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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(815) 244-2355
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

December 14, 1989

89-178

FMB votes east Europe aid,
appoints ordained woman

By Robert O'Brien

N-FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees voted \$1 million for evangelism in Eastern Europe, appointed 24 new missionaries and heard reports of strategies aimed at spreading the gospel in unevangelized areas of the world during their December meeting.

News of the first net loss in the foreign missionary force since 1972 added a sobering note, but hope was voiced for an upturn in 1990.

Harlan Spurgeon, board vice president for mission personnel, confirmed a problem about which he warned trustees in an earlier meeting. The appointment of 306 new foreign missionaries in 1989, down from 358 the previous year, will bring the total overseas mission force to about 3,786, pending final tabulation at the end of 1989.

Southern Baptists ended 1988 with 3,867 missionaries. But retirements, resignations, deaths and the normal service completions surpassed appointments this year.

Spurgeon, who challenged trustees to help reverse the downward trend, indicated some encouraging prospects exist for more appointments in 1990.

Noting the changes in Eastern Europe and that Spurgeon's challenge had moved him "philosophically and spiritually," trustee Chairman Mark Corts asked three trustees, headed by John Jackson of Anaheim, Calif., to convene a "solemn assembly" for a half-day at the trustees' February meeting. The solemn assembly was used in Old Testament times to call people to repentance, prayer and fasting, said Corts, a pastor from Winston-Salem, N.C.

"It's an appropriate time for us as a board to call our own solemn assembly" as trustees confront the needs of the world, additional missionary recruitment and the wisdom to respond to the "extraordinary changes in Eastern Europe," Corts said. "It's an appropriate time for us to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into the harvest. It's a specific command of our Lord."

The \$1 million appropriation for assistance in Eastern Europe, which is undergoing sweeping political change, will draw from unused funds set aside for missionary cost-of-living supplements, said Carl Johnson, vice president for finance. The strength of the U.S. dollar overseas resulted in a surplus in the missionary account, he explained.

The board's Global Strategy Group has assigned a task force to study needs targeted by Eastern Europeans. A trustee subcommittee also will prepare an overview of the history of Southern Baptist strategy in Europe. Trustees opted for the overview study rather than following up on a proposal that they specifically consider purchasing an evangelical school in Belgium.

The 24 new missionaries include Patricia Chiu Lee and her husband David, both Chinese born in Taiwan. Mrs. Lee, minister of education of a Chinese congregation in Dayton, Ohio, since 1982, became the first ordained woman appointed since a trustee subcommittee vote last June raised speculation among some people that the board no longer would appoint ordained women.

Mrs. Lee's appointment, Corts said, proves trustees "honestly practice board policy that ordination neither qualifies nor disqualifies a missionary candidate and that ordination is a local-church matter. Board policy is not in bondage to a theological position or to this board of trustees."

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In June, the subcommittee rejected the application of Greg and Katrina Pennington of Ardmore, Okla. She had been ordained at the request of her church to serve as a staff member over the objections of the local Enon Baptist Association.

Trustees said in earlier news reports that the Penningtons were not rejected because she was ordained but because the subcommittee felt the couple had not handled her ordination redemptively, resulting in disruption of fellowship among area churches. The association dismissed the church from its membership.

Trustees said the Penningtons' actions created concern the couple might fail to cooperate with overseas Christians in delicate situations on the mission field. The subcommittee has agreed to reconsider the Penningtons' application.

The Lees will go to Japan, where he will develop churches and she will serve in a church and home role and work with women and children. She was ordained in 1982 at the request of Culbertson Avenue Baptist Church in New Albany, Ind., where she and her husband served during seminary study. She said she accepted the ordination as an affirmation by her church but does not feel it is necessary for her ministry.

In other action, trustees received two recommendations they will consider at their February meeting -- a nominee for regional vice president for the Americas and a recommendation on the board's divorce policy.

Board President R. Keith Parks nominated Betty F. Law to be regional vice president for the Americas, succeeding Don Kammerdiener, who will become executive vice president Jan. 1. The trustees' Americas committee approved the nomination.

Law, a former missionary and current associate area director for Spanish South America, is a veteran of more than 33 years of mission service. That includes eight years in the 1950s as a missionary to Cuba under the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, more than 17 years as a missionary to Spain and eight years on the Foreign Mission Board's Richmond, Va., office staff.

Trustees also received a unanimous recommendation from their mission personnel committee that the board retain its long-established policy of not appointing divorced people.

The recommendation grew out of a year-long study of the issue in response to a motion at the 1988 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting calling for an evaluation of the board's current policy. The study, one of the most comprehensive ever on the FMB's divorce policy, leaders said, reviewed Scripture and surveyed other Southern Baptist agencies, other missionary-sending agencies and predominant attitudes in countries where Southern Baptist missionaries work.

William R. O'Brien and Lewis Myers of the board staff outlined approaches the board is making to reach millions of unevangelized people in the world.

Southern Baptists are working to help evangelize 21 major people groups in restricted parts of the world, said Myers, the board's vice president for Cooperative Services International. CSI relates to regions where missionaries do not or cannot live -- both by sending skilled professionals and by using the non-residential approach. Non-residential missionaries help coordinate evangelization of people groups in highly restricted areas from bases outside the areas.

"We currently have 15 non-residential personnel under assignment to 120 million of the least-evangelized people in the world," Myers said. "Twenty-four other population segments have been targeted, and personnel are being enlisted. When all these units are in place, non-residential personnel will be focusing on nearly 240 million of the least-evangelized people."

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Southern Association places
Southeastern on 'warning'

By Marv Knox & Mark Wingfield

N-10

Baptist Press
12/14/89

ATLANTA (BP)--Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary -- troubled by a two-year dispute between faculty and trustees and administration -- has been placed on warning by one of its accrediting agencies.

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The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools sanctioned the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary during the association's College Delegate Assembly Dec. 12 in Atlanta. The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada also is studying Southeastern's accreditation and will consider its relationship with the seminary in January.

The Southern Association cited Southeastern as deficient in four areas: planning and evaluation, selection of faculty, the role of faculty and its committees, and governing board.

The warning it gave the seminary is the second of three levels of sanction.

The first sanction is notice, which is imposed for one year when an institution shows signs of losing compliance with SACS' criteria for accreditation or has a major lapse.

A Southern Association statement describes warning as "a public sanction imposed for a maximum of two years." During that time, the school is to work to correct its deficiencies and report that progress to the association. A review team from the accrediting agency is to visit Southeastern during the next year and prepare a report on its findings. The Southern Association will consider Southeastern's case at next year's meeting in December.

Under Southern Association guidelines, Southeastern will retain its accreditation during the time it is on warning. However, the action means the association refuses to reaffirm the seminary's accreditation until the deficiencies are corrected.

If a school does not return to compliance during the two-year warning period, it is placed on probation, the final sanction, or it is removed from membership. And if a school on probation does not reach compliance during a two-year probationary period, it is removed from SACS membership.

Southeastern's warning follows about 18 months of investigation by the Southern Association and the Association of Theological Schools. Those investigations began at the end of six months of change on the seminary campus.

In October of 1987, the seminary trustees' new conservative majority changed the way the school picked professors -- a move faculty and others believed was designed to ensure that only biblical inerrantists could be hired as professors.

That action reduced the faculty's power to determine faculty candidates, vesting more control with the president and a trustee committee. Then-President W. Randall Lolley, most administrators and some faculty subsequently resigned.

Trustees elected Lewis A. Drummond, formerly an evangelism professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., as president in March 1988, about the time the accrediting agencies began their investigations of Southeastern.

Following campus visits by representatives from their organizations, both accrediting agencies issued reports critical of the seminary. Subsequently, trustees, faculty and an administration-led committee representing various seminary constituencies drafted responses to those reports.

Most recently, trustees concluded a two-day faculty/trustee/administration workshop by approving a three-part compromise designed to help the seminary deal with its accreditation problems.

The agreement placed a moratorium on election of permanent faculty until after the trustees' March meeting; instructed a special faculty/trustee task force to propose a new faculty-selection process, to be considered by trustees in March; allowed President Drummond to maintain his prerogative to appoint temporary faculty as needed during the interim.

The task force -- three trustees, three faculty members, Drummond and Robert Cooley, president of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in suburban Boston and the facilitator suggested by the Association of Theological Schools -- currently is working on the the faculty-selection proposal.

Meanwhile, Southeastern awaits specific written information from the Southern Association regarding its deficiencies and an accreditation meeting held by the Association of Theological Schools.

Contacted by Baptist Press, representatives of administration, faculty and trustees responded to the Southern Association's action with relief and concern.

"We are very pleased that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools did not place Southeastern on probation," said L. Russ Bush III, vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty. Bush, trustees James R. DeLoach of Houston and William Delahoyde of Raleigh, N.C., and Vice President for Internal Affairs Paul Fletcher met with the Southern Association accreditation commission prior to its decision.

"We did receive a warning, and that is a serious matter, but it is not as serious as probation," Bush said. "We feel this was a very significant decision in our favor. We went down there thinking they might be considering probation. Instead, it was a tremendous burden lifted off our shoulders.

"We have not yet received the official notification of the areas of concern that we need to address, but we are confident that we will be able to remedy all of our remaining problems soon. We can respond to their citations, have this warning lifted at their next meeting and get back on track."

"President Drummond is grateful to all who have worked and prayed for this school during these difficult days."

(Drummond, who had undergone cancer treatment during the fall, was recovering from surgery to remove a malignant tumor in his colon during the Southern Association's meeting. Doctors who removed the tumor did not discover any spread of malignant cells, Bush said.)

G. Thomas Halbrooks, professor of church history and president of Southeastern's chapter of the American Association of University Professors, stressed the seriousness of the situation.

"The situation appears grave," he said. "This day in the life of Southeastern Seminary has occurred because of changes forced upon the school in violation of established standards in American higher education.

"The faculty remains committed to these standards. We call on the administration and board of trustees to join us in meeting these standards and restoring the reputation of Southeastern Seminary as a theological school offering quality higher education."

Progress on restoring Southeastern's standing with its accrediting agencies is an open question, Halbrooks said: "It remains to be seen if the board and administration are willing to work with us to continue that process. There was no official action taken at the fall board meeting to address these issues. All of that remains to be done. I hope they will begin to do so at their March meeting and that the administration will provide leadership and make recommendations toward correcting the deficiencies of meeting the standards of accreditation."

Trustee Chairman DeLoach, associate pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, echoed Bush: "We were glad the sanction was not probation. I feel the reason they took this step is they are satisfied to see we are moving in the direction to do something about their citations. Some of them are lengthy processes; it takes time to do what they are asking us to do. They must feel we are trying to set things in order, and they are consequently willing to give us more time to do it."

Southern Association policy calls for the chief executive officer and trustee chairman to be notified in writing when an institution is placed on warning. DeLoach said he had not received that notification but was expecting it soon.

Southeastern can resolve its faculty-selection situation this spring, he said, noting work of the task force, "I'm sure in March we will come up with a faculty-election process that attempts to do what SACS asked us to do."

The seminary also will work on the other criteria, he said, and singled out a charge that academic freedom has been abridged: "They have not come up with one circumstance where anyone's academic freedom has been trampled upon. If they will come up with an example, we could respond; I believe trustees are ready to deal with that."

The Southern Association's action does not have a direct bearing on the Association of Theological School's decision, said Leon Pacala, its executive director.

"The actions of the two commissions are separate, autonomous actions," Pacala said. "One does not necessarily lead to the other."

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Law nominated for FMB
regional vice president

By Mary E. Speidel

N- FMB

Baptist Press
12/14/89

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Betty F. Law, who worked 25 years as a missionary in Cuba and Spain, has been nominated for election as the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's regional vice president for mission work in the Americas.

Law, the board's associate area director for Spanish South America, was recommended by board President R. Keith Parks to members of the trustees' Americas committee Dec. 11. Following the committee's approval, the nomination was announced Dec. 13 to the full trustee board.

The trustees will vote on the recommendation at their next meeting, Feb. 12-14 in Richmond, Va. If elected, Law would succeed Donald R. Kammerdiener, who will become the board's executive vice president Jan. 1.

The regional vice president for the Americas relates to the overseas-based directors for mission work in Middle America and Canada, Brazil and the Caribbean and Spanish South America. About 1,400 Southern Baptist missionaries work in these areas. The regional vice president also participates in the board's Global Strategy Group, a long-range planning body of top administrators.

Law, 61, currently assists in administration of mission work in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela. She also directs the Richmond office for Spanish South America and travels periodically in these countries. She has worked in the area office since 1981.

Because of her widespread geographic experience, Law would bring a comprehensive view of missions to the regional vice presidency, Parks said.

Parks described Law as a strong administrator whose team approach would fit in well with area directors and the global strategy group. "She gets the facts, seeks consensus, makes tough decisions and functions objectively when negative decisions come down," he said.

In addition, Law's gender is "a tremendous asset for the cause of missions at this time," said Parks. More than half of Southern Baptist foreign missionaries, Richmond office staff and all Southern Baptists are women, he pointed out. "Betty will provide a needed perspective which will enable us to function more effectively."

Law and her husband, the late Thomas L. Law Jr., were appointed missionaries to Spain in 1962. Their first assignment was in associational ministry and church starting in southern Spain. Later they worked in literature ministry. Law also was a national leader in the Spanish Baptist Woman's Missionary Union. The couple lived in Barcelona, Jerez de la Frontera and Seville. Law resigned in 1980 following her husband's death.

Before their appointment by the Foreign Mission Board, the Laws were missionaries in Cuba with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board from 1953 to 1960. He was pastor of two Baptist churches in Havana.

After leaving Cuba, the Laws did associational mission work in the Lower Rio Grande Valley Baptist Association in Texas for two years.

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In addition to missionary service, Law has been an office manager and has taught Spanish at the university level. Before missionary appointment, she was a laboratory technician for the Fort Worth (Texas) Public Health Department.

A native of Fort Worth, Law received the master of arts degree in Spanish literature and bachelor of arts and science degrees from Texas Woman's University in Denton. She also attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth and the Institute of Hispanic Culture in Madrid, Spain.

Law has four grown sons. One son, Thomas L. Law III, is a Southern Baptist missionary in Paraguay. She is a member of First Baptist Church of Richmond, where she teaches a Sunday school class for adults.

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

Foreign board appoints
ordained Chinese woman

By Robert O'Brien

N-FMB

Baptist Press
12/14/89

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Patricia Chiu Lee has become the first ordained woman appointed as a Southern Baptist foreign missionary since a vote by the denomination's Foreign Mission Board trustee subcommittee last June raised speculation among some people that the board no longer would appoint ordained women.

Board trustees appointed Mrs. Lee, her husband, David, and 22 other new missionaries Dec. 12. The Lees, both Chinese born in Taiwan, will go to Japan, where he will develop churches and she will serve in a church-and-home role and work with women and children. About 10 ordained women serve among a total of 1,890 female Southern Baptist missionaries.

Trustee Chairman Mark Corts, a pastor from Winston-Salem, N.C., said Mrs. Lee's appointment proved the trustees "honestly practice board policy that ordination neither qualifies nor disqualifies a missionary candidate and that ordination is a local-church matter."

"Board policy is not in bondage to a theological position or to this board of trustees," Corts said.

In June, the trustee subcommittee drew many protests from Southern Baptists when it rejected the application of Greg and Katrina Pennington of Ardmore, Okla. She had been ordained at the request of her church to serve as a staff member over the objections of the local Enon Baptist Association.

Trustees said in earlier news reports that the Penningtons were not rejected because she was ordained but because the subcommittee felt the couple had not handled her ordination redemptively, resulting in disruption of fellowship among area churches. The association dismissed her church from its fellowship.

Trustees said the Penningtons' actions also created concern the couple might fail to cooperate with overseas Christians in delicate situations on the mission field.

The subcommittee has agreed to reconsider the Penningtons' application.

Mrs. Lee, ordained in 1982, has been minister of education at Chinese Baptist Mission in Dayton, Ohio, for nearly eight years. Her husband has been pastor there.

"We have always been a team," he said. "I do the preaching, and she does the teaching."

Mrs. Lee, who came to the United States in 1980 with her husband to study at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said she had never thought about ordination as an issue.

She was ordained at the request of Culbertson Avenue Baptist Church in New Albany, Ind., where she and her husband worked during seminary study. She accepted the ordination as an affirmation by her church but does not feel it is necessary for her ministry, she said.

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"I feel thankful the trustees put God's will as No. 1," she said. "I also feel thankful the Foreign Mission Board accepted me as a missionary. A missionary (in Taiwan) led me to Christ. I thought all missionaries were Americans. I have prayed that I could be a missionary, too."

The Lees, who speak five languages, have overcome a lot of history to go as missionaries to the Japanese, who formerly occupied Taiwan.

"There has been much bitterness between Chinese and Japanese," she said, "but as Christians we feel the call of God to go to Japan to show the love of Jesus Christ for all people."

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

Uganda clears
Hesch to return

By Craig Bird

N-FMB

Baptist Press
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NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary Roger Hesch, jailed without charges for a week in November and ordered out of Uganda, has been cleared to return to his work in the eastern Africa nation.

Hesch has been staying in Nairobi, Kenya, with his family since the expulsion order. He was notified Dec. 12 that the Ugandan minister for internal affairs had ordered his revoked work permit reinstated pending receipt of a letter of apology from Hesch.

The missionary sent the letter by express mail from Nairobi Dec. 13 and met with Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials later that day to plan his return. The letter stated that on the evening of Oct. 31, in the company of a Ugandan military friend, Hesch entered a military base without proper authorization. He acknowledged the impropriety of the action and requested forgiveness.

Hesch, of Little Falls, Minn., was arrested Nov. 1, the day after he gave a Ugandan soldier a ride to his barracks on a military installation.

At a Nov. 7 meeting with a military officer empowered to release Hesch, Baptist mission officials were handed an order giving Hesch seven days to leave the country. A week later, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, at the urging of the American Embassy, rescinded the order until it could be reviewed. But by then the Hesches had left for Nairobi, where they decided to remain until a final decision was reached.

"We appreciate the fact that our mission board gave us other options if we felt uncomfortable returning to Uganda, but we are glad to be going home for Christmas," Hesch said.

He and his wife, Meg, expressed appreciation for the concern of Christians in the United States, Uganda and other parts of Africa who prayed for him during his imprisonment and later that the couple would be allowed to return to their work.

"Once again we are privileged to see the power of prayer at work in our own lives," Hesch said. "We are grateful God has reopened this door."

The Hesches also voiced gratitude for the manner and speed with which the Uganda government responded to their plight. "We feel they were very prompt in their investigation and realized I had not intentionally done anything wrong," Hesch explained.

Mrs. Hesch admitted to some anxiety about returning. "I had to look at my tall, strong husband through prison windows without knowing for sure he'd ever get out alive," she said. "I'm sure there will be times my stomach will knot up, but we are ready to resume our lives in Uganda and are reassured by the wonderful prayer support we have had in the past five weeks."

The couple and their two children, Sarah, age 9, and Joel, 7, planned to drive back to Uganda from Kenya Dec. 17.

The family spent much of Dec. 11 decorating their small guesthouse apartment in Nairobi with Christmas ornaments. But they were more than willing to pack them for the return trip. And Hesch already had bought something else to take back -- an Arabic Bible for a Muslim man with whom he shared a cell during his time in prison.

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Cawthons find 'everything'
in out-of-the-way Guinea

By Craig Bird

F - FMB

CONAKRY, Guinea (BP)--Fifteen years ago, Frank and Sally Cawthon planned to give their children "everything," like the good on-the-way-to-being-rich California parents they were.

In the summer of 1988, "everything" included a tiny house with no air conditioning in Conakry, Guinea, a small country in coastal West Africa. Furnishings were cots and lawn chairs. The streets consisted of mud overlaid with garbage. The weather was rain, followed by rain, followed by more rain.

"Things were so bad the American Embassy people were coming to us for information on how to get things done in Guinea," said Cawthon, a Southern Baptist missionary from Riverside, Calif. Mrs. Cawthon is from San Francisco. "Our three kids weren't exactly thrilled at what we had gotten them into."

But things -- both for the Cawthons and for Guinea -- have improved.

During the first six months of 1989, most of downtown Conakry's streets were paved, and sidewalks were made. Stores now stock more groceries, and local markets are beginning to produce again after decades of neglect.

Now established in a larger house, the Cawthons have electricity and water "more often than not." They stockpile food items, when they are available, to last during periods when goods disappear from store shelves for weeks or months at a time.

And the children? "Jayne (age 17) misses California but describes herself as 'basically happy wherever I am.' Matt (13) is very family-oriented, so where we are is where he wants to be -- most of the time. And Luke (5), well, just give him a cricket to play with and he's content," Mrs. Cawthon said.

The Cawthons, who spent nine years working in Senegal before transferring south to Guinea to begin Southern Baptist mission work there, knew they were going into a difficult situation.

Having seen -- up close and personal -- how tough it is, they have planned for the future. "We figure we have 25 good years left before retirement," Mrs. Cawthon said. "And it will probably take that long to establish a good, strong church among the Muslims of Guinea."

Such a long-term outlook comes in handy in a place such as Guinea, where frustration, both in everyday living and in attempting to share the Christian faith with an overwhelmingly Muslim population, piles up day after day.

The Cawthons plan to build a program around a Baptist community center and keep the center "neutral ground" where people coming for classes or entertainment will feel free to discuss religion. "But here the classes themselves can be more directly evangelistic than in Senegal because the nature of the typical Muslim is different here," she said.

Different -- but still difficult to reach with the gospel.

"This type of evangelism is hard," said Mrs. Cawthon. "One-on-one is everything. You must really love the people as they are and be available when they are open."

In more than a decade of working in West Africa, the Cawthons never have known of a Muslim who has become a Christian without a deep, long-term relationship with another Christian. Cawthon added he has never "led a Muslim to the Lord before 9 at night, and it's usually around midnight. They just reach a point where they have to have answers about Jesus Christ right then."

As in many African countries, the search to know God is part of Guinea's culture. Traditional African religions are strong, but Islam is the strongest religion in Guinea, numerically and financially.

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"It is easy to see the biggest problem Christians face," Cawthon said and pointed to a mosque that covers acres. Its green spires are visible all over town. "That mosque, built by Saudi Arabia, is half a mile from the largest Christian church in Guinea, which runs between 80 and 100 people on Sunday mornings." In October, construction began on another Saudi-funded mosque with a price tag of \$3.7 million.

"You tell someone you want to introduce him to the God you serve and they look at the shacks we worship in and say, 'Do you expect us to believe God would come into the middle of a mess like that when he has a beautiful, huge building right down the street?' They are convinced that God is power, God is money.

"The Islamic League is everywhere doing relief (work) and telling people, 'Look what Allah is doing for you. Don't forget Allah. Allah is being good for you,' and Libyan Muslims are going around doing street evangelism, which Christians aren't allowed to do."

Compared to the petrodollar funding of the Arab Muslim outreach, Christian evangelization efforts fall far behind on the financial balance sheet. Further, "When a person becomes a Christian in a country like Guinea, he loses his family, his job and his status," Cawthon said. "So our churches are very poor." And small.

But Christian victories do occur. In addition to establishing a Baptist center in Conakry, the Cawthons work in the Benty district, south of the capital along the Atlantic near Sierra Leone.

Baptist work across the border in Sierra Leone, seen by some of the Benty leaders while they were in self-imposed exile from the previous government of Guinea, convinced the men Southern Baptists would help them. They wrote the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., asking for missionaries to work in the Muslim stronghold.

The chairman of the Benty Development Committee is a devout Anglican, but other members are Muslims. Yet they have given Baptists a large plot of land in the center of town for a center or church. They regularly entreat the Cawthons to move there from Conakry.

At one meeting last summer, a man who had made the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca insisted that Cawthon bring a supply of Arabic copies of the Gospel of John, which the man handed out to everyone on the committee. When the supply ran out, he told the men who lived in Benty to take copies and those who lived in Conakry to drop by Cawthon's house to get one.

Southern Baptists have financed the drilling of the first five of 60 wells planned for Benty, so people can have clean drinking water. The water they currently haul from the swamp often causes cholera. Other groups have given the Cawthons medical supplies for the local hospital.

The hospital water supply is a mudhole more than a mile away. The hospital lacked even a thermometer, and rust had eaten a hole out of the center of the delivery table.

"These people go hungry most of the time. They have almost nothing, yet they welcome us so warmly," Mrs. Cawthon pointed out. "They are survivors, but I don't know how they survive."

The Cawthons regularly make the three-hour drive to Benty from Conakry for intensive language study in Susu and to continue building relationships among Muslims who may become inquirers after Jesus Christ.

And back in Conakry, as they stand in line at the phone company to make a rare call home, or wait hours in government offices for some necessary paper to be stamped, or try to outwit the thieves who ignore guards, dogs, eight-foot tall cement walls and locked metal gates -- losses include a coffee pot taken from the kitchen window sill during breakfast -- the Cawthons remember the people of Benty. And the people of Conakry. And they know why they are where they are.

"Sometimes we do question if we have treated our children fairly," Mrs. Cawthon admitted, looking at her two sons and daughter sprawled across a bed watching a borrowed videotape. "But my mother told me one time that if we were doing God's choices, then our children would be OK."

And for the Cawthons, "OK" is giving children "everything."

Frugal Parker gives
million to children

N- CO

THOMASVILLE, N.C. (BP)--A man who borrowed his neighbor's newspaper and who didn't make ice cubes in his refrigerator to save money gave Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina \$1.25 million at his death.

Willard T. Parker died in July leaving BCH almost his entire state. At a banquet in Parker's honor, BCH President Michael C. Blackwell received a \$1 million check from the estate, the largest single gift BCH has received in its 104-year history. BCH will receive the estate's remainder when all details are finalized.

Never wasting anything, especially words, Parker "ate to live," manufactured lye soap he used for everything from bathing to cleaning dishes and drove a custom-made Checker cab from the '60s, because they were built tough.

Ironically, the tall, rugged, epitome-of-economy did not believe in daylight savings time. He never set his watch forward or back claiming "if the time was good enough for God, it was good enough for Willard Parker."

Parker worked 25 years for the U.S. Postal Service in Norfolk, Va., but made most of his money from investments. He retired in the late 1960's and moved to Murfreesboro, N.C., where he lived a reclusive, independent life. He died July 5 at age 94, outliving two wives and his immediate family.

Growing up the only son of a farmer, Parker plowed as his four sisters attended school. On occasional rainy days Parker's father allowed him to ride his bike miles to school. Yet Parker's niece, Carolyn Owens, described him as a walking encyclopedia. "He could converse with anybody at any level at any time," she said.

Dorothy Harrell, a neighbor to Parker for 30 years, said he owned a refrigerator but never froze anything because it made his light bill too high. Parker would not buy a television but would show up each evening to watch Dan Rather.

"He did take the newspaper but wouldn't take the Sunday paper because it cost \$1," she said. "So we would hear from him on Sunday, too."

According to Harrell, Parker daily took four tablespoons of a homemade vinegar and honey "remedy." He was convinced it would keep the doctor away.

His love for trees and solace inspired him to spend years cultivating woods, by hand. At the edge of the Tuscarora Forest, he camped first in a tent then an old abandoned city bus, clearing 60 acres.

"He was one of the most intelligent men I ever knew," said Isaac Terrell, one-time BCH development director who performed the wedding for Parker and his second wife. "He was a tough man; he had to be to wash in lye soap. Deep beneath the crustiness was a humble man who seemed to love Jesus Christ and children."

Blackwell called Parker a "rugged individualist" and said Parker had "pioneer spirit."

Baptist Children's Homes, founded as an orphanage in 1885, serves more than 1,000 children and families each year through four residential campuses, nine emergency care homes, a maternity home, a home for teen-age mothers and their babies, therapeutic camping, parent aide, two homes for behaviorally troubled girls and a model child development center.