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91-111

Texas convention, Baylor
announce proposed agreement

N-Texas

DALLAS (BP)--Baylor University and Baptist General Convention of Texas leaders have reached an agreement which may end the struggle over who will control Southern Baptists' largest university.

The joint agreement must be approved by the two groups' boards and by the messengers to the annual meeting of the state convention in November in Waco.

In "An Open Letter to Texas Baptists Concerning the Relationship of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Baylor University" the leaders expressed hope the proposal will help conclude a controversy which resulted from an action by the Baylor board on Sept. 21, 1990. That action amended the institution's charter to alter the relationship of Baylor to the Baptist General Convention of Texas, giving the university the right to control election of its regents.

"The excellent work of the Committee on BGCT/Baylor Relationship and of the 12 person discussion group from the committee and the Baylor board helped to move the deliberations to a point of near agreement after months of prayer, research, and intense negotiation. Our efforts in developing the attached proposed agreement were made in order to enhance the process set in motion by the executive board to deal with the future relationship of the BGCT and Baylor," the letter reads.

BGCT Executive Director William M. Pinson Jr. and Baylor University President Herbert H. Reynolds said the proposed agreement provides for primary objectives and assurances sought by representatives of the BGCT and Baylor during the "extensive, fruitful and cordial discussions" which have been ongoing in the months following the Baylor board's action in amending its corporate charter.

The Committee on BGCT/Baylor Relationship's primary concern was to eliminate the two-tiered system of having both regents and trustees for Baylor, to have the right by the BGCT to elect directly a portion of the Baylor board of regents, and to secure some assurance Baylor would remain "true to its Baptist heritage and commitment."

The agreement provides: (1) for amendment of the Baylor charter to eliminate the office of trustee and to provide the BGCT will directly elect annually 25 percent of each class of Baylor regents, and (2) for inclusion in the Baylor bylaws, as is already the case in the Baylor charter, all Baylor regents must be Baptist, Baylor will continue to be operated within Christian-oriented aims and ideals of Baptists, including those contained in the Baptist Faith and Message statement adopted in 1963, and the assets of the university upon discontinuance by dissolution and liquidation will be transferred to the BGCT.

The agreement further provides these provisions of the bylaws may be amended only by two-thirds vote of the entire board of regents provided at least ten days notice in advance of the vote is given; otherwise, a vote of 80 percent of the regents is required in "extreme emergency."

In addition, the agreement provides the BGCT, in electing annually 25 percent of the Baylor board of regents, will follow its current nominating procedures, which allow for input from Baylor.

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Baylor also has agreed to amend its bylaws so the university "will give due and careful consideration to the suggestions of the BGCT" as Baylor's regents elect the remaining 75 percent of each new class of regents and has agreed to report to the BGCT each year on the election of regents.

Baylor officers signing the agreement were: Paul W. Powell, chair of the board of regents; Herbert H. Reynolds, president; Thomas R. Powers, vice-chair; and Randy W. Ferguson, secretary.

BGCT officers signing the agreement were: Phil Lineberger, BGCT president; Robert Parker, chair of the executive board; and George Gaston, chair of the administrative committee of the executive board.

"This agreement represents a fair, honest, and prayerful attempt to provide a way for the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Baylor University to maintain a close and harmonious working relationship," said Lineberger.

"After the last meetings of our boards, Dr. Lineberger and I agreed to keep on talking, looking for an approach to fashion a kindred relationship for the future," said Powell, also a former BGCT president. "In cooperation, I think we have found it."

Reynolds said he was very pleased with the agreement.

"The new relationship between the two entities assures for Baylor control of its own destiny. The agreement achieves this result because it leaves intact the provisions of the September 1990, charter amendments providing the Baylor board of regents will annually elect 75 percent of each regent class," said Reynolds.

Pinson was conciliatory in his observations.

"Under the circumstances it appears to be the best agreement that can be reached in line with the approach recommended by the special study committee," said Pinson.

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Muslim converts set free
after nine months in jail

By Art Toalston

N FMB

Baptist Press
7/25/91

CAIRO, Egypt (BP)--Three Muslim converts to Christianity have been freed after nine months in prison on charges of contempt for Islam and threatening the unity of Egypt.

The men were released July 13, according to sources inside Egypt.

Authorities gave no reason for suddenly freeing the men, an Egyptian Christian leader said. "Don't forget that we are under marshal law -- easily arrested, easily released," he said. Egypt's state of emergency dates back to the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat by Islamic extremists.

But the release of the three converts follows a letter-writing campaign to Egyptian officials organized by Amnesty International and various Christian groups.

The campaign was fueled by reports the men were beaten, drugged, tortured with electrical rods and cigarettes, hung by their wrists with handcuffs and cursed in efforts to make them renounce their Christian faith during the initial months of their imprisonment. They were held in solitary confinement in the Abu Zaabal Industrial Prison on the outskirts of Cairo.

The men are Mustafa Muhammad Sa'id Al Sharkawi, 30; Muhammad Hussein Sallam, 25; and Hassan Muhammad Isma'eel Muhammad, 21. Their names often are spelled in different ways in various English-language reports. They converted to Christianity more than five years ago.

"They're in good shape, in good health (and) good faith," the Egyptian Christian leader said. "In their hearts they are believers. ... Believers all over the world are called to witness, and (they) should be willing to pay the price for that."

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No other Christians "that we know about" are in jail in Egypt for their faith, the leader added.

Charges of converting to Christianity and seeking to convert others were filed against the men last fall. Two were arrested Sept. 28 and the other on Oct. 9. The charges were dismissed in "security" court hearings Nov. 23 and Dec. 8. Charges of contempt for Islam and threatening Egypt's security were filed after the December hearing.

Government interior ministry officials exercised their authority to keep the men in jail after hearings in March, May and June.

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First orders of improved literature
shipped to Southern Baptist churches

Baptist Press
7/25/91

By Frank Wm. White

NSSB

NASHVILLE (BP)--The first orders for improved Sunday school literature to be used by churches beginning in October were shipped from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board July 24.

The shipment represents a final phase of the six-year research and planning process that began in 1985 to provide literature with improvements that feature a stronger emphasis on the Bible, added evangelism and application, greater ease of use and improved attractiveness.

Shipping began one day earlier than scheduled because most of the new BREAKTHROUGH literature was available in the warehouse and orders were ready to be filled, explained Mark Langlois, manager of the board's physical distribution group.

July 25 would have been the regular shipping date for church literature orders for the October quarter, Langlois said. "I didn't anticipate the materials being available by this point to put us several days ahead of schedule."

Only two or three curriculum items were not available when shipping began. Those were expected to arrive in the warehouse by the following day and would not delay shipments, Langlois said.

As many as 600 orders were expected to be included in the first day's shipments with many of those going to churches in Alaska, Hawaii and overseas, Langlois said.

Because of the distance, many of the first orders would likely take 10 days to reach churches. Normally, orders will arrive at churches within six to eight days after being shipped from the board's Nashville operations building.

As many as 13,000 orders had been received from churches as of July 23 and most of those will be filled in the next few weeks, Langlois said.

Displays of the literature are available for review at Baptist Book Stores across the country, said Bill Graham, director of the board's book store division.

Also, state convention offices will have literature samples available for review by church staff members and Sunday school workers.

When Sunday school leaders and workers review the literature they will find materials that "will meet their needs and go beyond what they had before," said Harry Piland, director of the Sunday school division.

"What I've seen in looking at the literature has given me the sense that this is what we have dreamed of," he said.

"I believe there will be widespread, enthusiastic acceptance" of the BREAKTHROUGH literature, Piland predicted.

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Piland encourages Sunday school workers to review the material and comment on it.

"We want to know how else we can meet churches' needs. We want to provide the best literature possible and won't rest until we do that."

In addition to viewing samples, Sunday school workers will find detailed information about the BREAKTHROUGH literature improvements in five promotional booklets released earlier this year. The 32-page general booklet, "Experience the Word," was included in the June/July issue of "Baptist Program" mailed to pastors and other church workers.

Additional copies of "Experience the Word" as well as the 24-page booklets about preschool, children's, youth and adult materials are available from associational or state convention offices.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press.

Lewis offers seven
unchanging principles

By Jim Newton

N-AMB

Baptist Press
7/25/91

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Starting 15,000 church-type missions in 10 years is possible when churches follow seven unchanging principles, says Southern Baptist Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis.

Lewis offered the seven principles in a workshop during Home Missions Week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center. Theme of the conference was "Starting and Growing Churches where the People Are."

Lewis said he discovered the seven principles when he was a pastor in Texas, Ohio, New Jersey and Missouri before becoming president of the Home Mission Board.

"A lot is being said about the need to contextualize missions and use different strategies in different contexts," Lewis said.

"But I am convinced that the work of the Lord can be done effectively anywhere in the world in any context when you follow basic principles that are based on Scripture."

Lewis' principles for church starting and church growth include:

1. Vision: The pastor must have a vision, not a program. "You can't depend on a program handed down from (SBC offices in) Nashville or Atlanta. You must have a vision from the Lord."
2. Spirit: The church must have a spirit of evangelism and enthusiasm. "There is no easy way for a church to grow; it takes work, and a spirit of enthusiasm."
3. Compassion: The church must have a compassion and love for people. "You need to develop a loving and caring fellowship that draws people like a magnet. A lot of people don't go to church because they went once and didn't feel welcomed or loved."
4. Prospects: The church must develop a specific list of prospects for every Sunday school class and a list of evangelistic prospects.
5. Workers: The pastor should not do all the visiting and witnessing, but should multiply his efforts by involving Sunday school workers in visitation. "We have to get off our seats, on our feet, out in the streets and into the homes of lost people."
6. Visitation: The top priority of every pastor and every church ought to be soul winning and visitation. "What you model for your people in your lifestyle of witnessing is more important than what you preach to them."
7. Anointing: The anointing of God is the most important principle, for without God, nothing is possible.

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Most Southern Baptist churches are not growing because they depend on transfer growth and biological growth instead of evangelistic growth, Lewis said.

He urged Southern Baptists to respond to the Home Mission Board's 15,000 campaign to start 1,500 new congregations each year until the end of this century, saying one of the best ways for a church to grow is through establishing new missions.

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Churches urged to start
ministries to the homeless

By Jim Newton

F NMB

Baptist Press
7/25/91

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Lamenting that few churches minister to homeless Americans, a Baptist center director offered practical suggestions on how to address their physical and spiritual needs.

Tobey Pitman, director of the Brantley Center in New Orleans for the past two years, said 240 people accepted Christ during his first year at the center and 352 accepted Christ last year.

"We were praying for one person a day to accept Christ, and we almost reached our goal," Pitman said. From January until June this year, 309 people accepted Christ at the Brantley Center.

Pitman suggested four possible church-based ministries for the homeless during a workshop at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Possible food ministries include soup kitchens, bag lunches, food pantries, meals on weekends or holidays when other food programs are closed, voucher systems providing free meals at local restaurants and mobile feeding units similar to the disaster relief units of state Brotherhood organizations.

Examples of medical and hygiene ministries include clinics providing free medical and dental care, tuberculosis testing, shower facilities at local churches, free haircuts, clothes closets (especially providing warm coats in the winter) and washers and dryers where people can wash clothes.

Support groups offer another valuable ministry to the homeless. Examples include Alcoholics Anonymous; discussion groups; cultural worship services; adult literacy programs; English as a second language classes; vocational rehabilitation groups; air conditioned, heated reading room where people can relax; a mailing address and telephone for the homeless and a job referral service.

Temporary housing may be the most complex and least practical ministry, Pitman said. He suggested some churches consider providing housing only during bad weather.

A one-page list of practical suggestions of ministries to the homeless is available from the church and community ministries department of the Florida Baptist Convention, 1230 Hendricks Avenue, Jacksonville, Fla. 32207, Pitman said.

Pitman urged Baptists to conduct a community survey to determine the extent of the problem and to discover what others are already doing before starting a ministry.

He cautioned those interested in such ministries not to fall into the trap of feeling they shouldn't do anything unless it is the biggest and best program anywhere. He also warned against getting discouraged when opposition develops.

"Many church people are afraid of the homeless. They think they will mess up the church building or steal or destroy church property if you let them inside the church door."

Stressing the response of homeless people to the gospel, Pitman declared: "Now is the time for churches to get in on the ground floor of developing ministries to the homeless that will become models for others to follow."

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Most advocacy organizations which work with the homeless claim there are about 3 million homeless people in America, Pitman said.

Laughter broke out when Pitman told workshop participants the official 1990 census reported only 228,621 homeless Americans. "Most people don't believe that figure is accurate," he said.

The American stereotype of homeless people as drunks and bums is inaccurate, Pitman said. The 3 million homeless Americans includes those who lost their homes because of an emergency such as fire, tornado, or eviction; stranded travellers; the unemployed; individuals and families on public assistance and welfare; the "lifestyle homeless" such as runaways, dropouts, prostitutes and alcoholics who have chosen to be homeless; the disabled (both physical and mental); and the "hidden homeless" who live with other family members but have no homes.

He cited research which indicates 30-40 percent of the homeless are families; 67 percent are single men; 30 to 50 percent are veterans; 25-33 percent are mentally ill or handicapped; 10-15 percent are single women; 44 percent are addicted to drugs or alcohol and all are very poor.

"There is no such thing as a typical homeless person," Pitman said. "About 75 percent of all Americans are just two paychecks away from being homeless."

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Dillard takes new
post with RTVC

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7/25/91

N-CO RTVC

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Douglas "Doug" Dillard has been appointed vice president for external relations of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, effective Aug. 1.

Also on Aug. 1, Dillard from Garland, Texas, begins his 24th year as editorial cartoonist for the Baptist Standard, Texas Baptists' weekly newsjournal.

In the newly-created post at the RTVC, Dillard, 62, will be responsible for development, public relations and counseling.

In accepting the RTVC appointment, Dillard leaves a job as director of information services for InfoNational, Inc. in Dallas, an international business that provides information services and consulting to the import-export industry.

Dillard has worked in the public relations field since 1965, both as a self-employed creative consultant and as an employee of several religious and secular organizations. He began a syndicated cartoon feature "Bro. Blotz" in 1961.

He holds a master's degree in religious education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth and a bachelor of arts degree from Baylor University.

Married 38 years, he's the father of three grown children. He is a deacon and Bible teacher at First Baptist Church of Richardson.

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Bivocational, smaller church pastors
should be equippers, consultant says By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
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F-JXCW

DALLAS (BP)--Instead of trying to "do it all," bivocational ministers and pastors of smaller membership congregations should devote themselves to equipping lay leaders for ministry, according to D.G. McCoury, pastoral leadership consultant with the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

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McCoury led a workshop on "developing lay leadership," one of several seminars offered at the fifth annual Texas Baptist Bivocational and Smaller Membership Churches/Missions Ministers and Wives Conference. About 100 people attended the meeting, July 19-21 at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, Texas.

"Get rid of your messiah complex," McCoury told the ministers. "The work of your church will never be done if you're the one doing it. You're not hired guns to do the church's mission."

McCoury challenged each pastor to become an equipper of a leadership team in his church.

"In a Southern Baptist church, pastoral leadership is influencing individuals and groups to develop and accomplish their goals in accordance with the church's mission," he said.

A pastoral counselor from Waco also urged the bivocational ministers and smaller membership church pastors to free themselves from the feeling the success or failure of their churches rests solely upon the pastors' shoulders.

"We need to look at our theology of self-idolatry," said Michael Smith, director of the Samaritan Counseling Center of Central Texas and a member of Seventh and James Baptist Church in Waco.

"The sense that we are indispensable can be a form of idolatry. There's a difference between feeling needed and feeling indispensable."

Smith encouraged the ministers to be forgiving of themselves and operate from a biblical theology of peace and faithfulness rather than a business world model of success and productivity.

Baptists often are too narrow in their understanding of calling into ministry, according to Dale Holloway, bivocational ministry consultant for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"The real challenge in Southern Baptist life is connecting ministering persons to ministry opportunities," Holloway said.

Too many seminary students expect a full-time, fully supporting pastorate upon graduation rather than being open to a dual-career ministry, Holloway noted.

"Our median church size is 60 in Sunday school, but we're preparing our ministers for fully supporting ministries. We're building bridges to nowhere," he said.

With dismay, he contrasted the large concentration of seminary-trained ministers in the South who are not serving any churches and the large number of unchurched communities in the Northwest and New England. Holloway challenged the ministers to consider becoming bivocational church planters in pioneer areas.

In a seminar on "The Sociology of Churching," Charles Lee Williamson, director of the missions division of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, explained people tend to congregate in a narrow spectrum on the socio-economic scale.

Smaller membership church ministers should recognize some of their church members -- or at least their church members' children -- may not choose to congregate in the same way as they rise socio-economically, he said.

Although people tend to be nostalgic about their choice of churches and may choose to continue worshipping in a smaller membership church with lower-income people, their children do not carry that same sense of nostalgia, he explained.

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"Help the families in your churches understand what's going on with their kids. It may not just be youthful rebellion causing them not to want to come to your church. We may be making some kids sociologically very uncomfortable," he said.

Among their many other ministries, smaller membership churches that attract low-income persons have a vital role in evangelizing and discipling the next generation of middle-class church members, Williamson said.

"As a population, Christians are more rapid in their upward mobility than non-Christians. The future of the Southern Baptist Convention lies in evangelizing the poor folks who, in a generation or two, will be in middle class churches that finance our missions programs," he said.

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To be read, writers need something
to say and someone to say it to

By Terri Lackey

F-SSB

Baptist Press
7/25/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Aspiring writers must determine why they want to write, what they want to say and who will be the audience for their words, several authors and editors agreed.

"Today there is a such glut of written material that we have to make certain we have something to say and someone to say it to," said Bob Dean, senior specialist of editorial and curriculum work for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's office of church programs and services.

Magazines especially target an even smaller and more specialized group than ever before, Dean told a group of about 50 writers attending the annual writers' workshop July 15-18 at the board. The group was there, not only to hone their writing skills, but to learn more about getting published through Sunday School Board periodicals, curriculum and books, Dean said.

"It used to be that you could walk into a book store and magazines would just take up a small section," Dean said. "Now they take up huge, sweeping areas."

Knowing what they want to say and who they want to say it to is not all it takes to get published, said Dean and Robert Hastings, author and editor emeritus of the Illinois Baptist, newsjournal of the Illinois Baptist State Association.

Writers must have something valuable to say, they agreed.

"Anyone with strong convictions has something to say," said Hastings of Springfield, Ill. "You also need imagination. You must aim for freshness. There aren't that many new truths in the world."

Hastings encouraged writers of religious materials to be especially careful about redundant and worn words.

"Move out of dullsville. One criticism you often hear about religious material is that it is dull and lacking imagination."

Writers owe their readers fresh and lively material, Dean said. "Our readers don't owe us anything. We owe them everything."

Grasping and holding a reader's attention is much harder today than ever before, Dean said. "Two generations ago people had longer attention spans."

"Increased competition (from television, other written materials and outside activities) makes reading more challenging for the reader and the writer," Dean said.

Hastings told the writers anyone with a past has something interesting to say. "Our entire past holds several good stories."

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He suggested several ways writers can call up their past and trigger their memories. Those include interviews with older relatives, scanning through old photo albums, high school or college year books or family correspondence.

"You can also use your own memory and just start working backward by recalling special days or special people. There is also a value in recalling bad things that have happened to us as well as the good," Hastings said.

Meanwhile, Lowell Thompson, a design editor in the board's Sunday school preschool-children's department, said curriculum writing is among the most stringent type of writing found at the Sunday School Board.

People wanting to write curriculum must meet a battery of guidelines and expect little pay for the number of hours worked, Thompson said. But, he added, they receive the satisfaction of involvement in a ministry that touches the lives of people throughout the nation.

Thompson told a group of writers attending a seminar on writing for children that in curriculum writing "we put you in a straitjacket and then say 'draw a picture.'"

Guidelines for being accepted as a curriculum writer are hard enough, but once accepted, writers must then follow rule after rule "and still be creative," Thompson said.

Sunday school children's curriculum writers must be born-again Christians, active members of a Southern Baptist church, experienced children's workers, and presently working with the age group of children for which they want to write, he said.

In another small workgroup, Charlie Warren, editor of Home Life magazine, likened query letters to job interviews.

"If you have a lot of strikeouts (on your typewritten letters); if your sentence structure is bad; or if you have a lot of misspelled words, then I'm probably not going to use your manuscript," Warren told a group attending a session on writing for families.

Home Life is produced through the board's family ministry department.

Query letters are written to editors by hopeful freelancers explaining a story idea they have for a particular publication, Warren explained. They are usually the basis for the editor accepting or rejecting a manuscript, "so they had better be great."

Freelancers should study the magazine for which they want to write to determine the target audience, build a relationship with the editor, submit neat manuscripts, watch spelling and grammar and verify facts, Warren said.

"It's also a good idea to have a 'hot' topic," Warren suggested.

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South Carolina youth group
takes unusual mission trip

By Terri Lackey

F-SSB

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE (BP)--Youth mission trips usually conjure teaching mission Vacation Bible School in an inner-city neighborhood, singing in a mall or witnessing on a beach.

Not this year for a group of 26 senior high youth from St. Andrews Baptist Church in Columbia, S.C.

Youth minister Jim Cashwell brought the youth to the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville where they worked in five areas learning more about what it takes to get Southern Baptist literature to the churches. The youth spent July 15-19 in the discipleship training, art, church music and family ministry departments, as well as in the Nashville Baptist Book Store.

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"Some of the results were a better understanding of the materials they (the youth) are using," Cashwell said. "We use exclusively BSSB materials, and now the kids are getting to see how it develops and the processes it goes through."

The idea, Cashwell said, came from DiscipleLife materials produced through the youth section of the discipleship training department. Cashwell has been using the materials since he joined the St. Andrews church staff six years ago.

The DiscipleLife strategy promotes a youth apprentice program at the church where young people go into classes to teach, go to the pulpit to preach or learn about other areas of the church, Cashwell said.

"This idea came about because we want our kids to be exposed to avenues of Christian service other than in the church or being a missionary," he said. "We have 19 of our kids who are committed to full-time Christian service. This is a way for them to find out more about what's out there."

"When we came up, we really didn't know what to expect. We really didn't know what we would face. But the board employees were really enthusiastic and supportive. The kids were really accepted and put right to work."

The youth "accepted a servant attitude to do anything," and that's just about what they did, Cashwell said.

Some evaluated curriculum, but others did "some boring stuff" like tear notebooks apart from summer conferences, Cashwell said. "It gave them a chance to realize some of the work involved in the real world."

Two of the youth who participated in the program agreed they thought the notion was "dumb" at first.

"I didn't think this trip had a purpose," said Anna Adams, "but I went on it because I go on the mission trip every year."

"Now I have a better understanding of what is put into everything (Southern Baptist literature, curriculum, materials) that we get at the church," said Adams, who was on a team that evaluated the written and visual content of youth discipleship training materials.

Warren Bazemore, who was on the same evaluation team as Adams, said he wants to take over the job and office of Clyde Hall, manager of the discipleship training department's youth section.

Twirling around in Hall's chair, he said, "I want this office."

Explaining further, he said, "I would like to be in some type of youth ministry."

"I think the most important time in a Christian's life is their youth," Bazemore said. "And that's why I want Clyde's job. Besides, he's cool."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press

Small church pastor
elected 2nd VP of SBC

By Joni B. Hannigan

F- CO

Baptist Press
7/25/91

PINE BLUFF, Ark. (BP)--He's not exactly a household name anyway, but if the new second vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Ed Harrison Jr. seems elusive, it is because he's an authentic gypsy and not because he is reluctant to talk.

Harrison, grandson of a gypsy fortune teller, loads up his travel trailer to head out for at least a few weeks annually to paint the roofs of barns for rural Arkansas farmers.

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"Ed is a real gypsy by culture," says David Rogers, the Tennessee pastor who nominated Harrison for his office. "He's just a happy, jovial guy, the sort you would remember if you saw him."

Pastor of Dollarway Baptist Church in Pine Bluff, Ark., for the past ten years, 44-year old Harrison quit school in the seventh grade but later attended Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.

Like most of his church members who hold regular jobs throughout the year, Harrison enjoys the travel and counts the summer work as a unique time to witness to farmers and those who don't get out much.

"They go place after place," Rogers testifies, "and are known for their honest work."

The traveling leaves the church, which usually has 80 in Sunday school, with about 30 on any given Sunday in the summer, Rogers confirms.

But this, he says, doesn't mean the church is in a financial crunch. "They always send their tithe from wherever they are," Rogers explains.

Like their tall, dark pastor, most churchgoers are extremely dedicated, according to Rogers, and enjoy the carefree missions call in the summer, without leaving the church to suffer.

Harrison and his wife of 26 years, Linda, have four children: Terry, 25; Timmy, 20; Tammy, 16; and Tiffany, 12.

Dollarway Baptist Church, in connection with the Harmony Baptist Association, recently published Harrison's biography, entitled "No Respect of Persons" which focuses on his ethnic gypsy roots.

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Hannigan is a correspondent for the Indiana Baptist, newsjournal of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.