the hurricane hit -- serving 54,064 meals in a two-week period -- help from the Volunteer State continues.

About 327 Tennessee Baptist men and women spent Thanksgiving week helping South Carolinians pick up the pieces from one of the most devastating storms to hit the state.

Disaster relief help continues to pour into South Carolina from other states as well. At least three state Brotherhood directors have established partnerships in South Carolina with a commitment to work in the Hugo-damaged areas until restoration is complete.

David Langford, director of the North Carolina Baptist Men organization, is pairing North Carolina associations with Santee Baptist Association in South Carolina. Alabama Brotherhood Director Tommy Puckett will coordinate Alabama's relief efforts in Folly Beach in Charleston Baptist Association.

Sullivan Island Baptist Church has been targeted by the Georgia Baptist Men organization for restoration. Sullivan Island, which is off the coast of Charleston, was the first area hit by Hugo and one of the last places to get relief.

In addition to repairs, Georgia Baptists are making material donations.

"We now have a list of items the church didn't have covered in their insurance," said Baptist Director Bob Green. "One organ for the church has already been donated."

Virginia volunteers are working through their local associations to do relief work.

Pittsylvania Baptist Association has sent about 200 people to South Carolina and has collected an estimated \$16,000 for relief efforts there, said Lloyd Jackson, Virginia Brotherhood director.

Virginia Baptists have contributed more than \$100,000 through the Virginia Baptist treasurer to South Carolina disaster relief, he said.

Volunteers from Florida continue to work in South Carolina. Over Thanksgiving, Lynn Sloan, Palm Lake Baptist Association's Woman's Missionary Union director, was accopanied by her husband, Don, and daughter, Keri, to McClellanville, S.C., where they delivered blankets, winter coats, cleaning supplies, and a chain saw.

Also working in McClellanville are Sally and Don Howden of Fort Myers, Fla.

The Howdens volunteered to spend a year in McClellanville rebuilding cabinets.

Dave Tracy's home was one of 21 houses, four church buildings and a fire station that volunteers reroofed during the week.

In addition, workers, many of whom came on Thanksgiving eve, built five new homes "into the dry," poured five foundations, set blocks on six foundations, built 121 trusses, did minor repairs on three homes, replaced four large picture windows and rewired one house completely, said Cameron Byler, director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Brotherhood department who coordinated the relief work.

Byler noted the volunteers, who came from 14 associations and 44 churches in Tennessee, laid 65,400 square feet of shingles during the week.

Providence Church in Macedonia was headquarters for the week's activities. Team members slept in campers and in sleeping bags in the church and a nearby high school gymnasium.

The Tennessee Baptist disaster relief van provided hot meals for the workers.

And despite being away from home for the holiday, volunteers did not have to sacrifice their traditional Thanksgiving dinner. Thirty-five turkeys, 100 pounds of dressing and 100 pounds of banana pudding were prepared along with other trimmings, Byler said, noting the food was consumed quickly.

"It was a super week. The volunteers had a spirit of cooperation, enthusiasm and empathy for the people in the community," Byler said.

"Everyone pitched in" and did what they were asked to do, he added. "It was a tremendous missions experience."

Judge Pippin, pastor of Ridgedale Baptist Church, in Knoxville, Tenn., agreed with Byler's assessment. "This probably will be the most memorable Thanksgiving we've ever had," he noted.

Pippin and his group, the majority from his church, began building a house for a person whose mobile home was flattened by the hurricane. "It's exciting to see how many people are here. It's like God sent his army because these people needed help," Pippin said.

Don Arwood, pastor of Clear Branch Baptist Church, in Lake City, Tenn., brought nine people from the church. "It thrills my heart these people see the need to share their Christian faith to the point they can sacrifice their Thanksgiving holiday," he said.

The trip, however, was not one-sided, said Pastor Tom Byrge of Clinch River Baptist Church in Lake City.

"Our guys will go back and talk about the fellowship. They feel they benefit from the work as much as the people they helped," Byrge said.

Don Colyer, a layman from Chapman Grove Baptist Church in Kingston, Tenn., and his wife, Dwain, made the Thanksgiving journey. Colyer summarized his reason for participating, noting "It's a fulfillment of what I feel the Lord wanted me to do."

Butch Harris was in his grandfather's home when the hurricane swept through. He watched the winds demolish his mobile home and belongings. But with the assistance of the group from Ridgedale Baptist Church in Knoxville, he now has a new house.

"To have Baptists come and help like this is beyond me," he said. "People have really pulled together."

Harris added the experience has "shown me how I can help others."

Tracy, whose home was reroofed, had an appreciation beyond the physical needs that were met: "The people who came over from Tennessee hold a special place in my heart. I was in the middle of something I didn't know how to handle. They taught me how to cope."

Pastor Mickey Caison of Providence Baptist Church, who helped find the most urgent needs for the volunteers to meet, said the witness provided by Tennessee Baptists to the community has been a boost.

"There's been a lot of favorable comments about Christians and in particular Tennessee Baptists and Providence Church because of the compassion that has been exhibited," he said.

Meeting the physical needs has made it easier to talk to people about their spiritual condition, he observed, adding that the people have been more receptive to hearing the Gospel.

Caison helped coordinate the supplies and food that poured in from Tennessee Baptists and others and also purchased building materials with money that was given.

"I don't feel like these things have been given to Providence Church. We're a trustee for the people in Berkeley County who need it," he said.

A week prior to the Thanksgiving relief work, Caison visited the annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention in Knoxville and spoke to the messengers.

"Thousands of dollars in disaster relief money have been given to our church," he said.
"These donations are being used to buy building materials and many other items to help people's needs.

"We continue to give food to scores of people every week who continue to need assistance. We have been able to provide food for churches in other communities to be distributed to minister to their people.

"All of this is possible because Tennessee Baptists have heard the modern day call from Macedonia to 'come over and help us.'"

Prior to the conclusion of the week's efforts, a lay-led revival team headed by Barry Barrett of Murfreesboro, Tenn., led services Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday morning.

The revival led to 12 professions of faith in Christ and five rededications of spiritual commitment, Byler noted.

And although the teams returned to Tennessee after Thanksgiving. Byler said he expects Tennessee Baptists will continue to relate to the Macedonia community, because much work remains to be done.

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(Also contributing to this article was Jim Burton of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.)

Scholar says faith involves 'whole being'

By Pat Cole N-(O)

Baptist Press 12/12/89

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) -- The biblical approach to Christian nurture involves more than a quest for "rational certainty" in the life of faith, claimed Christian educator Thomas Groome.

Groome, professor of theology and religious education at Boston University, said Christian faith involves a person's "whole being."

"Truth in the Western tradition ceased to mean things you do in faithfulness to the truth or in faithfulness to what you recognize as the good." said Groome during the Julius B. Gay Lectures at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. "The truth no longer has the biblical sense of the foundation that you cling to on the mountainside of life."

Such truth is known "in the depth of your being and you know to let go of it is to fall to the abyss beneath you," he said.

Biblical faith, Groome noted, draws people into prayer, action and right relationships with God, one's self and God's creation. However, he said that the mind should not be excluded from Christian faith. He pointed out that the Western emphasis upon the mind has assisted Christian faith. It has "dared people to think for themselves and bring their faith to understanding," he said. The Western fondness for rational certainty has also prompted scholarship that has enhanced Biblical interpretation, he added.

In the present age, a "technical rationality" that stresses "a quick fix" or "how to" mentality has become a popular approach to biblical study, he said. "I believe we are called to a much more relational approach to the biblical word," Groome said. "It is constantly to confront us, judge us, console us, promise us and bring us forward. We are invited to a prayerful relationship to the text rather than just a technical-critical analysis of the text."

Christians should be encouraged to "become agents of their faith" and "experience the word of God in their own reality," he said. He warned that Christians can lean too heavily on pastors, biblical scholars and church hierarchy and thus become "dependents in their faith." --30--

Parkinson's disease launches missionary's new ministry

By Art Toalston

F-FMB

Baptist Press

VINA DEL MAR, Chile (BP) -- Mary Jo Geiger knows one of her most cherished abilities is in jeopardy because of Parkinson's disease.

"All the muscles of the body will be affected," she said, recounting medical literature she has read. "The facial muscles become rigid and do not move easily."

She then spoke of her ability to smile. "If I ever get to the place that my face cannot reflect the joy I feel in Christ, it would hurt very, very much."

Geiger, of Memphis, Tenn., and her husband, Bill, of Miami, have been Southern Baptist missionaries to Chile since 1966. She trusts her faith will alleviate much of the hurt if Parkinson's disease someday steals her smile. She was diagnosed with the disorder three years ago at age 48 -- relatively early for its onset.

"My God has the power to heal me," she said. "And I know there are a lot of people praying" -- Chilean friends in the city of Vina del Mar, where the Geigers live, and family and friends back in the United States. But a familiar Bible story in the book of Daniel, which she came across in her regular Bible reading, has defined her attitude toward whatever way God answers their prayers.

When King Nebuchadnezzar gave Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego the choice of worshiping idols or being thrown into a fiery furnace, they replied, " ... the God we serve ... will rescue us from your hand, O king."

"When I read that, I thought, wow, that's true. God could deliver me," Geiger recalled.
"Then I got to the next verse where Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego add, 'But even if he does not (rescue us) ... we will not serve your gods' And that is the way I feel. If God chooses to heal me, that's fine. But if he doesn't choose to heal me, I'll serve him anyway, in whatever way I can. If he thinks I can honor him by keeping the Parkinson's, he can decide that, because he's all-powerful.

"The Lord sometimes takes us to the point where we cannot rely on anything human," she continued. "I think he is taking me there very fast. It seems there is not all that much I can do but depend completely on him."

Geiger first suspected something was wrong physically when she began feeling "clumsy" several years ago. "Anytime I would comment about it, everybody would say, 'Oh, that just comes when you get older.'"

Buttoning buttons and cutting meat became more difficult. "When we would go out to eat, I would feel like I was all thumbs. Getting up at night, I would just shuffle my feet along. I thought, 'That is so funny; I've never walked like that in my life.'" Puzzling over letters she had penned, she would think, "My goodness, I didn't know I had written so poorly."

A few months later, she noticed her leg shaking during exercises at bedtime. "I didn't think anything about it at first ... but I noticed every time I raised it, it would shake. I would raise my arm and it would shake. I would move my fingers and they would shake."

Increasingly concerned that only the left side of her body was affected by the shaking, she finally concluded something might be something seriously wrong. Tests with several medications confirmed Geiger was suffering from Parkinson's disease, which afflicts an estimated 1 percent of the U.S. population.

Parkinson's results from the degeneration of nerve cells in the brain that produce the chemical dopamine, which plays a key role in nerve signals that control muscle movements. Scientific studies have failed to find a cause for the disorder. It is treated with medications that compensate for the lack of dopamine.

The disease manifests itself in shaking, stiffened muscles, stooped posture and balance difficulties -- conditions that, despite medication, become increasingly pronounced with the passage of time, ultimately disabling victims but allowing their intellect and senses to remain intact.

A regimen of exercise several times a day has become a vital part of Geiger's battle against Parkinson's. "The exercises help you feel good for three or four hours," she said. "The next day, you have to start all over again."

The medication she takes to control her Parkinson's tends to hinder her mental faculties. But her husband observed, "It seems that everything related to the spiritual realm is almost more keenly remembered." She can cite verse after verse of Scripture that help lift her faith.

Several months after being diagnosed with Parkinson's, Geiger went through an inner struggle, asking herself whether it was fair to ask the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to continue to employ her and Bill as missionaries in light of her disability. They drove to Santiago to meet with Bryan Brasington, who directs Southern Baptist work in Spanish-speaking South America.

"I told him, 'I just want you to know that any time the board would want me to go home to the States, I am willing to go. Sometimes I just feel so unworthy to continue here. I am so slow. It takes me twice the time to do anything that it used to take. It has become much more difficult to speak before groups,'" she said, explaining that Parkinson's was beginning to affect even the tiny muscles in her voice box.

Brasington's response: "It is true that your ministry may change. It may be the best ministry of your years in Chile."

Those words "just astounded me," Geiger recalled. "It was a challenge I couldn't forget."

After several minutes of discussing various possibilities with Brasington, he asked, "Have you ever thought about a ministry of intercessory prayer?"

"I said, 'Well, I know that is very important.' And he said, 'It is more than important. Everything that is done must be done in the name of Jesus and bathed with prayer or we're just spinning our wheels.'"

Brasington's words about prayer latched onto her spirit. Geiger began to take keen interest in prayer passages in the Bible and books on prayer.

"I need to grow so much more in prayer," she said. "I think the more we see the great necessity of prayer and the power of prayer, and the more we pray, the more we see how little we once prayed. The Lord has given us a command and a privilege, too, to pray for others."

Bill Geiger testifies to the power behind his wife's blossoming prayer ministry. The past year has been the most challenging he has ever faced in his Christian education work with the churches. "Yet it has been the best year for growing spiritually," he said. "I have felt a spiritual strength in the pulpit and in other activities that I have never experienced before."

The reason is clear, he added. "I know that when I leave the house, she is in her room praying for me."

BP photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Baptist marketplace minister: businesswoman cited in Inc. 500

12/12/89

By Mark Wingfield

F- AMB

Baptist Press

MONROE, Mich. (BP)--When Sheila West talks about being a CEO, she isn't referring to her position as president of one of America's fastest-growing companies.

CEO is West's abbreviation for "Christ-Empowered Opportunities."

Acting on such an opportunity, West and her husband, John, founded a company that for the second year in a row is ranked on Inc. magazine's list of America's 500 fastest-growing private companies.

In its December issue, Inc. ranks Archery Center International at No. 151, up from No. 307 last year. Only one-third of the companies on last year's list qualified again this year.

West is featured in a brief article that tells about her transformation from housewive to entreprenuer in 1984 with no business experience or college degree.

West, who also has been the subject of a cover story in USA Today, credits not only the success of her business, but its very existence, to Jesus Christ.

She is among a growing number of Southern Baptists who intentionally connect their work with their Christian witness in a movement known as marketplace ministry.

Marketplace ministers take their common surroundings and turn them into what West defines as Christ-empowered opportunities. She identifies her guiding principle as "agape in the marketplace," meaning that she strives to share the love of God in her workplace unobtrusively.

"I haven't tried to use God to build my business," she explained. "I've tried to use my business for God."

West does not bill her wholesale archery distributorship as a "Christian" business. "I don't believe in Christian businesses."

She has not plastered the office walls with religious trinkets. Instead, she strives to deal compassionately with employees and customers, looking for natural opportunities to share her faith

"My goal is for our business to reflect Christ in us," she said. "We don't cram it down our people's throats. To me, agape in the marketplace means accountability and responsibility. We must learn to regulate our Christ flow, just as businesses regulate their cash flow."

West maintains her "Christ flow" by cultivating her personal relationship with Jesus, she said, noting, "I try to increase the Christ flow in me to cover my operating needs each day with enough left over for those around me."

Long before starting her business career, West did not have such a vibrant relationship with Jesus, she said. Her life was plagued by insecurity and troubles.

West was raised in a Southern Baptist church in Florida but did not commit her life to Christ until she was 20. "I had spent my whole life searching, looking for peace, serenity and happiness," she said.

Raised by a single mother, West had been told her father was dead. Later she learned he had left her mother and probably was still alive.

Just before her conversion, West's grandfather and mother had died and her husband had left her -- all within a four-month period.

"I was in a state of total despair," she recalled. "I desperately needed someone on whom I could depend."

After counseling with a Baptist pastor in Chicago, West went home and committed her life to Christ. Defying her greatest fear, she vowed to trust God for her future, even if it meant raising her child as a single parent.

After two years, the marriage was reconciled, but West soon realized she was placing more priority on her marriage than on her relationship with Christ. "The love became so great that my greatest fear was losing my husband again," she recalled.

Struck with the pain of a relative's death, she realized her husband would not have gone to heaven if he had been the one killed. "I said I would rather go to hell with John than go to heaven alone," she said.

After counsel with another pastor, she "made a commitment that even if it meant John left me, I would follow Christ."

When she came home to tell her husband about her commitment, he said that was fine as long as she didn't "cram it down my throat."

"I told him I would only love him more," she said. "God had shown me that I was to live my life so my husband could see the love of Christ in me."

With time, that happened. After taking her husband to a Billy Graham film, West led him in a prayer of commitment to Christ.

She also found her estranged father, who was Jewish and a professor at Baylor Medical Center in Houston. With a persistent but loving witness, she led him to faith in Christ before his death.

"I really have a lot of reasons to want to share Christ's love in the marketplace because he's done so much for me," West said.

Mentor program pairs laymen with inmates

By Ken Camp

F- Texes

DALLAS (BP) -- Texas Baptists hope to reduce recidivism and share God's love with inmates on a one-to-one basis through the Texas Department of Corrections' "mentor" program.

In the next three years, organizers of the program plan to match 1,000 "free world" volunteers with 1,000 TDC inmates during the prisoners' final months of incarceration and in the years following release, said Emmett Solomon, a Southern Baptist chaplain and administrator of the TDC chaplaincy programs.

At its Nov. 6 meeting in Lubbock, Texas, the Texas Baptist Men Executive Board voted to join the mentor program as part of its on-going prison ministry emphasis.

The program already has been in place for five years at one TDC institution and now is being piloted at five additional units. Several TBM prison ministry volunteers have been involved in the pilot efforts, Solomon noted.

Volunteer "mentors" agree to visit an inmate once a month during his last one to two years in prison and to be his friend after he is released.

"Previous program experience indicates that it takes about one year for an inmate to build trust with a person he doesn't know," Solomon said.

"Once that trust is established and a relationship is developed, the ex-convict will be able to call on his mentor after he gets out. Experience shows that he'll be half as likely to come back to prison as those who don't have a friend to call on."

No financial interaction is permitted between mentors and inmates. However, mentors can help ex-convicts find employment after they are released.

During visits, volunteers are free to share the gospel with inmates who are uncertain about their relationship with Christ or to disciple those who have made professions of faith.

Currently, about 75 Texas Baptist volunteers are involved in leading MasterLife discipleship programs behind prison walls at 10 TDC units, two federal prisons and three private correctional facilities, and permission has been granted to begin classes at eight other institutions.

MasterLife is a demanding program involving Scripture memorization, Bible study, prayer, witnessing and ministering. Of the 370 Texas inmates enrolled in MasterLife, 125 have been graduated from the initial 13-week program and 112 have completed the entire 26-week curriculum.

Solomon believes that through the mentor program, Texas Baptists can help to provide discipleship opportunities for inmates who lack either the commitment or the mental capability to participate in MasterLife.

In doing so, Solomon is convinced that Texas Baptists will benefit society in general.

"The most inefficient part of the criminal justice system is at the point of restructuring felons back into society. Government really does not have the ability to cause society to open its arms to receive an ex-convict," Solomon said.

"The church probably has the best ability out of all institutions to influence society to open its arms to released inmates and to welcome them back into their communities."

--30--

Roman Road more than highway to former alcoholic artist

By Orville Scott

F-Teyos Baptist Press

DALLAS (BP) -- The "Roman Road" is much more than a historical highway to artist Don Jonas of Pampa, Texas, an alcoholic for 27 years.

Last January, during the Share Jesus Now Phase One evangelism effort, Pastor Darrel Rains of First Baptist Church of Pampa used the Roman Road in leading Jonas to faith in Jesus Christ.

Rains used passages from the Book of Romans, a witnessing pattern that commonly is called "the Roman Road to salvation."

More than 1 million copies of the Book of Romans were distributed through the Texas Baptist evangelism division to help achieve a goal of 89,000 people who are trained to share Christ with a million non-Christian Texans last February and March. During Share Jesus Now Phase Two next spring, churches are being encouraged to enlist and train 10 percent of their resident members to share the gospel for 30 days before the "Here's Hope" simultaneous revivals.

To commemorate his newfound salvation, Jonas has done in calligraphy a framed plaque called Roman Road, displaying the passages Rains used in leading him to Christ.

Jonas discovered a God-given talent for calligraphy several years ago after his chains of alcoholism were broken, largely through the influence of his wife, a member of First Baptist Church of Pampa.

"I had enjoyed six years of sobriety, but being saved hadn't entered my mind," Jonas said. After attending services at First Baptist with his wife, Jonas felt he needed to talk with Rains.

Rains led him through the Roman Road, and Jonas prayed to accept Christ. The next Sunday, when the invitation came. Jonas rushed down the aisle to make public his new relationship with Christ.

"I was crying so hard I couldn't talk," he said. "It was a physical lifting of my past off me. In 27 years of alcoholism, you build up quite a past.

"Now I have a peace and serenity I'd never had in my entire life."

Among the people with whom Jonas shares his newfound faith are recovering alcoholics. "I have a compassion for them other people don't," he said.

God has led him to do more and more scriptural calligraphy for which he finds a ready market. He believes it is in itself a witness for Christ, but it also provides a platform for sharing Jesus' plan of salvation.

After witnessing for Christ about 10 times at an art show, he wondered if people might think he was only witnessing to sell his work. "I knew in my heart I wasn't," Jonas said.

The next morning, a woman with whom he had shared Christ came in with a young couple and asked, "Mr. Jonas, will you witness to my son and daughter-in-law?"

Jonas is like "a breath of fresh air," Rains said. "He is just one of those who came to the Lord during Share Jesus Now. It had a tremendous impact on our community." --30--

Former Czechoslovakian Baptist says recent changes for real

By Scott Collins F-(0 Baptist Press 12/12/89

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) -- As Josef Solc weaved through the gauntlet of Russian tanks and soldiers 21 years ago on his way to freedom in the West, he distributed leaflets and tracts about Jesus Christ.

That was during the Prague Spring of 1968, when democratic reform swept Solc's native Czechoslovakia only to be crushed by armed forces from five other Communist nations.

Now, Solc, a Southern Baptist pastor in Fort Worth, Texas, hopes to return for a visit to his homeland next year free to do what he couldn't in 1968 -- preach the gospel.

"For 40 years they were not allowed to do anything beyond the scheduled meetings in the church," Solc said of Christians in Czechoslovakia. "Now they are asking that everybody would be able to have the freedom of speech, which would apply to the church."

Solc said such a change means Christians would be allowed to gather in large numbers for the first time since Communists took over the country in 1949. Since that time, groups of more than five had to notify the government of a "meeting."

While democratic reforms may mean freedom for Christians in Czechoslovakia, Solc said there is a lot to be done.

"Those Christians need a lot of encouragement -- knowing that somebody prays for them and would like to help them in these new possibilities," he said. "What they need is instruction on how to reach out to the rest of the country."

Along with encouragement, Solc said Czechoslovakians need "to know how to develop disciples. They need to be taught how to evangelize and how to grow Christians."

What Southern Baptists can offer to Christians in Czechoslovakia will depend on how quickly reforms occur, Solc believes. If the country's borders open wider, Solc said visits by Baptist groups will show Czech Christians that people around the world "care for them and pray for them.

"I would be really excited if I could take 70 or 100 people to Prague and go out and teach them (Czechs) how to boldly reach people for Christ. You don't get bold instantly. You need some good examples and we here in America are used to reaching out."

And while Solc believes the reforms in Czechoslovakia are real, he cautioned Baptists not to be too quick.

"What's important right now is for somebody to go in and find out how much of this is actually going to be possible," said Solc, who has talked with friends still living in Prague. They told Solc they are "elated" with the changes and said the reforms appear to be real.

For Sole, the lifting of the Iron Curtain is an answer to more than 20 years of praying.

The son of a Baptist pastor, Solc fled Communist-ruled Czechoslovakia in 1968 after he was refused admittance to the University of Prague three times because of his Christian convictions.

At the time, Solc was the top junior tennis player in the country and a member of the country's national hockey team. But even those talents could not get him into college. "They said they did not need me there," he said.

Feeling a call to the ministry, Solc applied to the Seminary of Prague and was finally accepted only to receive a letter from the government stating that "it was not in the interest of the State that I should study there."

Not willing to give in, Solc applied again in 1968 when democratic reforms were sweeping Czechoslovakia. He was told he could start at the seminary in September, but a month before classes were to begin the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia, dashing his hopes.

At the time Solc was holding a visa he received earlier in the year to attend a Baptist convention in England. That gave him a passport with permission to leave the country which he used on the sixth day of the Russian invasion.

He entered Rushlikon Baptist Seminary in Switzerland and later accepted a full tennis scholarship to Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Okla., where he was an All-American twice.

After graduating from Oral Roberts, Solc entered Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, earning master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees.

In 1978 he received American citizenship and married Joy Roeda. Solc has been pastor of Hulen Street Baptist Church in Fort Worth since 1980.

With the reforms in Czechoslovakia, Solc hopes to return next summer for a visit. He has been refused a visa twice in the past 20 years. But he is optimistic this time.

"To be free is just a wonderful gift from God," Solc said. "And those people have been waiting for it for a long, long time."