



(BP)

-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

December 15, 1992

92-209

CALIFORNIA -- Church goes 'hog wild' for best-ever visitation.
NASHVILLE -- SBC seminary enrollment increases over 1991 total.
MISSISSIPPI -- Restaurant, church team up for unique ministry to youth; photo.
NASHVILLE -- Bill Young receives 1992 award, friend of discipleship training.
DALLAS -- Texas church takes singing Christmas tree behind bars.

Church goes 'hog wild'
for best-ever visitation

By Mark A. Wyatt

Baptist Press
12/15/92

ESCONDIDO, Calif. (BP)--A short feature item in Baptist Press led John Swartz to a close encounter of the pig kind.

Swartz, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Escondido, Calif., the past 25 years and past president of California Southern Baptist Convention, read about a Davenport, Iowa, preacher who said if he thought it would help the church's weekly visitation program he would even be willing to "kiss a pig." The account appeared in Baptist Press last summer as a (BP) Brite.

Swartz mentioned the item in a sermon he preached to Sunday morning worshippers last September.

"If I thought it would stimulate members from our church to go out and visit and reach new prospects in the community, I, too, would be willing to kiss a pig," Swartz said. After a reflective pause he added, "Above the moisture, that is."

Founded by a handful of people in 1949, the church has grown to more than 1,100 members. After completing construction of a new children's education building last summer, Swartz realized the church needed a new challenge.

L.P. "Pat" McNally, deacon chairman, and his wife, Kathy, immediately took up the challenge. They set in motion a plan they called "pig mania," a weeks-long program designed to increase involvement of church members in discovering and visiting prospective members.

But to get the payoff their pastor promised, the plan had to really succeed: "I will not kiss a real live, red-hot pig for a lukewarm effort," Swartz said. He agreed to kiss the pig only if the visitation emphasis turned out to be the best in the church's history.

Highlighting the emphasis were weekly events devised to keep the outreach theme before the congregation. Included were visitation evenings titled:

-- "Pig out, piggyback night," in which participants were treated to homemade ice cream.

-- "Ham it up," when ham sandwiches were served.

-- "Porker night," when participants enjoyed baby-back barbecued ribs.

-- "Reach a friend by phone -- Hog calling" and "Hogtie a friend," encouraging members to call friends and encourage them to attend services at Bethel.

The theme also was used in defraying costs as bright pink piggy banks distributed during Bible study classes helped collect money to pay for refreshments.

Attendance at visitation grew from eight to 10, then to 100. Before it was over, members made 1,687 contacts.

--more--

The church celebrated the dedication of the new children's building Nov. 15 with baked ham served at a luncheon. The same day, a 6-month-old registered Vietnamese pot-bellied pig named "Mercy" was introduced during Bible study classes.

Eight days later, Nov. 23, a record 106 outreach visitors were on hand. An observer noted the group went "hog wild" when Swartz fulfilled his pledge and kissed Mercy the pig ... "above the moisture."

Swartz then turned to share the moment with his wife, Carol. But instead of the kiss he apparently expected, he received a good-natured cream pie in the face.

Deacon chairman McNally termed the emphasis a success, putting the effort -- and the results -- into perspective: "No matter how you dress up a pig, it's still a pig," he observed. "No matter how you dress up church outreach and visitation, it's still witnessing for the Lord."

--30--

SBC seminary enrollment
increases over 1991 total

By Betty R. Kemp

Baptist Press
12/15/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Fall 1992 enrollment for Southern Baptist seminaries totaled 10,551, with most showing an increase.

Enrollment reports from the seminaries appear below in alphabetical order:

-- GOLDEN GATE Baptist Theological Seminary has a total of 859 students for 1992 fall term, roughly equal to last year's total. Enrollment at the seminary's campuses was Mill Valley, 399; Brea (southern California), 144; Portland, Ore., 48; Ethnic Learning Development Centers (a cooperative venture between the seminary and the Home Mission Board), 268.

Among Golden Gate's master of divinity students: Randi Lansky, who was raised in a conservative Jewish home, ran away at a young age and, after experimenting with several other religions, including Taoism, accepted Christ. She also works with single adults at Tiburon Baptist Church near the Mill Valley campus.

(Among the seminary's 1991 graduates: Joe Garfield, a self-described former drug dealer now serving as pastor of First Filipino Baptist Church in Berkeley, Calif., and Marcel Taflinger who, while in seminary, traveled around the world sharing Christ, logging an estimated 50,000 miles.)

-- MIDWESTERN Baptist Theological Seminary's fall enrollment is 472 compared to 463 students in 1991. (The seminary graduated its 2,000th student in 1988.)

-- NEW ORLEANS Baptist Theological Seminary's fall semester cumulative enrollment is 3,311 at the main campus and at 11 centers in five states and Puerto Rico. The overall enrollment is a 27 percent increase over last year.

NOBTS, the first Southern Baptist seminary to be founded by direct action of the SBC in 1917 in New Orleans, this year is celebrating its 75th anniversary. The school was known as Baptist Bible Institute until 1975.

NOBTS has extension center campuses in Jackson, Miss.; Miami, Graceville, Orlando, Ft. Myers and Tampa, Fla.; Shreveport, La.; Birmingham and Boaz, Ala.; Marietta, Ga.; and Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. Students are able to work toward associate and master's degrees at these locations.

-- SOUTHEASTERN Baptist Theological Seminary Fall enrollment increased despite the seminary's probationary status with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

"We are pleased and encouraged. Not only is enrollment up to 628, but we have 153 new students, with many transferring from other institutions," said Sheldon Alexander, Southeastern's registrar.

-- SOUTHERN Baptist Theological Seminary's fall enrollment was 1,917 as of Nov. 4. By the semester's end, when all students enrolled in Boyce Bible School off-campus programs are counted, that number is expected to increase to 2,400-2,500. Boyce provides ministerial training for people without college degrees. Last year's overall enrollment was 2,489.

Among enrollment trends: In the past decade, the number of Korean students has increased from eight to 60. There are nine Russian students sponsored by Southern and the Foreign Mission Board attending Boyce Bible School for one year of study.

--more--

Also, while the ag of the Southern's students continues to be in the 23- 28-year-old group, there was a significant increase this year in the 35- 45-year-old age group.

-- SOUTHWESTERN Baptist Theological Seminary's fall enrollment showed an increase for the first time since 1985: 3,364 students, an increase of five over a year ago. This represents students registering at the Fort Worth campus and off-campus programs in Houston, San Antonio and Lubbock, Texas, and Shawnee, Okla.

Southwestern's cumulative enrollment (total number of students enrolled for all three semesters) for 1991-92 was 4,014.

At the Fort Worth campus, enrollment increased by 12 females in the schools of religious education and church music and 18 males in the schools of theology and religious education.

--30--

Betty R. Kemp is editorial assistant in the Baptist Press central office.

Restaurant, church team up
for unique ministry to youth

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
12/15/92

COLUMBIA, Miss. (BP)--With a menu that includes burgers, fries, shakes and "the best hot fudge cake in town," it's no surprise The Deck is a popular hangout for teen-agers in the small, quiet city of Columbia, Miss.

Restaurant owners Joan and Waddell Stewart don't even mind if the teens gather to talk in the parking lot as long as they don't block traffic.

Don Lum, minister of youth and activities at First Baptist Church of Columbia, is a frequent customer at the restaurant himself, and he saw its appeal to youth as an opportunity for ministry.

Lum had been using the "24-Hour Counselor" -- a series of audio cassette counseling tapes for teens -- with his own youth group and decided to approach the Stewarts about displaying and giving away the tapes at their restaurant.

Produced by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, the cassette tapes feature information and advice from leading Christian counselors on a number of contemporary issues like self-esteem, alcohol abuse, suicide, loneliness, teen-age pregnancy, depression, date rape and sexual abuse. They can be reproduced free of charge by churches as a ministry outreach to youth and parents of youth.

"I realized the tapes would minister to my kids to a degree but if they were going to be really effective, I had to find a way to get them outside the walls of our church and into the community," Lum said. "I knew the (restaurant) owners were Christians, so I approached them with the idea. Right away they were supportive and encouraging. They realized (displaying the tapes) could be a ministry for them, too."

Lum put up the first display board filled with counseling tapes at The Deck in December 1989. In the last three years, the restaurant has given away more than 2,200 cassettes.

"There are a lot of issues teens wouldn't feel comfortable talking with their mother or father about, but they will take home a tape and listen to it," restaurant co-owner Joan Stewart said. "And some of the parents are getting tapes for their kids or someone else they know.

"People can't believe they're free for the taking. We've even had people from out of town tell us, 'This is a super idea. I'm going to tell my pastor about it,'" she said.

The display board at the restaurant notes the ministry is sponsored by "First Baptist Church Youth Ministry and The Deck," and Lum also included a container of his business cards.

"It has really been good PR for our church because it has let people know that we are concerned about the youth of this community and their problems," he said.

While admitting most restaurants probably wouldn't allow religious products to be displayed in their buildings, Lum said youth ministers should work at developing other creative ways to use the 24-Hour Couns lor tapes.

--more--

"The tapes can be used as a tool to reach today's kids in a non-threatening way. You can reach them and they don't even know they are being reached," he said.

Three of the four 24-Hour Counselor volumes have been revised with updated statistics and information and featuring recordings by professional recording artists. Two new titles also have been added: "I'm Thinking About Joining a Gang" and "Someone Close to Me has Died."

Hispanic and African-American editions of the product also are available, as are three editions of "Gospel Tract," an audiodrama presentation of the plan of salvation for youth, college students and adults.

The 24-Hour Counselor cassettes may be ordered through Baptist Book Stores or by calling the Sunday School Board's Customer Service Center at 1-800-458-2772.

--30--

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

Bill Young receives 1992 award,
friend of discipleship training

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
12/15/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Advocating strong ministries and top-quality leaders to work with preschoolers and children at church has been a hallmark of Bill Young's 28-year ministry at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Young, who retired in November as manager of the preschool-children's section in the discipleship and family development division, received the 1992 Friend of Discipleship Training Award during annual December planning and promotion meetings.

"Preschoolers and children make no contribution to the budget. They require adequate space and materials and, hopefully, receive the better-trained workers," Young said. "Sadly, staffing often begins with the older age groups and works down."

Discipleship training and other church ministries with preschoolers and children are foundational, said Young, who directed a children's Sunday school department for 20 years and now directs an older children's discipleship training department at First Baptist Church of Nashville.

"Ministries during the preschool and children's years lay a foundation for a whole life a child has to devote to Christ," if led to understand Bible truths and how to become a Christian, he said.

After joining the board's church administration department in 1964, Young moved to discipleship training in 1970 as manager of the children's section, a position that was later enlarged to include preschool work.

The change from administration to childhood education required Young to undertake a continuing education program that included reading, seminars and post-graduate study at Peabody College (now Vanderbilt University), Southern Methodist University, the University of San Francisco and others.

He became known as one of the foremost Southern Baptist experts on childhood education. In 1991, he represented Southern Baptists at the National Conference on the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Being a student and enjoying learning began early for Young who started to school at age four and graduated from high school at 16.

Providing professional development opportunities for professional and lay workers has been one of his major contributions. In the late 1970s, he led the discipleship training department to begin offering an advanced seminar for preschool and children's ministers. He introduced ChildLife seminars for professionals and laypeople.

He said he looks back with satisfaction on efforts "to help churches understand the importance of discipleship training."

Another area of fulfillment has been in "reaching a large number of people through field service in discipleship training and helping them better understand children and their needs," he said.

Recent contributions have included new member training for younger children in the form of a workbook, "Now That I'm a Christian," scheduled for release in April 1993.

--more--

"Because churches were using a variety of sources, this was a place where we could make a contribution," Young said. His workbook is designed not for class use at church but for use at home by a parent or caregiver with a child.

"Younger children need intense attention. This will help the parent better understand where the child is in understanding what it means to be a Christian," Young said.

In another area, a children's Bible club program for use during the week, "TeamKID," is scheduled to be introduced in April 1994.

While Young plans to continue writing, leading conferences and teaching, he also intends to enjoy his grandchildren and expand a personal ministry begun after his 1989 brush with death from leukemia.

Typical of Young, in recovery he supplemented his personal experiences by reading and studying about the needs of critically ill persons, including children, and their families.

"I hope I've developed ministry skills which I can use to minister and also teach others about," Young said. "I have been given life, and so I'm delighted to share that with others."

--30--

Texas church takes singing
Christmas tree behind bars

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
12/15/92

DALLAS (BP)--With a helping hand from three sister churches and the cooperation of a Southern Baptist chaplain, the music ministry of Baylor Baptist Church in Ennis, Texas, took its "living Christmas tree" behind the high walls and steel bars of the Beto II state prison unit near Palestine, Texas.

Several prison trustees joined choir members and a 13-man sound and lighting crew in erecting the 26-foot, tree-shaped stage inside the Texas Department of Corrections facility. A 48-voice choir performed twice at the prison Dec. 6 for a combined audience of about 500 inmates and guards.

The idea of taking the singing Christmas tree into a prison was proposed in 1990 when the "tree" was built in the sanctuary at Baylor Baptist and the choir performed on it the first time.

"I'd love for you to do this in a prison sometime," Don Dennis, prison MasterLife leader and then pastor of Shawnee Baptist Church in Ennis, told Michael Ryer, minister of music at Baylor Baptist.

"Find us a prison that'll let us take two weeks to build it, and we'll talk about it," Ryer said, reflecting on the difficulties the crew experienced in building the stage.

But last year, having erected the "tree" successfully once, the crew took only a day and a half putting the unusual stage together. Ryer decided perhaps the ministry could be taken inside prison walls after all.

Working with Michael Fleming, Southern Baptist chaplain at the Beto II unit, Ryer received permission for the choir to present two performances on the first Sunday in December. The day before the performance, crew members from Baylor Baptist traveled 90 miles to the prison to build the "tree."

"The crew worked all day and, with the Lord's help, finished it early in the evening," Ryer said.

The next day, after the morning worship services at Baylor Baptist, the choir boarded a bus provided by Tabernacle Baptist Church in Ennis and journeyed to the prison near Palestine for performances at 3 and 6:30 p.m.

Between performances, Harmony Baptist Church in Palestine opened its fellowship hall, and the Woman's Missionary Union from Ryer's home church -- First Baptist Church in Canton, Texas -- provided the choir's evening meal.

"It was great to see the sister churches pull together from great distances to minister to the needy," Ryer said.

"I just pray that our people will see from this that God-sized things can be done by ordinary people if they only will be led by God."

--30--