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September 15, 1992

92-151

BULLETIN: Gary S. Jones turned down the position of executive director-treasurer of the Georgia Baptist Convention after a 69-34 vote in favor of his nomination Sept. 15 by the convention's executive committee. Jones, vice president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's services section, was the unanimous nominee of the convention's 12-member search committee. A full story will appear in Baptist Press Sept. 16.

TENNESSEE -- Funds approved for Hawaii relief; Quayles visit Florida disaster unit, with photo.
FLORIDA -- Florida Baptists OK \$1.5 million aid for Andrew-ravaged churches, families.
FLORIDA -- Dakota Baptists learn value of partnership in Florida.
SOUTH CAROLINA -- Martha Franks dies at 91; feisty missionary, speaker, with photo.
ARIZONA -- Richard Jackson announces pending retirement plans.
GEORGIA -- 71-year-old leads hundreds to Christ through CWT witness.
GEORGIA -- Released time programs offer students Christian alternative.
DALLAS -- Volunteers rebuild village, build relationships in Turkey.
CALIFORNIA -- California Baptists take stands on homosexuality, Holiday Inns.
WASHINGTON -- Just what can churches, pastors say and do in election year?
WASHINGTON -- Prices cut for Zimbabwe World Youth Conference.

EDITORS' NOTE: The following update substitutes for a 9-14 story in Baptist Press with the same headline.

Funds approved for Hawaii relief;
Quayles visit Florida disaster unit By Steve Barber

Baptist Press
9/15/92

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission took the first step Sept. 14 toward disaster relief involvement in Hawaii with the approval of funds for a mobile kitchen to serve victims of Hurricane Iniki.

Brotherhood Commission President James D. Williams approved the expenditure to purchase the unit, along with a water purifier, food and equipment. A dollar amount was not disclosed. Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers Bill Arnold and Milton Schmidt from Dallas are expected to arrive in Hawaii Sept. 16 with the equipment to train local volunteers in mass feeding techniques. American Airlines transported the relief equipment without charge and granted free passage to the volunteers.

Meanwhile, the Brotherhood Commission's Memphis staff continued to evaluate additional needs in the stricken area.

The "garden island" of Kauai took the brunt of Iniki's 130 mph winds when it came ashore Sept. 11. The intensity of the winds and the extent of damage are reported to be comparable to Hurricane Andrew, which hit Florida and Louisiana three weeks ago.

The Hawaii Baptist Convention reported damage to three churches on Kauai but there were no deaths or injuries among church members.

At the Lihue Baptist Church, pastored by Rick Watkins, the preschool building was destroyed. Large holes were opened in the roof of the sanctuary while the parsonage roof had minor damage.

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The parsonage at Eleele Baptist Mission was flattened and a portion of the church roof was destroyed. Pastor Mel Campos lost virtually all his household goods.

The roof of Waimea Baptist Church, pastored by James Merritt, was partially blown off. The parsonage garage collapsed and smashed the church van and the pastor's automobile.

"Hawaii Baptists are responding with food and volunteers," said O.W. Efurd, executive director-treasurer of the Hawaii Baptist Convention in an initial report of Iniki's onslaught.

In Florida, the Kentucky Baptist Convention disaster relief unit at Florida City's First Baptist Church welcomed Vice President Dan Quayle and his wife, Marilyn, for a 20-minute visit Sept. 12.

The vice president had no prepared remarks. Instead, he and Mrs. Quayle moved around the unit talking to disaster relief volunteers, local pastors, and area residents.

"Watching him (Quayle) move around in the crowd, there were smiles on a lot of faces. He really looked into their eyes and tried to empathize," said Jim Veneman, a Sunday School Board photojournalist on assignment for the Brotherhood Commission. "It showed a real link between Southern Baptists and what the government wanted to see people doing in that situation, and our people were doing it."

Veneman said his weekend visit to south Florida convinced him the crisis there is not yet past.

"This is not the end of the effort ... it's right in the middle of it. It's a critical time and they are in desperate need of help," he said. "If Southern Baptists have prayed for them for a month and that's it, that's not enough. And we in the media will do them a terrible disservice if attention goes elsewhere and the story is forgotten."

Aside from the Kentucky unit at Florida City, others still operating in the area as of Tuesday included the Florida unit at First Baptist Church in Cutler Ridge; Tennessee at Glendale Baptist Church in Miami; Ohio at First Baptist Church in Perrine; and North Carolina at Richmond Heights Middle School. South Carolina and Missouri continued operations at Homestead Middle School. The Illinois unit, which was based at McCall Baptist Church in Cutler Ridge, deactivated Sept. 14.

The units are serving an average of 40,000 meals per day. More than 1.5 million hot meals have been provided by disaster relief crews in Florida alone since Aug. 24. Some 160,000 more were provided by units in south Louisiana. Approximately 650 volunteers have served thus far in the two disaster areas.

Further information is available on the Hurricane Andrew Message and Information Line at 901-278-7839.

Donations may be sent to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104, and should be designated for disaster relief. Contributions may also be sent to the Hawaii Baptist Convention, 2042 Vancouver Dr., Honolulu, HI 96822 and marked "Kauai Relief."

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Jim Burton, Ken Camp and Sarah Zimmerman contributed to this report. (BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Brotherhood Commission.

Florida Baptists OK \$1.5 million aid
for Andrew-ravaged churches, families

By Barbara Denman

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--After hearing of the emotional plight of Southern Baptist churches in south Florida recovering from the destruction of Hurricane Andrew, the state board of missions of the Florida Baptist Convention has approved a \$1.5 million financial aid package to help devastated congregations in the Miami Baptist Association.

The \$1.5 million package will be used:

- to provide salaries for the pastors and staffs of the affected churches.
- to fill the gap between insurance and replacement values of church buildings.
- to replace contents not covered by insurance.
- to purchase building materials for churches and homes in the communities.
- to provide food and household goods to Baptists and non-Baptists alike.
- to offer a variety of ministry support and counseling services to pastors and their families.
- to fund expenses incurred in establishing disaster relief operations including warehousing commodities and establishing a command post in Miramar.

In making the appeal for the designation of funds, John Sullivan, executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention, admitted this was an "emotional" issue for him. "I don't apologize," he told the board. "I was there for 10 days in the midst of the struggle and I can tell you without equivocation, I have walked in disaster in Texas, I have walked in disaster in Louisiana, but never in my life have I seen anything equal to what happened in south Miami, never," he said.

"I cannot get it off my mind. I cannot get it off my heart. And I have no desire to do either," Sullivan added. "I appeal to you to help us in this effort in every way you can."

"Folks, whatever we give is not enough" said Marvin Gibson, pastor of the Bay Area Baptist Church in Tampa and chairman of the budget-allocation committee, during the board meeting. "But I think we also need to understand that once this first blush of response comes, that really is only the beginning. When the new wears off is when real ministry begins. We need to understand that we are going to be in for the long haul."

The recommendation passed unanimously.

The \$1.5 million will come from a variety of funding sources, including state convention monies and contributions from churches and individuals as well as several Southern Baptist Convention agencies.

To date \$634,832 has been received by the Florida Baptist Convention as disaster response contributions from nearly 1,000 churches and individuals. These include gifts from North Carolina Baptists, \$100,000; South Carolina Baptists, \$76,519; and Virginia Baptists, \$70,507. The Montana Southern Baptist Fellowship, one of Florida Baptists' partnership states, gave \$3,500.

Other sources of the funding include:

- \$200,000 to be retained from 1992 Cooperative Program receipts designated for SBC causes. Approval of this action and reallocation of the funds must be given by the Florida Baptist State Convention during its Nov. 9-11 meeting.

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- \$250,000 increase in the Maguire State Mission Offering goal, which was revised during the meeting to earmark additional funds for the storm-ravaged area.
- \$100,000 received from the SBC Home Mission Board from hunger and disaster relief funds.
- \$200,000 transferred from the state convention's 1993 program budget funds.
- \$200,000 in 1992 Florida Baptist Convention budget reallocations.
- \$30,000 collected during Labor Day weekend national singles conferences.

Sullivan noted three SBC agencies have agreed to provide services to the affected congregations:

- The Sunday School Board has committed to provide literature and hymnals free of charge.
- The Annuity Board has promised to underwrite the cost of medical insurance and annuity for pastors and church staffs enrolled in the Annuity Board program.
- And the Brotherhood Commission have agreed to subsidize additional food and storage services.

In recommending the \$1.5 million package, Sullivan said state convention personnel had visited and made assessments of every damaged church, a count which now stands at 21.

Sullivan reported 3,250 volunteers from 19 states have been processed through the Pembroke Road Baptist Church in Miramar since Aug. 24. "I think this represents less than one-third of the number of Southern Baptist volunteers who have been on the field ministering during the crisis," he said.

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Dakota Baptists learn value
of partnership in Florida

By Barbara Denman

Baptist Press
9/15/92

FLORIDA CITY, Fla. (BP)--Driving 49 hours, over 2,000 miles and stopping only for gas and oil, seven men from North and South Dakota celebrated Labor Day toiling in temperatures registering 90 degrees.

"This is quite a change for us," said Rex Tollefson of Rapid City, S.D., as he wiped the sweat off his forehead. "We left 40-degree temperatures back home."

The group of Dakotans came to south Florida in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew to help Florida Baptists in their time of need. In the process they discovered a new way to express the word partnership.

For the past five years, the Florida Baptist Convention and the Dakota Southern Baptist Fellowship have shared a partnership relationship. Over the years, Florida Baptists have sent many mission teams to the northern states, served in church-to-church linkages and subsidized many training events. Also during the past four years, Florida's Maguire State Mission Offering allocated funds for new church sites in the Dakotas and pastoral assistance for pastors there.

"We just appreciate Florida," Norm Wagoner said. "They've given so much to us over the years, we're just glad we can be here." Wagoner, a Mission Service Corps volunteer, is Brotherhood consultant in the two Dakotas.

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The soaring heat, humidity and no-frills living conditions was hard on the Dakotans. One suffered a heat stroke as he carried food to homes in the community. "We've worked some long hard days from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.," Tollefson said.

But Claud Williams, pastor of the Capitol Heights Church in Pierre, S.D., said the opportunity to say thank you to Florida in a tangible way was well worth the hardships. Just recently Florida's Campers on Missions painted the Capitol Heights church building, led in worship services and backyard Bible clubs and shared their Christian testimony with the entire town, Williams said.

The men from the Dakotas cleaned out stairways at First Baptist Church in Florida City, cut trees down in nearby neighborhoods and carried food and supplies to people in the community.

During their trips on the backroads, they loaded a horse trailer and offered supplies from "a mobile grocery store." They found several families who had been stranded in devastated homes without electricity, water or transportation since Andrew cut a path through their yard.

A couple in their 70s pitched a tent in their backyard and were living there, unable to walk through the remains of their home. They lost their car, making it impossible to get to the feeding station in town. The only food they had received in the two weeks after the storm was what one neighbor had shared. Portions of their dentures had blown away in the wind.

Covering her mouth in embarrassment, the elderly woman expressed amazement that the Dakota volunteers had traveled so far to help them in their time of need.

The Dakotans soon discovered as they traveled the gravel roads and farm fields doling out Crispy Rice and chocolate chip cookies and mops that the storm's victims felt compelled to tell how their world had been turned upside down on that fateful morning.

One woman shared how mud rushed in through their windows, seeping under the awning. "I thought we were going to drown," she said. "I could smell the salt water."

To these the Dakotans gave a word of hope, comfort and invited them to the Florida City church.

As the volunteers hauled their makeshift supermarket by each tattered house, the victims shared what little they had: home-grown bananas, coconuts and honey from a bee keeper. No one wanted to take too much, but implored the Floridians to save the food for someone else who needed it more.

Jim Weber of Hettinger, N.D., said he was reminded during this time of life's simple pleasures too often taken for granted. Giving a small doll to a little girl who had nothing brought a "smile from here to here," he said pointing to his ears. Giving a boxed juice drink to a boy "soon brought a whole string of youngsters clamoring for more."

"It reminds me again of how temporary what we have or don't have is. It's not what we do, achieve or possess that lasts forever. Only God does."

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Martha Franks dies at 91;
feisty missionary, speaker

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
9/15/92

LAURENS, S.C. (BP)--Martha Franks, one of the best-known missionaries in Southern Baptist life, died Sept. 14 of heart and kidney failure after several years of declining health. She was 91.

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"Miss Martha's" missionary career spanned a tumultuous 40 years in China and Taiwan. She endured famine, riots, civil war, evacuations and internment by the Japanese in north China. But she also witnessed one of the great religious awakenings of modern times -- the Shantung Revival -- as Christianity took root in the region.

Franks then spent a quarter-century "retirement" that was just as active, if not as risky. Known for her vitality, wit and sharp dress, she was in demand as a missions speaker for decades -- especially for young people.

She told a reporter she had worn out 11 Volkswagens driving to speaking engagements -- and that was 10 years ago. Over the years she also drove vehicles ranging from a Model T to a motor scooter.

Her later life's dream -- of starting a retirement and prayer center with fellow missionary retiree Olive Lawton in their hometown of Laurens, S.C., -- became the Martha Franks Baptist Retirement Center, now a multi-million-dollar facility.

Appointed a missionary in 1925, she went to a China torn by chaos and civil strife to teach children. She wound up teaching preachers -- "not much difference," she once quipped.

In the '30s she did evangelistic work with women and children, then was dean of women at the North China Baptist seminary where she taught men and women. She worked at the seminary until World War II, when she was interned by the Japanese six months before being returned to the United States.

The war's end found her back in China, where she joined the All-China Baptist Theological Seminary in Shanghai. She persisted there for a year after the communist takeover of China but finally transferred to Taiwan. She worked there another 13 years and helped start the Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary in Taipei.

Was she gutsy? Consider:

-- She once drove a panel truck from South Carolina to San Francisco so it could be shipped to Taiwan for mission use.

-- She played the accordion for street meetings in Taipei, attracting crowds that became the nucleus of True Light Baptist Church.

-- She once taught a 7-year-old blind boy to read by forming Chinese characters for him with marbles in a tray of sand. Another friendship, with a hostile deaf child, led to a large Sunday school class for the deaf.

Franks summed up her life in a 1981 article called "Looking Back:"

"True, my friends had money in the bank -- I didn't. But I had millions in advantages, opportunities, and joys. I had stretched my horizons, lifted my sights, expanded my soul, and enriched my spirit. I had had a year in Peking -- the most charming city in the world -- at language school. I had feasted on the artistic skills of the Chinese people. I had rubbed shoulders with some of the greatest of our missionaries -- worked with them, learned from them. I had ... fallen in love with the Chinese people, especially the children.

"I suppose looking back as a retired (retarded, a little boy said!) missionary my greatest gratitude for the 40 years in China was that I was there. I saw and felt and experienced the great spiritual awakening that came to north China. ... The day I left (for China), I wept volumes of tears. I honestly thought I was doing God and the Chinese a great favor. Now I know that what he did for me was millions more than I ever did for him."

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Franks received the bachelor of arts degree from Winthrop College (where she was student body president) in Rock Hill, S.C., and studied at the Woman's Missionary Union Training School (now merged with Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) in Louisville, Ky. In 1989 she received the honorary doctorate of humane letters from Clemson University. She taught school in Virginia for two years before missionary appointment.

Franks is survived by two nieces. Funeral services were scheduled Sept. 16 at First Baptist Church in Laurens.

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

Richard Jackson announces
pending retirement plans By Elizabeth Young & Sandy DeVaney

Baptist Press
9/15/92

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church, announced his intention to retire during his Sunday morning sermon Sept. 13.

"I so believe that the best is yet to come and still to be for North Phoenix Baptist Church that I believe it's in the will and purpose of God for North Phoenix Baptist Church to seek pastoral leadership for the future," Jackson told the congregation. "I am announcing to you this moment that I am going to be retiring from the senior pastorate of this church in the coming months."

Jackson, four-time nominee for the Southern Baptist Convention presidency, told the congregation he made a prayer covenant with God in 1972 when the church purchased its present 40-acre property. He promised to remain as pastor until age 55; he will be 55 in August 1993.

Pastor of the Phoenix congregation nearly 25 years, Jackson said he did not want to stay beyond the days of his best usefulness. "I don't walk away from the very best job in my profession with little thought," he said. "But I must do what God would have me to do."

Jackson did not announce a date for his retirement but indicated his desire to remain on staff until a new pastor is called, whether the search takes three weeks or more than six months. He promised to be "available to the new pastor from a far enough distance not to hurt him and close enough to help."

During Jackson's tenure with the church, which is the largest Southern Baptist congregation in the West, total membership has grown from 1,788 to 20,979 in 1991, according to Arizona Southern Baptist Convention statistics.

Throughout Jackson's ministry, North Phoenix was consistently among the leaders in baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention. In June, the 20,000th person was baptized under Jackson's leadership.

Cooperative Program giving grew from \$26,680 in 1967 to a high of at least \$1 million annually from 1986-89. Through 1991, the church continued to give at least 10 percent of its undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program. In 1991, North Phoenix gave \$560,305.

Seeking to dispel rumors about his retirement, Jackson said he was not running from anything or to anything.

"This is the time in my ministry here when I'm least conscious of anybody being after me I've ever been," he said. "And they've been after me as long as I can remember."

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Jackson, a Texas native, told the congregation his plan was to be involved in itinerant ministries such as crusades and revivals, but he would like to reside in the Phoenix area. He will pursue new areas of ministry through his position as president of the Jackson Center for Preaching and Evangelism, located on the Grand Canyon University campus in Phoenix.

"If God would allow, I would entertain an invitation from the church to be given the honorary position of emeritus pastor," he stated.

Jackson attributed his long tenure at North Phoenix to loving the people and centering his ministry on winning the lost, he told the Baptist Beacon, newsjournal of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention.

He said his father always told him, "If you love the people and preach, they'll forgive half your mistakes, and if you keep the baptistry water hot, they'll forgive the other half."

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71-year-old leads hundreds
to Christ through CWT witness

By James Dotson

Baptist Press
9/15/92

FAYETTEVILLE, Ga. (BP)--Richie Dzio got a knock on his door on April 21, 1985, that changed his life.

A Christian Witness Training (CWT) team from Gainesville's New Hope Baptist Church came by to explain the gospel to Dzio -- a nominal Catholic at the time -- in a way he had never heard before. He liked the concept so much, in fact, he not only accepted his own personal relationship with Christ but also now leads about 100 people to Christ each year as a staff member at New Hope. He is an outreach assistant, with sole responsibilities for visiting people in their homes and sharing the gospel using methods learned through CWT.

"It's the most beautiful thing you'll ever see," Dzio said of the experience of helping someone come to know Christ. "And you can become as addicted to that as you'll ever get addicted to drugs or alcohol."

Dzio, 71, shared his testimony recently with participants in a four-day CWT National Seminar at New Hope to train ministers or laymen who will then lead their churches in establishing the full 13-week course.

Christian Witness Training is an intensive program that equips Christians to share the gospel using a memorized outline of Scripture and illustrations. The presentation begins with questions exploring how the person feels about his or her relationship with God and culminates in an explanation of what God has done for mankind through Jesus Christ.

Dzio said he has found no better method for sharing the basics of the gospel.

"It's so programmed, so planned, that any interruption can come up at any point and you can just go back to where you left off," he said. "People will believe you because you do not have to go through a book."

After accepting Christ, Dzio said he began visiting with others from the church that summer. Then, in the fall, he took CWT himself and has never stopped using it since. He is now a certified pastor-leader, eligible to teach the program to others.

"I made my mind up that I would never become so tired and so busy that I couldn't take 10 minutes of my life to go witness to someone," he said.

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He said the approach is simple enough that anyone -- even a layman with little advanced education such as himself -- can be successful with it. Yet it still explains the central truth of Christianity.

"I feel there is enough information here to give them the right foundation, then as they get baptized and join the church, they begin to understand more about it," Dzio said.

Steve King, minister of youth and evangelism at First Baptist Church of Dallas, Ga., was one of the participants in the CWT seminar at New Hope. On his second night of visits, he had the opportunity to lead a man to a prayer of faith in Christ -- a man who initially was unwilling to invite the team into the house.

King said he had led others to Christ before but never a person he had just met minutes earlier on a doorstep.

"It was a humbling experience and it probably did almost as much for me as it did for him," King said. "It's like we've been taught ... it's no longer you; it's the Holy Spirit working. And that's really exciting to see."

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Released time programs offer
students Christian alternative

By James Dotson

Baptist Press
9/15/92

ELLIJAY, Ga. (BP)--The course, being taken by about 150 Gilmer High School students this year for credit, is called "Handling The Hot Ones." One recent class included prayer requests, prayer, a brief lecture from 2 Kings and a discussion of peer pressure from a biblical perspective.

When the class was over, the students left the Gilmer Christian Learning Center -- a privately funded center in Ellijay, Ga., offering biblically based instruction as a high school elective -- and walked down the hill to the public high school for the remainder of their day.

Such a scenario would be impossible, some might say, in an age when religious observance has been all but banished from the public school classroom. But the Gilmer Learning Center -- and more than 100 similar centers nationally -- are perfectly legal under a court-sanctioned concept called released time religious education. As long as students attend classes voluntarily, with parental approval, and at off-campus locations, then schools must release students for those classes.

Christian religious liberty advocates contend released time is one of the most neglected tools in the arsenal of Christians combatting public-school secularism.

"Released time programs are the best-kept secret about the constitutional religious rights of parents in public schools. And it is a secret the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) wants kept," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

James L. Holt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Ellijay, which is one of the sponsors of the Gilmer center, agreed.

"We can beat the air, we can preach and we can holler about taking prayer out of the schools but this is a way for us to bring that back into the lives of students in an evangelistic, strong, biblical way. And it is completely legal," Holt said.

The Baptist Joint Committee On Public Affairs also has endorsed the concept.

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Released time for religious education has been around since at least the early part of the century, according to Roger Blankenship, director of the Ellijay-based National Association for Released Time Christian Education and former director of the Gilmer Christian Learning Center. He also was the author of a resolution supporting released time programs approved last year by the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Blankenship said released time programs were especially popular in the North. They allowed students to leave school during the day to receive religious instruction.

A low blow was struck to the concept in 1948 when the Supreme Court ruled that classes could not be held on public school property. But in 1952, the *Zorach vs. Clauston* decision made the constitutional issues clear.

"The effect was to say that the treatment of the time as creditable time by the school district does not in itself establish a religion; it accommodates the religion of the community," Whitehead said.

Blankenship's organization was founded in 1982 as a way of promoting the released time concept nationally. A former Southern Baptist youth minister, he has been executive director since 1989.

Blankenship was the first director of the Ellijay center when it began in 1985, but it was the Christian Education Center in Gainesville that pioneered the concept in Georgia. That program was founded in 1968.

The Gainesville center, adjacent to the Gainesville High School campus, is sponsored by individuals and eight churches in the community representing Baptists, Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians. Among Southern Baptist sponsors are Gainesville's First Baptist and Lakewood churches.

The courses, such as the New Testament ethics class currently being taught, integrate biblical teaching and principles into a variety of areas, according to teacher Faith Simpson.

One recent class, for instance, covered such basics as proper listening skills and proper etiquette for introductions. Other classes will deal with biblical themes and applications to modern life, but the center -- particularly because of its broad constituency -- is careful to avoid taking positions on issues in which interpretations differ.

"The basic philosophy of this was to give religious education without being evangelical in the approach," said David Smith, director of the center. "If it's New Testament, it's going to be a course about the New Testament. It's not going to be slanted or biased toward one position or another."

"We could have it like a Sunday school class, but would the students take that, and would the administration give credit for it?" asked Simpson, noting schools aren't required to extend credit for released-time classes.

In Gainesville, she said, the center has become a vehicle for reaching "at risk" teens who especially need a Christian influence. Rather than serving as an extension of the church, it is an outreach tool for promoting Christian values and ethics.

"We have a definite cross-section of a lot of unchurched-type kids," she said.

The center operates a counseling service that also has the support of the school and the community, Simpson said.

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The program in Ellijay, the largest in Georgia, operates in much the same manner, although the particulars are somewhat different. Although some of the students are unchurched, many have at least a basic understanding of Christian values.

"The vast majority are very respectful of God, they kind of want to do what's right in God's sight, but they're not sure of some things. And so we've got to sell them on God's way," said Sid Webb, director of the center.

The classes are somewhat less formal than those at the high school, with snacks allowed in class and open discussion encouraged. The atmosphere in many ways is similar to that of a youth group -- but one with a fair number of unchurched teens to occasionally bring up a challenging subject.

"We're not just lecturing them all day long," Webb said. "We have fun with learning. And we show a degree of care and concern for the kids that they're not used to seeing. Because of that, they come."

Webb said he also tries to include a gospel presentation several times a year, and that follow-up discussions with some of the students have resulted in professions of faith in Christ. But he stressed the class itself is focused more on helping the teens deal with life's issues through a biblical perspective; the changed lives are simply a result.

"We are dealing with life skills, and to me as a Christian, the primary life skill is a good relationship with God. And out of that flows the other life skills," he said.

He acknowledged, however, a center in a more populous and diverse community probably would face more challenges to such a philosophy.

"I think if we were in (the Atlanta area), we would have to be very careful how we presented the program," Webb said. "If you come across as very fundamental, you will alienate the powers in the community and it would kill your program. In Ellijay, it's something that's kind of expected."

Whitehead noted for some of the same reasons the Christian released time program has been successful in Ellijay, other religions have found it successful in areas where they are dominant. Mormons, for instance, have made wide use of programs in the W st that leave some Christians feeling like outsiders.

He suggested Southern Baptist agencies might find an excellent opportunity for missions in helping develop Christian released time programs.

"I've often wondered if we could not do it right and as Southern Baptists restore an idea that has been ... neglected by many parents," Whitehead said.

With the apparent benefits of the programs, some might wonder why they are not more widespread -- especially in an age when Christian education has grown more popular among evangelical Christians.

One reason is directly related to the increase in popularity of Christian schools, according to Whitehead.

"The debate has been Christian school vs. public school, instead of focusing on how to take advantage of the public school system -- particularly for those folks who would maybe choose Christian schools but could not afford it," he said. He noted Christian schools probably would be ideally suited to provide released time programs, but usually don't because of that philosophical divide.

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Another roadblock is difficulty in getting local school boards and communities to get behind the efforts.

"You have to convince the school system and the community it's worthwhile and you're not going in there to bend the minds of the kids," Webb said.

He noted while school systems technically cannot prohibit the programs, they can make it easier for them to be successful -- such as by accepting transfer credit for classes taken during released time.

Jay Sekulow, general counsel of the Atlanta-based Christian Advocates Serving Evangelism, said while he supports the concept, some also have expressed concerns released time programs still cannot completely circumvent the secularism taught in public schools.

"It's almost that the students are getting a dual-track education -- one from a completely secular perspective and then this one hour from a religious perspective. So you still have this 7-1 ratio of time," he said. In Christian schools, he said, students are taught everything from a biblical base while still being exposed to secular arguments.

Other possible hindrances suggested by sources were a general lack of information and difficulties in gaining the level of support necessary to establish and finance a program.

Several students at the Gilmer center in Ellijay, however, agreed the decision to start the program there was wise.

"It kind of gets you in touch with things more and makes you realize that God is more important in your life than you think," said Brenda Dale, a member of Flat Branch Baptist Church in Ellijay.

"Everybody's for it," added Storme Doughty. "I think it would really hurt the school, the community and everybody if they didn't have it."

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Volunteers rebuild village,
build relationships in Turkey

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
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DALLAS (BP)--Six Southern Baptists traveled to Turkey to help rebuild an earthquake-ravaged village and in the process built bridges across centuries of ethnic hatred, laying the foundation for further Christian witness.

Three volunteers from California and three from Texas worked two weeks in August as part of an international team to help rebuild a predominantly Kurdish village of 24 homes that was destroyed by an earthquake in March.

The six Baptists joined other volunteers from New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Singapore working under the auspices of Global Partners, a London-based humanitarian organization.

In addition to construction, the volunteers also took water samples and measurements of existing water wells near the village. Within a month, a water purifier purchased by Global Partners will be installed in the village.

"The needs of Turkey and her people are great. I thank God he has given me a chance to reflect his love to them," said Gary Smith, a member of Midway Road Baptist Church in Dallas. "Kindness is a language the blind can see and the deaf can hear."

Other Southern Baptist volunteers were project coordinator Edd Brown and two fellow members of Sierra Baptist Church in Pioneer, Calif., Charlie Throssel and James Warren, and two other members of the Dallas church, Mike Rouse and Mafa Barzani.

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Upon arriving at the mountain village in northern Turkey, the volunteers discovered serious structural problems in the homes being erected.

They also encountered local construction workers with 12 years building experience who had never seen an electric saw. They saw concrete slab foundations and ceilings being mixed by hand and bricks being unloaded individually by hand.

"We saw the problems but we couldn't come in as know-it-all Americans telling them how to do their jobs," said Rouse, who worked in construction before joining Exodus Ministries in Dallas, an after-care program for recently released ex-convicts. "We had to earn their confidence and teach by example."

Through a series of happenstance meetings that Rouse saw as "the activity of God," contact was made first with the chief contractor, then a building inspector and finally with governmental officials in Ankara.

When Brown, recently retired Brotherhood director for the California Baptist Convention, met with federal officials in Turkey's capital, they worked together to propose a program in which selected suppliers, architects and builders will go to California to learn the latest construction techniques.

The muktar (mayor) of the village welcomed the volunteers with open arms, moving his family into a tent so the builders could stay in his home.

One night the muktar saw the volunteers' interpreter sitting on his patio and he asked, "Why have these people come so far from their homes to help my people? What makes them different?"

As the interpreter shared his Christian faith with the muktar, the village leader initially was repelled by any mention of Jesus' name. But on the last day before the builders left the work site, the muktar asked the interpreter for a Bible so he could learn more about Christ.

Barzani, a Kurdish-American, told local Kurdish workers how he was introduced to the love of Jesus Christ while serving as interpreter with Southern Baptists offering relief to Kurdish refugees in Iraq.

While he recognized the history of centuries-old animosities between Turks and Kurds, Muslims and Christians and even Shiite Muslims and Sunni Muslims, Barzani advised the Kurds not to live in bitterness.

Rouse, likewise, had the opportunity to share his faith with his co-workers. One time, a bricklayer asked him if, indeed, smoking cigarettes is no longer acceptable in the United States. Then the conversation turned to cocaine.

To the bricklayer's surprise, Rouse told him not only was cocaine use a serious problem among Americans, but he personally had gone to prison for possession and use of the illegal drug. Noting that he had friends and family who were addicted to cocaine, the bricklayer asked Rouse how he managed to quit.

"That was the open door I needed," Rouse said. "I told him the only way I could find freedom was through the love of God and inviting Christ into my heart. That was the only place I could find forgiveness and eternal life."

Like the village muktar, the laborer initially turned away at the mention of Jesus Christ. But before the volunteers left the village, the bricklayer asked for a Bible.

California Baptists take stands
on homosexuality, Holiday Inns

By Mark A. Wyatt

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--Moral issues prompted debate and action at the Sept. 10-11 California Southern Baptist Convention executive board meeting. Members approved one resolution opposing pro-homosexual legislation and another ending a five-year boycott sparked by pornographic movies available at Holiday Inn hotels and motels.

By a unanimous vote board members approved a resolution opposing three bills already passed by the California general assembly: AB 2601, which would prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation, and AB 2755 and SB 1078, both of which would require the state's public schools to teach appreciation for groups such as homosexuals.

The executive board resolution "strongly urges Governor Pete Wilson to veto these three bills" and acknowledges Wilson's "wise decision in vetoing similar legislation last year."

The resolution further encourages "all California Southern Baptist churches to communicate to the governor their opposition to these bills prior to September 24, 1992." That is the deadline for Wilson to either veto the bills, sign them into law or allow them to become law without his signature, according to W.B. Timberlake, lobbyist and president of the Committee on Moral Concerns.

The resolution, recommended by the executive board's denominational relations committee, came after an appeal by Timberlake Sept. 4 asking California Southern Baptists to register opposition to the legislation and urge Wilson to veto the bills.

While the resolution on pro-homosexual legislation passed with little discussion and no dissent, there was lively debate before board members voted to drop a five-year-old boycott over pornographic movies offered by Holiday Inns.

In January 1987 executive board members voted to join a boycott of Holiday Inn Corporation begun by Donald Wildmon, president of the American Family Association based in Tupelo, Miss. Because of pornographic movies available in Holiday Inns, executive board members voted not to use Holiday Inns for convention-sponsored meetings.

Five years later, however, an executive board composed of different members voted to rescind the boycott while making a strong statement against "pornography in any form." Still, not everyone agreed with ending the boycott.

Jim Wilson, a Palm Desert pastor, opposed lifting the ban. "Has God's will changed since January 1987?" he asked. "I believe there's times we do what's right regardless of whether or not it's effective. I think there's times we do what's right, not what's economical."

Wilson asked about reports that a possible state convention annual meeting site would be jeopardized if the Holiday Inn boycott remained intact.

Dennis Schmierer, CSBC business services division director, confirmed a Pasadena site being considered for the 1996 convention meeting includes a Holiday Inn. But Schmierer said no firm plans have been made for that meeting.

"I think the timing is bad," said David Daffern, a Livermore layman. "If the motion is right and we do it for the wrong reasons, it would look bad if there's an expediency motive here."

Board members said continuing the boycott was inconsistent.

"Every major line of hotel now makes available pornographic movies," explained Jerry Tillman, a Fresno pastor.

He said it is "hypocritical to boycott Holiday Inn but use" other hotels which offer similar movies.

Jerry Corbaley, an Arcata pastor, indicated he agreed with the boycott's original purpose, which he termed a "political" attempt to express Southern Baptists' opposition to pornography. But with many hotel chains offering similar movies, Corbaley conceded, "It has gotten to a point where we are singling out one, without what would be called just cause at this time.

"If we continue after it has become politically insignificant, we are taking a step toward a monastic existence, withdrawing from society. It's time to show the courage to assess this attempt at political strategy and say 'It's failed, it didn't work this time,'" Corbaley said.

Larry Fisher, East Bay Southern Baptist Association director of missions, told board members by doing business with such hotels " ... sometimes our witness can be effective" Fisher, an observer at the meeting, said when a hotel offered to provide champagne breakfasts at last year's state convention annual meeting, he was able to explain Baptist beliefs to the hotels managers.

"When we move into a place and don't use their movies and their bars, we speak to everybody from the cocktail waitress clear to the top," Fisher declared.

The Holiday Inn resolution was adopted, with five dissenting votes.

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ANALYSIS

Just what can churches, pastors
say and do in election year?

By Michael K. Whitehead

Baptist Press
9/15/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--Are you suffering from "tax-exemption paranoia?"

The syndrome makes cultural cripples of many well-meaning pastors and church leaders who have developed an irrational fear about losing a church's tax-exempt status because of excessive "political activity."

This fear can paralyze churches and prevent them from helping members to apply their Bible-based convictions when exercising their citizenship.

In extreme cases, victims are afraid it is illegal even to talk about political issues or candidates while inside a church building. They would prefer that pastors and teachers avoid criticizing government policies or politicians rather than take any chance the Internal Revenue Service might revoke the church's tax exemption.

Historic Baptists such as John Leland were willing to be jailed or hanged before they were willing to be licensed or muzzled by Caesar, who had no authority over when, where or what they could preach. Baptist statesman George Truett went to the steps of the U.S. Capitol and demanded that Caesar keep his millstone off the church's neck.

Is it possible Baptists have allowed the principle of church-state separation to be so mangled by modern secularists it is now used to intimidate the church into silence about political/moral issues in exchange for exemption from income taxes?

Part of the reason for the paranoia is an ambiguous statute. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code has two rules which regulate political activity by churches and exempt corporations.

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The first rule permits some lobbying or "influencing legislation" by a church body, so long as it is "no substantial part of the activities" of the entity. The code does not define "influencing legislation" or "substantial part."

The second rule prohibits a church or tax-exempt corporation from "participat(ing) in or interven(ing) in (including the publishing and distributing of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office." The code does not define "participate" or "intervene."

What is the speed limit?

"Just tell me what I can and can't do. Tell me the speed limit and I'll obey it," you say. Unlike speed limits, the tax code is not always clear.

Come to think of it, speed limits are not always clear. A driver on an interstate highway may be going 65 mph toward an unfamiliar city. Leaving the rural area and entering the suburbs, he has not seen a speed sign in a while but he knows the limit must change to 55 mph somewhere near the city. He is in a hurry, but he feels uncomfortable not knowing if 65 mph is safe or risky.

Some people handle such daily dilemmas by going 40 mph, the legal minimum on the freeway. Others will weigh the circumstances and make a judgment about what is safe or risky until they see a clear signpost. Living with ambiguous tax laws requires similar judgment.

Practicing such preventive law is prudent, but pastors and teachers will seek to balance their duties under an ambiguous law with their religious duty and constitutional right to preach prophetically to culture and government.

When balancing the risks, consider the fact that the Internal Revenue Service has never judicially revoked the tax-exempt status of a church because a pastor went too far in praising or rebuking a political candidate or in stirring up public pressure about some legislation. This is not to say churches should ignore the law just because the IRS has not enforced it. A driver should not drive as fast as he pleases just because he sees no police officer.

The fact that the IRS has judicially never enforced this section against a church, however, is relevant to reducing the fear churches have of this issue. It may show the IRS realizes the code is ambiguous, and strict enforcement would conflict with constitutional rights. Therefore, churches should feel comfortable in making judgments about such activity with more latitude than the letter of the law seems to give.

The IRS always could change its policy and start enforcing the letter of the law against churches. If that happens, churches will doubtless ask the Supreme Court to hear many of these cases in order to define the rights and duties of churches and members.

Until then, it is prudent to "drive with care" but without paranoia. Pastors don't have to be tax lawyers to make practical daily judgments about complying with the law while still obeying Christ's command to be "salt" and "light." Like the driver on an interstate, pastors and churches can make some informed judgments about the level of risk with which they feel comfortable.

For a list of supporting footnotes pertaining to this story, contact the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Prices cut for Zimbabwe
World Youth Conference

WASHINGTON (BP)--Airfare and accommodation costs for Baptist youth and youth leaders planning to attend the 12th Baptist Youth World Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, Aug. 11-15, 1993, have been reduced by \$116 to \$314.

Up to 4,000 young people from around the world are expected to meet in Harare under the theme, "Risking All for Christ -- Our Only Hope."

"We have been concerned about the costs," said Paul Montacute, director of the Baptist World Alliance's youth department, "and we have worked hard ... to lower the costs of this trip because we want to do all we can to help Baptist youth to attend."

The greatest savings of more than \$300 on the new prices just released by Wilcox World Travel and Tours, the official U.S. travel agency for the conference, are for those planning to fly from New York and stay in a first-class hotel during a combined conference/South Africa visit and those planning to combine attendance at the conference with a "Best of Zimbabwe" tour and stay at a first-class hotel.

The savings on other tours range from \$277 to \$116, with the least change in prices originally quoted for persons choosing accommodation at colleges rather than hotels.

Reports to the BWA youth department show many groups and individuals are well along in their planning for Harare.

Doug Hubbard, minister of youth for the American Baptist Churches' Los Angeles Baptist City Mission Society is planning to lead a group of young people to Harare, via South Africa for \$2,900. In South Africa, they will be hosted by members of the Baptist Convention of Southern Africa.

John Corbitt, Baptist student leader at Springfield Baptist Church in Greenville, S.C., is planning to lead a group through Europe en route to Zimbabwe.

Montacute said while costs seem high for North Americans, having the conference in Zimbabwe, Harare -- the first time a youth conference will be held in Africa -- "will make it a little easier for African delegates to attend."

For more information on conference travel packages, contact the Baptist World Alliance at 6733 Curran St., McLean, VA 22101 or (703) 790-8980.

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