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NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #73
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2335
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8911
CompuServe ID# 70420.1

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strade, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

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91-93

ATS cites progress
at Southern Seminary

By Pat Cole & David Wilkinson

N-CO
SBTS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--A covenant between faculty and trustees may represent the "best possible hope for the future" of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a report from a national accrediting agency concludes.

The report from the accrediting commission of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada commends the "Covenant Renewal" document approved this spring by trustees and faculty as a sign of improving conditions at the Louisville, Ky., school.

The commission's report was issued June 21, a month after a two-day "focused visit" to the campus by representatives from ATS and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the seminary's other accrediting agency.

In endorsing the "focused visit" report, the commission acknowledged "the progress that has been made by all parties," citing in particular the adoption of the covenant and the board's amendment of an earlier action allowing tape recorders in all classrooms.

However, it cited "the continued need for monitoring the situation" and called for a series of progress reports from the seminary. The report made no suggestion Southern has been in danger of being placed on probation or losing its accreditation.

Relations between trustees and seminary faculty and administration have been strained since a new conservative majority of trustees pushed through several controversial actions last year. Those actions also prompted the ATS and SACS investigations.

Since a preliminary ATS staff report in January, however, trustees and faculty reached the covenant agreement, spelling out a compromise on employment of future faculty. Trustees in April also voted to leave determination of "appropriate methods of transcribing classroom lectures" with the administration. That action replaced a policy approved last September which would have allowed all seminary classes to be tape recorded. The policy had been termed in January's preliminary ATS report as "a direct intervention of the board" into seminary teaching practices.

The covenant, approved overwhelmingly by both faculty and trustees, effectively replaced trustee action a year earlier which added the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee report as a guideline for the employment, promotion and tenure of all faculty. The action potentially would have required all faculty to subscribe to both the recommendations and the findings of the peace committee report, in addition to adhering to the Abstract of Principles, the theological statement that has governed the seminary since its founding in 1859.

Faculty, however, voted unanimously to urge trustees to rescind the action. The preliminary ATS staff report also questioned whether the board had stepped "well beyond the approved academic personnel policies and the seminary charter and bylaws."

After several months of intense negotiations, specially-appointed trustee and faculty committees drafted the "covenant" document as a compromise proposal. The statement articulates a cooperative effort to steer the seminary in a more conservative direction. It pledges the seminary will seek balanced theological representation on its faculty by filling future openings with "conservative evangelical scholars."

"Perhaps its greatest significance is that it represents some compromise on all sides," the ATS report said of the covenant, adding it "symbolizes hope that all parties want to work together to avoid causing irreparable damage to the institution."

The accrediting commission requested semi-annual progress reports from the seminary between now and late 1992 when Southern is scheduled for its regular re-accreditation visit.

Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt, commended in the report as a "key factor" in progress made at the seminary, described the ATS assessment as a "strong affirmation" of trustees, faculty and administration. "The future hinges on the covenant," he said. "If it is implemented responsibly, as I think it will be, we have plotted a path to a bright future."

Trustee Chairman W. Wayne Allen, pastor of Briarwood Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., said he was "very pleased," noting "the apprehension felt by students and faculty about accreditation problems should be eased if not erased by this report."

Although interpretation and implementation of the covenant remain a challenge, faculty and trustees are "probably closer than the common perception," he added.

The ATS report encouraged the trustee board to "continue its own development," including more faculty-trustee dialogue. It also suggested trustees expand their understanding of their role to include support and advocacy for the seminary as well as oversight.

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Blind Southern Baptists struggle
to find identity in SBC

By Maria Sykes

N-10

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6/24/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--"Let's stop making excuses and start asking for solutions," Charles Couey, president of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Blind said during the conference's second annual meeting, June 21-23 in Nashville.

The conference unanimously adopted a proposal seeking acknowledgement and funding to equip blind Southern Baptist for ministry from the Home Mission Board, re-elected Couey as president for a second term and set goals for direction of the conference.

Gene Cole, retiree of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, led the music during the opening session Friday afternoon in the Van Ness Auditorium at the Sunday School Board.

Gary Cook, vice-president of the office of church programs and services, of the Sunday School Board, welcomed the group. Woody Parker, manager of the special education section of the special ministries department, affirmed the conference and defined the position of special ministries department and the board in its relation to the conference.

Couey referenced correspondence between the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and the Sunday School Board, which have run circles searching for a solution in verifying the, needs of blind Southern Baptist.

On behalf of the conference, Ernest E. Mosley, executive vice-president of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, asked for help from the Home Mission Board and its program of Christian social ministries and the program of language missions in a letter on Jan. 16.

In a response letter dated March 15 from the Home Mission Board to Mosley, Paul R. Adkins vice-president of HMB Ministry, said, "Because of staff and budget limitations, our work in ministry with disabled persons has focused on raising awareness of the needs and encouraging local church-based ministries," he continued, "While we intend to continue these efforts, it is doubtful at this time that additional resources can be allocated for this specific ministry."

"With regard to the ... production of materials in braille, large print and audio tapes, I would recommend that this request be forwarded to the Sunday School Board," Adkins said.

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Although the conference struggles to establish itself in the Southern Baptist realm, under the leadership of Couey, it refuses to give up. "It's time for the blind to stand up and say 'Stop tossing us back and forth ... Let's cooperate together,'" Couey said, "Help us use our gifts. Give us the support and materials we need."

Couey is expected to present the conference's proposal to the Home Mission Board executive committee during their meeting July 16-17, 1991. "If that doesn't work," explained Couey, "We'll take it to the Southern Baptist Executive Committee at the meeting in September."

"The whole purpose of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Blind is to help sighted persons who work with the blind and help blind persons come to the full realization that they are not all equipped the same," Couey said during his presidential address. "... But they are equipped and gifted for special service and must do that service in the power of God."

"As we help our sighted friends understand our equipping, we call upon them to help us have a clear voice in our denomination to say ... 'Provide for us the tools that enable us to do the ministry that God has ... called us to do,'" Couey continued.

"We want, more than anything else, to have at our fingertips materials that make us feel comfortable when we stand before a Sunday school class or when we take the challenge of any other task in our churches," said Couey.

Parker explained the Sunday School Board previously produced braille curriculum and Bible study materials, but in 1987 ceased the program. Parker alludes the decision to usage. "Only 16 percent of the all blind persons read braille," explained Parker.

The Sunday School Board currently produces audio tapes of various board materials including adult curriculum and Open Windows devotional. "About 2,700 tapes are ordered each quarter. Half of those are used by visually impaired," said Parker.

One point of confusion and lack of support for the Southern Baptist Conference for the Blind is proving to be ignorance among Southern Baptists in local churches. Cole explained, "The conference needs visibility. We need to concentrate on visibility."

There are about 43,000 visually impaired Southern Baptist and "... Many are twice blinded -- physically and spiritually. We need to reach them too," Couey said.

While the total attendance for the conference only reached eight during the weekend meeting, Couey said it went very well. "We were encouraged with a variety of personalities and input. We are enthusiastic," Couey said.

In closing remarks, Couey challenged Southern Baptists, "Unite with us as the Southern Baptist Conference of the Blind and let's, united, ask for what (is needed)."

The conference voted to meet for its third annual session June 26-28, 1992. The location has not yet been decided.

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Decision on nude dancing victory
for 'common sense:' Whitehead

By Tom Strode

N-ell

Baptist Press
6/24/91

WASHINGTON (BP)--The United States Supreme Court's decision supporting a ban on nude dancing is a victory for "common sense" in the arena of freedom of expression, the general counsel of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission said.

The Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision June 21 a law forbidding public nudity can be enforced to prohibit totally nude dancing in bars and adult bookstores. The court said the law was not a violation of the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of expression.

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The Court's opinion, written by Chief Justice William Rehnquist, said nude dancing is "expressive conduct within the outer perimeters of the First Amendment, though we view it as only marginally so." Government has a right to limit such a form of expression because "it was not the dancing that was prohibited, but simply its being done in the nude," the Court said.

"Dancing may be expressive activity, but the manner of dancing -- nude -- may be regulated," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Christian Life Commission.

"The dancers are free to dance and to speak their minds about nudity," Whitehead said. "But the fact that they are dancing does not permit them to ignore the law against public nudity, just as dancing while smoking marijuana would not transform the smoking into legally protected 'free speech.'"

"It is refreshing to see such common sense prevail in free-speech litigation," Whitehead said.

Indiana's public indecency law, adopted in 1988, banned total nudity in public. It was challenged by two South Bend businesses, the Kitty Kat Lounge, a bar, and the Glen Theatre, which houses a "bookstore" featuring live entertainment. They sued, maintaining the state's requirement their dancers wear pasties and a G-string violated the First Amendment.

The district court ruled such nude dancing was not protected by the Constitution, an opinion reversed by the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

"The dancers at the Kitty Kat Lounge claimed a constitutional right to dance naked on bar-room table tops covered only by the first Amendment," Whitehead said. "The Supreme Court has told them to get some clothes on."

In the case, *Barnes v. Glen Theatre*, the Court applied a four-point test presented in *United States v. O'Brien* in 1968 to determine if these restrictions on expression are valid:

- The law must be within the government's "constitutional power;"
- It must promote an "important or substantial governmental interest;"
- The government's interest has to be "unrelated to the suppression of free expression;"
- Its regulation on freedom of expression must be "no greater than is essential to the furtherance of that interest."

States have the power to "provide for the public health, safety and morals," the Court said. Indiana fulfilled this authority with its public indecency law and did so without unconstitutionally limiting freedom of expression, the Court said.

Rehnquist was joined in the opinion by Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy. Antonin Scalia and David Souter, the newest justice, wrote concurring opinions.

Scalia said the law is not a limitation on the freedom of expression and therefore does not require the government's interest be "important or substantial." Souter said the prevention of such crimes as prostitution and rape, which are associated with adult entertainment, is enough to warrant a ban on nude dancing.

Byron White, writing the dissenting opinion, said the Indiana law is a violation of freedom of expression because it "targets the expressive activity itself; in Indiana nudity in a dancing performance is a crime because of the message such dancing communicates."

Retreat setting allows BSU directors
opportunity to renew spiritual walk By Tammi Ledbetter

F-CO
OK

NORMAN, Okla. (BP)--Convinced those doing the ministering need a time away to be the recipients of ministry, Max Barnett proposed a five-day getaway for Baptist Student Union directors amidst a piney forest of Oklahoma.

Seventy-four directors from across the country met June 8-13 for the National Directors Conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's student ministry department and hosted by the Baptist Student Union of Oklahoma University in Norman.

"I think it's very important directors have times of spiritual renewal," says Barnett, campus minister at Oklahoma University. "They need to be able to think through their own priorities and relationships and be with others who are involved in the same type of ministry."

The fruit of such a retreat includes mutual support, encouragement, and even accountability, he explains.

In one of the closing sessions, student ministry department consultant Bob Hartman of Nashville reminded directors to recall their divine calling. "You and I are here on this earth by divine appointment," he said, "because God has chosen for us to be."

Hartman encouraged participants to be certain God is the source of strength empowering their ministries. He also emphasized the value of "revisiting our initial decision with the Lord Jesus Christ" so they might always live their lives grateful to God.

After challenging directors to "stay faithful to the Father and the task to which he has called you," Hartman urged them to always "return to the Father when you go astray."

Nineteen elective workshops dealt with disciplemaking, placement and development of graduates, leading small group Bible studies, making evangelism a priority, training in Biblical counseling, ministry to freshmen, building a leadership/ministry team on campus, prayer ministry, Scripture memory, mission trips, and other specific needs of students.

Brett Yohn of the Kansas-Nebraska student ministry department addressed the need to understand college students in order to properly minister to their needs. "As a baby boomer, I have observed a culture that did not understand or really even try to understand their youth" he remarked, citing the impact of the volatile decade of the 60s. "Consequently, a generation of youth was lost in this nation and in the church."

"Now and through the year 2010, the children of the boomers will be our primary target group on the campuses." He expressed concern campus ministers not perpetuate the same lack of understanding and resulting death.

Prayer, the development of small cell groups, and biblical leadership were cited as key elements of a campus ministry that will reach students today, according to Yohn.

Among the leadership qualities needed in a leader of a college ministry are vision, a clear Biblical and culturally relevant message, integrity, sacrifice and creativity.

"No one in their right mind would live the way we live," Yohn said in regard to the sacrifice expected. In addition to economic and lifestyle demands, Yohn said, "There is an emotional sacrifice that rolls over us year after year. The students are getting younger and we are getting older."

"Also we must face the task of the missionary entering an alien culture, speaking a language that is not our native tongue, relating the message to a culture which truly is foreign."

Urging directors to be creative and learn to hear God, Yohn said "only leaders willing to change and experiment will be effective."

Prior to a closing time of recommitment and prayer, Barnett encouraged those present not to feel overwhelmed by all they had heard and learned. "You've heard so much that you may feel like you are so far behind," he warned, "but I want to encourage you to go back and walk with the Lord on a daily basis."

Acknowledging much remains to be learned and internalized, Barnett reminded, "The thing you can do that can help you the most is to go back and develop that solid walk with the Lord. Nothing can substitute for that. Don't get too busy on a daily basis that you don't have time for the Lord."

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Moroccan Baptist finds
he can go home again

F-CD

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Allen Bennett found himself well-remembered recently, even by some people he had never met.

After an absence of fourteen years, Bennett returned to his hometown of Melilla, a Spanish colony on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco. He visited the small Baptist church where he became a Christian thirty years before.

"It has not grown much in number, but for sure it has grown spiritually," he observes. Many active members from the days of Bennett's youth still are there, but now their children are leaders in the church and preach.

"During all those years, these people remembered, and talked about, and prayed for their young Christian brother who had gone off to America. So when I returned, even the youngest ones, and some I had never met, knew about me and welcomed me as an old friend."

Bennett actually moved from Melilla in 1969, living for a time in Lebanon, England, Egypt and Germany, with visits home annually. Then in 1977 he and his Egyptian-born wife and Beirut-born daughter moved to the United States. Their second daughter was born shortly after their arrival in Nashville. Trips home became too far and too expensive.

For more than twelve years Bennett has been a printer and shipping superintendent for the Seminary Extension program in the Southern Baptist Convention Building. On his own time he has been involved in ministries among Arabic and Spanish-speaking people in Nashville.

Bennett became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1983, at which time he adopted his American name of Allen Mark Bennett. Back in Morocco he still is known by his original name of Ahmed Benali.

He was just eighteen when he began preaching in the Melilla church during times when they were without a pastor -- which was most of the time. He estimates he preached a total of five years out of seven. He also became a deacon, a Sunday school teacher, and youth leader in the church. On the first Sunday of his recent twelve-day return visit he was invited to lead in the worship service again.

Getting to visit with all his friends and relatives posted quite a challenge. Bennett was forced to set up a daily appointment schedule to fit everyone in. Meeting in homes and cafes, these visits usually lasted from thirty minutes to an hour. "The whole time I was there, they never stopped." One niece traveled more than twenty-two hours each way from her home in Spain to see him.

"In my younger years I had been able to touch the lives of many of these people," Bennett says. "Strengthening those relationships was one of my reasons for wanting to go back at this time."

Another major reason was his aging parents. His Arab father is "very old. He says he is 113, and I believe him," Bennett said. His 78-year-old mother is a Berber, the mountain tribe indigenous to North Africa. Bennett says because of their advanced years they wanted to see him even more than he wanted to see them. During his visit with her, his mother said to him in her Berber language, "Now I can die because I have seen you again."

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Ironically, one of the older deacons in the Melilla church said almost exactly the same words to him, but in Spanish, near the end of his visit.

Now that he is back in the United States, Bennett finds himself thinking about going back to his hometown to stay. "I would like to do it for just one reason: I see many opportunities to witness to those who never heard about salvation in Christ."

Making such a move now would require "too much adjustment" for his two school-age daughters, he feels, but he plans to keep thinking about the idea and discussing it with his wife.

"If it doesn't happen before then," he says, "the day after I retire I will have my ticket to go back."

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Seminary students learn
wise counsel through center

By Kathy Wade

N-CO SWETS
JWB

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Roberta Damon doesn't like testifying in court about child abuse cases. She calls it the "downside" of her ministry.

But as a minister of counseling in a church, Damon also has her "upsides in ministry."

Damon, minister of counseling at First Baptist Church in Richmond, Va., is part of a growing movement toward Christian counseling.

"We're on the cutting edge of this movement," said Ted Dowell, director of the Marriage and Family Counseling Center and chairman of the department of psychology and counseling at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Enrollment growth in the counseling program has reflected the growing needs of society, according to Dowell.

There were 210 men and women enrolled in the program last fall. "It's a very superior program," said Dowell. "It has the highest academic standards of any master's degree.

"We want (the students) to be committed to ministry first, then we train them in counseling as a way of expressing ministry," he added.

Those high standards, combined with a greater awareness of counseling as a form of Christian ministry, have helped boost Southwestern's marriage and family counseling program.

The increased need in society for counselors "is probably related to increased stress, the breakdown of the family and family values," Dowell said.

Fracturing of the family, he said, creates the need for counseling within the church.

"Churches can be no stronger than the families that make up the church," he said. "If families are fractured, it affects the life of the church. It reduces the effectiveness of the family in terms of Christian witness."

Consequently, there are some people coming to Christ now "who are coming out of this milieu," said Dowell. "They come with a lot of damaged emotions that need healing."

With more "wounds in family life, Dowell said more specialists are needed to treat problems related to families. "The marriage and family counseling movement was first recognized as a specialty in the mid 1970s," he said. "Now it is a well established and recognized need."

Dowell credits John Drakeford, professor emeritus in the department, for envisioning the counseling center and becoming the first director of the facility in 1960.

"He envisioned counseling as Christian ministry and he envisioned having our own clinical facility," said Dowell.

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The center is available for seminary students, faculty, staff and their families and people from the community at large. The success of the counseling center has led to a change of location. The center is moving this summer to the renovated Walsh Building which formerly housed the seminary's medical center.

Services focus on needs such as personal growth, pre-marital counseling, divorce, marriage and family relationships, stress management, spiritual concerns and life changes.

Supervised counseling is under the direction of approved supervisors and clinical members of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists and Texas State Board of Examiners of Licensed Professional Counselors.

Dowell is joined in the seminary's department of counseling by Pat Clendinning and Wynona Elder, who both hold doctor's degrees in counseling and give supervision to student counselors.

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Bill Glass helping prisoners
overcome hard knocks of life

By Matthew Brady

F-CC Dallas

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DALLAS (BP)--As a former All-American and All-Pro defensive end, Bill Glass knows about hard knocks and punishment.

But for the past 18 years he has become an expert in punishment of another kind.

Last year his Bill Glass Evangelistic Association, recorded more than 10,000 decisions in its prison ministry. The response has been similar throughout the 25-year history of the association's other ministry -- city-wide crusades.

But statistics don't flow easily from Glass, a former star with the Cleveland Browns and founder of the nation's largest evangelistic prison ministry.

"We just have been very un-numbers conscious," Glass said. "We've never reported our statistics anywhere. I want to reach a lot of people, but I don't want to necessarily go around bragging about how many we've had," he said.

Even if Glass is shy about his ministerial successes his seminary alma mater, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, isn't. The school's Alumni Association this summer awarded Glass with its Distinguished Alumni Award at the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta.

Glass' evangelistic outreach goes back to summer revivals he led while a student at Baylor University in the 1950s.

Even before he was named All-America his senior year, Glass said he was getting "tremendous opportunities in area churches.

"I was speaking in all the big churches around and I felt pretty ill-prepared to do that, having only been a football player," he said.

He graduated from Baylor in 1957, then entered the Canadian Football League. The next spring Glass enrolled at Southwestern Seminary.

"I really felt that I needed to be better prepared if I was going to spend most of my time doing Christian work," Glass said.

Although uncertain of a call to the ministry, Glass told himself, 'Well, you're functioning as a minister, you might as well prepare for the ministry.'

For the next six years he attended Southwestern in the off-season. In 1963 he graduated with a theology degree.

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By that time he had finished one year of football in the Canadian League, four years with the Detroit Lions and had begun a seven-year career with the Cleveland Browns. During his years in Cleveland, Glass was named to four Pro Bowl squads and played on the Browns teams that won the National Football League championship in 1964 and divisional championships in '65, '67 and '68.

Being an outspoken Christian in pro football was a rarity in those days, he said.

"The FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes) was in its infancy. There were no Tom Landrys and other people to blaze the trail. I was one of the first," he said.

Glass said his teammates would make life miserable for him sometimes, making fun of and laughing at him.

"Football players have to have something to tease you about. If it wasn't that, it would be something else," Glass said. "I really just laughed along with them and didn't fight it."

"They would make Christianity a series of moral platitudes as opposed to a vital, living faith," Glass said.

"The worst possible thing that could happen would be for me to clean up their morality and them still not become Christians, because now they're just self-righteous pagans, but they are still pagans," he said.

In 1966, Glass began city-wide crusades in the off-season. When he retired from football in 1969, he went full time with the crusades.

After several years of pushing by one of his board members, Gordon Heffern, Glass branched out into prison ministry.

Heffern had been a supporter of a failed inmate rehabilitation program in the late '60s. Designed to find jobs for inmates once they got out of prison, the program succeeded in finding jobs but failed to rehabilitate the ex-convicts. Five years and 5,000 jobs later, the program had no success cases, Glass said.

"Every one of them (the inmates) got put back in prison, lost his job for disciplinary reasons -- every one of them had some kind of problem," he said. "(Heffern) saw the bankruptcy of just a social program that has no spiritual content."

But Glass didn't believe he had much in common with prisoners.

"I had been the sort of all-American type. I'd never really been a street person. I'd never really been involved in a life of deep sin or anything like that," he said. "I didn't feel that I fit in with these kind of sleazy characters in prison."

In 1972, Glass, along with 40 counselors and well-known athletes entered Ohio's Marion Prison. After a 40-minute athletic clinic, Glass gave a short testimony and invited the prisoners to stay afterward and talk with the counselors.

That first program resulted in 40 decisions, and Glass never looked back.

Since 1972, he has taken his combination of big-name athletes and the gospel to 600 prisons. This year he will visit nearly 100 prisons and anticipates visiting 120 prisons next year. His ministry resources have grown to include 8,000 volunteer counselors nationwide.

Glass said his wife and three children have been very supportive of his ministry through the years and have gone with him on crusades.

"This is not something you do half-heartedly," Glass said. "It's a down-on-your-knees type of spiritual preparation necessary in order to go in there and do the kind of job you ought to do."