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Andrew disaster relief gifts
top \$1.5 million to Florida

By Barbara Denman

Baptist Press
10/21/92

MIAMI (BP)--Dipping into piggy banks, pocketbooks and personal savings, more than 1,500 Southern Baptists and others have offered a liberal financial hand to churches and communities in the hurricane-ravaged Miami area.

As of Oct. 15, more than \$1.5 million had been contributed to the Florida Baptist Convention's disaster relief fund to help victims of Hurricane Andrew -- an unprecedented amount for the convention to receive in unsolicited giving.

These funds are being earmarked for a variety of purposes, meeting immediate and long-term needs in Dade County.

Individuals, businesses, churches, Sunday school classes, Baptist associations and state conventions have participated in the giving, providing small and large amounts.

Their gifts have ranged from \$2.70 given by a Florida child to more than \$100,000 contributed by a sister state convention.

Individuals and churches from North Carolina contributed \$286,300; South Carolina Baptists, \$232,600; Georgia Baptists, more than \$158,000; Virginia Baptists, \$130,800; and Montana Baptists, \$3,500.

John Sullivan, executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention, said the \$1.5 million in contributions is "unbelievable. It has far exceeded any expectations I had. It just proves again the most generous people in the world are Southern Baptists."

Robert LaFavre, Walton County Baptist Association director of missions, spent the early hours after the storm helping at the state convention's command center at Pembroke Road Baptist Church in Miramar. He returned to the association's churches and led them to raise \$15,000.

Among gifts from more than 400 Florida Baptist churches were \$27,000 from First Baptist in Orlando; \$19,000-plus from First Baptist in Jacksonville; and \$13,000-plus from Calvary Baptist in Clearwater. Another 500 donations received were from individual Floridians.

Many gifts represented sacrificial giving by elderly persons, who wrote that their checks were "small" but when added to other gifts increased in size.

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The gifts from churches do not include any funds received through Florida Baptists' Maguire State Mission Offering earmarked for hurricane relief. That offering emphasis has \$250,000 allocated for relief efforts.

Contributors to the cause included two Texas women, 90 and 87 years of age, and a retired 84-year-old school teacher from Alabama, as well as Cub Scouts and Vacation Bible School children.

Several letters accompanying checks indicated that reports on the Cable News Network said Florida Baptists were the first to respond to the victims, prompting gifts to the relief effort. Another gift was from Deborah Sharpe, a USA Today reporter who noted on a sheet from a reporter's notebook, "I'm not Baptist, but I am impressed with the work your teams did in south Dade County. Besides your coffee was better than most anyone else's."

Many of the gifts carried sentimental significance. A gift of \$500 was sent from First Baptist Church of Manning, S.C, which was the on-site location of the Florida Baptist Convention disaster relief van in the 1989 aftermath of Hurricane Hugo.

Other gifts were sent by a Navajo Indian church in Arizona, Southern Baptist missionaries in Bermuda, the ladies guild of a Catholic church in New York, a Presbyterian church and an Assembly of God high school.

Also included in the relief funding is \$150,000 from the Southern Baptist Convention's Annuity Board to cover medical insurance premiums, protect annuity payments and provide grants for pastors and churches affected by the hurricane.

Another \$200,000 in disaster relief funds was provided by the SBC Home Mission Board. Participants in the annual Single Adult Labor Day Conference raised more than \$25,000.

Among ways the funds have been used thus far:

When ethnic congregations in South Dade were in desperate need of rice and black beans, 40,000 pounds of each were purchased. Disaster relief funds paid \$12,000 for the black beans and for half of the rice.

The disaster relief funds purchased, at a cost of \$15,000, 100 tents for homeless migrant families in Florida City.

Nearly \$100,000 was distributed to individuals and churches as one-time cash relief disbursements to persons in immediate need.

Annie Mosely was one to receive \$100 in cash. A diabetic, Mosely's leg was amputated immediately before the hurricane struck. At the onset of the storm, the nursing home which had been caring for the elderly woman sent her home to her 79-year-old husband. In the days following the storm, the woman laid in bed dehydrated, without air conditioning or electricity, fading in and out of consciousness.

After discovering her condition, Ken Taylor, associate in the Florida convention missions ministries department, and Rosetta Harris from Glendale Baptist Church in Miami began making visits and directed medical attention to her. A crew of Baptist volunteers cleared the debris from their home.

Immediately after the storm a Miami family stopped by the Florida Baptist Building in Jacksonville on their way out of the state. The wind from the hurricane had taken their wallets, all identification papers, as well as their home. Because their baby was in poor health, the family was returning to their parents' home in Alabama but had run out of gas on the trip. When he received an envelope with cash, the young man's eyes began to fill with tears. "No one else believed us or were willing to help us but you," he said.

Other money to be distributed:

-- \$800,000 to cover the deductible and other uninsured items in the rebuilding of 35 damaged Florida Baptist churches.

-- \$150,000 to supplement the salaries of pastors and staff during the next six months.

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-- \$250,000 to help 250 families purchase materials to rebuild their homes.

-- an undetermined amount to underwrite the operational costs at the state convention's command center at the Pembroke Road church, which included renting trucks, providing meals for volunteers, installing phones and subsidizing costs incurred by the church, but will not underwrite salaries or administrative costs.

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SBC agencies lay follow-up plans
to win new believers in Russia

By Doug Dillard

Baptist Press
10/21/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Representatives of Southern Baptists' Foreign Mission Board and Radio and Television Commission have begun work on a pilot project involving broadcast ministry opportunities in the former Soviet Union.

Don Kammerdiener, FMB executive vice president, and Sam James, vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, met Oct. 19 in Charlotte, N.C., with Jack Johnson, RTVC president, and Richard T. McCartney, executive vice president, to discuss ways the two agencies can work together.

The RTVC began transmitting two hours of programming weekly in the Russian republic in July.

"We felt it was vitally important to seize the opportunity for gospel proclamation which the sudden offer of free television time brought," Johnson explained. "We knew local follow-up would be needed and that involvement of foreign mission personnel and Russian Baptists would be required to take full advantage of the opportunity."

The two agencies agreed to work cooperatively to construct a pilot project to build on the unique aspects of the unexpected Russian opportunities. They agreed to propose to Baptists in St. Petersburg a one-year project limited to the St. Petersburg area. If Baptists there agree, the Foreign Mission Board could select a coordinator, possibly a volunteer, to work with Baptists there to design a follow-up strategy.

"The Foreign Mission Board is always interested in using follow-up from media programs to integrate into work that is being done by local missionaries," Kammerdiener said.

Johnson agreed, "I am convinced we must explore the outer limits of what media does best, then place that tool in the hands of field missionaries to help accelerate our pursuit of Bold Mission Thrust goals," Southern Baptists' denomination-wide emphasis on sharing the gospel worldwide by the year 2000.

One positive result of the effort, James said, could be building a database for the Commonwealth of Independent States beneficial to all Baptists in the former Soviet Union. "Not only would individuals seeking spiritual help be identified, but it would be much easier to spot areas where new churches may be needed," he said.

The plan calls for discussions with Baptists in the CIS in November to see how they might respond. Later, probably in early 1993, a coordinator could be enlisted to work with churches in the St. Petersburg area in establishing a follow-up plan.

At the appropriate time, the RTVC would begin inviting response from viewers, with the expectation that responses would be shared with local churches who might participate in the follow-up, Johnson said.

"Television may very well be one of the methods God wants to use in these closing days of the 20th century to touch this vast area of the world," Johnson added. "I pray that we and the staff of the Foreign Mission Board may be able to refine a powerful strategy for taking full advantage of this significant opportunity."

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Martin Bradley retires
after 38-year BSSB career

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE (BP)--Martin Bradley was working as a cost accountant in the Ford Motor Company's aircraft division in Kansas City, Mo., when he chose another career path.

He joined the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board as statistician in the research and statistics department, becoming the first staff member trained in the field of statistics. That was 1954, and Bradley, 65, retires Nov. 1 after 38 years with the department, concluding his service as director of corporate planning and research.

When Bradley submitted his resignation at Ford, he was called in by his superiors and asked to stay.

"We didn't talk long," he recalled. "I told them I felt led to go (to the Sunday School Board). It was not the best-paying alternative. It was the right thing. I have not had a minute's question of it since."

During his career, the Sedalia, Mo., native has seen the research department grow from a unit of five to a peak of 37 employees involved in conducting research not only for the board but for other Southern Baptist agencies. He has overseen the mammoth compilation of the annual Uniform Church Letter, statistical reports from the more-than-38,000 Southern Baptist churches.

In the early days when statistics were compiled with IBM sorters, "we just couldn't do much with UCL statistics compared to what we can do now with computers," Bradley said. Today, for example, a computer can churn out on demand data on the top 10 SBC churches in membership, Sunday school enrollment or a myriad of other items.

Bradley pointed with pride to the introduction of the multiple-part Uniform Church Letter that allows churches to fill out one document to be forwarded to the associational office with copies to state conventions and the board. Formerly, associational clerks had to painstakingly transcribe church data to a new form, a process that resulted in frequent errors and left the board with no direct access to the church document.

Bradley also led the board to introduce in 1986 an issues management process to monitor emerging trends in society and strategize appropriate responses by the board through its products and services.

"This enables us to look at what's going to be happening out in the future rather than always being reactive," Bradley said.

Issues identified and dealt with in recent years have included the aging of America, baby boomers, customization and niche marketing, literacy, the environment and globalization.

Bradley expressed concern that Southern Baptists and Christians in general remain unprepared to grapple with a multitude of concerns related to bioethics -- euthanasia, biological experimentation, genetic engineering, in vitro fertilization, mapping of genes.

If, by examining a person's genes, scientists can tell if he has a predisposition to Alzheimer's Disease, questions arise such as when he should be told, or if? When should others be told?

"One question is how much of what we can do, should we do," Bradley said. "Where are the rights -- with the individuals directly involved? with parents? society? If they can design embryos by engineering the genetic makeup, should they do that?"

"I'm convinced bioethics is going to embroil Southern Baptists in concerns and debates," Bradley said. The issues call for Scripture study, careful examination and reasoned solutions, he noted.

"We don't have the luxury of settling these before the scientists act," Bradley warned. "They already are acting and the marketers already are working."

In addition to leading the board's research efforts, Bradley helped to organize the Southern Baptist Research Fellowship and has served as its president. He has been active in the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, attending 30 consecutive annual meetings.

He chaired the team which produced the 1990 Churches and Church Membership Study, compiling statistics on adherents of American religious groups. He was a member of the team for the 1980 study.

In addition to involvement in research and futures organizations, Bradley has attended the past 38 consecutive Southern Baptist Convention meetings, serving as recording secretary 1978-90.

Along the way, he met many Southern Baptist leaders. He recalled with gratitude a 1951 conversation with SBC executive secretary Porter Routh, who took time out during the SBC meeting in San Francisco to eat lunch with the 24-year-old Bradley and tell him about the board's research and statistics department. That conversation shaped the future direction of his career.

In retirement, Bradley plans to do research consultation and assist state conventions in planning and research. He plans to travel and continue his long-time attendance at Vanderbilt University football and basketball games.

"The enriching thing for me has been the persons and the relationships," Bradley said.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Baptist Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press.

Southern Baptists lead
temperance organization

By Louis Moore

Baptist Press
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Nashville (BP)--During much of this century, Methodists led the nation's Temperance Movement but in the past 20 years the movement's leadership has shifted to Southern Baptists, says temperance leader Curt Scarborough.

"Southern Baptists still advocate abstinence (from alcohol)," said Scarborough, executive director of the American Council on Alcohol Action Program.

Indicative of that change, Dan Ireland, a Southern Baptist who is executive director of the Alabama Citizens Action Program, was elected as the new president of ACAP, the national temperance coalition, at the organization's annual meeting in Louisville, Ky., in September.

Scarborough, a Southern Baptist who has been ACAP's executive director since 1986, is a trustee of the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

ACAP represents a coalition of 36 state affiliates, 19 of which are led by Baptists. The nine-person executive committee includes four Southern Baptists, two United Methodists and one each from the Evangelical Free Church, Roman Catholic and Mormon traditions.

Southern Baptist members of ACAP are Ireland of Alabama, Claude Witt of Kentucky, James Hamilton of Nebraska and Pat Jones of Tennessee.

American Council on Alcohol Problems has been actively involved in education regarding the dangers of alcohol and other drugs and in the development of public policy to control the availability and advertising of alcoholic beverages.

ACAP recently has been active in restoring "Age 21" laws for purchasing alcohol in all 50 states, mandating warning labels on alcoholic beverage containers and increasing the federal excise taxes on alcoholic beverages.

ACAP adopted nine resolutions during its recent meeting, which:

- encourage family-oriented theme parks to cease and desist in promoting alcoholic beverages.

- support national legislation to require warning messages on alcoholic beverage advertisements.

- encourage young people to write their senators and representatives in Congress expressing concern about alcohol advertising and the negative consequences among youth.

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- oppose the use of so-called non-alcoholic beverages.
- urge Christian radio programmers and broadcasters to enhance the number of programs with alcohol prevention messages.
- encourage all states to pass legislation mandating non-smoking sections in all public places.
- oppose all forms of gambling and commend those who work to decrease the availability of gambling in the country.

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Colorado rural churches thrive
on ministry quality, not quantity

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
10/21/92

DEER TRAIL, Colo. (BP)--Welcome to Deer Trail Baptist Mission; average attendance, four.

Obviously, most people in this town of about 400 are still on the outside looking in, trying to figure out this latest addition to their community.

But patience, faith and devotion are essential for church planting in Colorado rural areas, where town elevations often exceed populations, say state Baptist leaders.

Deer Trail, 45 miles east of Denver, had two churches before the mission came. Some residents question the need for another Baptist church since already they had an American Baptist church, said Danny Gillam, 28, pastor of the four-month-old mission.

He contends, however, there's room for Southern Baptists considering the other two churches draw less than 100 people each Sunday. "Nobody was really touching the unchurched anyway," he said. "That's why we are there."

Deer Trail's mission is the latest addition to the Platte Valley Baptist Association in northeast Colorado. Here, Southern Baptists have 20 congregations with membership totaling less than 2,000 members among 65,000 people, said George Garner, church planter and director of missions for the area.

With little identity and scarce resources, Colorado Baptists can't take anything for granted, said Charles Sharp, executive director of the Colorado Baptist Convention.

"In a traditional Southern Baptist state, you've got a lot of 'built-ins,'" he said. "Out here, people don't know who we are. Although we're the third largest denomination in the state, we're still small."

Southern Baptists are less than 3 percent of Colorado's population, according to the Glenmary Research Center's 1990 study of church membership.

Conditions are harsh physically, spiritually and financially. Most church work falls to the pastor, said Mike Chadwick, pastor of Hi-Plains Baptist Church in Limon.

"There are a lot of things that churches of any bigger size at all just take for granted," he said. "You're minister of education, you type the bulletin, you try to find the pianist for Sunday."

Less than 40 percent of the state's population is connected to any church, the study reports. A western, self-reliant spirit contributes to a low church population, and residents' slow acceptance of anything new accounts for slow growth, Sharp said.

"Farmers and ranchers are used to doing things that need to be done by themselves," he noted. "They've been basically ranching the same way for 100 years here, so other changes are hard to make."

Gillam agreed. "Slow. That's the key word," he said, adding that many church growth books aren't much help because they focus on reaching suburbs. "This is not your typical baby boomer, yuppie community."

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That's one reason Southern Baptists here measure success more by impacted lives than by numbers.

"I'm not going to say you're not successful because you've been out here three years and you're not running 100 yet," Sharp said. "Some of the best ministry (a pastor) may do is drive the truck during wheat harvest."

"That may mean that they may not join our church, but they'll make an adjustment in their lives toward God," Gillam added.

Such opportunities for ministry do exist, said Randy Whitley, a pastor at two congregations in Idalia and Wray.

"There's a lot of loneliness out here. You might be six, seven miles away from your nearest neighbor," he said. "People are hungry for someone to walk their life with them."

Most ministry occurs not inside churches, but outside, helping residents and meeting needs, Sharp said. "If you've got a guy who's mending fences and you want to talk with him, he's not going to stop. One of the best things you can do is mend fences with him."

Bivocational pastors are important to Southern Baptist work in the state, he said. "They accept (a bivocational pastor) a lot more as a fellow worker than they do as a pastor of a Baptist church," he said. "He's out there with them, and he's a part of the community."

Although they have fewer resources than those in traditionally Southern Baptists states, work still gets done, Sharp said. "Sometimes we've got churches starting missions that are hardly able to be churches themselves."

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(BP) photo of Mike Chadwick, pastor of Hi-Plains Baptist Church in Limon, and church planter George Garner mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Atlanta Bureau of Baptist Press.

Volunteers' work plays key role
in Southern Baptist pioneer state

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
10/21/92

DENVER (BP)--At age 60, Louise Ford said she wanted to volunteer for Christian work but didn't know what she could do.

Ford, who has been active in Woman's Missionary Union all her life, said she found a job to match her convictions when asked to be a Missions Service Corps volunteer secretary for the Colorado Baptist WMU director.

"I know that God just put me where he wants me to be," said Ford, who left her home in Corsicana, Texas, to live in Denver for a year.

Filling a wide range of jobs, from convention office secretary to church music director, Colorado Southern Baptists have almost doubled their use of volunteers since 1990, said Bill Harper, volunteer organizer for the state convention.

"I am convinced that the Lord's work gets done by volunteers," Harper said. "We've gotten into relying on the preacher to do everything, and when the preacher can't do it, let's pay someone."

Volunteers like Ford are a vital part of administrative, church building and evangelistic work, say Colorado Baptist Convention officials.

For churches without resources to pay for every job, it's either volunteers or nothing, said Charles Sharp, the convention's executive director. "If it weren't for volunteers, we couldn't do a lot of the things we're doing."

Ford's knowledge of WMU programs more than made up for her inexperience as a secretary, said Sydney Portis, Colorado's WMU director.

With no office support before Ford, Portis said she spent much of her time buried under her job's administrative duties instead of planning and promoting missions work.

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"She became a part of everything I do," she said, adding that Ford's help has doubled the time Portis can spend with WMU groups. "When I go out, it's because she's here."

Meanwhile, volunteer construction crews from other states help many small churches get into their own building long before they otherwise could, Sharp said. "In starting new churches, we don't have the large churches that have a lot of resources to help."

While people, not a building, make up the church, Sharp said a building gives a lot of credibility to a new church in a rural community. "They've seen other groups come and go. With a building, you're here to stay."

Volunteer crews often offer Backyard Bible Clubs or other outreach efforts, said Fred Sorensen, a Mission Service Corps volunteer who coordinates out-of-state construction teams in Colorado. Volunteers often are a community's first introduction to Southern Baptists. In Deer Trail, a Fort Worth, Texas, missions team helped with civic improvements while conducting evangelistic work, said Danny Gillam, pastor of the Southern Baptist mission there.

"People were walking around Deer Trail for three days scratching their heads wanting to know what we wanted in return," he said, adding that the work was volunteers' way of showing God's gift of love.

As with most needs, demand exceeds supply. Harper said he fills about 60 percent of the requests he gets for Mission Service Corps volunteers who make commitments to serve full-time for at least one year in home missions.

Sometimes the hardest job is convincing Southern Baptists God can use their skills as a volunteer, said Bob Mills director of the Mission Service Corps program of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"Most Southern Baptists do not have a high opinion of their abilities," he said. "When they recognize that their skills could be used, many of them are amazed."

Many mistakenly believe they have to be ordained or seminary trained to be active in Christian work, he said.

"We are more concerned about their availability and their desire to serve," he said. "That's more important to me than their education pedigree."

More information about the Mission Service Corps program and Southern Baptist volunteerism is available from the Home Mission Board or a state convention's volunteer coordinator.

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Hard play, hard work needed
in resort ministry efforts

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
10/21/92

ESTES PARK, Colo. (BP)--How would you like a job description that includes skiing, hiking and Christian ministry in Colorado's picturesque mountains?

Not so fast, cautions resort missionary Steve Hoekstra, who says harsh weather, high expenses and mixed receptions are constant concerns to those in resort missions.

"When you've got a ski ministry and it's 40 below and you have to go whether or not anybody else does, it really does take its toll on you," says Hoekstra, 43, director of Alpine Resort Ministries in Estes Park.

Hoekstra has been in resort missions 16 years, including nine years in Vail. He is one of 25 Southern Baptist resort missionaries appointed by the Home Mission Board. Another 125 Southern Baptist pastors, associational workers and volunteers are active in such missions, says Joel Land, associate director for the Home Mission Board's special ministries department.

Hoekstra, director of special ministries for the Colorado Baptist Convention, also is a consultant to churches that have established Alpine Resort Ministry branches in nine vacation areas in the state.

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His latest assignment is in Estes Park, the eastern gateway city to Rocky Mountain National Park. "This is the largest single attraction in the state, so we feel like we needed some ministry here."

While the weather is sometimes adverse, the conditions for ministry can be equally uninviting, he says. A 1990 study by the Glenmary Research Center found less than 40 percent of Colorado's population belonged to any church.

More than a third of those who do belong to a church are Catholics, and Southern Baptists make up 2.5 percent of the population, according to the report. "When you hit those kinds of percentages to grow churches, it is a harsh environment spiritually."

In a state where tourism is a major source of revenue, resort missionaries must be willing to accept different expectations from people who are on vacation, Hoekstra says. "No matter how much planning you do and praying, people don't go to resort areas to go to church.

"The only way you can break those barriers is to play with the intention of ministry," he says. "Skiing becomes a ministry. It doesn't necessarily take the fun out of it, but it changes the perspective."

Other ministries include sports camps, puppet shows, campground worship services, day camps and concerts, he says. "People are responsive when you do something different than traditional church."

Vacationers and residents in resort areas are there to escape the normal routine of urban areas, Hoekstra contends. "Part of that norm is the normal church."

"When they come into the mountains, or the resort areas in general, one of the ways we can reach them is to offer something out of the ordinary with the same gospel," he says.

While working with volunteers, churches or residents, Hoekstra doesn't allow his helpers to use the word "tourist."

"It has negative connotations in almost every resort area," he says. "Tourist is used almost like a swear word. 'I'll be glad when the (*italics*)tourists(*end italics*) are gone.'"

Instead, he calls them guests or visitors, believing it's hard to resent someone taking the last parking space at a store if he is a guest. "You can't have a bad attitude towards somebody and yet say we want to minister to them."

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(BP) photo of Steve Hoekstra mailed by the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press.

1993 BWA men's conference
to include missions training

By Jim Burton

Baptist Press
10/21/92

NASHVILLE, (BP)--The Sixth World Conference of Baptist Men is scheduled May 27-30, 1993, at the Baptist World Center in Nashville, W.J. Isbell Jr., Baptist World Alliance men's department director, has announced.

Hosted by the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., of Nashville, the Sixth World Conference will include "Baptist Men's University" sponsored by the Memphis-based Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's adult division.

"This is a new approach for us," Isbell said. "By combining these meetings, Baptist Men and Baptist Young Men from around the world will have the benefit of training in the Southern Baptist program while the Southern Baptist participants learn about international men's work.

"We've designed the meeting to be mutually beneficial to both BWA and the SBC while offering participants the maximum amount of training," he added.

The BWA conference will include a 12-hour management course for business and professional Baptist leaders. Fred Roach of Dallas and James Williams of Memphis will lead these sessions.

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Roach is a retired chief executive officer of Centenni 1 Homes, a division of Weyerhaeuser. Now he directs the leadership training division of the Baylor hospital system and the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Williams is president of the Brotherhood Commission, the missions education agency for men and boys in Southern Baptist churches. Before joining the Brotherhood Commission in September 1991, he was executive vice president of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. Previous to his tenure at BSSB, he taught church administration 22 years at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

The conference will target any Baptist whose vocation necessitates their working and managing people, Isbell said.

Baptist Men's University will include how to develop disaster relief response teams, train men's leaders, start and strengthen local units and conduct missions projects. Other areas of study include the biblical basis for missions, moral ethics in business and preparation and involvement in lay evangelism.

The BWA's women's department is preparing a program for all wives attending the Sixth World Conference with their husbands to run concurrently during the day workshops.

For more information contact W.J. Isbell Jr., BWA Men's Conference Registration, 2300 Quail Dr. S.E., Bessemer, AL 35203, (205) 426-4536; or Baptist Men's University, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104, (901) 272-2461.

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'Students reaching students'
is 'East/West Challenge' goal

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
10/21/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Extending the gospel outreach to college students in three newer convention areas in the next three years is the goal of an "all-out effort" being organized by Southern Baptist student ministry leaders.

And to accomplish the goal, they've decided to use their best resource -- students.

The "East/West Challenge," first shared with students attending summer conferences at Glorieta (N.M.) and Ridgecrest (N.C.), is a plan to raise funds and enlist prayer and missions support for student work in Boston, Chicago and the state of California.

According to student ministry reports, California has more than 1.7 million students on 300 college and university campuses, but Baptist student ministries exist on only 25 campuses. Chicago has Baptist student ministries on only six of its 83 college campuses and Boston has only nine on 76 campuses.

Baptist Student Unions and collegiate Sunday school classes across the nation are being recruited to help with the project. Students can get involved in several ways -- adopting and praying for a campus in one of the three areas, giving money raised through offerings and/or special projects or becoming involved in mission projects in one or more of the three areas.

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"This really involves students reaching students," said Bob Hartman, senior student ministry consultant for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. "It's going to be an all-out effort and we believe the ultimate result will be more students reached for Jesus Christ."

East/West Challenge is being coordinated by the SBC Newer Convention Support Committee, composed of representatives from the Sunday School Board's student ministry section, the Home Mission Board, state conventions and local student ministries.

A monetary goal for the project has been set at \$33,000 per year for three years for each of the three areas. The money will be used for a variety of purposes, including stipends, insurance costs, housing and travel expenses for student workers, scholarships for students attending BSU retreats, computer software and Bible study and program materials.

Several thousand dollars already have been raised, Hartman said, adding several states plan to take up offerings at their fall student conventions.

This isn't the first time students have come to the aid of their peers in new work areas, Hartman said. First started four years ago, the project already has raised funds and mission support for student work in New York City and Portland, Ore.

"The most important thing about East/West Challenge is that it's a missions education program for students," said Bill Lee, director of the special ministries department at the Home Mission Board and one of the coordinators of the project. "Missions is working when the receivers become the givers."

For more information about East/West Challenge, contact the Student Ministry Section at the Sunday School Board, MSN 153, 127 Ninth Ave. N., Nashville, TN 37234.