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Volunteers arrive en masse  
to minister in Miami

Baptist Press  
9/9/92

MIAMI (BP)--Less than one week after the plea was issued, more than 1,000 Southern Baptist volunteers from as far away as Michigan and the Dakotas responded to a call to help South Florida residents recover from damages inflicted by Hurricane Andrew.

At least 1,056 workers answered a call issued by Florida Baptist Brotherhood director Cecil Seagle for 1,000 volunteers to work during Labor Day weekend, according to registration recorded at the state convention's disaster relief command post in South Florida.

In addition to the 1,065, Seagle estimated possibly another 750 volunteers went directly to church sites. For instance, more than 200 volunteers arrived to work at First Baptist Church of Cutler Ridge, but Seagle said only 45 were sent from the command post.

"We never want to be a hindrance to any volunteer getting on the field where they are needed," he said.

The Labor Day weekend teams joined a force of more than 1,500 Southern Baptist volunteers who had traveled in and out of the Miami area since the Aug. 24 hurricane struck.

Many of this first wave of volunteers prepared and served 80,000 meals a day to South Dade County residents. Others organized food and baby products in a distribution center, carried non-perishable food items to needy families and provided child care.

The Labor Day volunteers came prepared to do clean up, remove debris, repair roofs and perform minor reconstruction tasks. The Baptist effort was reinforced by a last minute plea for volunteers for the same weekend made by President George Bush.

A caravan of 18 Michigan Baptist men drove 29 hours and brought three semi-trailer trucks of food and building supplies to help the hurricane victims in South Florida. Their effort was underwritten by \$20,000 raised by Michigan Baptists. For three days they worked beside volunteers staffing the Ohio Baptist feeding unit located at the First Baptist Church of Perrine.

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Michigan Brotherhood coordinator Wayne Vann said Michigan Baptists have given with their heart. One Michigan man donated a 24-foot mobile home. Another gave a camper and planned to leave it with a homeless Perrine family.

When Vann gave \$20 to a woman to purchase gas for her generator, "the women cried and cried," he said. "Some needs are very great," Vann said. "Some needs are very small. In some cases you can meet a small need. In other cases the needs are too great."

Seven men from North and South Dakota drove 49 hours, stopping only for gas and oil, to help Florida Baptists in their time of need, according to Norman Wagoner, state Brotherhood consultant for the Dakota Southern Baptist Fellowship. For the past five years, the Florida Baptist Convention and the Dakota Fellowship have had a partnership relationship, which included the sending of many Florida Baptist work teams and resources to the two states.

"We just appreciate Florida and all they've given us over the years," Wagoner said. "We're just glad we can be here to help."

Seagle said he is "amazed at the resources, energy and commitment of Southern Baptist people. They've been willing to work and work hard at their tasks under very tough circumstances, without complaints and with great grace."

Seagle noted recovery is beginning to take place. "There is an obvious difference in the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of the people of South Florida. They have been bruised but they have found someone cares and from that they have some glimmer of hope."

A need still exists for people to help in the feeding, clean up and medical assistance phases of the recovery process. A massive rebuilding effort will begin as soon as building inspectors and insurance adjustors complete their work, Seagle said.

Volunteers who want to participate should call the Florida Baptist Convention at (800) 226-8584 for more information.

To date, Southern Baptists have contributed \$220,000 to the hurricane relief effort through the state convention. Additional funds may be donated by sending checks payable to the Florida Baptist Convention disaster relief fund, 1230 Hendricks Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32207.

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More volunteers, commodities  
needed in South Florida

Baptist Press  
9/9/92

MIAMI (BP)--Although the nation's media is portraying recovery has come to South Florida, volunteers, food and supplies are still needed.

"Why is the national media telling us the crisis is over?" asked volunteer Gary Amos of Virginia Beach, Va. "Why don't they tell us what's it's really like?"

Amos recently spent a day with Virginia Baptist volunteers and Mike Dailey, church and community ministries director of the Miami Baptist Association, searching piles of wreckage and twisted metal that were once mobile homes in several Homestead labor camps.

The group of volunteers met men, women and children living among the ruins at the camps, without basic necessities. "They really don't have enough food," said Dailey. "They have a few staples but they need flour, pinto beans and other supplies."

Dailey said he was concerned "after the glitz" is gone, Southern Baptists will forget about the needs in the area. "This is not a short-term project."

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Cause of their frustration, said Dailey, is the media giving the picture everything in under control since the military arrived in South Dade County. "That is not the way it is."

Although the number of deaths in Florida from Hurricane Andrew stands at 38, more than 4,000 people still are listed as missing persons. There is concern many more migrants, whose family members fear detection of their illegal status, have not been listed as missing.

Area building officials are condemning homes throughout the county as unsafe, yet few residents are willing to trade their few possessions or their wrecked homes for a new life among the military tents.

The 250,000 homeless people include some insured homeowners in South Dade but many more poorer homeowners, apartment dwellers and mobile home residents have no insurance, little recourse and nowhere to go.

According to Daily, many South Florida residents are still in shock. "I saw a friend of mine driving to work in a forklift the other day," he said. "He wore a glazed look on his face as he steered it down the road. Many are going to work each day and coming home to a pile of rubble."

Some Florida Baptist Convention officials are concerned after the initial supplies of food are gone, no more food will be available.

Brenda Forlines, church and community director of the Florida Baptist Convention, said she fears this relief effort will be like hunger crises in the past. "As soon as the plight of the residents is off the news, people will stop giving," she said.

Forlines noted the economic base of South Florida is in shambles. "So many people, especially the poor, hourly-waged employes have lost their jobs and source of income. They will be unable to purchase food when the stores reopen."

As she managed the response of Florida Baptists at Cutler Ridge Baptist Church in South Dade County, Forlines found early in the relief efforts the number of food shipments quickly saturated available storage space. But ten days after the hurricane, "we needed more food and supplies," she said.

As a pastor in Perrine for 32 years, Tommy Watson said, "We will have opportunities to minister for the next six months." He said many people without jobs will come to the church for help, noting many years ago the average house payment was \$125 a month. Now mortgage payments are in excess of \$900 a month. "This will financially drain our church," he said.

Florida Baptists are in South Florida for the "long haul," said John Sullivan, executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention. "We were there before the Red Cross, we will be there after the Red Cross," he said. "We were there before the Army and we will be there after the Army."

An emergency response team from the Florida Baptist Convention is stockpiling the supplies in warehouses to relieve some of the long-term distress.

Supplies needed include: adult diapers, baby diapers, formula and supplies, charcoal, cereal, candy, cleaner, bleach, dry milk, flashlights, flour, insect repellent, plastic bags, potatoes, flour and rice in two-pound bags, shampoo, sugar, toilet paper and others.

The following building supplies are also needed: 30 pound roofing felt, shingles, 3/4 inch plywood, viskeen, roofing nails, nylon window screening and duct tape. A more complete list is available through a telephone bank at the Pembroke Road Baptist Church at (305) 964-7182.

People sending or shipping supplies and food stuffs for the South Florida relief effort should send it to the Pembroke Road Baptist Church, 7130 Pembroke Road, Miramar, FL 33023, just south of Fort Lauderdale. Once there, trucks will be directed to a warehouse being used by Florida Baptists.

People can contribute to the cause by making checks payable to the Florida Baptist Convention disaster relief fund, 1230 Hendricks Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 23307.

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Dismissal of lawsuits against  
SBC, Tennessee are ordered

Baptist Press  
9/9/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Five lawsuits seeking \$10 million in damages filed against the Southern Baptist Convention, Tennessee Baptist Convention and a Chattanooga area association will be dismissed, according to a court order sought by the plaintiff's attorneys.

The civil lawsuits were filed in connection with an earlier conviction for child molestation of a Chattanooga church's minister of music and youth. Donald McCary was convicted and sentenced in April to 72 years in prison.

In targeting the SBC, TBC and the Hamilton County Baptist Association, the lawsuits alleged "vicarious liability" (legal liability for McCary's actions), "negligent retention and/or supervision" of McCary as an employee of Central Baptist Church of Hixon in Chattanooga, and "negligence."

SBC legal counsel, Nashville attorney James P. Guenther, told Baptist Press "orders of non-suit" have been submitted by the attorneys for the plaintiffs. Guenther said it probably would be a few more days before the judge actually signs them, which officially removes the SBC, TBC and the association as defendants.

Guenther had predicted the three entities would be dismissed from the lawsuit because of the particular church polity of the Southern Baptist Convention where each entity is autonomous and independent. The SBC, Guenther explained, does not ordain, certify or defrock ministers or select, supervise or discipline them for local churches.

Dismissing the SBC, TBC and the association from the civil lawsuits still would leave the local church and McCary as defendants in Hamilton County Circuit Court.

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Students' prayers for Bibles  
are immediately answered

By Tim Fields

Baptist Press  
9/9/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--How do you locate 150 Bibles in an hour and a half to donate to victims of Hurricane Andrew?

Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Education Commission, and students and faculty of the American Baptist College in Nashville will tell you it takes timely prayer and fast action.

Students and faculty of ABC, a four-year Bible college sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., had just returned from surveying needs of hurricane victims in low income areas of South Miami with Coretta King and other African-American leaders.

"We found that when Hurricane Andrew ripped through Florida and Louisiana, it not only damaged or destroyed homes and churches, but the wind and rain also destroyed most or all of their possessions including their Bibles," explained Bernard LaFayette Jr., vice-president for academic affairs at ABC.

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"We had an 18-wheel tractor trailer loaded with drinking water, diapers, foodstuffs and clothing leaving the campus for Miami in 90 minutes, and we wanted to send all the Bibles we could find.

"I called Arthur Walker to share the appeal for Bibles with him, but he was out of the office in a meeting," LaFayette explained. I left word with his secretary that the truck was leaving at 2 p.m.

Unknown to LaFayette, Walker returned to the office and immediately began responding to the appeal. He found a few Bibles in the Education Commission storeroom and then contacted Bucky Rosenbaum and Harold C. Bennett of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

Bennett and Rosenbaum found three cartons of surplus Bibles like the ones used in the auditorium of the SBC Building for chapel and Executive Committee board meetings. The Bibles which had been donated several years before by the Baptist Sunday School Board bore the gold-stamped words "Southern Baptist Convention Building."

Walker quickly loaded the Bibles into his car and headed for the campus unaware that at that very moment students and faculty of ABC were in chapel service making an appeal for Bibles and praying for God to provide the Bibles before the truck left campus.

"Our sermon title was 'Preaching the Word in a Changing World,'" LaFayette said. "As the chapel service was drawing to a close Dr. Walker walked in to deliver the Bibles. Our prayers were answered immediately."

"We are now praying that American Baptist College and the Southern Baptist Convention can form an alliance to provide additional Bibles and other long-term assistance especially for low-income families," LaFayette said.

In their survey, faculty and students at the school found large pockets of low-income Hispanics, Haitians, whites and blacks in places such as South Miami, Florida City and Goulds, Fla., whose special needs are not being met.

"We are trying to prepare these people for the post traumatic syndrome or spiritual storm which will remain long after Hurricane Andrew," LaFayette said. "This storm of spiritual deprivation is just beginning to hit. These people must now deal with storms of anger, hostility and frustration which come from losing everything they have.

"These people have nothing to do all day. They have no home, no television, no telephone, no radio. They need spiritual strength to survive this storm. They need hope," he said.

In addition to collecting and sending more Bibles, ABC is preparing to organize Southern Baptist and National Baptist volunteers who can work at rebuilding the physical and spiritual base of the low-income communities.

"We will work through churches such as Glendale Baptist Church, a black Southern Baptist congregation in Goulds. These churches will coordinate the relief efforts in their communities," LaFayette explained. "We want to provide people-to-people contact to let these victims know that we love them and God loves them."

Southern Baptists and others who want to donate supplies or volunteer their time to the ABC hurricane relief effort are encouraged to phone Bernard LaFayette or Nelson Wilson at American Baptist College at (615) 228-7877.

Pastor gets his ministry  
up to speed -- of 235 mph

By Lee Hollaway

DEWITT, Iowa (BP)--Combining a hobby and ministry has taken Bill Huff to the World Series of Drag Racing and speeds that would leave most pastors trembling.

In his yellow rail dragster, "Pastor's Pastime," Huff can achieve speeds of up to 167 miles per hour in just eight seconds. He and his crew currently are putting together a nitro-burning "funny car" that should reach 235 miles per hour in a quarter-mile ride.

Huff has been the bivocational pastor of First Baptist Church in DeWitt for four years, but he took up drag racing as a hobby just over a year ago. For the past two seasons his competitions have included the World Series of Drag Racing in nearby Cordova, Ill. Last year he took home first prize in the trophy bracket. This year he made it to the quarter-finals in the super pro class before being eliminated by transmission problems.

His biggest thrill at this year's world series, however, was getting to conduct a worship service Sunday morning in the grandstand bleachers, a first for this event. About 70 people attended, and Huff says, "The people who came were those who needed it most."

A number of fellow drivers and crew members and their families were in the service. Huff built his sermon around the idea, "Do you know for sure where you will spend eternity?" He kept his presentation simple, including explanations of some religious terms. "I would guess that 90 percent of those present never attend any church. Most of them had never heard the gospel before. No one made a decision Sunday morning, but many went away moved."

Being a drag racer gives Huff a unique standing with this crowd. "If you are a driver among drivers, they will listen to you. If you are not, they won't."

Huff sees drag racers and those who come out to watch them as one of several segments of society often bypassed by traditional evangelism efforts. He enjoys being part of the sport, and he welcomes the chance to evangelize, which he says was part of his calling from God.

"Mine was a radical salvation experience," he says. Born and reared in Iowa in another religious tradition, Huff came to know the Lord just eight years ago, at the age of 28. Initially he did not feel led into a pastoral ministry, but he was attending a church that needed a pastor. After an extended struggle, God convinced him this was his will and provided him with the gifts for a pastoral role.

Since the church could not afford a full-time pastor, Huff has continued to generate most of his own support through the home improvement company which he owns.

Huff has adopted a philosophy that relates equally to his church work and his racing: "Whatever the Lord decides to do that day, I go along for the ride."

The ride has not always been a smooth one. One day while he was still earning his racing license, Huff discovered at the end of the quarter-mile track that he had no brakes. His speed of 142 miles per hour carried him 150 yards into a cornfield at the end of the track. Dust filled his cockpit and ruined his engine.

On another occasion he noticed a steering problem during a run. His crew found the bolts holding one of the front wheels had come out and those on the other side were loose. "If I had made one more run like that I would have been history," Huff admits.

"We have been so close to disaster so many times, but something else led us to find the problem. One of my pit crew told me, 'You are the luckiest guy I know,' but I said it wasn't luck. I believe the Lord is watching over me.

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"In this year's world series, I should have been eliminated in the first three races. I had problems with my timing, and the car wasn't running right. But it seemed like the fellows I was racing against had worse problems. This showed me again God's presence, that he was in charge."

Huff chose the name of his car very deliberately as a way to communicate what he is about. And people apparently are getting the message.

"You would not believe the number of people who come up to me at the racetrack. Often they end up confessing to me how far they have departed from their faith and their upbringing."

An incident at the recent world series was typical. "A guy walked up and started asking about my being a preacher. He asked to talk with me alone, so I got to do some counseling with him. He was 'way backslidden.' Like many of the people I see at the track, this man was one who, from his lifestyle, you would never expect to have anything to do with a preacher."

Huff also gets asked to sign autographs a lot, and he always adds a Scripture verse, Ephesians 3:8. "When people ask what that means, I tell them to go find a Bible and explain to them how to find the verse in it."

The verse also help him maintain his perspective, Huff says. "I view myself as 'the least,' just as Paul did. A lot of the people I meet are not as far from the Lord as I was when he saved me. If he can do so much for me, I know he can help them too."

Sometimes people ask him if he really thinks it is appropriate for a pastor to be involved in drag racing. Huff quickly points out that other pastors enjoy other sports such as fishing or golf, so why not drag racing?

"And besides," he adds, "who better to risk their life every weekend than someone who's got their future secured forever?"

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Life cycle of churches  
affects growth, speaker says

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press  
9/9/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Leading a plateaued church to growth requires more than trying new programs and methods for ministry. The pastor and church leaders also must determine where the congregation is in its life cycle, a speaker at the Nationwide Church Growth Conference said.

"You need to understand what's going on in a church that has led it to that particular point in its history. This is extremely important because different things will work (to bring growth) at different stages," George Bullard, director of the missions division of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, said.

Every church, no matter what size, goes through three primary life cycle phases: growth, prime, and decline. Within these phases, Bullard said, churches also pass through 10 different stages, each with their own unique characteristics and struggles. They include:

1) Birth. A church begins with a vision or dream. The congregation is enthusiastic, excited about the future.

2) Infancy. Inclusion is emphasized through activities such as evangelism, outreach, assimilation and discipleship.

3) Childhood. The church begins to define the "how and why" of its age-group ministries. Programs become more important than outreach.

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4) Adolescence. The church is "growing in all directions" in an awkward manner. A lot of competing programs are talked about and debated. Many fights occur over what the church's priorities should be. Churches that fail to decide what kind of church they are going to be in this stage experience stunted growth.

5) Adulthood. Programs and ministries are running smoothly. A potential problem occurs in this stage if churches give the mantle of church growth to the pastor and staff.

6) Maturity. When the congregation is a generation old (about 22-28 years), the congregation rests. Vision is no longer important. The original goals/dreams of the church have been accomplished and are not replaced by a new vision.

7) Empty nest. During this very angry stage of the church's life, members begin challenging one another's commitment level. Many leave the church.

8) Retirement. The congregation is aging, and little effort is made to reach out to the community. Decline continues.

9) Old age. The church is on the verge of dying.

10) Death. The congregation dies, unless it develops a new vision and strategies for change.

Where do most Southern Baptist churches fall in the life cycle? According to Bullard, about 80 percent are in maturity, empty nest, retirement, or old age. Not good news, since the amount of effort it takes to turn a church around increases as it progresses in the life cycle, he said.

A change in methodology and programs may help spur growth in churches through adulthood, but once they hit the stages of decline "a vision solution instead of a program change is what you need," he said.

"The issue is not work harder, but work smarter in terms of reconceptualizing the vision and direction of the church. No church that I'm aware of has to die," he said.

Dozens of pastors and denominational workers shared tips for leading churches off the plateau during the conference. Some of the common suggestions included:

- Make a formal commitment to grow.
- Develop a vision or purpose statement for your church and make specific goals for growth and plans for achieving them.
- Work at establishing unity by resolving past hurts/conflicts within the congregation and focusing on the church's mission.
- Don't throw out traditional ministry methods and programs that are working, but be willing to take risks on new approaches like home cell groups and Bible study classes that meet on different days of the week.
- Start new Bible study classes.
- Focus worship services on "celebration."
- Determine members' needs and preach practical, biblical-based sermons to provide them help.
- Involve lay people in ministry.
- Teach members how to witness, and ensure church leaders are modeling personal evangelism.

-- Begin a prayer ministry and pray for God's direction in becoming the church he wants you to be.

-- Research the community. Examine the demographics, and survey the community to find the unchurched. Determine why they're not coming and what it would take to get them there.

Once a plateaued church begins to grow, leaders need to realize everybody won't be happy about it, Gary Farley, associate director of the town and country department at the Home Mission Board, said.

Farley told a group of small church pastors: "Some people are not going to be comfortable in a large or mid-size church, so maybe part of your responsibility (as your church grows) is to start another small church to leave behind.

"I hope that as you grow you don't forget where you came from and you don't turn your back on those folks," he said.

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: More than 100 church growth-related seminars were offered during the Nationwide Church Growth Conference. Many are available on cassette tape. For ordering information, write Omega Media Ministries, P.O. Box 1049, Whitehouse, TX, 75791, or call 903/593-7845.)

Southwestern Seminary student  
pastor meets needs of neighborhood By Matthew Brady

Baptist Press  
9/9/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Scott Corwin believes what's good enough for the foreign mission field is good enough for the Fort Worth, Texas, South side neighborhood where he is pastor.

The son of Southern Baptist missionaries to Indonesia, Corwin knows foreign missions. But as the pastor of South Fort Worth Baptist Church, he also knows the needs of a community living in the shadow of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"To me, it's a tragedy that we're willing to give our money to support all kinds of creative ministries overseas, but are unwilling to do them in our own churches," Corwin said. "You have to take the church to people by reaching out to meet their needs. As you meet their needs, you share the gospel with them."

The 34-year-old Southwestern doctoral student applied what he knew about foreign missions to bring the gospel to the community. Today his church sponsors a Hispanic mission, hosts the Connect program for troubled youth and cooperates with a local school to provide clothes for children.

Taking a stand for creativity has not always been popular for Corwin. With the support of local residents, he led an effort to bring a government drug and crime fighting program to the area. Detractors say the program is unnecessary government interference. Supporters say it's just what this crime-ridden area needs.

Corwin said government involvement in the neighborhood is minimal. The federally-funded Fort Worth Challenge program will provide assistance and a local foundation will pay for a community organizer and office equipment. Residents, businesses, and churches will pay only for specific programs in the community.

"Our participation, as individuals and as a church, would be as just another partner in a systems approach to addressing drug abuse and crime prevention in our area," he said.

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For example, Corwin said when schools have a red-ribbon "Just Say No to Drugs" week, his church supports that through Sunday school lessons and preaching. Likewise, when the church has its emphasis on drug abuse prevention, the other neighborhood groups support it.

"There is a need," he said. "There are people in our community that are caught up in drug abuse. Crime is a problem, not for only the people that are committing those crimes, not only for the people that are caught up in drug abuse, but also for the people that are the victims. They need to be ministered to as well," he said.

In the past, Corwin's mostly white, senior adult congregation expressed hesitancy in reaching out to its largely Hispanic community. But Corwin said church members are "recapturing their heritage and vision for reaching the community for Christ."

"There are fears, but they are not a people of fear. They are a people of faith," he said.

Corwin earned his master of divinity degree from Southwestern in 1987 and chose to focus on Christian ethics in his doctoral work. The attraction to ethics, Corwin said, is because ethics involves evangelism, issues of justice and addresses people "where they live and how the gospel can make a significant difference in their lives today," he said.

"Christian life without theology has no basis. Christian life without ethics has no impact," he said.

That understanding of Christian ethics, along with his years at Southwestern, have stretched Corwin's understanding of evangelism.

"It (Southwestern) has broadened my fishing hole, so to speak," he said.

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

Make your dreams happen,  
older singles counseled

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press  
9/9/92

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Assigned to lead a conference for older single adults titled "Re-tread, Not Retire," Sara Thrash decided the name lacked the flair she prefers and changed it to "Going Over the Hill with the Top Down."

Thrash -- sixtysomething, retired professor of education at St. Leo College in St. Petersburg, Fla., author, international speaker, single adult conference leader and intern in a two-year hospital chaplaincy program -- presented her case for single adults over 50 living out their dreams by telling her own story.

She led sessions during the Sept. 4-7 Labor Day Weekend Single Adult Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center. More than 2,200 attended the four-day conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division.

"I meet so many singles over 50 who seem to need a jump-start from God's Diehard battery," said Thrash. Too many older singles seem sidetracked with "if onlies" and playing the "ain't it awful game."

"God needs us who are over 50," she said. "We have the resources young, struggling singles do not have."

Born on the campus of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., where her father was academic dean, Thrash announced at age 10 she was going to get married, have four children, be a college professor and "sow seeds of joy for God." At 12, she further announced she was going to China to be a missionary.

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All those dreams have happened, though being a missionary to China took 50 years. Thrash went on a teaching mission there in 1990, a trip that included a visit to the church where Southern Baptist missionary Lottie Moon served.

Thrash's dreams were not realized without interruptions. In 1978, her husband of 28 years divorced her to marry someone else.

"I chose for almost three years to lie on a pallet of self-pity," she recalled. "God will let us do that. God had to do open heart surgery on my attitude, my life. Change comes only when you get sick and tired of being sick and tired.

"Our problem is we want to microwave our pain," counseled Thrash. "God doesn't microwave us, he slow cooks us. And he's right there with his eye on the thermostat."

Thrash, who retired early from teaching on the college level, now travels internationally, speaking and leading conferences. She has written a book: Dear God, I'm Divorced.

She urges single adults to live below their income and save money to be able to achieve their goals when they are older. And she outlines a goal-setting process:

(1) Write a clear, concise action statement describing where you want to be one year from today.

(2) Assess where you are today.

(3) What intermediate steps will you need to take to get from where you are today to where you want to be?

(4) List your resources to make this happen.

(5) Identify specific obstacles. How can you change or diminish them?

(6) Commit your will to your goal.

(7) Take the first step.

Thrash is still setting goals and fantasizing about her own future. "I've always wanted to be the first female chaplain for an all-male football team," she quipped.

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Single adults give \$30,000  
to aid hurricane victims

Baptist Press  
9/9/92

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Offerings totaling \$30,603.28 to aid victims of Hurricane Andrew were contributed by single adults attending three Southern Baptist Labor Day Weekend Single Adult conferences.

Offerings were given by participants in conferences at Ridgecrest (N.C.) and Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist conference centers and St. Louis. All money will be channeled through Southern Baptist agencies for relief efforts in Florida and Louisiana, according to Tim Cleary, conference coordinator in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division.

"This generous response is typical of single adults," said Cleary. "Churches that reach out and integrate singles into their total ministries know of their leadership, commitment and stewardship."

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Liza Bolzmann, a single adult from Miami, attended the Ridgecrest conference to get away from the stress of the disaster. Her townhouse had suffered severe damage and Bolzmann is living temporarily with her mother. However, she counted herself lucky because "I have insurance and I have a job."

At the conference, a single adult who did not tell her his name pressed a \$100 bill in her hand and told Bolzmann to give it to someone in Miami who needed it.

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Greater efforts needed  
to reach single adults

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press  
9/9/92

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--If the vast majority of adults in a Southern Baptist church are married, then that church likely is ignoring the needs of the 50 percent of adults in the community who are single.

Bo Prosser, associate pastor/minister of education at Forest Hills Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., told participants in a seminar during the Sept. 4-7 Single Adult Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center about one-half of adults in the United States today are single, including never married, divorced and widowed.

"It is important for churches to recognize the vast numbers of single adults out there and respond to their needs. Folks, it's just not happening," Prosser said.

He highlighted 10 current trends in society and their relevance to church ministries with single adults, beginning with the need for flexibility in coping with constant and rapid change.

Also, he called for greater simplicity in church budgets and calendars, warning leaders to avoid falling into a trap of believing a church ministry with singles demands constant activities.

"Single adult ministry is not a Christian dating service," Prosser emphasized. "Part of single adult ministry is giving singles permission to live life" and not providing many activities to fill up every moment.

He called for "visionary responses dealing with the increasing role of women. We have been Baptist ostriches for too long. Single adult women are professional women. They need to be incorporated into the life of your church."

Specific ways to bring about greater involvement of women must be left to individual churches, he said.

Prosser said church ministries with singles must major more on aggressively going out where people are rather than just providing a ministry and assuming people will come.

"We can't sit on the boulevard, open our doors and expect people to come to us," he said.

Worship and Bible study must be both motivational and inspirational, he said.

In other areas, Prosser called for:

-- compassionate church ministries to help people coping with difficult issues related to sexuality, such as divorce, promiscuity, homosexuality and AIDS;

-- greater efforts by Anglo churches to reach singles of other races and cultures;  
and

--more--

-- greater intentionality in meeting the needs of the singles involved in the church.

"People go where they know they've been prepared for and cared for," Prosser said. "If you're not prepared for your folks and they think you don't care for them, you can kiss them goodbye."

Labor Day Weekend single adult conferences also were held at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, San Diego, and St. Louis. They were sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division.