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NATIONAL OFFICE  
SBC Executive Committee  
901 Commerce #75C  
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(615) 244-2355

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Christians face opportunities to witness to Muslims, missionary says By Mark Wingfield

*N-AMB*

LOS ANGELES (BP)--American Christians face an unprecedented opportunity to witness to Muslims if they will begin by showing love, a Southern Baptist expert on Arabic ministries said.

"God has cracked the door" for Christians to share their faith with one of the most closed groups in the world, said Khalil "Charlie" Hanna, a Southern Baptist missionary among Arabic-speaking people in the United States.

Hanna, who is Egyptian and became a Christian through the ministry of Southern Baptist foreign missionaries, has been a home missionary in California for 15 years.

The current conflict in the Persian Gulf ultimately will provide more opportunities for Christians to present the gospel to Muslims, he believes.

"God is allowing this opportunity for some people from Islamic nations to hear the gospel. As the war in the Gulf takes place, Christians should take spiritual warfare to winning Muslims in the United States.

"I want to encourage Southern Baptists to take the advantage."

Traditionally, Christian work among Muslims has been difficult at best, he explained. "It is not easy to bring a man of Muslim background to become a Christian. Humanly speaking, it is impossible."

The Islamic religion and Middle Eastern culture are so intertwined as to be inseparable. When someone from the Middle East forsakes Islam, he also forsakes his heritage and culture.

Additionally, those who convert from Islam to another religion usually are persecuted, Hanna said. "If a Muslim becomes a Christian he can lose his job, his life, his family."

However, the harsh regime of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran forced many Iranian Muslims to question their religion, Hanna said. "He caused people to ask, 'Is this truly God's religion? Is this God encouraging killing?'"

Because there is no separation between religion and government in Iran, the terror wrought by Khomeini's government reflected poorly on the Islamic religion, he explained.

Hanna believes the same is likely to happen among Iraqis as a result of Saddam Hussein's leadership, assuming the allied forces win the war.

To illustrate, he cites an Iranian man he met recently. The man, who served in Khomeini's air force, had just become a Christian.

Hanna asked the man why he had converted from Islam to Christianity. "I was seeking a God who teaches love," the man replied.

This instance illustrates a breakthrough Hanna said he now sees with unusual frequency. After 15 years of labor among Middle Easterners in California, Hanna hopes to organize the first Iranian Southern Baptist church soon. "This is perhaps the only time in history we have found an Islamic nation open to the gospel."

The same ultimately will be true among Iraqis and others affected by the war, Hanna predicts.

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"Middle Easterners look to the United States as a Christian nation. Whatever the United States does politically, in the Islamic mentality is perceived as Christianity.

"Suppose you are a Kuwaiti man. After the war is over, who will have returned you to your land? A Christian. Who will have protected Saudi Arabia? A Christian nation.

"What's taking place now in the Gulf, our troops being there, is significant because it is a Christian presence on the most holy land of Islam. The Gulf region will not be the same religiously after this war.

"I feel what has been done is to drive a big nail in the Islamic coffin."

Additionally, the war has broken the bond between Muslims, Hanna said. "They are fighting Islam against Islam, and Islamic nations are aligned with Christians."

Now, as never before, Southern Baptists need to learn about people in the Middle East, Hanna said. "This is a unique time for Christians to show Middle Easterners that Christians love and care."

Hanna offered these suggestions for witnessing to Muslims:

1. Locate Muslims. Many are doctors or small business owners, he said. Others are university students.

2. Start with respect rather than fear. Instead of looking at all Middle Easterners as potential terrorists, Christians should educate themselves in preparation for ministry, he urged. "I deserve respect because God created me in his image, not because he created me in the Anglo image.

"Middle Easterners are generally warm, friendly people."

3. Avoid politics. "The church should create an accepting atmosphere. We need to say, 'Even though we have war, Southern Baptists still love you and care for you.'"

Additionally, Southern Baptists especially need to realize that the relation of Israel and the Palestinians is an emotional issue that can create a barrier to Muslims accepting Christianity, Hanna said.

4. Find a common ground. "This could be friendship, caring, fulfilling social needs, ministering to physical needs," he explained.

During the current conflict, churches might consider opening special prayer lines or offering counseling to those who have families still living in the Middle East, he said.

5. Present a New Testament. "Muslims may read the New Testament in private without fear of persecution," Hanna said.

6. Nurture the relationship. Even though the Koran forbids Muslims from developing friendships with Christians, most Muslims in America are usually more accepting, he said.

7. Don't rush it. By nature, Middle Easterners do not adapt to change quickly, Hanna said. "Allow enough time for him to change his way of thinking. Don't rush him and he will come around in his own time.

"To minister to Muslims requires a different philosophy, a different plan," he claims. "Winning the Muslim in the United States requires vision, patience and optimism."

Middle East conflict  
'just,' President says

By Tom Strode

N-00 CLC

WASHINGTON (BP)--President George Bush, speaking to a meeting of religious broadcasters, said the conflict in the Middle East is not a "religious war," but it is a "just" one.

The president said that though Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein had tried to portray the battle as a religious one, it "has nothing to do with religion per se. It has, on the other hand, everything to do with what religion embodies -- good versus evil, right versus wrong, human dignity and freedom versus tyranny and oppression.

"The war in the Gulf is not a Christian war, a Jewish war or a Moslem war -- it is a just war," Bush said.

The president made his comments in a 19-minute speech delivered to a capacity audience of about 2,000 people on Jan. 28 at the annual convention of the National Religious Broadcasters. His speech, which focused on the moral justification for this country's involvement in the war, was interrupted 12 times by applause and appeared to have widespread support from the crowd.

After the American-led coalition prevails, the United States "will have a key leadership role in helping to bring peace to the rest of the Middle East," Bush said.

The president told the broadcasters he understood "more than ever that one cannot be America's president without trust in God." He also said that he understood the disagreement some held with the war, but "I have no bitterness in my heart about that at all, no anger. I am convinced we are doing the right thing."

The president utilized what he called "the principles of a just war" for the heart of his address. Bush did not state each tenet of just-war theory, which was delineated by early church leaders, especially Augustine, but his speech addressed all of the just-war requirements for resorting to military force.

Just cause -- "Our cause could not be more noble," Bush said. "Some ask whether it's moral to use force to stop the rape, the pillage, the plunder of Kuwait. And my answer: Extraordinary diplomatic efforts having been exhausted to resolve the matter peacefully, then the use of force is moral."

Just intent -- "We seek nothing for ourselves," he said, adding that United States forces will return home "as soon as their mission is over."

Last resort -- The president said "we did not want war." He said his administration traveled more than 103,000 miles for more than 200 meetings with foreign officials and for 10 diplomatic missions in the 166 days after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Hussein rejected all attempts and "made this just war an inevitable war," Bush said.

Legitimate authority -- He did not refer to Congress' passage of a resolution authorizing military force but said the coalition opposing Iraq was "supported by unprecedented United Nations' solidarity."

Limited goals -- The president said the United States does not "seek the destruction of Iraq." He also said that "victory can be achieved ... let me reassure you here today it won't be another Vietnam."

Proportionality -- Bush said that "when war must be fought for the greater good, it is our gravest obligation to conduct a war in proportion to the threat. And that is why we must act reasonably, humanely and make every effort possible to keep casualties to a minimum. And we've done so. I'm very proud of our military in achieving this end."

Noncombatant immunity -- "From the very first day of the war, the allies have waged war against Saddam's military," he said. "We are doing everything possible, believe me, to avoid hurting the innocent."

Stetson University receives  
Hollis gift of \$4.5 million

By Greg Warner

N-CO (Fla.)

DeLAND, Fla. (BP)--Stetson University will receive \$4.5 million from the William M. and Nina B. Hollis Foundation of Lakeland, Fla., to establish scholarships to assist students from lower- and middle-income families.

The Hollis Scholarship Program will be merit-based and will assist academically talented and leadership-oriented students. Special assistance will be offered to students from lower- and middle-income families who otherwise could not afford to attend Stetson.

One important intent of the Hollis Scholarship Program is to provide an opportunity for students to attend Stetson who might fall outside the boundaries of current federal and state need-based financial aid standards. These students might come from middle-income families, families with two parent incomes, or from families with more than one child in college.

"My mother and father have always believed in the value of a private college education," said Mark Hollis, president of both Publix Super Markets of Lakeland and the foundation that bears his parents' names. "They wanted to find some way to make it affordable to all students."

Scholarships also will be made specifically to minority students who possess academic ability, personal motivation and financial need. In addition, the fund will assist successful Stetson students who are experiencing financial difficulty.

"This new scholarship pledge reaffirms to all Stetson people the magnitude of the Hollis family's commitment to the mission and future of Stetson University," said university President H. Douglas Lee. "This commitment will change the lives of many young people in ways impossible to measure. We are indeed grateful for the courage and commitment of the Hollis family."

A total of \$4 million of the pledge will be added to Stetson's scholarship endowment fund, said Hollis, a Baptist layman and Stetson graduate. Another \$400,000 will establish a life challenger endowment fund to offset part of the recent loss of Florida Baptist Convention support, which the university had been using for scholarships.

An additional \$100,000 is an unrestricted gift.

A number of Hollis Leadership Scholars will be named each year, beginning in the fall of 1991.

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Baptist Children's Homes  
receives \$1.15 million

By Norman Jameson

F-CO (NC)

Baptist Press  
1/30/91

THOMASVILLE, N.C. (BP)--Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina announced Jan. 24, receipt of two gifts totalling \$1.15 million as part of its \$11 million "Give a child a chance" campaign to secure the future for hurting children and families.

Salisbury, N.C., residents Tommy and Jeanie Eller, volunteer leaders in the campaign, and Keith Buchanan Jr. of Sanford, N.C., made the gifts, both of which will be utilized at Cameron Boys Camp in Moore County. At Cameron, 30 teen-age boys from dysfunctional families live with Christian counselors outside year round in shelters they build themselves.

"These gifts mean the Cameron Boys Camp expansion can continue full speed ahead," said BCH President Michael C. Blackwell. "Soon we can trim the waiting list and begin to serve up to 50 boys at a time. Cameron is one of our most successful programs and the commitment to it shown by Tommy and Jeanie Eller and by Keith Buchanan will ensure hundreds of boys will get a chance to become the men God intended them to be."

The Eller gift will establish the Curlee-Eller Endowment Fund, named in memory of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. W.W. Eller and Mr. and Mrs. H.E. Curlee Sr., and in memory of Tommy Eller's son, Thomas Michael Eller. Also the primary dining area at camp will be named Safrit Dining Hall in honor of Eller's son Steve and his wife, Barbara, of Salisbury.

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Keith Buchanan Jr. of Sanford was recognized for his gift to build a new office facility at Cameron Boys Camp. Money for the Buchanan Office Building is given in memory of his parents, P.K. and Martha I. Buchanan. The younger Buchanan is president of Sanford Industrial Center, Inc.

This is the third million-dollar gift BCH has received in the past 15 months. Just one year into its \$11 million campaign, BCH has received \$8.05 million in gifts and pledges.

Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, founded as an orphanage in 1885, now serves more than 1,000 children and families each year through 15 facilities statewide, including four group campuses, seven emergency care homes, two homes for behaviorally troubled girls, therapeutic camping for boys, a maternity home, a home for teen-age mothers and their babies, and a child development center and the Philpott Parent Aide Program.

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Inerrancy controversy's roots deeper than past 12 years, Dockery says

By Matthew Brady

*N-C (Texas)* Baptist Press  
1/30/91

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The inerrancy controversy which has dominated the Southern Baptist Convention for more than 12 years has its roots in events occurring nearly 40 years ago, according to a Broadman Press editor speaking at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Two historic changes took place in Southern Baptist life during the early 1950s that set the stage for today's conflict over the nature and inspiration of the Bible, David Dockery told students during a chapel service at the Fort Worth school.

During those years the introduction of historical, critical studies in Southern Baptist seminaries and colleges resulted in a "new and challenging way of reading and interpreting the Bible," Dockery said.

At the same time, the "Million More in '54" Sunday school growth campaign began a more program-oriented approach to ministry, he said.

"Consciously or unconsciously, a movement away from theology began to take place," Dockery said.

When later controversies took place in 1960, 1969 and 1979, "a doctrinal foundation was lacking among most people to examine and to evaluate these issues, he said.

"Even men and women who believed the biblical stories as reported, who affirmed the historical foundation of Holy Scripture and who never for one minute doubted the miraculous claims of the Bible were confused by such terms as inerrant and infallibility," Dockery said.

The controversy over the Bible is not unique to Southern Baptists and reflects debates taking place in Christianity at large, he said, adding, however, "the intensity of the (SBC) controversy is unrivaled in other circles."

Dockery stated views held by some theologians who question the Bible's inspiration and authority and who say scripture passages cannot be used to validate the Bible's authenticity.

Dockery argued against such beliefs by telling the students there is more than the citing of II Timothy 3:16 that guides understanding into the nature of Scripture.

"It is rather a compounding of the biblical testimony coupled with the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the written word of God in our hearts," he said.

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Durst named new director  
of seminary's So. Calif. campus

*N-CY (Calif.)*

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Rodrick K. Durst, pastor of Castlewood Baptist Church in Vallejo, Calif., has been named director of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary's Southern California campus in Brea.

He will replace Donald E. Sewell who resigned to become director of special projects and public affairs for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board last October. Durst has been pastor of the Vallejo church since 1984. Previously he had been youth pastor and then pastor of Coddington Baptist Church in Santa Rosa.

A native of Bryan, Texas, he has a bachelor of arts degree from California Baptist College in Riverside. He earned master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees from Golden Gate Seminary.

He has been active in denominational life in local associations and as an executive board member and parliamentarian for the California Southern Baptist Convention. In addition, he has taught church history and philosophy or religion courses for Golden Gate.

"I am pleased to have a Golden Gate graduate with extensive church experience in this key position," said seminary President William O. Crews. "We anticipate continued growth at the Brea campus under Dr. Durst's leadership."

Durst said he is committed to working with local churches and training ministers to serve effectively. "I'm a West Coast person and desire to see our cities won for Christ," he added.

Elected by a mail ballot of the seminary's trustees, Durst will be acting director until Feb. 16, when he officially will assume his duties on a full-time basis.

He is married and has three children.

In another development, the seminary announced the resignation of D. Glenn Saul as professor of Christian ethics, effective Jan. 31. He will be pursuing other avenues of ministry and endeavor.

Commenting on the resignation, Crews said, "Dr. Saul has made a significant contribution to the life of Golden Gate, churches in the West and Southern Baptists. He will be sorely missed."

Saul joined the faculty in 1977 and has been associate dean of academic affairs since 1985.

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CLC joins in brief  
on broadcast indecency

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
1/30/91

*N-CY (CLC)*

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has joined nine other groups in a friend-of-the-court brief in federal court supporting a 24-hour ban on indecent broadcasting.

The brief asks the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to uphold the Federal Communications Commission's regulation forbidding broadcast indecency at all times. Oral arguments were heard on Jan. 28 in the case of Action for Children's Television, et al., v. FCC and United States of America. The brief was filed on December 11, 1990.

Congress passed legislation in 1988 requiring the 24-hour ban. The FCC's regulations enforcing the law were challenged in court. In the meantime, the Supreme Court ruled in a case involving telephone transmission that indecent speech may be controlled if the regulations promote a "compelling" government interest and are "narrowly-tailored" to serve that interest. The appeals court granted the commission a period to receive public comment. In July 1990, the FCC adopted a report stating that, based on the data it received, the 24-hour ban did meet the Supreme Court's test.

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"The amicus brief stresses that the public airwaves must be regulated by government to serve the public interest," said Michael Whitehead, CLC general counsel. "Persons who wish to indulge themselves in indecency must be required to find private sources for such material. Broadcasters have no right to pollute the airwaves and expose American families to indecent material which may be inadvertently heard on radio or TV."

Groups joining the Christian Life Commission in the brief include the Christian Legal Society, Christian Medical Society, Family Research Council, National Association of Evangelicals, National Coalition Against Pornography and National Religious Broadcasters.

The brief says that a 24-hour ban is "constitutional, necessary and the only viable means to protect the nation's children, facilitate parental supervision and preserve the privacy of the home." It points out that both Congress and the FCC concluded that children under 18 were in the broadcast audience at all hours of the day.

Groups joining Action for Children's Television in opposing the ban are the American Civil Liberties Union, People for the American Way, Motion Picture Association of America and National Association of Broadcasters.