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**Crossover Atlanta brings
messengers to their feet**

By Mark Wingfield & Sarah Zimmerman

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ATLANTA (BP)--Before sitting down to five days of preaching, several hundred Southern Baptist Convention messengers put feet to their faith in a variety of evangelistic ministries.

Street witnessing, door-to-door visitation and feeding the homeless were the main thrusts of Crossover Atlanta, a pre-convention project coordinated by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Crossover Atlanta was the vision of SBC President Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas.

For the past two years, messengers to the annual Southern Baptist Convention have done door-to-door witnessing in their host cities. This year's pre-convention project was expanded for the first time.

Evangelism and ministry came together at Woodland Hills Baptist Church in Atlanta. The church participated in the Saturday evangelism project as well as hosting a feeding site Saturday and Sunday.

The two ministries complimented each other as Baptists taking the door-to-door evangelistic survey invited people they met to eat at the church.

"I met a man who was out of work and another man on disability income. I invited them to come eat with us. If they don't show up, I'll take food back to them," said John Thompson, pastor of Gilbert Creek Baptist Church in Baisden, W.V.

In addition to feeding people who came to the church, volunteers sent 150 meals to a high rise apartment complex for elderly residents and 75 meals to homeless people living under a bridge.

Brooks Teague, member of First Baptist Church of Tuscaloosa, Ala., was team captain for the Alabama Brotherhood volunteers who operated the feeding site at Woodland Hills. "We looked at this as a training opportunity for us to cook and serve while we're not under the pressure of a disaster," he said.

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Woodland Hills had the largest Crossover Atlanta ministry of any church in the city. Members began their work Saturday by driving around Interstate 285 which circles the city. They called the drive "Project Jericho."

"We prayed for God to break down the walls of resistance as people witnessed today," explained Irene Cannon, a member who participated in the drive.

Each car displayed a Christian flag and a sign which said, "The people praised him and the walls fell and they took the city."

A total of 77 local churches participated in the One Day Soul Winning Encounter Saturday, teaming up with volunteers from churches across the nation. (Final statistical results from this effort will be available Monday, June 3.)

On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday prior to the convention, 83 volunteers preached on Atlanta's downtown streets and recorded 135 professions of faith.

Mobile disaster relief units from five states fed the homeless four meals over the weekend, a time when many ongoing local feeding programs do not operate. Baptist Men from Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, North Carolina and Alabama worked alongside local volunteers.

Ernest Robert of Parkway Baptist Church in Duluth, Ga., served food with the Mississippi unit near Techwood Baptist Center, where Southern Baptists have an extensive ongoing ministry. Just six days earlier, Robert had been baptized at Parkway.

The church, which recorded 31 in Sunday school attendance that Sunday, brought 28 members to help with the feeding. "It's something we wanted to do as a church," he explained, "getting out in the community in an area where there's a need."

At another downtown site where Arkansas Baptist Men were serving sloppy joes and fruit, one of the recipients expressed his delight with the free food.

"If I hadn't come here I wouldn't have eaten at all today," said Johnny. "I don't have a job and have nowhere to live. This is really a blessing."

In two days, the five disaster relief units expected to serve 14,000 meals. Volunteers were also on hand to distribute Scripture portions, tracts and give a spoken witness.

Street witnesses took a different approach, using music, drama and preaching to draw crowds at busy public places such as parks and mass transit stations.

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Dick Thomassian brought a group of six volunteers from Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala., for the street witnessing. They used puppets, drama and music to draw a crowd near the Five Points MARTA station in the heart of Atlanta's business district.

"We use the puppets and skits to draw a crowd and then we go out and minister to them," explained team member Lisa Hildebrandt, clutching a New Testament and a handful of tracts. "The puppets really draw a crowd."

The Five Points MARTA station attracts an odd mix of people ranging from the homeless to workers in nearby office buildings. Just around the corner from the Baptists, street vendors sold produce, a man preached about Islam and a woman wore a sandwich board proclaiming the impending end of the world.

Witnesses on the downtown streets and those going door-to-door encountered a variety of religious beliefs in Atlanta. At one street witnessing site, while Baptists distributed Christian tracts a woman also distributed tracts for a New Age event.

Rick Smith, associate pastor of Cook Memorial Baptist church in Panama City, Fla., said while going door-to-door Saturday he met a teenager who immediately told him she was a Jehovah's Witness.

"She acted like she was really afraid of us; like her mother warned her of people like us," Smith said. The girl listened to Smith share the gospel, but she would not take a tract.

Elaine Helms, member of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Atlanta, said her most challenging visit was with a Jewish man. He told her he did not believe a loving God would allow anyone to go to hell.

Nonetheless, Helms shared the gospel and explained the importance of the Jewish heritage to the Christian faith.

Stan Jordan, pastor of Clairmont Baptist Church in Atlanta, said he met a "New Age kind of lady. She didn't agree with what I said, but I got to go through the entire tract."

Sue and David Cobb had the opposite reaction from the first place they visited. A teenage girl would not open the door to the strangers, but she read the tract through the screen door. She was one of two people the Fort Worth, Texas, couple led to make a profession of faith Saturday.

Morris Denman, pastor of Cook Memorial Baptist Church in Panama City, Fla., also led a young mother to make a profession of faith.

"She thought being saved was just a feeling you have. We read through the tract and when we got through she was crying. Then she prayed to receive Christ," Denman said.

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Women In Ministry told to be
'strong and courageous'

By Brenda J. Sanders

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ATLANTA (BP)-- Members of Southern Baptist Women in Ministry were exhorted to "be strong and courageous" during their annual meeting in Atlanta.

About 45 members of the organization gathered June 2 at Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga., to lead the congregation's Sunday morning worship service and to conduct their annual business meeting.

The women were among 10 Baptist groups meeting in advance of the three-day session of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Paula Buford of Decatur, president of the Georgia chapter of Women in Ministry, told the congregation that "courage -- the courage to be -- requires not just an inner commitment to see and confront the truth about the slaveries to which we are all confined but to act in bold truthfulness."

"Doing courage often requires that we first name our oppression, examine the ways in which we may be unwittingly participating in our own enslavement and then may require our willingness to move out of old lands into the new promised land to which God has called us," said Buford, a pastoral counselor at Georgia Baptist Medical Center in Atlanta.

"As a denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention has progressively enslaved itself with codes, demands and restrictions. Our leaders want to tell us what our promised land looks like and the form that our doing courage must take," Buford said. "We must be willing to go against the official interpretation of our supposed spiritual leaders in the SBC if being obedient negates our doing courage."

Buford said doing courage "may require radical departure for us from our denominational structures in new ways of doing worship and faith. When our enslavement is so complete that we can no longer speak the truth of the good news, we must be open to the new lands to which God is continually calling us to enter."

During a business session, Women in Ministry members voted on several minor changes in the wording of their constitution and bylaws. In particular, they voted to delete all references to holding their annual meeting "in June, to coincide with the week of the Southern Baptist Convention." They left those sections of the constitution and bylaws open ended so that they might hold their annual meeting at any other time during the year.

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Officers, elected prior to the meeting by the group's executive board, will serve through the coming year. They are Pam Tanner, Sugar Land, Texas, president; Carolyn Hale, Georgetown, Ky., vice president; Reba Cobb, Louisville, Ky., treasurer; Ruth Fowler, Staten Island, N.Y., recorder; and Nancy Howard, Louisville, Ky., membership coordinator.

Newly elected steering committee members include Suzanne M. Coyle, Lawrenceburg, Ky.; Terry L. Huneycutt, Cary, N.C.; Romelle M. Jones, Phoenix, Md.; Bill J. Leonard, Louisville, Ky.; Catherine E. Miller, Raleigh, N.C.; Dixie Petrey, Knoxville, Tenn.; Sharlande Sledge, Waco, Texas; and Cherie L. Smith, Louisville, Ky.

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WMU executive board
acts on budget, publications

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By Susan Todd Doyle *ND*

ATLANTA (BP)--The executive board of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union announced Saturday the redesign of its adult member magazine, approved a record budget and voted to produce jointly with the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission a quarterly kit for youth workers to use in coed youth groups.

They also reduced or set goals for the 1991-93 missions offerings and approved the first phase of implementation of a national marketing campaign for the organization.

Research conducted during the last three years led the Royal Service staff to change the member magazine to be more "reader friendly" by including more Bible study helps, more spiritual development resources, more journalistic stories, shorter articles, less textbook style, reader poetry and recipes, mission cartoons, trend information and more photographs.

The leader edition will be identical to the member edition but will include a 16-page leadership section. It will include leader training, work sheets for duplication, diagrams and charts for use during meetings, retreat outlines, suggestions for missions involvement, guidance in using spiritual gifts in missions and ideas for events and activities.

Dellanna O'Brien, WMU executive director, also announced a price increase for all WMU magazines effective with October 1992 issues. The last magazine subscription price increase was in January 1990. Printing and mailing costs have risen dramatically since then, O'Brien said.

The board adopted a budget of \$13,413,380 for 1991-1992. The new budget reflects a 6.6 percent increase over the current budget of \$12.5 million.

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The board of the women's auxiliary also set national goals for the 1992 Lottie Moon Offering Foreign Missions and the 1993 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions.

The 1992 Lottie Moon offering goal is \$88 million. The board also voted to reduce the 1991 Lottie Moon offering goal from the \$88 million to \$84 million due to concerns about a shortfall in 1990 foreign missions giving.

The executive board learned gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering totaled \$79.3 million, which fell almost \$6 million short of the goal. The 1990 gifts also were less than the amount given to the offering in 1989, making 1990 the first year in 53 years that the gifts fell below the previous year's offering.

"If we do not meet the goal this year, it will be the 10th anniversary of not meeting our goal, and that is an anniversary we don't want to celebrate," O'Brien said.

O'Brien said the Annie Armstrong offering does not seem to be suffering as much as the foreign missions offering. She announced the 1993 Annie Armstrong national goal will be \$41 million. The goal has been set at \$41 million since 1990. Southern Baptists have yet to reach it.

The executive board also voted to join the Brotherhood Commission to produce a quarterly kit for use by youth ministers in leading coed youth groups in learning about missions. The kits will be available beginning in October 1992.

WMU officials stressed the resources are to help reach youth who are not involved in age-level missions organizations offered by WMU and Brotherhood.

The board also voted to establish a partnership between WMU and the Brotherhood Commission in World Changers national missions projects.

In other business, WMU leaders heard a progress report from Earle Palmer Brown representatives on a multi-phase research project that the marketing/communications firm is undertaking for WMU. The firm is finishing the focus-group phase of the research, which will be a national mailed survey.

The firm had reported at the board's January meeting on the first three phases of the research, which included an "internal audit" of opinions by WMU state and national leaders.

Board members authorized WMU to begin the first phase of implementing a national marketing campaign, once the firm has recommended a marketing strategy based on the research.