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TENNESSEE -- Jailed minister, other Baptist bodies face lawsuits totalling \$10 million.
KENTUCKY -- Volunteers don't let age stop their missions work.
HONG KONG -- Communists changed Molly Wong's China, but she changed her world, with photo.
ST. LOUIS -- College administrator visits former students in Kazahstan.
ILLINOIS -- Retired Baptist editor L.H. Moore dies in Illinois.

Jailed minister, other Baptist bodies
face lawsuits totaling \$10 million By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
8/12/92

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (BP)--Five lawsuits seeking a total of \$10 million in damages have been filed against a Baptist minister, the Southern Baptist Convention and three other Baptist groups in connection with the minister's conviction for child molestation earlier this year.

Named in each \$2 million civil suit are Donald McCary, minister of music and youth at Central Baptist Church of Hixson in Chattanooga for 17 years until his arrest; the church itself; the Southern Baptist Convention; Tennessee Baptist Convention; and Hamilton County Baptist Association.

Attorneys for the church and the SBC voiced certainty their clients would be dismissed from the suits, filed in Hamilton County Circuit Court by attorneys for five boys each identified as "John Doe." Four of the boys were involved in the prosecution of McCary.

McCary was indicted last November then convicted in April of 13 counts involving aggravated sexual battery, assault, sexual battery, rape and statutory rape of the boys, who were 12 to 15 years of age at the time. McCary was given a maximum 72-year sentence and is in the county jail awaiting transfer to a state prison.

In targeting the church, the SBC, the Tennessee convention and local association, the lawsuits allege "vicarious liability" (legal liability for McCary's actions), "negligent retention and/or supervision" of McCary as an employee and "negligence."

The church's attorney, Richard Bethea of Chattanooga, said he is "absolutely confident the church will be exonerated."

"The church simply did not know any more than the parents of the children knew" of McCary's alleged abuse of five boys from the church, Bethea said. "This came as an absolute shock to everyone."

The suits allege that Central's pastor, Ron Phillips, failed to investigate McCary's activities after a member of the congregation, in 1989, discussed concerns about McCary's contacts with the member's son.

"That allegation is patently false," attorney Bethea said. "At no time did anyone ever report to the pastor or any other church official any concerns that Mr. McCary may be engaging in the conduct that resulted in his arrest and prosecution."

Phillips, pastor of the church the past 13 years, is current chairman of the board of directors of the SBC Home Mission Board and president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

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"Central Baptist Church took immediate steps to deal with this situation when they were made aware of Mr. McCary's conduct at the time of his arrest," Bethea added. "They cooperated fully with law enforcement authorities and were, in fact, praised by law enforcement authorities for their attitude of cooperation and assistance in Mr. McCary's prosecution."

James Guenther, SBC general counsel, predicted the SBC will be dismissed from the suits as will the Tennessee convention and local Baptist association.

The suits contend McCary was "employed and/or under the direction and control of" the church and the other Baptist bodies.

"We've probably had a dozen of these cases where a plaintiff has undertaken to show that the SBC controls a minister," said Guenther, who has handled SBC legal affairs since 1966. "Plaintiffs have never been able to show that we do" control any minister.

Guenther explained the SBC does not ordain, certify or defrock ministers or select, supervise or discipline them for local churches.

Added Bethea, "The Southern Baptist Convention, the Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Hamilton County Baptist Association, as any Baptist knows, have no legal authority over the independent and autonomous churches that choose to participate in those associations."

McCary has a twin brother, Ron, who also is in prison for child sex abuse and an older brother, Richard, on parole for similar charges, according to newspaper accounts.

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Volunteers don't let age
stop their missions work

By Pauline Stegall

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MAYFIELD, Ky. (BP)--Age hasn't tied Anne Parrish Markham and Roberta Bridges Chumley to rocking chairs.

"The Lord has been so good to me. I feel I must serve him as long as I can," said Markham, 86, of Mayfield, Ky., who recently returned from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She and Chumley, 72, of Greenville, Ky., spent two months cataloging books in the Brazilian Baptist seminary's library there.

They have teamed up before: Markham, a retired college English teacher, catalogs books; Chumley, one of Markham's former students and a retired jeweler, prepares work cards.

Both seasoned travelers, they were undaunted by their austere quarters in Brazil. Their small room contained two hard beds, two chairs and a table, Markham said. But after some 30 missionaries honored the pair with a shower of household items, they spruced up their short-term home.

Markham and Chumley got to know many of the seminary students during their time in Rio. Resting on their porch, they often would be joined by young people. Some spoke only Portuguese and were anxious to improve their English.

That was a familiar pattern for Markham, a veteran volunteer. Since she retired at age 72, she has cataloged three libraries in Guatemala, three in Kenya and others in Jamaica and Australia.

In her many trips, Markham never has experienced illness or injury. "The Lord has taken good care of me," she claimed.

She's been invited to go to Bolivia and catalog a library on computer. "I may go," she said, "but I don't do computers. I may have to go to Murray State and take a course."

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Communists changed Molly Wong's
China but she changed her world

By Lydia Murphy

HONG KONG (BP)--The communists called her an enemy of the people and considered her an anti-revolutionist. She had no security and couldn't trust the government.

But Molly Wong had peace because her strength and support did not come from communism.

For Wong, who received the distinguished alumna award from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary this summer, the words sent to her by a missionary friend became her message of encouragement through years of persecution: "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."

"Along the way in my Christian experience I had learned that Scriptures and hymns are God's rod and staff. Every time I faced tribulations or I needed them most, they were there. I was comforted, enlightened and strengthened," she said.

Although Wong completed her college education, it did not help her career with communist officials. Because she was a Christian and educated she was a favorite target during group indoctrination sessions where she was belittled and scorned.

"Day after day they scolded, blamed and shouted. They wanted me to answer their questions again and again. What they wanted was their kind of answer even if it went against my faith and conscience," Wong said.

"I was in misery and felt I had reached the bottom. I could not endure any more and there was no place I could go and no one who could help me.

"At night, when I got home, I prayed in agony. In my room I secretly read my Bible and sang hymns which had special messages," Wong said. "I could never forget God's presence during those precious hours."

Growing up in a middle-class Chinese family in Shanghai, Wong was the youngest of four children. Her parents died when Wong was 6 and the children became orphans.

As a teen, Wong went to the North Gate Church (First Baptist Church of Shanghai) where she came under the influence of Baptist missionaries.

According to Wong, it was missionary Elizabeth Hale's selfless and devoted life that had the greatest impact on her.

"I accepted Jesus as my personal Savior and immediately my life was changed," Wong said. "There was no more fear of death, devils and darkness. I was sure that Jesus had saved me."

Wong's confidence in God upheld her through the difficult days of communist takeover and oppression as a young adult. At one point she became so ill from a kidney infection she nearly died.

But Wong depended on God to overcome her sickness and other obstacles to reach her desire of serving God in a free land.

"The biggest problems were political," said Wong, who was a government statistician. "They considered some of the information to be secret. They would not let me leave."

But Wong's prayers and perseverance paid off and she managed to escape China for Hong Kong, where she began work for Hong Kong Baptist Press.

In 1969, Wong graduated from Southwestern and returned to her work with the Hong Kong publishing house. Her book, "They Changed My China," was published in 1970 by Broadman Press and tells her story of fleeing from the communist takeover.

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Wong retired in 1990 after 30 years as editor and editor-in-chief of Hong Kong Baptist Press. But the 72-year-old writer hasn't stopped. She currently is editing a new translation of the Chinese Bible.

As she considers going through another communist takeover in 1997 when Hong Kong reverts to China, Wong does what she did before -- trust God.

"I hope God will make a revival among the churches and Christians will be stronger and not compromise as before."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southwestern Seminary.

College administrator visits
former students in Kazakhstan

By Trennis Henderson

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ST. LOUIS (BP)--George Hutchings, acting dean of development at Missouri Baptist College in St. Louis, will go any distance -- even halfway around the world -- to stay in contact with college alumni.

Hutchings and David Love, a junior at Missouri Baptist College, recently returned from Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, in the former Soviet Union, where they visited with two former Missouri Baptist students.

Kalamkas Zhanysbaeva and Zhanar Abdildina spent the 1990-91 academic year studying at Missouri Baptist College. They originally traveled to the United States to participate in a one-semester student exchange program sponsored by Cooperative Services International, Southern Baptists' international aid organization. But after a few weeks, the two young ladies asked to stay a second semester.

The Soviet government agreed for them to remain in St. Louis an additional semester if the college would provide the needed expenses. Hutchings and other college officials raised \$8,000 to cover the expenses and provide the two students additional time at the college.

Hutchings worked closely with the students while they were at Missouri Baptist College and the three of them developed a lasting friendship. When the two young women returned home, they told their families of Hutchings' kindness and their families, in turn, invited him to visit Alma-Ata.

Love, a member of Manchester (Mo.) Baptist Church, volunteered to accompany Hutchings on his trip. A composer and pianist, Love was able to play the piano for various audiences in Alma-Ata. The two Missourians visited the Kazakh Parliament and the National Academy of Science and Hutchings spoke at a Baptist church in Alma-Ata.

Describing the culture as "totally, totally different," Love noted, "I learned a whole lot about the people and how friendly they are."

Hutchings said the trip provided an excellent opportunity to "follow up on their spiritual lives." The two students, both Muslims, had gained a positive perspective of Christianity during their time in the U.S.

During a banquet in Alma-Ata, Hutchings said Zhanysbaeva, a government interpreter, told her friends and family it has been "born in her heart to believe 100 percent in the Almighty God."

Although she "doesn't have all her theology straight yet," Hutchings said he plans to send her some Christian material "to help her on her pilgrimage."

Abdildina, who now works on the Kazakh stock exchange, also expressed an interest in Christianity by the end of the week-long visit, Hutchings reported. He said her parting request was: "Pray for me. I need spiritual help."

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Reflecting on his trip, Hutchings noted, "I have learned that other cultures -- such as Muslims and atheists -- are not necessarily hostile to us. Simple kindness can open the doors to the hearts of atheists."

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Retired Baptist editor
L.H. Moore dies in Illinois

Baptist Press
8/12/92

SALEM, Ill. (BP)--L.H. Moore, editor emeritus of the Ohio Baptist Messenger and former editor of the Illinois Baptist, died at his home here Aug. 10.

Moore, 82, had suffered the past few months from an inoperable brain tumor. Earlier this year, he and his wife, Neoma, moved from Columbus, Ohio, to Salem, Ill.

From 1967 until his retirement in 1976, the native Illinoisan was editor of the Ohio Baptist Messenger. From 1957 until 1967 he was editor of the Illinois Baptist. For four years before that, he was evangelism director for Illinois Baptist State Association.

Ordained to the ministry in 1926, Moore served for 25 years as pastor of churches in Tennessee and Illinois. After retirement, Moore was interim pastor of several churches in the greater Columbus, Ohio, area.

Moore was a past president of Illinois Baptist State Association and the Southern Baptist Press Association.

A graduate of Union University in Jackson, Tenn., he is the author of three books: "Southern Baptists in Illinois," "From Forest Trails to Urban Jungles" and a history of Ohio Baptists. He co-authored a book of sermons, "Jesus Is Calling."

Funeral services will be at 10:30 a.m. Aug. 14 at First Baptist Church in Vandalia, Ill.

Besides his wife, survivors include four sons, Thomas of Phoenix, Ariz.; Lamire H. of Fayetteville, Ark.; Paul of Salem; and John D. of Lewistown, Mont.; a brother, Stanley W. Moore of Vandalia; 24 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

Memorials may be made to the Baptist Children's Home at Carmi, Ill., or to the L.H. and Neoma G. Moore Memorial Fund of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

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EDITORS' NOTE: Mrs. Moore's address is 317 E. Jennings, Salem IL 62881.