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August 13, 1990

90-105

Middle East workers eye situation;
family takes refuge in U.S. Embassy By Art Toalston

N. JMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist representatives in the Middle East have made contingency plans to evacuate should hostilities erupt with Iraq.

News of the contingency plans reached the SBC Foreign Mission Board at the same time the U.S. State Department reconfirmed that a Southern Baptist family in Iraqi-controlled Kuwait has taken refuge in the U.S. Embassy compound.

State Department Kuwait task force member Judy Dunbar reconfirmed Aug. 10 that the Southern Baptist family in Kuwait, Maurice and Laurie Graham and their 13- and 10-year-old sons, were reported safe in the embassy compound, according to a cable from U.S. officials there. Graham is from Shelbyville, Tenn., and his wife is from Hutchinson, Kansas. The Grahams have been in the country less than three months to do youth and music work at the National Evangelical Church.

Earlier in the day, other task force officials would only confirm that the Grahams were safe and in contact with the embassy, but not whether the family was being sheltered by the embassy. Dunbar said those officials probably did not have access to the cable confirming the Grahams had moved from their home on a church compound in Kuwait City to the embassy compound.

One task force member who asked not to be identified reported that the U.S. Embassy has been "in personal contact with almost 900 of the American citizens living in Kuwait out of a total of about 3,000. There's one operating telephone at the embassy and it's being used to check at the different hotels on the welfare of Americans in those hotels."

"There have been reports of looting and attacks on foreigners by Iraqi soldiers but we don't see yet any pattern that they're just targeting Westerners," she said. Iraq has imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew on Kuwait since it invaded the country Aug. 2.

Last week State Department spokespersons could give no estimate of the number of Americans who have taken refuge at the U.S. Embassy, but they did say the embassy compound consists of a series of buildings on "a large amount of acreage" with about 130 U.S. diplomatic officials.

Dale Thorne, who directs Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board work in the Middle East and North Africa, said Aug. 13 that evacuation plans for workers in the region are being made should they become necessary. "Our people in the various countries have been meeting," he said. "We want them to keep their plans current."

Thorne said the workers are maintaining a low profile, "not being too obvious in their movements, especially in countries with anti-American demonstrations going on."

In Jordan, Southern Baptist representative Gerry Milligan is seeing such demonstrations daily at the University of Jordan in Amman, where he is on the nursing faculty.

Milligan's wife, Arylis, heads the group of about 25 Southern Baptist workers assigned to Jordan. She said Aug. 13 that the university president told her husband that he didn't think the situation was dangerous but neither could he guarantee absolute safety for Americans. A dean at the school later told Milligan he should be careful wherever he goes.

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"You get conflicting reports," Mrs. Milligan said. "We are just on hold here, not really knowing what to do, listening to the news accounts at every moment. We're waiting to see what's going to happen, whether we need to leave or if things are going to settle down."

Southern Baptist workers Charles and Nancy Browning, stationed in Ajloun, Jordan, will be spending several days in Amman "until they find out what's going to happen," Mrs. Milligan said, as will Jeffrey and Susan Vann, who are stationed in Irbid.

Travel plans remain in place for two additional Southern Baptist workers to arrive in Jordan at the end of the month, Thorne said. The two are Vicki Smith of Fredericksburg, Va., who already has worked in Jordan for four years with the Foreign Mission Board, and Liz Hardage of Sherwood, Ark., who is part of the board's two-year journeyman program.

In Bahrain, Southern Baptist worker Don Littlejohn, who works as a medical technology supervisor at a hospital, said the only sign of tension is the exodus of a number of foreign executives from the island nation, which is just a few miles from Saudi Arabia and some 300 miles from Kuwait.

Littlejohn and his wife, Peggy, are the only Southern Baptist workers now in Bahrain. Three other workers assigned to the country currently are in the United States.

"We're prepared to leave if things take an unlikely bad turn," Littlejohn said Aug. 13, "but it seems so far that we will be staying."

Bahraini citizens and non-executive expatriate workers seem to be staying in Bahrain, Littlejohn said, adding, "There's definitely a lot of people here who do not know Jesus from all parts of the world." He told of a Sri Lankan woman who attended English-language classes that his wife led by utilizing readings from the Bible. The woman said last week that she wants to know more about Jesus.

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HMB to launch emphasis
on marketplace evangelism

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
8/13/90

ATLANTA (BP)--A new emphasis on marketplace evangelism will be launched Nov. 1-4 in the first of two national conferences sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Marketplace evangelism is a new term being used by the HMB's lay evangelism department to describe a witnessing and ministering lifestyle of Christians in the workplace.

"Marketplace evangelism is the natural extension of what we've been doing for years in lay renewal," said Reid Hardin, HMB director of lay evangelism. "This is our effort to encourage the laos -- the people of God -- to renew their faith and then move out into their communities to minister to others."

The HMB is recruiting 100 churches nationwide to be pilot churches in the marketplace evangelism emphasis. Pilot churches will share results of their launching marketplace evangelism through a variety of strategies and models.

Southern Baptists will receive the first glimpse of the new emphasis during "The Laos in Marketplace Evangelism," a four-day conference to be held in Boston Nov. 1-4. Hardin said the conference differs from many HMB-sponsored events because it is designed for laypeople as well as for pastors and denominational workers.

The conference will include models of marketplace evangelism, workshops, creative presentations, a prayer walk through the Boston Commons and conclude with a commissioning service for marketplace ministers.

A separate track is planned for students, in conjunction with the national student ministries department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

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Documentary to explore changes in
Eastern Europe and Soviet Union

F-CP
(Texas)

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Picture an overflow crowd with some members standing in aisles and outdoors as they participate in a three-hour worship service at Second Baptist Church in Oradea, Romania.

Add to that a Baptist evangelistic service in a park -- with choirs and an orchestra -- in Kiev, the Ukraine Republic's capitol city.

And then add interviews with people like Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Yuermachuf, a Russian Baptist couple, who suffered for their Christian faith under Communist rule.

These are just a few of the scenes to be included in a one-hour television documentary the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission is producing on recent and current historical changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and the changes' impact on Christianity. Former "Good Morning America" host, David Hartman will host the documentary.

"The documentary will explore the role individual Christians and some churches played in the moves toward democracy and examine opportunities for church growth and the freedom to spread the gospel in new and innovative ways," said Robert Thornton, vice president of television production and programming for the RTVC.

"In profiling individual Christians, it will emphasize their past struggles, present lifestyles and hopes."

Thornton and Bernie Hargis, an RTVC television producer, returned to Fort Worth recently from a survey trip and soon will return to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, accompanied by a camera crew, to videotape the documentary, slated to be shown on ABC in December.

"With new freedoms, churches are blossoming in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union," Thornton said. "Christians call it a miracle."

There are concerns, however, that the new freedoms may be lost in some countries if hardliners regain control, he added. Also there are concerns that materialism and worldly enticements may lure people from the church.

For the most part, however, signs are encouraging, said Thornton.

"In Moscow," he said, "the 5,000-member Central Baptist Church holds six services a week and has numerous outreach ministries, including work with labor camp inmates.

"In Kiev, Baptist churches are constructing new buildings to accommodate expanded membership and are holding evangelistic services in parks, libraries, schools, theaters and stadiums. Posters and newspaper ads freely promote Christian activities."

In rural communities, like Podolck, south of Moscow, churches are attracting young people as well as the old. The Podolck Baptist church, which had no young people five years ago, is filled with young Christians.

Other denominations also are growing, and the Russian Orthodox Church with its 50 million members is refurbishing ornate cathedrals that were neglected under Communist rule, Thornton said.

A 100-year-old former Russian Orthodox church in Leningrad is being renovated for use as a Baptist church. But, not far away, a former Russian Orthodox church still houses a museum dedicated to atheism.

The first Baptist church in Leningrad is thriving. It has 2,500 members, seven mission churches and a number of outreach ministries, including Christian music concerts in parks and youth discussions involving Christians and atheists.

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The Second Baptist Church in Oradea, Romania, has 2,500 members and only 960 seats, but is planning a 4,000-seat auditorium. At present, members crowd the aisles and spill outside the church building as they stand through three-hour worship services.

In Timisoara, Romania, pastor Peter Dugulescu -- who in December was involved in demonstrations that spread throughout Romania and that led to the downfall of the Ceausescu regime -- preaches in a new Baptist church.

Dugulescu led 200,000 demonstrators in the Lord's Prayer and chants of "There is a God ... God exists."

Thornton and Hargis returned from their survey trip with what they believe is a "feel" for the spirit of Christians in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union who have new hope. Through the documentary, they hope to share that "feel" and understanding with others.

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Breakthrough must happen
in individual churches

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
8/13/90

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP) -- While "Breakthrough" is the theme for the 1990-95 nationwide Southern Baptist Sunday school enrollment emphasis, it must begin with growth in individual churches, Ken Marler, a Sunday school growth consultant, told pastors and ministers of education attending the Fast Track 2 Sunday School Leadership Conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

Sunday school can be a catalyst for the achievement of Bold Mission Thrust, the Southern Baptist Convention goal of sharing the gospel with every person in the world by the year 2000, Marler, a consultant in the Sunday School Board's Sunday school division, said.

Churches are being asked to set goals to achieve a 9.1 percent increase in Sunday school enrollment during 1990-91, Marler pointed out.

"The goal is something any church can relate to, no matter what size it is. It's a goal that can be personalized to each church," he said.

A pastor from Ohio and a minister of education from Maryland were among several conference participants telling of growth successes their churches have experienced.

John Hays, pastor of Jersey Baptist Church in a rural area outside Columbus, Ohio, said his church started a second Sunday school last year and plans to start a third this year against all recommendations that the church was too small for multiple Sunday schools.

Hays said the church averaged 277 in Sunday school in July for an increase of about 50 over July 1989 as a result of dual Sunday schools.

Last year, leaders and members of the seven-year-old church learned how to start an additional Sunday school and how to enlist teachers. Those lessons will be applied to the church's venture into a third Sunday school in October, Hays said.

He said the moving force behind the growth is the Sunday school director, Tom Cook. "He started teaching me about Sunday school and how we could grow by developing the organization."

Hays said despite stereotypes that Sunday school is an organization that only flourishes in the South, he has learned "Sunday school growth also is possible in the North.

Jersey Baptist Church will start 10 new Sunday school units in the fall and eventually will need to build additional space in spite of the multiple Sunday school approach, said Hays.

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Dennis Richards, minister of education at Middle River Baptist Church near Baltimore, Md., said Vacation Bible School has given the church a prospect list that has caused church members to see potential for growth.

The church had a VBS goal of 400 and had 507 enrolled with 37 decisions. "But the best thing was the 300 prospects we found in VBS," Richards said.

"Now our people have a new mentality of wanting to prepare to grow. They are planning new units that weren't considered before VBS," he said.

The 45-year-old church outside the Baltimore Beltway has suddenly realized new potential, Richard said.

Other pastors and ministers of education told similar stories of growth against the odds. Marler said similar success stories are needed in churches throughout the SBC if Sunday school breakthrough growth becomes a reality.

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Language missions is
way of life for Vargas

By Trennis Henderson

F-20
(MO)

Baptist Press
8/13/90

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--Mauricio Vargas' life and ministry are a testimony to the importance of language missions efforts.

Vargas, the language missions associate in the Missouri Baptist Convention missions department, grew up in El Salvador. He became a Christian at age 18 following a message delivered by a Southern Baptist missionary.

While attending a teachers' college in his hometown of Sonsonate, Vargas accepted God's call to ministry. "We didn't have a pastor" at the time, he explained. "People were asking me to help in the local congregation." During college and later as a schoolteacher, Vargas was a lay leader at First Baptist Church of Sonsonate.

During that time, Vargas met B.W. Pitchford, an American businessman from Mountain Home, Ark. Pitchford, working in a petroleum refinery in El Salvador, quickly impressed Vargas. "He didn't look for an English church but joined a Hispanic church and learned the language," Vargas recalled.

Pitchford also was impressed with Vargas. As the two visited together, Pitchford discovered Vargas' desire to attend seminary in the U.S.

"There were no seminaries in El Salvador to prepare young people for the ministry," Vargas explained. "Most ministers went to Costa Rica or Mexico to study."

For Vargas, however, "I always wanted to learn English and go to an American seminary. That's what the missionaries always talked about." Additionally, Vargas was awestruck by the wealth of resources available in the U.S.

Noting that he had once visited a missionary's home which contained "a bedroom full of books," Vargas recalled, "I had never seen so many books. We had five books in our church." He added that even in the schools in El Salvador at that time, the teacher generally was the only one with any books and the students would write down information as the teacher dictated.

Even as a child, "I always wanted to read," he reflected.

When the time came for Pitchford to return to the U.S., he invited Vargas to join him so he could study at an American seminary.

The one drawback was that Vargas knew no English. Arriving in the U.S. with a tourist visa, his first priority was to enroll in an intensive three-month English course.

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He soon was able to have his visa upgraded to student status, and he became a student at Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Ark. Even with his crash course in English, however, Vargas still could not speak fluent English when he arrived on campus. "I learned English by making a lot of mistakes," he recalled.

While earning an associate's degree from the junior college, Vargas experienced a series of events that helped shape his future life and ministry. He became a summer missionary, serving with a seamen's ministry in New Orleans; he joined a campus Baptist Student Union revival team; and he met his future wife, Carolyn Pavey.

Vargas served in the seamen's ministry for three summers. The chaplaincy-oriented ministry involved visiting crew members aboard ships in port, witnessing to them and seeking to help meet their personal needs.

In addition to using his Spanish to communicate with many of the sailors, Vargas also learned Portuguese. "We had a lot of ships coming from Brazil," he explained. "I memorized three or four sermons in Portuguese."

While serving in New Orleans, Vargas was constantly confronted with the importance of language missions. "These were doors that God opened and showed me how to minister," he pointed out.

During the school year, Vargas had an entirely different experience on the BSU revival team. Although he still had trouble communicating in English with the members of the rural Arkansas Baptist churches where the team went, he used his musical talents of singing and playing the accordion to bridge the language gap. By his second year on the team, Vargas said, "I was able to give my testimony by speaking with a really heavy accent."

After graduating from Southern Baptist College, he went on to earn his bachelor's degree at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark. From there, he became a student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

While working toward his master of religious education degree, Vargas discovered a ministry among New Orleans' Cuban population. During his seminary years, he helped start three Hispanic missions.

Following seminary, Vargas became a teacher at a Christian academy in North Carolina. A strange turn of events in 1978 quickly led him back into language missions work.

While teaching at Kernersville Wesleyan Academy in Kernersville, N.C., Vargas received a visit from a member of nearby Union Grove Baptist Church. The visitor, Helen Ledford, was Woman's Missionary Union president at her church.

"Are you a Baptist?" she asked Vargas.

"Yes," he replied.

"Are you a pastor?" she continued.

Again the answer was yes.

"Will you please help us?" was the next question. Mrs. Ledford went on to explain that a young Mexican migrant with no family or friends had drowned and his body has been given to a nearby school of medicine. Rather than accept the body, school officials were seeking someone to provide an appropriate funeral and burial.

Vargas agreed to conduct the funeral service at Union Grove, with the young man then buried in the church cemetery.

"When the Mexicans saw this act of compassion by the church, they began to attend," Vargas said. "I discovered migrants were working four blocks from my house and I began to minister to them."

The Anglo congregation called Vargas as their bivocational Hispanic pastor and he began to lead Sunday afternoon worship services which attracted as many as 160 migrants.

When cotton-picking season ended and the migrants moved south, Vargas discovered a group of Mexicans in the nearby town of Stoneville who worked year-round at a small furniture factory. Vargas began ministering to both groups, bringing the factory workers to Kernersville for worship when the migrants were in town, and traveling to Stoneville for services during the off season.

When the North Carolina Baptist Convention was seeking a language missions worker, they naturally turned to Vargas. He served there for nine years before accepting his current position in Missouri in 1987.

"The language ministry that I see in Missouri is to continue finding new migrants and refugees and setting up strategies to reach them," Vargas emphasized. He said there currently are 90 language mission works throughout the state, including African, American Indian, Cambodian, Chinese, deaf, Filipino, Hispanic, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Romanian, Russian, Samoan and Vietnamese.

"People will respond in the language they understand most," Vargas pointed out. "We need to reach them in their different language structures." Even for immigrants who become fluent in English, Vargas observed, "They still want to come together culturally. We need to reach them in the name of God according to the culture where they are."

As Southern Baptists observe Language Missions Day on August 12, Vargas said congregations can help support language missions through prayer and through commitments to serve as sponsors or co-sponsors of language mission works.

Vargas also encouraged local churches to welcome individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds. "Matthew 28:19-20 tells us to go to all nations with the gospel. The reality is that all nations are here.

"Many people are coming to the United States, but unless we open the doors to our churches, they won't hear the gospel."

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Interpreted services not enough
to reach deaf community

By Sarah Zimmerman

F-AMB

Baptist Press
8/13/90

ATLANTA (BP)--Interpreting worship services will not be enough to reach the 2.2 million deaf people in the United States, Southern Baptist ministers to the deaf agree.

Churches designed specifically for people in the deaf community show the most signs of growth, observers say.

The Southern Baptist Convention has about 50 churches for the deaf. Typically not a word is spoken in these churches, but lessons are taught, hymns are sung and sermons are preached through sign language. Another 800 churches have interpreters who translate oral communication into sign language, says Rodney Webb, director of the Home Mission Board language church starting department.

Robert Moore, deaf pastor of the deaf ministry at First Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C., says when his church had a deaf Sunday school class, only a few members stayed for the interpreted worship service.

Deaf members said the vocabulary in the service was larger than their sign language vocabulary, so they were not learning.

In response, the church began a separate worship service for deaf people. During the first year, 10 unchurched deaf people became Christians, Moore reports.

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Clifford Bruffey had a similar experience in Alexandria, Va. Five years ago, fewer than 10 people attended his church's Sunday school class for the deaf. The deaf home missionary says maybe four stayed for worship services.

Then the church began a deaf mission which now has more than 200 members. Sunday school attendance averages 60, and 70 to 80 people attend the worship services, Bruffey says.

Robert Parrish, consultant for deaf ministries for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, says interpreted services "provide a service and are still the backbone of Southern Baptist ministry" among the deaf. However, he says deaf churches are growing faster than interpreted ministries.

Texas leads the convention in the number of deaf congregations, with 15 deaf churches and missions and one Baptist Student Union ministry at a college for deaf students.

Howard Burkhardt, missionary to the deaf in California, says the state's three deaf churches each average about 25 people in weekly services, compared to the approximately 23 interpreted services which usually average fewer than 10 deaf people.

Lack of leadership and in some cases a lack of money keeps deaf churches from beginning, Burkhardt says.

For example, Burkhardt says 20,000 deaf people live in San Diego, but the city has no deaf church of any denomination. He says there are fewer than 10 evangelical ministries for the deaf in the city which is four hours from his home.

A deaf church planter is needed in San Diego, he says, but it is difficult to find someone trained in sign language and church starting. Parrish agrees that the "key to deaf ministries is finding leaders."

In Florida, nine deaf churches are what Donald Otwell calls a "church within a church." Otwell, associate in the state's language missions department, says these congregations meet in the facilities of hearing congregations. But the deaf groups have their own Sunday school classes and worship services.

"They do not intend to become self-supporting," Otwell said. But the deaf congregation allows members to become "participants rather than spectators. It gives them responsibility and an opportunity to serve."

Otwell claims the greatest perceived need among deaf people is the chance to develop their potential and to express themselves. Deaf churches, he says, give them the opportunity to "be leaders and to take charge."

Moore's experience is that many deaf people have never heard the gospel. Bruffey says deaf people may learn the sign language communication for religious terms, but they usually are not taught the terms' significance.

When deaf people learn about Jesus, Bruffey says they often use the same excuses as their hearing peers for not becoming a Christian.

"Many deaf people don't see being deaf as a handicap," Bruffey says. "They have good jobs, their health and nice homes. They don't see their need for Jesus."

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Basden named university
minister at Samford

N. C. (Samford) Baptist Press
8/13/90

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Dr. Paul A. Basden has been named the first permanent university minister at Samford University.

Basden has served as pastor of Valley Ranch Baptist Church, Irving, Texas since 1986. His appointment is effective Aug. 13.

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As university minister, Basden will be responsible for the enrichment of religious life among faculty, staff and students in all areas of academic and campus activity.

He will succeed Dr. C. Otis Brooks, the retired pastor of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church in Birmingham who has served as acting university minister since the post was created in 1989.

Basden holds a B.A. degree from Baylor University and M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Basden and his wife, the former Denise O'Brien, are parents of two daughters, Kari Renee, 9, and Kristen Leigh, 4.

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Missouri congregation reads
entire Bible in 66 hours

By Shari Schubert

Baptist Press
8/13/90

COLUMBIA, Mo. (BP)--The first reader stepped to the podium at 6 a.m. "In the beginning. ..." Nearly three days later, the final reader concluded, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Members of Memorial Baptist Church in Columbia, Mo., recently read the Bible through in observance of the 1990 International Year of the Bible. The project took more than 400 readers, and about 66 hours.

Initially, the reading was expected to take 60 hours, noted pastor Robert Lively. When it became evident that it would take several hours longer, more people volunteered to come back and read than there were time slots to accommodate.

The Bible-reading project first was suggested by Harold Renfrow, a member of the congregation and former Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil. Renfrow had participated in similar readings in Brazilian churches, and observed positive results including renewal of churches, commitments to Christ, rededications and commitments to ministry.

Working through Memorial Church's Sunday school, readers were enlisted for 15-minute time slots.

Elisa Knight, age 10, was the youngest reader; Berta McKay, age 83, was the oldest.

Among those who participated were members of Memorial's international department, who read during a 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. shift. "All of our internationals were really excited about taking part in it," said Susan McFarland, who co-directs the department with her husband.

"Many of them said things like, 'I have never read publicly before,' especially in English," Mrs. McFarland noted.

While some members of the congregation read, others came to listen, Lively noted. "We would average about 10 to 12 persons listening."

"I thought it was very good," said Evalyne McCallister, one church member who did not read but came to listen. Describing the experience as reverent and inspirational, she added, "I think it's something we'll remember for years to come."

"We found it to be a very meaningful experience," Lively affirmed.

The unusual Bible-reading marathon gained the attention of Columbia-area radio, television and newspapers.

Aside from the novelty, participants said there were other benefits gained from participating in the project. "It was a very excellent way of getting the church together," Renfrow commented.

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Seeing that it was possible for a group to read the Bible through in such a short time provided an encouragement for individuals to be more consistent in their personal Bible reading, observed Mrs. McFarland. "It made the Bible seem more approachable."

Several people who participated said they now want to read the Bible through for themselves, Renfrow noted.

Many times during the reading of the Scripture, participants were touched by its message. "One man became so emotional he had to stop reading," Renfrow's wife, Nona, recalled.

Mrs. Renfrow, who read from Psalms during one time slot, related, "I was so struck with the power of the Holy Spirit; I realized how powerful God is."

Observing that there seemed to be a "different" spirit in the church's worship services the Sunday following the Bible reading, and noting that public professions of faith were made in both services, the Renfrows said they believe the Bible reading has had, and will continue to have, a lasting impact on the congregation.

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Rob Bryant completes
"Row Across America"

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NASHVILLE (BP) -- Rob Bryant rowed to the steps of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., on July 30 -- 119 days and 3,280 miles after he started a grueling journey which began in Los Angeles on April 2.

He was met by representatives of the President's Council on Physical Fitness, Senator Charles Robb of Virginia and several congressmen in recognition of powering a three-wheeled rowing machine across the country. Bryant, a paraplegic, is a member of South Cliff Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

He received a flag flown over the capitol and a plaque which recognized Bryant, DynCorp, his employer which gave him full salary while he attempted the trip, and the Row Across America effort to give attention to physical fitness.

The trip was not without dangerous and anxious moments, Bryant recounted Aug. 9 on his first day back at work in Fort Worth.

During the trek across Kentucky, he had a 102-degree fever for two days, a period about which he remembers little. And in Wheeling, W.Va., he overturned his RowCycle, cracking his safety helmet, breaking a toe and cracking a shoulder.

The most difficult state, according to Bryant, was Pennsylvania, where the frequent hills required more pulling power for the rowing oars, which take 60 pounds of pressure to propel the RowCycle on flat ground.

Bryant is the author of "Lord, Lift Me Up," a book published by Broadman Press of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. His first book recounts his injury in a fall from an oil rig, the resulting paralysis and the record-setting walk he achieved, on crutches, from Fort Worth to Dallas. He is planning a second book on his Row Across America adventure.

Bryant said the time and commitment to row across the country was well worth the effort, if only "to encourage the hurt and pain" felt by people he encountered while speaking in local churches during the three months of his trip.

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John Kiwiet to continue
spiritual journey in retirement

By Pam Alewine

F-80
(2/10/90)

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Since walking away from a forced-labor camp during World War II, John Kiwiet has never stopped.

His journeys have taken the Dutch native through the war, across Europe and eventually to Fort Worth, Texas, where he has taught at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary since 1967.

But when he retired as professor of historical theology July 31, Kiwiet and his wife Margaret packed their books and headed off on another pioneer adventure. But their next journey is taking the Kiwiet family back over familiar territory. They are moving to Eastern Europe to work with Christians there.

"The chance to go is now," Kiwiet said "I think the East is very important."

That pioneering spirit has driven Kiwiet since his early years. Born into a Baptist family in the Netherlands, he was in the middle of a new Christians' class when World War II drove his church out of town before Kiwiet could be baptized.

But he had learned enough through his training to know that the two most important things for him were "following Christ and gaining an education." Neither would be easy.

By the time Kiwiet reached high school age his parents were opposed to his education because of what Kiwiet calls "a suspicion of education. I just ran off and went to high school in secret," he said.

In 1943 Kiwiet, who was serving time in a labor camp, took advantage of a leave to escape.

"I escaped from the camp in a way," he said. "They asked me what I wanted to do, and I said I'd like to go home and discuss my future with my parents, so they gave me a permit to go home and I didn't come back," Kiwiet said.

Kiwiet ran from farm to farm, living in haystacks for the next seven months. "You had to eat from the land because there was very little food," he said. "I ate turnips, carrots -- whatever I could find.

"I also did some studying in the haystacks," he said. At night, he would go to a college professor who would teach Kiwiet Latin. It was also during the war that Kiwiet felt called to the ministry.

After the war he helped develop retreat centers for Baptists.

"In nine years we went from nothing to four retreat centers, with 5,000 people coming every year," Kiwiet said. It was while serving on action committees in the retreat ministry that Kiwiet met his wife.

"I saw her for the first time in an American dump," he laughed, telling how they would search for tents and other equipment from the American Army to use at the retreat center. With a similar call to missions and ministry, Kiwiet married Margaret Barendregt in 1951.

Kiwiet continued his education at the Universities of Utrecht in the Netherlands and of Zurich in Switzerland, receiving a doctor of theology in comparative religions and a doctor of philosophy in the area of Anabaptist history and thought. Those were added to a bachelor of divinity from the European Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

While in Switzerland Kiwiet became interested in the true Anabaptist story, which he said had never been told. He set out to research the subject by retracing the group's movement.

In 1962 the Kiwiets moved to the United States where he taught church history at the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Chicago before coming to Fort Worth in 1967.

In addition to having five children, the Kiwiets have kept busy in the Fort Worth area, working with Cambodians, Ethiopians and Latin Americans.

Although the Kiwiets said they will miss Southwestern and the way it "widened our horizons," they are ready to move on.

"My life is basically in motion," he said.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southwestern Seminary

Southwestern Seminary student
falls head over wheels for Jesus

By Pam Alewine

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Duke Jones is in the race of his life

F-60
(SUBS)

And if the 24-year-old student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, seems driven, it's because he doesn't want to lose that race.

Unlike many Christians, Jones isn't 'running' the race -- he's driving, and riding along is a pack of wide-eyed teenagers.

Jones, youth minister at First Baptist Church in Arcadia, La., combines his work at the church with his hobby of racecar driving. To the youth in the church, he is their friend, minister and favorite driver.

"I just took all my talents and abilities and agreed to give them to the Lord so that he could use them. That was my calling," Jones said, explaining how he combines his hobby with ministry.

The two interests came together last year when Jones developed the club "Radically Saved Racing" as a way to use racing for evangelism and involve youth in the sport. The result has been increased involvement of unchurched youth.

"God doesn't just move in the church," Jones said. "Jesus didn't wait for the people to come to him, he went to the people."

Jones' program has been especially successful with troubled teens whom he allows to work on the cars with him.

Along with the big race cars, Jones also uses small remote cars. "It's fun, and it gives me another avenue to share Christ. It's open to all young people," Jones said. The youth build and paint the cars and then race them.

To make sure they know Christ is more important than the cars, Jones requires each teenager to complete a discipleship program before getting into the group. "It's for somebody who really wants to be committed to God," he said of the group.

And youth are not the only ones who become interested in the hobby. Jones said parents also take an interest in the cars.

Jones' driving doesn't start or stop with racecars. He also makes the four-and-one-half hour drive each week to Fort Worth to attend Southwestern and works during the week at a local baseball card shop.

Jones was not raised in a Christian home, but when a Sunday school teacher "demonstrated Christ's love," he made a profession of faith at age 9.

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And although his parents were divorced, Jones still idolized his father, who was a racecar driver. He believes his growing-up experiences have made him a better youth minister.

"I'm very real to my kids," Jones said of the youth. "You cannot be fake to young people if you expect to minister to them. You can't live a lie.

"I want my kids to desire to be like Christ," he said. "Our ministry is going to change many people because it's rooted in Jesus Christ."

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