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December 12, 1990

90-169

Graham returns to Nashville  
after confinement in Kuwait

By Wm. Fletcher Allen & Connie Davis

N-FMB

NASHVILLE (BP)--"You really get to practice what you preach," Maurice Graham says about his four-and-a half month confinement in the American Embassy in Kuwait.

The Shelbyville, Tenn., native, who was released along with 150 other Americans Dec. 9, added, "You learn to pray for your enemies."

His escape came just weeks before all supplies would be depleted by the hostages at the embassy, said Graham, a Southern Baptist worker in Kuwait.

Graham commented on his stay in Kuwait during an interview with the Baptist and Reflector, the newsjournal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the morning after his arrival in Nashville.

He and his wife, Laurie, and two sons, Peter and Aaron, were part of a small band of refugees who went to the embassy just after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait Aug. 2. Their home and church building had been broken into and the hourly danger of being taken prisoner led them to make the move for diplomatic shelter. "We had no choice," he said.

Laurie Graham and the sons joined other Americans and Westerners who were released in September. They have been staying in a home provided by Woodmont Baptist Church in Nashville.

The situation was uncertain, shaky, at first, Graham said. "We were relatively safe inside the embassy compound, while all around us was devastation and destruction."

In their haste to evacuate the country, many people left everything they owned; and others went into hiding for fear of being captured by Iraqis. "Houses were ransacked, the church building was sacked, plumbing and pipes were ripped out and stolen -- along with furniture, clothing, everything," he said.

Graham reported he heard the kind of gunfire that indicated executions were taking place. Munitions were pointed toward the compound and mustard gas containers were placed near it.

He saw troops searching homes again and again to determine who had left -- and who remained.

"If you are a resister to the invasion, or if you are caught helping to feed or hide people, you can be shot," Graham said.

The paradox to Graham was that he had worshipped with Iraqis in the National Evangelical Church, where he was associate pastor.

"They're human beings who are also caught in a situation in which they don't have a lot of control and, from my point of view, which they don't really understand."

What's important "is not how much tuna I ate," continued Graham, referring to the tuna and rice which were the main ingredients of their diet. Accounts of people's needs and the healing work of The National Evangelical Church are the important things, he noted.

He proudly reported the church, which drew worshippers from 28 ethnic groups, was continuing its ministry despite extensive problems.

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Members care for 43 severely handicapped children at a local hospital and pay the salaries of 19 people who work there.

Church members have fed countless numbers of people in Kuwait, and they have done it sacrificially. Half of the church income is spent for food for the hungry.

Even though confined to the embassy, Graham continued his work with the church. The telephone became his link with members. He recorded sermons by phone. He also encouraged members to accept leadership positions. Pastor Jerry Zandstra of the Reformed Church of America is on furlough, explained Graham.

His telephone ministry also reached others. One of the first phone calls Graham made after arriving in Nashville was to report on a relationship he formed by telephone. Graham learned about a young Kuwaiti man who was visiting family in Kuwait from his home in Louisiana and was trapped during the takeover.

Church members have risked their lives to take food to them, reported Graham. Because of the witness to him, the young man became a Christian during the past few months. Graham contacted the wife, who is also a Christian, to report on him.

Calls to an American hiding from the soldiers with only a dog as comfort were especially meaningful to Graham.

The fact that telephone communication was even available is just one example of God's provision for the group staying in the embassy, explained Graham. "God handpicked the people to make it possible for all of us to survive," Graham said was the remark of United States Ambassador W. Nathaniel "Nat" Howell, concerning the group. After women and children left in September, the group included eight diplomats and 16 refugees.

Early on in the invasion, Iraqis had cut off the electricity, cut the phone lines, shut off access to water.

Besides rigging the phones to make contact with the outside world possible, the group included someone who could repair a generator; someone who cooked delicious desserts from the few provisions available besides tuna and rice. Someone else was able to plant and grow vegetables; and someone dug a well so water was available for washing and bathing -- without depleting the clean water supply.

The Iraqis must have been amazed, Graham said, that the compound swimming pool remained full -- despite the fact the group was using it for cooking, etc., after boiling. "But there was an old, hidden water line that was not discovered."

And Maurice Graham was there to counsel in person and by telephone, to lead prayer and worship services, to be a Christian friend.

Graham is enthusiastic about the spiritual development he viewed among the group. Some had never read the Bible before, he explained. He has been asked by the United States State Department to continue a counseling service to hostages and families.

When he left five diplomats remained at the embassy, said Graham. The others left with Graham, all taken to the Kuwait airport by cars, some of which were furnished by church members.

"Iraqi Air took us to Frankfurt. It was snowing, so there was a delay there, but finally a TWA airliner brought us home. I called Laurie in Frankfurt. When we got to the United States, I was determined to make it home on Laurie's birthday -- and I did." That was Monday, Dec. 10.

Graham said he would be "grossly disappointed" if Americans stopped praying because he and other Americans have returned unharmed. He asked for prayer for the National Evangelical Church, the other Christians in Kuwait, including a Catholic bishop who worked for Graham's release, and for the people involved in the crisis.

"I have no doubt at all that God called me to Kuwait and I would return if things settled down enough to allow it," said Graham.

SBC churches on lists of U.S.  
largest and fastest-growing

By Mark Wingfield

F - AMB

ATLANTA (BP)--Nineteen Southern Baptist Convention churches appear on a newly published list of the largest churches in America, while 25 SBC churches appear on a similar list of the 100 fastest-growing churches in America.

Both lists were compiled by John Vaughan, a church growth professor at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo. The lists are included in the 1991-92 edition of "The Almanac of the Christian World," published by Tyndale House.

Vaughan's listing of the largest churches in America is based upon 1989-90 worship attendance, not upon membership.

North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., is listed as the sixth largest church in America, with an average attendance of 9,500. Second Baptist Church in Houston ranks eighth with 8,500 in attendance.

The two Southern Baptist churches fall behind First Baptist Church of Hammond, Ind., Willow Creek Community Church of South Barrington, Ill., Calvary Chapel of Santa Ana, Calif., Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Va., and First Assembly of God in Phoenix.

Other Southern Baptist churches on the 100-largest list and their attendance figures are:

First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., 7,000; First Baptist Church of Dallas, 6,750; Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis, Tenn., 6,500; First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla., 5,300; First Baptist Church of Houston, 5,035; First Baptist Church of Atlanta, 5,000; Trinity Baptist Church of San Antonio, Texas, 4,500; Prestonwood Baptist Church of Dallas, 4,038; First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas; 4,000;

First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss., 4,000; Saddleback Valley Community Church of Mission Viejo, Calif., 4,000; First Baptist Church of Gonzales, Texas, 3,850; Champion Forest Baptist Church of Houston, 3,750; McGregor Baptist Church of Fort Meyers, Fla., 3,700; First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach, Fla., 3,550; Loveland Missionary Baptist Church of Fontana, Calif., 3,400; Roswell Street Baptist Church of Marietta, Ga., 3,200.

Vaughan's list of the fastest-growing churches in America is based upon net gain in worship attendance from 1989 to 1990 -- not upon percentage growth.

On this list Saddleback Valley Community Church of Mission Viejo, Calif., ranks fourth with a net gain of 1,345. First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., ranks fifth with a net gain of 1,213.

The three fastest growing churches of any affiliation are Calvary Chapel in Albuquerque, N.M., Mount Ephriam Baptist Church in Atlanta and Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill.

Other SBC churches on the fastest-growing list and their net gain in worship attendance are:

East Brent Baptist Church of Pensacola, Fla., 940; Sunnycrest Baptist Church of Marion, Ind., 700; Second Baptist Church of Houston, 635; San Jacinto Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, 600; Hyde Park Baptist Church of Austin, Texas, 600; First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ga., 500; First Baptist Church of Merritt Island, Fla., 500; Woodland Park Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tenn., 500; Hoffmantown Baptist Church of Albuquerque, N.M., 457; First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., 450;

First Baptist Church of Midland, Texas, 438; Trinity Baptist Church of San Antonio, Texas, 400; Casas Adobes Baptist Church of Tucson, Ariz, 400; Hickory Grove Baptist Church of Charlotte, N.C., 400; McGregor Baptist Church of Fort Meyers, Fla., 400; Rehobeth Baptist Church of Atlanta, 350; First Baptist Church of Moore, Okla., 350; Lake Pointe Baptist Church of Rowlett, Texas, 346; First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow, Okla., 300; Smoke Rise Baptist Church of Atlanta, 300; First Baptist Church of Snellville, Ga., 300; Roswell Street Baptist Church of Marietta, Ga., 300; Metropolitan Baptist Church of Houston, 300.

Chapman meets with DOMs  
about Crossover Atlanta

By Mark Wingfield

F-AMB

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman came to Atlanta Dec. 11 to promote Crossover Atlanta with directors of missions from eight area associations.

Crossover Atlanta is an evangelistic emphasis planned prior to the denomination's June 5-7 annual meeting in Atlanta.

"I am here to ask your help to birth what I believe could be of great significance in Southern Baptist life," Chapman told the local leaders.

Also attending the meeting were Georgia Baptist Convention President Truett Gannon, pastor of Smoke Rise Baptist Church in Atlanta, and Dwight "Ike" Reighard, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga., and one of two co-chairs for Crossover Atlanta.

Chapman told how he conceived the idea for Crossover America, which is an ongoing plan for partnership evangelism that will be launched with Crossover Atlanta this summer.

In 1992, Southern Baptists will participate in Crossover Indianapolis prior to the denomination's annual meeting there. Beyond that, Chapman said, he hopes the Crossover projects will not be restricted to the week prior to annual meetings.

"I've always had a heart for the cities of America," said the pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas. "I believe if we don't reach the cities, we're going to lose America."

The objective of Crossover Atlanta is to reach the city with the gospel, not just to have something to do prior to the convention, he said. Additionally, it will "put Southern Baptists to work doing the thing we all say we believe in."

In Crossover Atlanta, churches in the metropolitan Atlanta area will host volunteer groups from churches across the nation for three days of door-to-door visitation and street evangelism. The project will begin Wednesday night, May 29, with rallies in local churches.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday will be devoted to personal evangelism, with an area-wide rally scheduled for Friday night, May 31, at Tabernacle Baptist Church in downtown Atlanta.

The project will conclude with Sunday morning celebrations in participating local churches.

Chapman earlier had announced the appointment of Reighard and Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss., as co-chairs for Crossover Atlanta.

Reighard reminded the group that he had been raised on Marietta Street in Atlanta but did not become a Christian until he was 21 years old. "I wish someone would have come and knocked on our door and maybe it wouldn't have taken me so long to be saved," he said.

Churches desiring to participate as sending or receiving congregations in Crossover Atlanta should contact Bobby Sunderland at the Home Mission Board, 1350 Spring St. NW, Atlanta, Ga. 30367-5601. Telephone inquiries should be directed to (404) 898-7687.

Sunderland, who works in the Home Mission Board's evangelism section, said January is the primary enlistment month for Crossover Atlanta.

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Trustees hear reports  
from Saudi Arabia

By Sarah Zimmerman

N-AMB

Baptist Press  
12/12/90

ATLANTA (BP)--More than 120 Southern Baptist chaplains are ministering to American military personnel in Saudi Arabia, trustees of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board were told.

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Lew Burnett, HMB director of military chaplaincy, reported on the ministry of chaplains assigned to Operation Desert Shield during the trustees' December executive committee meeting.

Some chaplains are conducting up to five Bible studies a day and leading multiple worship services on Sunday, Burnett said. One chaplain reported holding baptismal services in the Persian Gulf.

Troops have been overwhelmed with Bibles, as individuals and organizations have sent Scriptures to the desert. Burnett said the Home Mission Board also has sent Bibles with troops, but the need now is for Bible study materials.

Mailing restrictions on religious literature have been lifted. Burnett said, "At the present time, anyone can send any religious materials to any military personnel they desire in Saudi Arabia."

Trustees were asked to refer people to the HMB chaplaincy office for suggestions on how to be a part of the Persian Gulf ministry.

Trustees also heard that year-to-date Annie Armstrong Easter Offering receipts are 8.1 percent more than 1989 receipts. The total of \$35.4 million is less than the \$41 million goal set by Woman's Missionary Union, but more than the \$32.85 million the HMB budgeted to receive from the annual offering.

In other business, trustees voted to include in the total missionary count Mission Service Corps volunteers who serve at least two years. Currently 1,301 people serve as Mission Service Corps volunteers, with about 500 of them serving for more than two years.

The committee elected four people to the Atlanta staff and approved appointment of 19 missions personnel.

New staff members include:

-- Ronald John Owens, associate director of prayer and spiritual awakening. Owens, a native of Canada, and his wife, Pat, have served in full-time music evangelism since 1964.

-- Michael David Riggins, associate director of Mission Service Corps. A native of Albuquerque, N.M., he moves to the position from San Jose, Calif., where he was area Baptist Student Union director for Santa Clara Valley Baptist Association.

-- Devane T. Simms Jr., associate director of the short-term volunteer department. Simms has been a home missionary since 1984, working with students in Akron, Ohio. He is a native of Ruston, La.

-- Henry E. Smart, associate director of field servicing in new church extension. The Texas native and former pastor moves from Phoenix where he worked as a church starter strategist for the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention.

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Churches can help E. Europeans,  
Soviets survive harsh winter

F-FMB

Baptist Press  
12/12/90

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist churches can help Romanians, Bulgarians and Soviets survive the harsh conditions expected this winter.

Many people in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are facing not only a cold winter but economic chaos and hunger as their nations struggle to adjust to profound social change.

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For several months, Western European Baptists have been sending food and basic medicine packages to Romania and Bulgaria. Each parcel contains items such as margarine, oil, flour, rice, cheese, powdered milk, coffee, soap, washing powder, aspirin, soups, sausages and canned meats.

In a carefully coordinated operation, the packages of essentials have been mailed directly from Baptist churches in Western Europe to churches in the East. "If guidelines are followed, the governments will not require senders or recipients to pay expensive customs charges on aid packages," said Karl-Heinz Walter, general secretary of the European Baptist Federation.

The response of European Baptists has been so great that better and cheaper arrangements now have been made to ship the parcels. They now will be trucked into Romania and Bulgaria, with some packages being shipped on to the Baltic republics and other parts of the Soviet Union.

Southern Baptists and others in North America who have requested opportunities to help also can participate, but not by sending parcels. Baptist World Aid and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board have made joint arrangements for supporting the aid effort by opening a special fund. Contributions received will be forwarded immediately to the European Baptist Federation in Hamburg, Germany, and used to pay for food packages.

Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid, the relief division of the Baptist World Alliance, estimated each package will cost \$25 to put together and ship. "If the same package was shipped from the United States it would cost nearly \$50 to airmail and \$25 to send by surface mail, and then it would not arrive until winter had ended," said Montacute. "This system will feed more people."

Funds for the project sent to the Foreign Mission Board should be marked "Manna -- Food Parcels for Eastern Europe." Funds sent to Baptist World Aid should be designated "Baptist Response-Europe."

"The beauty of this plan is that it allows Southern Baptist churches of any size or even individual families to help," said Keith Parker, FMB area director for Europe. "Winter is going to be awful in these countries. Indications are that many people will face hunger and that shortages in medicines will cause untold suffering to families. Already many items are being rationed. Here's a chance for us to make a difference."

Churches are being asked not to send large loads of food and clothing because of problems with both storing and distributing bulky shipments. The small packages shipped by European Baptists will be distributed to the most needy through networks established by local churches in Romania and Bulgaria.

"We already have heard reports that the packages are getting through," Parker said. "It is essential that the packages be sent through this system, though, since we've heard of others winding up for sale on the black market."

Both Parker and Montacute serve with Walter on Baptist Response-Europe, a committee established last January to coordinate response to the changing situation in Eastern Europe.

"So much has already been done," said Montacute. "Churches and individuals have already been so generous. But more is needed."

Help through Baptist Response-Europe has ranged from Bibles and Christian literature to food parcels, buildings and vehicles.

A word of warning came from Montacute however. "There is undoubted need in Eastern Europe. People are going hungry. We are emotionally switched on to Europe," he said. "But let's not forget the starving of the world, the people of Sudan, other places in Africa and throughout the world."

Fixed fund rate projected  
8.8 percent for '91

F-2000

DALLAS (BP)--The anticipated crediting rate for the fixed fund of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has been projected to be 8.8 percent for 1991.

Annuity Board President Paul W. Powell announced the number Dec.5 after the investment division completed its analysis of fixed fund assets and prospects for new investments in the coming months.

In December 1989 the expected rate of earnings for 1990 was pegged at 8.9 percent, and earnings have been posted each month to fulfill that goal.

The Annuity Board announces a rate each December for the coming year to assist retirement plan members in their decisions on allocation of contributions and accumulations.

"I am delighted that in a period of expected downward trends in interest rates we are able to anticipate another excellent year for our members," Powell said.

The fixed fund has invested assets of more than \$1 million in guaranteed investment contracts issued by major insurance companies, bank investment contracts and related deposit products issued by commercial banks, and high-quality money market investments.

Though the fixed fund earnings rate is not guaranteed, the investments tend to be of such a conservative nature that the board never has credited less than the preannounced rate.

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FMB leaders keynote  
Global Missions Week

By Brenda J. Sanders

F-FMB

Baptist Press  
12/12/90

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--"Doors of spiritual opportunity" have opened around the world in recent years, and Christians must be willing to walk through those doors to share the gospel message, said Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks.

"I've come to the deep conviction that God determines when, before whom and toward whom there are open doors of spiritual opportunity," he said.

Parks and three other FMB administrators recently spoke at Global Missions Week at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. Global Missions Week highlighted missions work around the world and included daily chapel services led by FMB administrators, displays staffed by furloughing foreign missionaries and classroom lectures presented by guest speakers.

Through the last decade, and especially during the past year, reforms by foreign governments have created an unprecedented opportunity for world evangelization, Parks noted.

God, in his way of surprising us and shocking us, moved across the earth and not only opened doors -- he blew them off their hinges! Now standing before us are those doors of opportunity," he told the chapel audience. "These are doors of spiritual responsiveness, the like of which no generation of Christians has ever seen."

Parks pointed out the methodology and resources are available to proclaim the gospel tot he entire world. However, Christians must be prepared to face various difficulties and even danger to share the story of Christ.

"The world is crying our in desperate need," he said. "Someone must be willing to deny self, take up his or her cross and demonstrate the love of Christ.

"Doors of opportunity are bursting open around the world," he concluded. "God has invested himself in creating these opportunities as spiritual gifts to his people. To fail to enter them is sin."

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In addition to Parks, other FMB officials who addressed students were William R. O'Brien, Lewis I. Myers Jr., and Midwestern alumnus Donald R. Kammerdiener.

"I submit to you, the church in the United States is the greatest debtor church in the world today ... (It) has more freedom to hear the gospel, and more human and financial resources at its behest than any organized body of Christ in the history of Christianity, and we sit here grasping it in our grubby hands," O'Brien, executive director of the board's public affairs office, told seminarians.

"We are debtors," he continued. "Our debt accrues year after year as we hoard the gospel unto ourselves in hold huddles, sitting in our warm boxes because it's safe in the box and it's cold out in the world."

In his chapel address, Myers told students 1.3 billion people in the world have never heard the gospel message. Perhaps 85 percent of those people live in a band stretching from North Africa, through the Middle East and central Asia, and on into the Soviet Union and China, he said.

"Within that band live 2,000 unreached people groups who have yet to be touched with the gospel in meaningful, consistent, productive ways," noted Myers, vice president for Cooperative Services International, the Southern Baptist agency which assists countries in which missionaries do not work.

"Southern Baptists must maintain a vision of the whole gospel for the whole world. Anywhere you build a wall and say, 'My concern goes to this point and no further,' you have undercut the real essential meaning of the gospel," said Kammerdiener.

The FMB executive vice president continued: "All of us are a part of a worldwide mission that comes from the authority of Christ himself. ... The gospel is worldwide in its implication, or it isn't the gospel. We must tear down those walls that separate us from seeing the gospel as a light for all the nations of the world."

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William Carey receives  
full accreditation

N-10  
(William  
Carey)

Baptist Press  
12/12/90

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (BP)--William Carey College announced Dec. 11 that full regional accreditation has been reaffirmed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools at its annual business session in Atlanta. This reaffirmation removes the college from the public warning status it received in December 1989, following its regular ten-year institutional self-study.

"This is great news for the college and all of our students, faculty and staff, and supporters," stated President Jim Edwards. "We can continue to approach the remainder of the 1990s with renewed enthusiasm, vision, and optimism for our goals of excellence as a Christian liberal arts based educational institution with selective programs of professional study. Our student enrollment gains, strengthening of faculty and library resources, better strategic and long-range planning, and improving financial condition were all key factors in the reaffirmation by SACS of our accreditation."

"This has been an incredible team effort," Edwards continued. "Our trustee board, Mississippi Baptist leadership, banks and community leaders, churches, and alumni have joined hands to support our new academic, administrative, and student leadership in Hattiesburg, Gulfport, and New Orleans and help move us forward in a very positive way. We still have many challenges ahead, especially in continuing to attract the financial resources needed to achieve our visions of excellence, but we've got a green light and a clear track to run on. All of our supporters can be proud of William Carey College," Edwards concluded.

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Chinese Christian music instructor  
finds 'family' at William Jewell By Elizabeth A. Webb

F- CG Jewell

LIBERTY, Mo. (BP)--"It is like a family here. The teacher-student relationship is like that of a sister and brother. I teach the students, and they help me."

With these words, Shuhui "Nettie" Ma, instructor in music, described her impressions of life at William Jewell College. Ma, a fourth generation Chinese Christian whose grandfather heard the gospel from a Baptist missionary, has become part of the Jewell family. She is assisting in elementary music education courses, in addition to lecturing and performing throughout the community.

Ma said she enjoys both teaching and performing, but added, she views teaching as a special form of ministry.

"Teaching allows you to share more with people than performing does," she said. "God gave me a personality suitable to being a teacher. In China, you cannot share the gospel outside of church. Teaching is a good way to show Jesus' love to children and young people through the way you act."

William Jewell College President Gordon Kingsley responded to an inquiry from a sponsoring pastor regarding the possibility of a teaching position for Ma at Jewell. After meeting with Kingsley and some music department faculty members, Ma and her 13-year-old daughter, Mary, settled in Liberty.

Because of the current political climate in China, Ma and her daughter must remain in the United States, while her husband and their 18-year-old daughter live in Shanghai. Having her family separated is difficult at times, although it is a situation to which most Chinese families are accustomed. Since the government in China arranges jobs, many husbands and wives are forced to work and live in separate cities. Ma and her husband were married five years before they were able to live together. Some couples are separated until they retire.

"It's a different way of looking at things," said Ma. "The government thinks of the whole country, not individual people. I've heard that now they're keeping families together more."

While in China, Ma was able to be with her husband several times a year. But now it has been four years since her family has been together. Ma says it is very difficult to raise a teenage daughter on her own. She also regrets that she did not have more time to give her older daughter.

"Because I was always working so much, my older daughter was almost raised with an absent mother," said Ma. "I gave so much to my country that time was taken from her."

The church and her faith are very important to Ma in adjusting to her life in the United States.

"My family is not here, but I have the international Christian family," said Ma. "Friends are so important to me. I am not alone. I know that someday God will reunite our family."

Ma thinks that the church in China has grown a great deal in last ten years, but still Christians are not free to share their faith. In order to be legal, a church must register with the government. It then becomes a part of the state church. There is only one church per district, and people are expected to attend the church in the district in which they live.

There are not enough churches to accommodate the huge population, Ma said. She believes more people, especially university students, have joined churches recently because people in China are seeking the truth. Although Christians are not allowed to witness openly in public, Ma says that people are influenced by the lives that Christians lead.

"God is doing great work in China," said Ma. "People need religious faith, and they can learn through example by watching how Christians live. Prayer for China and Chinese Christians is the most important thing."

Foreign missionaries in China are forbidden to speak publicly about Christianity, but they still minister in different ways. Ma said she knows of some Southern Baptist missionaries who were in China to teach English.

"They could not talk about Jesus in a public place, but they were showing their Christian life to students," Ma said. "Students always asked them, 'Are you a Christian?' Then they observed the life that a Christian has."

Ma earned her bachelor of arts degree in harp performance at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1968, where she remained a harp instructor until 1972. For the seven years following, Ma worked as harp performer and instructor for the Song and Dance Troupe of Cheking Province. Then in 1980 she joined the faculty of the Music Research Institute of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

During her time at the Music Research Institute, Ma was given the opportunity to pursue her master of arts degree in music education at the University of North Texas in Denton. Ma began her master's work in 1982. In 1984 she completed her degree and returned to China.

"In China, the traditional teaching method is teacher-centered," Ma explained. "Everything comes from the teacher, who 'feeds' the students. With the creative method the teacher teaches the students how to learn, and leads them to gather something by themselves."

Ma returned to the University of North Texas in 1986 to work on her Ph.D. in music education. As part of her work as a research assistant, Ma lectured on various aspects of Chinese music at Northwestern and Harvard universities and at the New England Conservatory of Music. She completed her doctorate in December 1989. Ma plans to remain in the United States for an indefinite period of time.

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Ministry to community is  
best evangelism, Porter says

F-CO (ariz)

Baptist Press  
12/12/90

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (BP)--The most effective way for a church to evangelize its community is to develop ministries which meet the needs of hurting people, a Southern Baptist church and community missionary said.

Nathan Porter of Waco, Texas, offered a simple solution to pastors who believe their church can't develop community ministries because they do not have the people or the budget funds to finance such ministries.

Porter challenged participants at a National Church Growth Conference to conduct community surveys by taking teams of lay people to visit local community service agencies.

Porter, a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board staff member who works with migrants, homeless and hungry people, cited numerous examples of small churches which have sponsored such community surveys and discovered needs they could meet with almost no budget support.

Most church members are not aware of the needs of hurting people in their communities, Porter said. The best education a pastor can do is schedule a community survey and assign groups of two or three lay people to visit each community action agency, he explained.

"All you have to do is sit down with the administrator and ask three simple questions," Porter said. They are: "What are the greatest needs you see among people in our community? What is your organization doing to help meet these needs? How can we as a church and as individuals help meet those needs?"

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Church members who hear community leaders list the needs almost immediately become concerned about hurting people, and say to themselves when they learn how they can help, "Hey, I could do that," Porter said.

He urged pastors to help lay people discover their gifts for ministry, and to equip, train and trust them enough to let to do the work of ministry.

He said most lay people don't really feel they have any gifts for ministry, but when they see the needs of hurting people, and hear community leaders tell about ways the church and individuals can help, they usually respond.

"When lay people feel God is calling them to be involved in ministries to human need, you don't need to worry about finding the money to finance the project," Porter said. "When lay people take responsibility for ministry, they will find the financial resources to do it.

"Most effective ministries are started by one individual who feels God has led him or her to be involved," Porter said.

"It doesn't take a lot of money to do community ministries," he said. "It just takes a few, committed people who see a need and respond by helping meet that need."

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Starting Sunday schools  
requires team involvement

By Frank Wm. White

F-55B

Baptist Press  
12/12/90

NASHVILLE (BP)--Starting new Sunday schools cannot be a one-person job but requires a team made up of state convention leaders and people from locations where new Sunday schools are needed, according to two state convention leaders.

Bob Cavin, consultant for growth and enlargement in the Sunday school division of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and Shirley Miebs, director of religious education for the Alaska Baptist Convention, discussed their successes in new Sunday school starts while attending annual planning meetings for state Sunday school workers in Nashville Dec. 5-7.

Texas started 213 new Sunday schools during the year ending Sept. 30, for the highest total among state conventions. Alaska started 12 new Sunday schools for the best ratio of new starts to existing churches with one new Sunday school for every 4.6 church.

Both states have been consistent leaders in new Sunday schools, according to Jerri Herring, consultant for new Sunday school work at the Sunday School Board.

Throughout the Southern Baptist Convention, there were 814 new Sunday schools started for an increase of 72 from the 742 started in 1988-89, Herring reported.

In other states, Florida had the second highest total with 113 new Sunday schools while Georgia was third with 40. Other states with significant gains in new Sunday schools include Illinois, 31; California, 25; Utah/Idaho, 19; Michigan, 18; Arizona, 17; New England, 16; and Maryland, 15.

Cavin said 23 contract workers are involved in starting new Sunday schools in Texas. Many of the workers are retired ministers of education, pastors and directors of missions.

Many of the leads for new Sunday schools come from the state convention church extension division's list of new churches, Cavin said.

New churches represent 130 of the new Sunday school starts for the state. A contract worker contacts each new church or mission to assist them with organizing a Sunday school, Cavin explained.

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The workers also contact existing churches which do not have Sunday schools. This year, Cavin plans to assign each contract worker a list of churches which did not report Sunday school information on Uniform Church Letters.

"We want to make contact with the church and find out what help they need. They may just need help filling out the UCL. If they don't have a Sunday school, we need to help set one up," he said.

But, the contract workers don't sit at home waiting for Cavin to give them assignments. Many of them are finding new locations to start Sunday schools, Cavin said.

Texas has a goal of starting 300 new Sunday schools for 1990-91, but the work can't be done from the state office, Cavin said.

The contract workers and churches willing to start new missions and Sunday schools are crucial in helping spread Baptist work to new areas, he said.

"We have a continuing need for new churches. We need to continue to reach out," he explained.

He said Outreach Bible Study in apartments, on campuses and other locations have been helpful in getting Bible study into areas that have potential for new Sunday schools. Outreach Bible Study is an eight-session evangelistic study for non-Christians published by the Sunday School Board and designed to be conducted in a location other than the church.

In Alaska, Miebs does not have an expanded staff to help start new Sunday schools but is aided by the state missions division's focus on starting new churches and by dedicated pastors in the state.

Mike Proctor, pastor of Glacier Valley Baptist Church in Juneau, has been responsible for many of the state's new starts, Miebs said.

He has targeted fishing villages, logging camps and native villages that could never support a church as locations for Sunday schools, she said.

"These camps with 50 to 100 people need someone to start a Bible study and then someone to come in and preach," she said.

Miebs hopes for graduates from the Alaska Native School of Theology, operated by Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, who will return to their villages to start Sunday school work. Outsiders often are not allowed in the villages, she explained.

Miebs, who is quitting her full-time job with the state convention and will work as a volunteer providing training and assistance in Sunday school work, also sees an urgent need for Mission Service Corps workers who can dedicate time to starting new Sunday schools across the state.

Mission Service Corps is a volunteer program coordinated by the Home Mission Board.

Alaska has 59 churches, 28 missions and 24 preaching points with Sunday schools. Those locations cover an area that would reach from the coast of South Carolina to the northern boarder of Minnesota and south to El Paso, Texas, Miebs said.

"We need to find ways to get some help to people needing Bible study," she said.

Any new Sunday school may receive assistance from the Sunday School Board including up to \$100 worth of Sunday school materials. Also available is a \$50 discount at Small Sunday School Leadership Conferences a \$25 gift certificate from Baptist Book Stores for Bible study and administrative materials; free materials to guide the church in starting a media library; 25 Baptist hymnals; graded choir literature for three months; a Holman pew Bible; \$75 in discipleship training material; a Vacation Bible School Plan Book and a copy of the current Church Materials Catalog.