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91-33

Russian student at Southwestern
says revival coming to Soviet Union By Matthew Brady

N-CO Juxca

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--In February, Sergei Nikolaev struggled to keep his head above the rising tide of term papers and deadlines threatening to swamp him as he worked on his doctoral degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

In March, Nikolaev will struggle with a different tide as he baptizes 118 new Christians at his church in downtown Leningrad.

"Revival is going on. It is there," Nikolaev said before returning to his ministry in Leningrad.

In 1989, Nikolaev helped establish the Temple of the Gospel Evangelistic Center in Leningrad. The church has grown to almost 1,000 members.

Besides serving as senior pastor at the Temple of the Gospel, Nikolaev is superintendent of the Northwest Region of the Soviet Union, representing the All Union Council of Evangelical Christians/Baptists and vice president of the Baptist Union of Russia.

The new Soviet openness has contributed "in a very positive way" to the revival, Nikolaev said. However, he added, "if there had not been anything there before the past two years, the explosion would not have happened."

"During the 70-plus years of atheistic life and communist domination, Christianity always played a solid role," Nikolaev said. "The thing is that Christianity was not recognized. Christianity was persecuted," he said.

"We have a proverb in Russia: 'The darker the night, the brighter the stars' -- Christianity was always alive," he said.

Now, the open policies of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev have helped change public opinion about Christians and made it easier for them to share their faith, he said.

"Now, you don't need people to ask you (about Christianity). You can share your faith and you know people will respect it," he said.

The son and grandson of preachers, Nikolaev said growing up in a Christian family meant facing ridicule.

"Christianity was always presented to the people like a concept of very stupid, illiterate people," he said. "My father always said, 'Christians have to be the best, wherever they are.'"

As a result, Nikolaev said he was always one of the top people in his class. He went on to college and became a professional musician, playing with orchestras. At the age of 20 he became a Christian.

But before he was converted, Nikolaev said he would tell his father, "There is no problem for me in God, but I will follow him, as you are, when I understand him."

Nikolaev said a preacher told him "to understand God, you need to be God, but to be saved you need to realize that you need him."

Nikolaev hopes to return to Southwestern Seminary next October to finish his on-campus studies for the doctor of ministry degree.

Students with Baptist ties
honored by USA Today

By Polly House

N-10

NASHVILLE (BP)--Four students attending Baptist-related colleges have been named to USA Today's All-USA Academic First Team.

Shara Clevenger from William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo.; Brian S. Jewett from the University of Richmond (Va.); Allegra Lee Jordan from Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.; and Katrina K. Schimmoeller from Georgetown (Ky.) College were among 20 students nationwide who were honored by USA Today.

Clevenger, a senior from Peculiar, Mo., is majoring in psychology and communications. After graduation this spring, she plans to attend graduate school at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and pursue a master's degree in public administration.

Jewett, a senior, will receive a B.S. degree with majors in chemistry and interdisciplinary studies. He is from Goldsboro, N.C. After graduation, he plans to attend medical school.

Jordan is a senior majoring in French and economics. She is a native of Selma, Ala. Jordan founded the Samford Student Computer Corporation three years ago to promote computer literacy at the school. In its first year of operation, the business grossed almost \$300,000. Jordan intends to work toward an MBA degree after graduation and eventually enter the computer profession.

Schimmoeller, a senior, is from Versailles, Ky. She expects to earn a bachelor of arts degree in English in May. Her long-range goal is to be a writer and an environmental activist.

The announcement of the All-USA Academic Team was made in late February. Each team member received a \$2,500 cash prize during a recognition luncheon held at the newspaper's headquarters in Arlington, Va.

"We think students should be honored for their outstanding academic achievement as well as for making jump shots," said USA Today Editor Peter Prichard, "so that's why we name an all academic team. These students are certainly tomorrow's leaders and we are proud to honor them.

The top 20 were chosen by panels of educators from 854 students nominated on the basis of scholarship, intellectual achievement and leadership roles in activities on-and-off campus.

"These students are representative of those who are enrolled in all 49 of our senior Baptist colleges. From other sources we have verification of the outstanding quality of these institutions. These students show that those enrolled also are outstanding," said Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Education Commission, the agency which related to all Southern Baptist-affiliated schools and colleges.

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Southern Baptists asked
to pray for Irish peace

By Louis Moore

N-10
CLC

Baptist Press
3/5/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Dublin Baptist Pastor Robert Dunlop believes churches are "part of the problem and therefore must be part of the solution" to the conflict in Northern Ireland today.

It is simplistic to say the troubles in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland are religious or theological in nature, he says. But it is just as naive to say religion is not a factor, he says.

The turmoil in Northern Ireland is often presented as a battle between the minority Catholics and the majority Protestants. In the Republic of Ireland, the conflict is often seen as between a tiny minority (4 percent) of Protestants and a huge majority (96 percent) of Catholics. Ireland is an island one-third the size of Texas that contains a total of 4.4 million people in the two countries of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

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Dunlop pictures the Irish turmoil as a combination of complex cultural, social, political and religious dimensions, coupled with fierce terrorism and extensive racketeering.

Nevertheless, Dunlop said he believes the focus needs to be on finding a solution to a way out of the conflict rather than finger-pointing to try to show who or what is to blame for the continuing battle there. He says he believes churches, including Southern Baptist congregations in the United States, can play a part in working toward a solution to the turmoil in Northern Ireland.

Dunlop is pastor of the Brannockstown Baptist Church in Kilcullen, Co. Kildare, in the Republic of Ireland, and past president of the Baptist Union of Ireland. He says there are about 100 Baptist congregations with about 20,000 members in all of Ireland.

He was in the United States recently promoting Sunday, March 17, as a time for all Christians in the United States to focus their prayers on peace in Ireland.

"Pastors across the nation will be invited to include prayers for Ireland in their worship services, and congregations will be encouraged to bring an offering or donation for the work of Co-operation Ireland," Dunlop says.

Co-operation Ireland is a non-political, multid denominational organization that concentrates on building personal relationships between participants on the different sides in Ireland.

"Co-operation Ireland is more than an idea or a concept -- it is a working entity which has already accomplished a lot in bringing healing through co-operative effort," he says.

Started in 1979 by Irish businessman Brendan O'Regan, Co-operation Ireland today has an annual operating budget of \$1 million, and includes a number of programs for youth and adults. Those programs arrange exchange visits and promote other bridge-building means to help Protestants and Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland get to know one another -- often for the first time.

Specifically, Dunlop encouraged Southern Baptist churches to take an active interest in finding a peaceful solution to the Irish conflict by doing the following:

- Praying for a peaceful solution to the Irish conflict.
- "Twinning" with an Irish Baptist congregation.
- Finding out the facts about the conflict and refusing to accept simplistic explanations or solutions.
- Emphasizing the need in every area of life for Christians to be salt and light in the world.

"We Baptists, with our understanding of local church and a commitment to a free church in a free state, should be ideally poised to offer a creative vision of life and society where God's order is taken seriously and biblical righteousness is not only theological and personal but also social and communal," he says.

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Seminary librarian perseveres through cerebral palsy

By Kathy Wade

F-10
(2/28/91)

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--When it comes to dedicated service and perseverance, Barbara Russell could write the book.

And once the book is written, Russell would also know where it belongs among the 13 miles of bookshelves in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's A. Webb Roberts Library.

"My mother always told me that I was never different from anyone else, and I could do what I wanted to do," said Russell, who was injured at birth, resulting in spastic cerebral palsy.

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Growing up in Hawkins, Texas, Russell was encouraged to take on the same tasks as her friends and schoolmates.

That can-do spirit has inspired her colleagues at Southwestern where Russell has worked for 30 years in the seminary's library. She is the catalog librarian -- one of six department heads in the library -- with a 14-member staff.

Russell said her mother never wanted her to think of the condition as a handicap. That challenge led her to become a class officer all through high school, a member of the pep club and president of Future Homemakers of America.

"The kids that I grew up with, most of us started first grade together. They never made any allowances for me because they always thought I was just like them," she said.

Russell went on to North Texas State University where she received her bachelor's degree. She later was encouraged by former Southwestern library Director Charles Johnson to get her master's degree in library science.

"Charles was a very good boss. He kept telling me I could go somewhere else," said Russell. "I was pretty well satisfied after I got my masters. I looked for other jobs and nothing really opened up."

It was then Russell made the commitment that if God wanted her at Southwestern, the desire to look for another job would be taken away and it was.

When the Roberts Library was built, the catalog department was one of the first to go on computer. Russell said the change was a far cry from typewritten catalog cards and hand filing.

Russell considers her relationship with student employees and spouses a ministry by "being part of their lives and encouraging them, being open when they need to talk."

Carl Wrotenbery, director of libraries, said he is impressed with Russell's ability "to get the job done under all kinds of circumstances and maintain a spirit and attitude that's probably the most Christ-like that I know."

Only the late L.R. Elliot had a lengthier tenure in the library of 35 years, according to Wrotenberry.

"She is one of a group of people who worked unselfishly and very devotedly with tremendous attention to detail to serve the needs of literally hundreds of thousands of people in her 30 years at the institution," said Wrotenbery.

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California layman begins
ministry to AIDS victims

By Sarah Zimmerman

F-NMB

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ATLANTA (BP)--Convinced that AIDS is "an epidemic we cannot ignore," a California layman is developing a three-part response to the life and death issue.

Ministry, education and shelter for people with acquired immune deficiency syndrome are the founding principles of Naaman's Fellowship. Don Smith, member of First Southern Baptist Church in Whittier, Calif., since 1972, is president of the organization.

The former Marine began developing Naaman's Fellowship two years before opening the ministry doors last October. In the first four months, he led 22 people to profess faith in Christ.

One focus of the ministry is responding to the three to 15 crisis calls that come to his Los Angeles area office every week.

One call came from a dying man Smith had visited and prayed with in Santa Barbara. Another call was from the sister of a man who had tried to commit suicide. Smith's work includes making hospital visits and conducting funerals.

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The ministry's educational phase involves leading seminars in churches and mission centers. "There's a lot of misunderstanding and phobia about AIDS," Smith says.

AIDS is not contracted by casual contact, Smith reminds Christians. Touching, praying with and ministering among people with AIDS is safe, although care should be taken to avoid contaminated body fluids.

Yet Smith says the ministry is "not easy. Christians are reluctant to see that this ministry is of Christ. Some Christians see AIDS as a disease of homosexuals, and their attitude is, 'Let them die in it.'"

Naaman's Fellowship treats homosexuality as a sin but treats the AIDS victim as person who is loved by God, says Russell Grelling, home missionary serving as church and community consultant for Southern California.

"Theologically, the fellowship is a place where we can minister," says Grelling who serves on the organization's board of directors. Physician and home missionary Fred Loper also is on the board of directors.

Smith compares AIDS victims with lepers of biblical times in that they are "social outcasts, unwanted, shunned and denied any type of acceptance." He named the fellowship after the story of Naaman, the Old Testament leper who was healed after dipping himself in the Jordan seven times.

Within six months, Smith hopes to be able to offer housing to people with AIDS.

Smith operates Naaman's Fellowship as his full-time ministry. He has received a grant from Union Rescue Mission in Los Angeles, but he says most of his financial support comes from families of people he has helped. His church donates space for the fellowship's office.

Smith's compassion for people with AIDS stems from his experience on skid row. He said he was a "hopeless alcoholic" before he became a Christian in 1971. He heard Christ preached through the ministry of Union Rescue Mission.

After becoming a Christian, Smith continued to be involved with Union Rescue Mission. He was on its board of directors for 10 years before leaving to form Naaman's Fellowship.

In 20 years of ministry, Smith says he has seen skid row change from being the "end of the line for older alcoholic men" to becoming home for younger men, women and children. Smith also notes that more and more skid row residents are people afflicted with AIDS.

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Volunteer missions takes
couple around world

By Sarah Zimmerman

F-AMB

Baptist Press
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ATLANTA (BP)--In two decades of volunteer mission service, J.V. and Burline Selman have been so many places their file reads like a world atlas.

Their travels began in 1971 when they went to Korea with a group from their church, First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas. That experience was the stepping stone for 20 years of mission involvement.

Since 1971, the Selmans have been on 30 short-term assignments for the Home Mission Board and have helped build six churches. In addition, they have served in 16 countries in partnership programs with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, including 16 trips to Korea and eight to Brazil.

They coordinate their mission trips with their professional and church work. Selman is in the specialty advertising business which allows him to take extended time away from his work.

"We've loved all the things we do and we've seen more than most people do," Mrs. Selman says, "but we're also very active in our church."

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The Selmans teach a single adult Sunday school class; he is a deacon and she is a Woman's Missionary Union officer.

At 69, Selman is retirement age, but he says he prefers to work and invest his income and time in missions. As volunteers, they are responsible for expenses on their trips.

Selman says in light of the eternal rewards, "promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ is how I can best spend my time while I'm on this earth."

The Selmans' next assignment is to Minnesota in July. They already have begun orientation sessions for the group which will work with them. In Minnesota they will help construct a church, lead Vacation Bible School and lead in personal evangelism, which Selman calls the "most important thing we do."

On their home missions projects, the Selmans travel in their Airstream trailer. They say the trailer serves as their home, office, headquarters for group projects and on occasion as a banquet hall for teams.

In addition, Selman serves as Mission Service Corps consultant for five associations in the Texas panhandle. In that role he keeps people aware of the demand for volunteers and helps match a person's interest with the area of need.

The Selmans' stateside trips have been coordinated through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's Christian Service Corps program for volunteers who serve on assignments of less than one year. Mission Service Corps is the HMB program for volunteers who serve more than one year.

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Missions development
awards given

F-NMB

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ATLANTA (BP)--Three awards were given to missions development leaders during the annual trainer's workshop in Atlanta.

Missions development is a program of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to help churches become more effective in mission action through mission development councils.

Distinguished service awards were given to Charles Wilson and Martin Atkins.

Wilson, a lay volunteer from Carlsbad, N.M., trained 230 people in missions development workshops last year -- the largest number of individuals trained by one leader.

Atkins, a pastor from Mauldin, S.C., volunteered 16 1/2 hours in conference time, the largest number of conference hours taught by any missions development leader last year.

A third award for "outstanding achievement in missions development" was given to J.B. Graham, who pioneered much of the missions development program before becoming associate vice president for the HMB's extension section this year.

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Nationalism, techno-worship
blasted by Baylor professor

By Ken Camp

N-Texas

Baptist Press
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AUSTIN, Texas (BP)--Nationalism, the concentration of power, society's embracing of violence and belief in "technological messianism" are obstacles to reconciliation in contemporary political life, according to Dan McGee, professor of Christian ethics at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

The Christian use of power must be exercised in the pursuit of reconciliation, said McGee, addressing "Power in the Political Arena" at the statewide workshop of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission. "The Ethics of Power" was the theme of the workshop, held in February at First Baptist Church of Austin.

"The Christian understands that the primary purpose of our power is reconciliation," McGee said, adding that reconciliation is "God's program for human history."

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Nationalism is a hindrance to reconciliation domestically because it elevates the nation-state to a position of highest loyalty, treating national symbols as holy relics, and it views expression of dissent as treason, McGee maintained. Internationally, it turns conflicts between nations into holy wars.

"Nationalism turns all opposition to your national interests into a Satan. Saddam Hussein, who was a partner when he fought the demon of yesterday, the Ayatollah, is now evil personified. There is no good in him, we are told," McGee said.

"One of the things that really concerns me about the American scene today is that we seem to have a need for a demon," he continued.

"Nationalism tends to create demons. What is wrong with that? What's wrong is that you can never reconcile with a demon. You can only destroy it."

While recognizing the value of the "balance of power" doctrine within the political system, McGee challenged Christians to move beyond that to a "redemption of power" doctrine.

"It's not enough just to shove power around enough so that everybody's got some. We must take whatever power we have and direct it at reconciliation," he said.

Society's preference for violence as the means of first resort rather than a regretted means of last resort is a stumbling block to reconciliation, McGee said.

It has made coercive force the power of choice in the political arena, he maintained, noting both the problems of overcrowded jails and the current conflict in the Persian Gulf.

"Domestically, we believe the way to deal with crime is capital punishment and more jails," he said.

"Internationally, after four or five months of an economic boycott and diplomatic efforts, we threw up our hands and said, 'Oh my goodness, five months and it didn't work! Let's give up.'

"Now we turn to the faith assumption that enough violence will do the job quickly, though I do hear the caveat that if it doesn't happen too quickly, we're willing to pursue the war for as long as it takes at \$ 1 billion a day, presumably, in order to get the job done."

It seems the one lesson some leaders learned from Vietnam is "that we didn't use enough violence soon enough," he noted with regret.

"We are addicted to violence -- in our movies, in our families, on our streets, in our souls," he said. "As General (George A.) Patton said, 'God, I love it!'

"We embrace violence, and as with all idolatries, we become its captive." Citing society's fascination with "the new technological whiz bang," McGee said modern technology has "sanitized war" in the minds of many people, transforming armed conflict into a video game and numbing consciences to war's horrible consequences.

"The potential of nuclear violence has upped the ante on violence to the point that we now feel virtuous when we only pour tons of conventional weapons on people," he said.

"Christians must point out what the world should have known since Hiroshima," he continued. "It's what Christians have known since the crucifixion: Our power can destroy us. Christians must also point out what we have known since the resurrection -- the dramatic limitations of the power of coercive violence."

Christians should bear witness to the potential goodness of power in the political arena while safeguarding against the sinful exercise of power, McGee said. Christian especially should testify to the interdependence of all humanity and be willing to listen to persons of other cultures and from other nations.

"The church has the potential, and thus the responsibility, to contribute to a political Pentecost where all the nations of the earth gather together and the miracle of understanding still happens," he said.