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Baptists continue to expand
relief help in Andrew's wake

By Steve Barber

Baptist Press
8/27/92

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist disaster relief units from Virginia to Texas had been activated as of noon Aug. 27 in response to Hurricane Andrew's assault on Florida and Louisiana.

The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, which is coordinating the disaster response, activated units from Virginia and Kentucky, adding them to 11 other states with units already en route or in operation on the two disaster fronts.

All units in the Miami area, which includes those from Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina, were continuing operations. Georgia's two units were at the Miami-Dade Community College South Campus while South Carolina was at Homestead Middle School, North Carolina at Richmond Heights Middle School and Florida at Cutler Ridge Elementary School. The Ohio unit was operating at First Baptist Church in Perrine.

The units are concentrated in south suburban Miami, which suffered the most severe damage when Andrew came ashore the morning of Aug. 24.

Bob Simpkins, Brotherhood director for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, is now on-site coordinator and Red Cross liaison in Miami, replacing Brotherhood staffer Jim Ferguson, who returned to the agency's Memphis headquarters.

Meanwhile, in Louisiana, other units had left their initial staging areas by Thursday and some were already on-site and serving meals.

There are three Texas units plus a command post now operating in Louisiana. An 18-wheel tractor-trailer feeding unit capable of serving 15,000 meals daily, was setting up behind the parish courthouse in New Iberia, a city of roughly 32,000 that was directly in Andrew's path. A unit from Beaumont served 2,000 breakfasts Aug. 27 in Lafayette, where about 20,000 homes and businesses are without utilities. Another unit, based in Tyler, Texas, was en route to Morgan City with water purification equipment.

Also on Aug. 27, units from Arkansas, Louisiana and Oklahoma were en route to Lafayette to receive specific assignments. A small Louisiana unit remained in Alexandria to feed evacuees at the fairgrounds.

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The Mississippi unit was operating in Baton Rouge while the Alabama unit was working in Houma, where about 50,000 residents are without utilities.

The Brotherhood Commission has also activated four child-care units for Louisiana, which plan to open by 9 a.m. Saturday.

The Texas Baptist Temporary Emergency Child Care unit, for example, will begin operating in New Iberia at 9 a.m., Saturday, Aug. 29. The unit is approved by Texas' Department of Human Resources as a licensed child care center in disasters, allowing children to get a hot, balanced meal at noon and providing parents time to clean up their homes and businesses.

Trained volunteers use carefully developed instructional modules to help children cope with the traumatic ordeal of disaster. The modules, which are stored in the mobile supply unit, are set up in churches, schools or other public facilities.

Douglas Beggs, vice president of Program Services for the Brotherhood Commission and national off-site coordinator for the relief effort, said volunteers still are needed but reminded them they should be ready to "rough it."

"In both areas, housing is in short supply, if not nonexistent, so try to come in a motor home or camper if one is available," Beggs said. "Also, volunteers must bring their own water and other necessities. In other words, plan on being totally self-sufficient."

Prospective volunteers should first contact their state convention Brotherhood office. Volunteers must be certified to work at the feeding units, but many more are needed for clean-up duty.

The Brotherhood Commission continues to receive donations designated for disaster relief. The mailing address is 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104.

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Ken Camp contributed to this story.

**Black Baptist leaders ponder
possible church conference**

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
8/27/92

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--An effort to get 500 participants from black Southern Baptist churches in California boosted attendance at the Small Sunday School Leadership Conference -- giving black church development leaders hopes for a multi-program conference week for black and language church leaders.

Tom Kelly, director of the black church extension department for the California Southern Baptist Convention set a goal of 500 people attending the Aug. 24-28 conference. "I can count 450 who came, but there are some folks here I didn't count," Kelly said.

With the 450 attending, black church workers from California accounted for more than half the 828 persons registered for the conference.

Kelly said he had 61 pastors signed up to receive scholarships to attend the conference and 55 of those attended.

"We try to target the black pastor," Kelly said. "If we can equip them, that gives us the ability to work with the leadership in their churches."

The state convention also subsidized transportation and regional contract consultants planned transportation from their area. Participants from San Diego planned to charter a plane but instead reserved 45 seats on a commercial flight.

Participants from the Los Angeles area used four charter buses. Several vans were needed for overflow from the buses, Kelly said. Vans were used for participants from Sacramento, Oakland and Central Valley areas with some vans stopping along the way to pick up other participants.

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A similar effort was considered to involve workers from black churches in Texas but was not successful this year, said Wil Tanner, black church consultant for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Tanner and black church leaders in Mississippi plan to coordinate efforts for Sunday school workers to attend the Small Sunday School Leadership Conference next year.

Meanwhile, black church development leaders from the SBC Sunday School Board, Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board are laying plans for a Black and Language Church Development Conference they hope will be possible by 1994.

With the black church attendance at Glorieta this year and the 800-plus participants in the National Language Church Development Conference in Orlando, Fla., Aug. 3-6, there is a demonstrated need for a conference week dedicated to black and language churches, said Jay Wells, manager of the black church development section at the Sunday School Board.

A conference for black and language church workers should be multi-program with joint agency sponsorship, said Will McPherson, director of the black church extension division at the Home Mission Board.

"The conference should have everything that touches church life -- the whole scope of church," McPherson said.

The week would offer a sampling of the different program areas from each of the other weeks offered at the conference centers, explained David Cornelius, director of black church missions at the Foreign Mission Board.

Wells, McPherson, Cornelius and black church extension leaders from Texas and California met during the Glorieta conference to discuss ideas for a multi-program conference.

With training in missions and Christian education, the week would not take the place of other weeks but would allow a pastor to bring the leadership from every program area to get the basics to build on, Wells explained.

Wells said the concept would provide a holistic approach to the black church model.

From the state convention perspective, Kelly said an expanded conference for black church workers would be helpful.

"Glorieta is the best vehicle we have for orienting new black church leaders," he said. "Once they leave here, their perspective is changed."

Kelly said growth is happening in California because of training events like the Small Sunday School Leadership Conference.

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Baptist anti-drinking stance
vs. relaxed societal attitude

By Mark Baggett

Baptist Press
8/27/92

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--As vices go, drinking has always ranked among the top Baptist targets.

Through the years, Baptists have denounced gambling, motion pictures and modern dance, divorce, obscene literature, tobacco and homosexuality. "But the greatest addiction has been to the temperance, or prohibition, cause," as Ellen M. Rosenberg says in her 1989 book "The Southern Baptists: A Subculture in Transition."

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Despite the long-held total abstinence stance and despite vigorous and continual condemnations of drinking, the realities of Baptist attitudes toward drinking have never been one-dimensional. Before the late 1800s, when the temperance tradition began in earnest, some Baptist state papers even carried liquor advertising, Rosenberg reports.

In contemporary Baptist life, the issue is difficult to gauge. Recent studies have shown a surprising number of Baptists drink although the traditional view of total abstinence remains strong.

"The attitude of Baptists today on this question is clearly modified from that of absolute prohibition," Brook Hays and John E. Steely said in their 1981 book, "The Baptist Way of Life."

"While ministers still speak with almost a single voice in favor of abstinence, our laymen are clearly divided, and the practice of disciplining a member for drinking is much less common than a generation ago," Hays and Steely wrote.

Dan Ireland, executive director of the Alabama Citizens Action Program, an educational and lobbying program on moral issues, believes Baptists should treat the issue realistically.

"We need to recognize there is a drinking problem within the fellowship and we need to have a redemptive attitude toward those people," Ireland said. "We need to vocalize the problem without categorizing people as bums, without castigating them or alienating them."

The huge liquor industry and relaxed contemporary attitudes toward drinking have not stopped Ireland from lobbying for controls. Although Southern Baptists are still the most dependable activists in county wet-dry struggles, other denominations such as the United Methodist Church also recently reaffirmed strong stands for total abstinence.

And church groups have been joined by none other than a member of the Kennedy family, Joseph, a Democratic congressman from Massachusetts, who has sponsored a bill requiring health warnings on advertising for alcoholic beverages.

Within the typical Baptist church, however, the subject of drinking remains taboo.

"The position of the church is total abstinence," Ireland said, "but members know that it (drinking) happens. It's something of a coverup job: You don't talk about my vice and I won't talk about yours."

Still, Ireland and his counterparts, such as Joe Bob Mizzell, director of the state convention's Christian Life Commission, fight the battle against social drinking, which some Baptists believe to be harmless.

"We have to deal with it realistically and not sweep it under the carpet," he said. "People must come to grips with the fact that alcohol is a drug ... the No. 1 drug problem and the No. 1 killer of teen-agers.

"If this drug is presenting this kind of problem, the adult members of a church should look at it in the interests of what it is doing and can do to young people and to the family and then say, 'I can do without it.'"

The alcohol industry spends \$2 billion a year on advertising and acceptance of drinking more and more becomes a "norm," Ireland said.

"There is definitely a more relaxed attitude by Baptists and others toward drinking," he said. "But in the last five years, there has been a decrease in consumption nationwide and the percentage of non-drinkers continues to increase. Part of this is because of the health craze and part of it is because more people recognize alcohol as a drug."

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The danger to teens is serious, Ireland said. He cited a recent poll conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that found approximately one of every five 13-17-year-olds has a drinking problem. ALCAP, which has gone into more than 1,000 schools and interviewed 12,000 pupils, found that 67 percent of the young people said they had their first drink at home.

Ireland has his own case studies as well.

"A layman in an Alabama church told me he didn't see anything wrong with social drinking," Ireland recalled. "But I asked him what would happen if one of his children began drinking and became addicted. He said that would be their problem. I find that a very shallow view.

"If you have alcohol in the home, you run the risk of all the children in the home having access to it. It's not worth the potential danger."

Ireland believes casual attitudes toward alcohol are beginning to change.

"Look at our attitudes toward smoking. It is the No. 1 killer drug," he said. "It is far more acceptable to say something against smoking nowadays. By and by, I think we'll reach that stage with alcohol."

Asked whether drinking could become a test of fellowship for Baptists, Ireland said he doubted it.

"If we're not careful, we draw the circle of legalism. Where would you stop? What about not tithing? What about not attending church? The Bible speaks to those issues, too. On this issue and other moral issues, we should argue that this lifestyle is not commensurate with our Christian witness."

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How many Baptists drink?
Studies reflect wide range

Baptist Press
8/27/92

-- In a 1986 study of Southern Baptists by National Family Research, more than 1,000 Southern Baptists answered a questionnaire on societal and denominational issues; 40 percent said they occasionally use alcoholic beverages, compared to 69 percent of "other Protestants" and 81.8 percent of Catholics.

-- A 1987 Gallup poll found that 51 percent of Southern Baptists drink, again the lowest percentage among major denominations.

-- In studies published in the book "Baptist Battles" by Nancy Ammerman, Southern Baptists were asked which practices Christians should avoid. More than 95 percent of those identifying themselves as "conservatives" or "fundamentalists" said drinking alcoholic beverages should be avoided; 86 percent of "moderate/conservatives" and 63 percent of "moderates" agreed.

-- "In Alabama, I would think 35-40 percent is more accurate figure of the number of Baptists who drink," said Dan Ireland, a Baptist minister who heads the Alabama Citizens Action Program. "We are on the lower end of the spectrum nationally in terms of per capita consumption because we have one of the highest tax structures on alcoholic beverages."

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Couple devotes retirement
to helping unwed mothers

By Dave Parker

Baptist Press
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ADA, Okla. (BP)--Mel and Jean Hayworth had strong convictions about the sanctity of human life but felt God's leading to do more than just protest.

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So, when Mel retired from a job near San Francisco, the couple moved to his father's old farm southwest of Ada, Okla., bought a mobile home to live in and started their own home for unwed mothers.

In 30 months, they have housed 12 different girls and are now expanding their facilities to improve their ministry. Mel, who had never built more than a storage shed before, designed and constructed an activity center for the girls; the couple moved into it temporarily while he builds a new home, giving the girls more privacy in the mobile home.

"How can you do that?" is a common question the Hayworths hear. Their response is, "How can you see people in need and NOT help?"

Even before the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion, Mel said he and his wife were active in the pro-life movement. In 1972 Jean's sister was in the middle of a difficult pregnancy and had been advised by her doctor to abort the baby.

In the hospital awaiting the procedure, Jean talked with her, read her Scriptures and left her a note about the sanctity of life; her sister checked out of the hospital, carried the baby to full-term and gave birth to a healthy child.

In 1973 the Hayworths bought the acreage near Latta. They had considered putting in a day camp but over the years became convinced God wanted them to open a home for unwed mothers.

"We naively thought the typical girl in need of a place to stay was 'Susie Sunday School' -- a good churchgoing girl who had just gotten herself in trouble," Mel recalled. "We were going to build a home for 8-10 girls; we thought it would be a bunch of happy campers with morning sickness.

"Unfortunately, it seems that all the 'Susie Sunday Schools' are aborting their babies," he said. "Church leaders in many cases are supporting that to avoid embarrassment."

Instead of innocent teens, Mel said the girls who have lived in the home have generally been very street-smart, in their late teens to early 20s and sexually experienced (one was in her fifth pregnancy). Almost all are from dysfunctional families and 10 had been sexually abused.

"My heart is with the protesters chaining themselves to abortion clinics, but we're ministering to the victims of sexual abuse," Mel said. "These girls are out finding the jerks of society that treat them the way they expect to be treated.

"Their families don't want them, their impregnators don't want them and the system is not designed to help pregnant girls. They really have no place to go."

Another problem was that the girls had no real experience in living on their own.

"They don't know how to cook, sew or plan a meal," Mel said. "They don't know how to NOT be entertained. They have no life skills. We hope to change that."

The activities building has areas to teach cooking, sewing, crafts and other such survival skills. Area women have volunteered their time to help teach the girls.

After an explosive confrontation with one of the girls, Mel said the girl told him something that sums up how most of them feel.

"She said, 'I will do anything to get someone to say they love me,'" Mel said. "That's why we're doing what we're doing. We're giving them unconditional love.

"Most of these girls were involved with sex at a very young age," he said. "There was no positive father image in any of their families.

When they started the home, they had three meals a day with the girls. To give them more privacy and help them learn responsibility, though, now they only have an evening meal together.

The girls must buy their own food and fix their own breakfast and lunch each day. They cannot use drugs or steal at the home, and they must attend church with the Hayworths. If they smoke, they must do so outside. Jean transports them to get food stamps, go shopping and to the doctor's office.

"We don't even assign chores," Mel said. "We just ask them to keep their own area picked up. We give them what amounts to unconditional love."

The Hayworths have a daughter, Sarah, 14, who "has been a real asset," Jean said. "She has to sacrifice a lot. We home school her, so she's here all the time."

In addition to their work with the girls, Jean also works with Ada's crisis pregnancy hotline, counseling girls considering abortion. At this time, Ada does not have a crisis pregnancy center, so Jean has to meet the girls wherever they feel comfortable.

"Two girls received the Lord through that," Jean said, "but we could do so much better with a full-fledged center. We are working on that. We desire a home, rather than an office."

Jean said the work with girls is rewarding.

"We moved to Oklahoma 10 days after he retired," she said. "Even our daughter has never regretted it. The family said, 'How's it going to affect Sarah?' It has affected her by teaching her that she's never going to have a part in this (unplanned pregnancies).

"Our other daughters -- two in California and two in Arkansas -- are all behind us," she added. "And we really feel like what we're doing has brought a new awareness to our church about what can be done. The singles class (at First Baptist in Ada) rallies around the girls, giving them showers and helping out.

"They show them the unconditional love we try to show them," Mel added. "They try to show them that God will provide for them."

Mel said he has learned a lot over the past two and a half years.

"These girls make the same dumb mistakes over and over again, and they're not grateful for anything we do," he said. "But I look at them and say I do the same thing to God."

Early in the ministry, Mel said he refused any kind of donation, determined to make it work on his retirement income and money he had saved. Soon, though, he realized some people felt led to give, so he does accept donations now.

"I've never really tried to amass a great amount of money," he said. "My retirement is enough to meet expenses."

The Hayworths did use up all their savings building the activity center and starting the house; Mel said he is going back to work until he earns enough to finish the house.

"We have people ask how we could take a stranger into our home," Mel said. "But, I'm the only father figure most of these girls have. People say how can you do it? My question is how can you NOT do it? How can you love a heavenly Father when there is no good earthly father around?"

Another question he is asked is what qualifications he had to run a maternity home.

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"We're willing to do it, that's what qualifies us," he said. "Before we came here, I would have described our mission as saving the preborn. But I believe God's got a special place in heaven for those who are not given a chance to live on earth. The ones we need to help are the women."

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(BP) photo available upon request from the Baptist Messenger, Oklahoma Baptist newsjournal.

New England pastor feels
burden of reaching millions

By Ben L. McDade

Baptist Press
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BRADFORD, R.I. (BP)--"When I stand at the judgment, if the Lord allows me to ask one question, I want to ask: Lord, why did you call 90 percent of the preachers to go where 10 percent of the people are and 10 percent of the preachers to go where 90 percent of the people are? That just doesn't square with me."

This question sums up the call and frustration of Bobby Barnett, pastor of Chariho Baptist Church in Bradford, R.I.

Barnett, who has the charm of a country gentleman and the commitment of Peter, moved to this community of about 2,500 people after a visit in the early '70s. A native of Marked Tree, Ark., Barnett has a disarming way of telling you exactly what's on his mind.

"Here are a million people in an area about the size of one of the counties in South Carolina and we've got five or six churches trying to reach a million people," said Barnett, who began his ministry there by starting home Bible studies.

"I'm not saying y'all aren't doing a fine work there. We just need some help. We need more people who are willing to come up here to start a work and stay with it. That's the key; staying with it."

The South Carolina Baptist Convention has entered a partnership with New England Baptists, and Barnett challenges Baptists to come see the needs and ways of ministering with New England Baptists.

"Y'all need to come up here and see the situation," he said. "I'd hate to say what you can do without some of you coming up here and seeing the situation."

Barnett recalls the lean early days when his church first started with no outside funding. "I'd heard of the Home Mission Board and we had always supported it. But I thought it was for folks that really needed it, folks that were on starvation. Somehow the Lord took care of us. I don't know how he did, but he did."

A Home Mission Board representative was at the constitution service of Chariho church on March 31, 1974, and assured Barnett if he would follow the procedures, the church would qualify for funding. For the next five years the growing congregation received \$500 per month.

"We probably wouldn't have made it without their help," Barnett says. "Well, we may have made it, but it would've been rough. The gravy got pretty thin as it was."

Once the church was established, Barnett moved back to Arkansas. However, about 16 months later, the church contacted him asking him to come back. He agreed and has been there since.

When asked what their biggest challenges and needs are, Barnett doesn't miss a beat. "Start missions. Start missions. That's the biggest challenge. I'd like to see a church in Hope Valley, one in Ashaway, one in Alton.

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"If Bradford, R.I., was Bradford, Miss., Bradford, Ark., or Bradford, S.C., there would be three or four churches. We just simply need Bible-believing, Bible-preaching churches."

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(BP) photo available from the South Carolina convention's public relations office.

Can Christians be rich
in a world of human need?

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Is it possible to be Christian and "rich" in a world full of human need? Nathan Porter thinks it may be possible, but difficult.

Porter, a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board field staff worker, specializes in U.S. hunger and migrant ministries. From his experiences, Porter said he judges many Christians to be rich in comparison with others in the United States.

Speaking to students at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center during a national student conference, Porter asked students who attend universities and still have the funds to attend the conference, "How can you be rich, have so much for yourselves and still have a genuine concern for the poor?"

In America, Porter said, "we live for things -- moving up the stepladder of income, success, a bigger home, a better car. The good life is our goal."

But Porter pointed to figures from the 1990 U.S. Census and other data-gathering sources to contrast the richness of America. More than 33 million Americans live in poverty. Of all poor people, 51 percent are children and senior adults. As many as 40 million Americans have no health-care insurance; 27 million are illiterate, with another 35 million marginally illiterate.

Jesus, he pointed out, lived a life of poverty, never accumulated anything for himself and was dependent on wealthy friends to bury him. The focus of his ministry was on the poor, the sick, the outcasts and the powerless in society.

While Porter acknowledged there is no easy or clear-cut answer to the dilemma of Christian wealth in a world of need, he offered some thoughts for individual consideration:

First, he said, operating out of guilt is not the answer. Establishing priorities, one's mission and purpose in life can help determine how Christians respond to needs.

"Not living out of guilt has something to do with the gospel -- repentance, faith, commitment," Porter emphasized.

Second, Porter noted, it is hard for rich people to be followers of Jesus. The Bible offers several examples of Jesus addressing the subject -- the difficulty for a rich man to enter heaven, the need for the tax collector to give his wealth away, the promise of the kingdom of God for the poor.

One's lifestyle, motivation and relationship to human beings can reflect individual response to need, Porter said.

"Don't work for money," Porter suggested. "Work for people."

To be rich and Christian in a world of human need may be the difference in struggling with the issue of sharing from our bounty and sharing out of commitment, faith, mission and purpose in life.

The Ridgecrest Student Conference was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's student ministry department.

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Second-language English
can be witnessing tool

By Charles Willis

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Helping international students speak English can be a natural way to witness for Christ while they are in the United States, a Southern Baptist missionary said during the Student Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, Aug. 15-21.

Gayle Leininger, national missionary for literacy missions with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, said English as a Second Language (ESL) Ministries involves ministering to human needs as Jesus did.

In fact, meeting international students' needs may be the only way to reach them for Christ, Leininger said.

"It's a wonderful way to build a relationship before you witness," she told students, "especially with people who don't trust Americans, who think Americans are just out for themselves.

"We can show them the love of Christ changes us. Teaching ESL creates a very natural setting to share your verbal witness. Some students will ask about your religion in the course of studying with you. It happens naturally and I find most Christian people prefer to witness that way.

"It also is a wonderful way to grow a church," she continued. "There are countless churches that have grown by inviting students to Bible study to practice their conversational English."

For American college and university students, teaching oral English to international students is a way to respond to God's call to missions.

During Ridgecrest Student Conference, Leininger's class had to be moved more than once to accommodate the growing numbers of participants. Leininger considers 15 students an ideal class, but at Ridgecrest 35 students crowded into a classroom.

Among the participants were English majors, linguistics majors, those preparing to teach, as well as future missionaries. Leininger said she was overwhelmed with the excitement of students who discovered the class listing in the printed program and said they felt it was an avenue to respond to God's leading.

At Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center students were offered a similar conference during the simultaneous Glorieta Student Conference.

The opportunities to teach English to internationals are impossible to count, Leininger said. Most international students have had some formal training in reading English but not all can speak the language. Some who have studied other Romance languages such as Spanish, French or Italian already know the Roman alphabet. Others may know only the Arabic or Sanskrit alphabet.

For those reasons, spoken English is taught to adults in the same way as American children. First, they hear it in situations to which they can relate. Later, they tie the spoken sound to printed words.

At some points, putting the sound and the printed word together can be humorous, she said. Persons who learn to say, "It's a book," may upon seeing the sentence in print admit they thought "itsa" was a word. Despite some of the resulting confusion, international students consistently say, "Don't teach me book English; teach me street English."

The differences in accents across the United States has not seemed to be a problem in teaching international students, Leininger said.

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"A student studying in Alabama needs to speak and understand the way English is spoken in Alabama," she said. "We supply their needs where they live and we explain that they won't hear English pronounced the same way in all parts of the country."

ESL Ministries can be a long-term commitment. Leininger said "survival English" can be learned in a year but four years may be needed for a student to be fluent in English. For a homemaker who only speaks English twice a week, 10 years may be needed to speak fluent English.

Leininger said the Home Mission Board became involved in literacy missions in the 1950s by teaching adults how to read. Today there are more than 500 trained workshop leaders who can train teachers. In 1985, Leininger was appointed the first state consultant for literacy missions in Florida. Now 21 Baptist state conventions have ESL adult literacy consultants.

Students or church members in university communities interested in ESL training may contact their local Baptist Student Union director, their state Baptist convention or the Home Mission Board.

Ridgecrest and Glorieta Student Conferences were sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's student ministry department.

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

Bus ministry proponent
advises careful planning

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
8/27/92

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--While Russ Richardson hopes many Southern Baptist churches will join a renewed emphasis for bus ministry, he cautions that careful planning, training and hard work are needed to avoid failure.

Richardson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Anadarko, Okla., led sessions on bus ministry during the Small Sunday School Leadership Conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center Aug. 24-28. He wrote the Bus Ministry Handbook available from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Richardson acknowledges that bus ministry crashed in the early 70s after many churches got involved and found it unmanageable. "I believe they got burned because of weak planning," he said.

As pastor in the 1970s at two Illinois churches that had healthy, successful bus ministries, Richardson understands the problems of bus ministry then and the pitfalls now.

Then, many churches purchased school buses and put them on the road without training workers or making adequate preparation for what was to follow.

Now, he predicts, most churches will use 15-passenger vans rather than larger buses. However, he said, the need for planning, training and preparation is the same.

A church should first determine the need for bus ministry in the community. Some of the indicators are:

- unreached segments of the population no other church is targeting.
- no other church in the community with a bus ministry.
- adequate space in the church for increased attendance.
- a church attitude supportive of a bus ministry.

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After determining the need for a bus ministry, a church must prepare adequate Sunday school space, allocate adequate funding for vehicles and maintenance, train potential workers and decide what children will do during worship, he said.

An important issue to address, he said, is whether children will attend the regular worship service and how they will be handled there or if a children's worship will be provided.

Materials are now available from the Sunday School Board for children's worship, he pointed out.

Worker training should include new Sunday school workers, bus workers and children's church workers if children's church is to be offered, he said.

Training for bus ministry will be provided during the next several years by the Sunday School Board and Home Mission Board at regional bus ministry training centers across the nation, Richardson said. Training will be offered in Kenner, La., and Houston, Texas, in 1993 and Nashville, Tenn.; Dayton, Ohio; Hot Springs, Ark.; San Francisco, Calif.; and Daytona Beach, Fla., in 1994. Inquiries should be directed to Tom Lee, MSN 179, Baptist Sunday School Board, 127 Ninth Ave. N., Nashville, TN 37234.

Training will be offered next year during each Sunday School Leadership Conference at Glorieta and Ridgecrest conference centers, Richardson said.

"Launching the bus ministry is the biggie event," Richardson said, "but don't launch until you are thoroughly prepared."

Richardson said churches likely will be more cautious in launching bus ministries because so many had bad experiences previously.

He recommends adding one route at a time. "Let the workers and Sunday school grow along with it as you add routes. It will be a healthier program that way."

Richardson cautions that bus ministry is not easy. "It is not the vehicles that reach people but the workers out there visiting on Saturday."

Visiting is at the heart of the philosophy for bus ministry, he said, "and it is hard work."

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Ridgecrest camps alumni
organize association

Baptist Press
8/27/92

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Alumni of Camp Ridgecrest for Boys and Camp Crestridge for Girls have organized Ridgecrest Camps Alumni & Friends, Inc., an independent, nonprofit organization.

More than 50 alumni and friends of the camps gathered during the July 4 holiday at the Boys Camp to mark the 50th anniversary of Spilman Lodge, a log building which houses a gymnasium and dining hall, said Frank Johnson, of Winston-Salem, N.C., president of the new organization.

In the course of homecoming activities the group organized Camp Ridgecrest Alumni & Friends, Camp Crestridge Alumni & Friends, and the umbrella organization for both, Ridgecrest Camps Alumni & Friends.

Johnson said the organization is a network of alumni, staffers, parents and corporate and personal friends, all of whom have an interest in the two camps.

"Our mission is to strengthen the work of the camps in their Christian ministry of developing boys and girls mentally, physically, socially and spiritually," he said. "This network keeps old summer friends in touch with each other and with the camps."

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Since the camps are restricted from soliciting funds, Johnson said the association will operate separately to organize fund-raising for scholarships and other needs.

Camp Ridgecrest for Boys opened with a two-week session in 1929 and began a more substantial program in 1930. Camp Grestridge for Girls began operation in 1955.

Since the July 4 beginning with 50 members, almost 150 persons have joined the organization, which charges an annual \$10, tax-deductible fee.

Johnson said plans are for establishment of local chapters once mailing lists are established.

Interested alumni and friends of the camps may write Ridgecrest Camps Alumni & Friends, Inc., P.O. Box 4, Ridgecrest, N.C. 28770.

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

EDITORS' NOTE: Members of a 15-member board of directors of Ridgecrest Camps Alumni & Friends are Frank Johnson, Winston-Salem, N.C.; Hewlett Sullivan, retired businessman, Greenville, S.C.; Steve Little, attorney from Marion, N.C.; Monroe Ashley, former boys camp director, now church staff member, Gaffney, S.C.; George Pickering, retired camp director from Black Mountain, N.C.; Mike Landrum, CPA from Memphis, Tenn.; Lee Davis, Winston-Salem attorney; Julius Corpening of Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem; Hal Unwin, physician from Dallas; Joey Overby, physician from New Bern, N.C.; Rick Johnson, former boys camp director and now a camp director from Mount Berry, Ga.; Johnnie Armstrong of Blue Mountain (Miss.) College; Julie Parkerson, Baptist Book Store employee at Ridgecrest, N.C.; and Jan Silvious, businesswoman from Chattanooga, Tenn.

Home Mission Board offers
grads missions opportunities

Baptist Press
8/27/92

ATLANTA (BP)--December 15 is the deadline for applications for US-2 missionaries, a missions program offered to college graduates by the Home Mission Board.

Serving in all 50 states, US-2 missionaries work on home mission fields for two years. Assignments include resort and innovative ministries, church and community ministries, new church extension, language church extension, student work, evangelism and internationals/seamen ministries.

Applicants must be college grads with four-year degrees, age 30 or younger, members of a Baptist church and in good health. Applicants will be placed in ministries according to need and personal ability.

During the two-year term of service, travel, housing, meals and insurance are provided by the Home Mission Board or local supervisors. Severance pay of \$1,200 for single people and \$2,400 for married couples, if both serve as primary workers, is paid at the end of the two year service. A seminary or graduate school scholarship of \$300 per person is available from the Home Mission Board for US-2ers after they have served two years.

Applicants must attend a group interview session one weekend in February and a week of orientation prior to arrival on the field.

To request information concerning US-2 missions write Missionary Personnel, Home Mission Board, SBC, 1350 Spring Street NW, Atlanta, GA 30367-5601, or call (404) 898-7610 or 1-800-HMB-VOLS.

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