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Faith, family, friends
support survivors of Killeen massacre

By Orville Scott

DALLAS (BP)--Faith in God and strong church and community support systems are enabling survivors of the worst mass murder in U.S. history to rise above the 10 minutes of indescribable horror in a small central Texas town according to local Baptist leaders.

Debbie Curl was eating with her parents at the Luby's Cafeteria in Killeen when George Hennard smashed his truck into the cafeteria and indiscriminately shot people for about ten minutes.

"He (Hennard) killed the girl in front of me and then fired at my head from what appeared to be about a foot away," said Curl, who with her husband and two children are members of East Side Baptist Church in Killeen. "I was praying that he would kill me and spare my parents, and I asked God to take care of my children. I wasn't afraid to die, because I knew I was going to heaven if I died."

When the gunman fired point blank at Curl's head, the bullet struck the billfold of her father who was lying across his wife and daughter, trying to protect them. It ricocheted off the billfold and struck Curl's mother in the foot, but they all survived, along with four other members of East Side Baptist Church.

"My mother and I agreed that God has something special for us to do," said Curl. "You don't know how glad I was to be a Christian. We're relying on God to help us overcome the psychological problems."

Among the 23 people killed by the gunman were two members of Southern Baptist churches: Juanita Williams of First Baptist Church of Belton, and Patricia Carney of Trinity Baptist Church in Harker Heights. Williams was a volunteer in the church office, and Carney was elementary curriculum director for Killeen schools.

Kitty Davis, a member of Skyline Baptist Church in Killeen, was among the critically injured.

Pat and Gladys Brymer, mother and stepfather of J.F. Franks, pastor of Memorial Baptist Church in Killeen, would have been sitting in their usual spot by the window where Hennard's truck smashed through had they not been detained on their way to lunch.

The Bell County Baptist Association disaster van was called to the scene to provide food and beverages for about 500 media people and law enforcement and other officials during the afternoon and night following the tragedy, said David Cannon, director of missions for Bell Association.

Disaster relief volunteers staffing the unit included Cannon, Warren and Mary Ann Hart of Bell Association, Jack Shannon of First Baptist Church of Belton, and Harry Campbell of East Side Baptist Church.

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t Baptist Church of Killeen, held a public prayer ti n Friday following the disaster, and hosted an area-wide memorial service on Saturday.

"The community has rallied to the support of everyone involved," said James D. Towers, pastor of First Baptist Church. "There is a real support system here.

"We know how to care for each other," agreed Jack Milligan, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church. "We lived through a year of Desert Storm. We're a strong community, and with the help of God, we'll make it."

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California volunteers help
fight Oakland firestorm

By Mark A. Wyatt

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OAKLAND, Calif. (BP)--Volunteers from San Francisco Bay area churches and across the California Southern Baptist Convention prepared early this week to help disaster relief workers and victims of a devastating firestorm in Oakland.

Within 24 hours after it began, the wind-driven blaze claimed a dozen lives and destroyed hundreds of homes. Thousands of people were left homeless by the fire that raged out of control most of Sunday and Monday. At least 14 people have been killed and property damage is expected to exceed \$1.5 billion.

Initial reports indicated no Southern Baptist churches were damaged by the fire. The fire cut off power and phone service to wide areas, however, making it difficult to verify those reports.

"We're trying to get hold of all of our churches and pastors, but we're having trouble getting phone calls in," said Larry Fisher, director of missions for the East Bay Baptist Association.

Fisher said none of the churches in his association are located in the fire zone.

"The largest part of the area is very affluent. We could have a few (church) members living up there, but I don't know of any pastors living up there," Fisher said.

California Governor Pete Wilson declared a state of emergency after touring the area by helicopter. The declaration paved the way for state government assistance to fire victims.

Meanwhile, Baptist disaster relief workers prepared to join efforts coordinated by the American Red Cross.

Volunteers and emergency response units went "on standby" Sunday, waiting for a call from the Red Cross, said Edd Brown, director of the CSBC men's ministries department.

"They don't want us to go if we'll just have to move out" because of continuing fire danger, Brown said. He said he did not expect the state convention's two disaster relief vehicles to be called in until the immediate fire danger ended in the region.

Relief efforts in the fire zone were complicated by hilly terrain that made the East Bay district a desirable residential area before the fiery disaster, Brown said.

"There is very little off-street parking and the streets are very narrow and heavily congested," Brown explained. Monday morning the first CSBC disaster relief unit was reported on the scene dispensing food and drinks to firefighters and traffic-control workers in the area.

Additional teams from the California Southern Baptist Convention also were prepared to respond to the Oakland disaster.

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"We probably will be involved, but we won't know exactly how for another day or two," said Greg Sumii, director of the CSBC missions ministries department.

"The Red Cross usually takes the first two days to assess damage and decide what resources they need. We expect to hear from them today," Sumii said Monday.

Convention teams are capable of helping with feeding evacuees and disaster workers; performing damage assessment with Red Cross-trained volunteers; and crisis counseling, Sumii said.

Oakland will be the site of the 1991 California Southern Baptist Convention meeting. But Dennis Schmierer, director of the CSBC business services division, noted the fire was miles from the Oakland Convention Center where the annual business sessions and several related activities are scheduled to be held.

Hotels designated for use by messengers are even more distant from the fire, he added.

Schmierer said he had received assurances from an Oakland Convention Center official that "there should not be any effect on the convention" as a result of the fire.

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SEBTS trustees recommend
'inerrancy' in statement

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Trustees of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in a meeting Oct. 14-15 elected officers, added two new trustees and proposed a change to the seminary's statement of purpose which would add the word "inerrancy" in regards to the Bible.

Roger Ellsworth of Benton, Ill., was re-elected chairman with Ken Stevens, Novi, Mich., elected vice chairman. Elected secretary and treasurer, respectively, were Dale Thompson, Rogers, Ark., and Arthur Madill, Mt. Airy, Md.

William Bowyer, pastor of Rock Hill Baptist Church in St. Louis, and Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis, Tenn., were appointed to the board of trustees filling positions vacated by Wendell Page, Lee's Summit, Mo., and Jack May, Memphis, Tenn.

The seminary's charter allows for the temporary appointment of trustees where there has been an unexpected vacancy. The SBC Committee on Boards will make recommendations for the two slots at the 1992 annual meeting in Indianapolis.

Trustees proposed changes to the seminary's statement of purpose and faculty selection process. Both were sent to the faculty for input based on the seminary's "shared governance" principle, a spokesman said.

The seminary's statement of purpose traditionally has been a lengthy, detailed document. Trustees voted to revise the statement and shorten it, suggestions made by the seminary's accrediting agencies SACS and ATS.

A statement of mission also will be considered following the adoption of a new statement of purpose, trustees decided. The mission document would be a commentary to explain in detail the statement of purpose.

In the purpose statement, trustees recommended three new terms be added, regarding the Bible: "veracity," "inerrancy," and "infallibility."

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Trustees also sent to the faculty for input a proposed faculty profile which includes a detailed description of the type of faculty member Southeastern would seek when looking for additional professors. The profile would be sent to candidates seeking faculty positions and used by the faculty selection committee in considering candidates.

Trustees asked the faculty to review the document and make their suggestions within 30 days.

Concerning faculty search, trustees voted to continue to be involved in the process, "largely because the present system was recommended by Dr. Robert Cooley, who is now president of ATS." Southeastern's faculty search committee consists of the president, vice president of academic affairs, three faculty members and one trustee.

Due to the number of faculty members who are leaving or soon will leave, trustees recommended cutting from 120 days to 60 days the time for receiving nominations for vacancies. Trustees also proposed keeping the nomination process open even after the faculty selection committee begins reviewing nominees.

Lewis Drummond, seminary president, said he planned to present three new professors to the trustees during the spring meeting and added he may have two additional names to present.

"We're speeding up the process, but we're not speeding it up to the point so that we can just have warm bodies to fill vacancies," Drummond said. "We feel we must have around 25 full-time professors on faculty to keep our curriculum viable."

In his report to the trustees, Drummond identified ten "foundation stones" which are needed to build the institution: (1) the faculty, (2) The Center for Great Commission Studies, (3) development of the seminary's continuing education and graduate programs, including the eventual institution of a Ph.D. degree, (4) growth of off-campus seminary extensions, along with the possibility of television and correspondence courses,

(5) clarification of trustee involvement in seminary administration, (6) decisions of the administration based on faith, (7) the seminary's students, (8) work continuing with Southeastern's accrediting agencies, (9) increase of the seminary's involvement and service to the whole of Southern Baptist life, and (10) trust that God will send a true revival to Southeastern's campus.

"It is time that we stopped focusing on minuscule problems and realize that the ultimate problem that any Christian or any Christian institution ever faces is essentially a spiritual problem," said Drummond. "God is the great problem solver and he does it by pouring out his Spirit and mightily reviving his people. I challenge you to join me in that quest for revival."

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Newly-endorsed chaplains
bring total to over 2,300

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ATLANTA (BP)--Fifty-six newly-endorsed Southern Baptist chaplains were commissioned Oct. 20, bringing the total number of Southern Baptist endorsed chaplains to 2,306. They serve in all 50 states and 23 foreign countries.

Doyle Dunn, U.S. Navy chaplain, told the congregation at New Hope Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga., which hosted the commissioning service, chaplains are called by God to their ministry.

"We are not deserting our homes or afraid of being a pastor," said Dunn who was a chaplain for seven and a-half months in Operation Desert Storm. "This is the only ministry I know of where you live 24 hours a day, seven days a week with your congregation," Dunn said.

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Thy Tisher, chaplain at St. Edward Mercy Medical Center in Fort Smith, Ark., said lifestyle evangelism and discipleship describe her ministry. Tisher, the first non-Catholic chaplain to work at the Catholic medical facility, said she primarily works with patients and families in the emergency room and intensive care unit.

Most institutions which hire chaplains require chaplains be endorsed by the religious group they represent. The Home Mission Board is the Southern Baptist agency responsible for endorsing chaplains.

Though chaplains are not paid by Southern Baptists, "they are missionaries in every sense of the word," said HMB President Larry L. Lewis. "They are effective, faithful, fruitful soul-winners. They are counselors, ministering to people in their need."

Lewis told of the chaplaincy ministry on death row in a Texas prison. One of the inmates said he had always been enslaved to lust, drugs and alcohol. After becoming a Christian in prison, the man said he felt free for the first time in his life.

"That's what it's all about," Lewis said, "setting people free."

The commissioned chaplains include 25 military, 17 health care, 10 institutional and four business and industrial chaplains.

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Kentucky pastor accepts call
to First Baptist of Nashville

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Historic First Baptist Church of Nashville has called Dan Francis, 39, as pastor of the 2,600-member congregation.

Francis, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Winchester, Ky., the past eight years, will begin the Nashville pastorate Nov. 10. He was elected by the congregation with a vote on Oct. 20 of 934-14.

Francis succeeds Charles Page, who was pastor of the church for five years and resigned last December to return to the pulpit of First Baptist Church of Charlotte, N.C.

The Nashville church will celebrate its 175th year in 1996.

Francis has a degree from Northern Kentucky University, a master of divinity, master of theology and a Ph.D. in Christian preaching from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

He and his wife, Neva Little, have two children: Nicholas David, 8, and Christen Layne, 6.

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Iowa Southern Baptists
note Arkansas partnership

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DES MOINES, Iowa (BP)--The 20th annual session of the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship met Oct. 18-19 in Des Moines as messengers approved a 1992 budget of \$1,080,847 which includes a one percent increase to the SBC Cooperative Program.

Iowa Southern Baptists will channel 19 percent of their Cooperative Program gifts in 1992 to the Southern Baptist Convention, a one percent or \$48,630 increase.

A partnership between Arkansas and Iowa Southern Baptists was announced by Don Moore, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Iowa also has had a partnership with Missouri Baptists and Don Wideman, Missouri Baptist Convention executive director, also spoke and promised a continued cooperation.

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sengers re-elected all officers for additional terms: Larry Stewart, pastor, Albia Road Baptist Church, Ottumwa, president; Jerry Elmore, layman, University Baptist church, Iowa City, vice president; Eugene Linn, pastor, Sioux Rapids Baptist Church, Sioux Rapids, recording secretary.

Reports heard by messengers indicated the state's churches had increases in all programs but three. Total gifts, CP gifts, missions giving, Sunday school, discipleship training, music, VBS, WMU and Brotherhood all showed increases over the past year. Declines were noted in baptisms (476 to 413), other additions and total membership.

"In years ahead we look for the discipleship increases of those brought in during Here's Hope to show an increase in those areas we were down in," said Dennis Hansen who works in evangelism in Iowa.

"I affirm the work of the churches in developing disciples, noting that every area of program increased this year. Church work, not denominational work, reveals that all the churches are doing well," said John W. Adams, director of the church development division for the fellowship.

Messengers at the meeting, held at Crestwood Baptist Church, also approved University Baptist Church in Ames as the site for the 1992 annual meeting Oct. 16-17.

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Operation Rescue reveals
plans for year ahead

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
10/22/91

WASHINGTON (BP)--Baton Rouge, La., or Little Rock, Ark., will be the 1992 target in Operation Rescue's new strategy to focus its anti-abortion efforts on moderately sized cities in the United States.

The activist, pro-life group also plans grass-roots activities in many cities in November; rescues in Washington in January; and efforts at the sites of the national conventions of both political parties next summer, Operation Rescue officials announced at a press conference Oct. 16.

A spokesman reported Operation Rescue had compiled a list in early fall of several cities, mostly in the South, from which to choose as the next major stop on the road to what it hopes will be an end to legalized abortion. The national organization was involved this summer in a lengthy, highly publicized effort in Wichita, Kan.

Although he did not disclose during the press conference the cities still under consideration, Keith Tucci, director of Operation Rescue National, told Baptist Press the list had been narrowed to Baton Rouge and Little Rock. Whichever site is selected, the campaign is expected to take place in the spring or summer, he said.

Operation Rescue's techniques include civil disobedience in the form of non-violent blockades by people attempting to prevent women seeking abortions, physicians who perform such procedures and other personnel from entering abortion clinics.

Tucci also announced the following plans:

National days of rescue Nov. 17-23, with people in 50 to 65 cities expected to participate in locally organized rescues, picketing at the homes of physicians who do abortions and prayer vigils. The most recent such grass-roots campaign in March involved about 10,000 people in 41 cities, Tucci said;

-- The Capital Project Jan. 20-22, with rescues and other pro-life activities occurring in Washington. Jan. 22 is the anniversary of the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion;

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Rescues in New York during the Democratic Convention in Houston during the
Republican Convention.

Randall Terry, founder of Operation Rescue, said the organization would be outspoken about the activities of the Republicans, who are expected to receive a challenge to their pro-life platform position from party pro-choicers.

"We want to make it very clear to the party hacks that we will make life miserable for the Republican Party if they try to bend their pro-life position and kowtow to the child-killers and to the pro-aborts that exist within the party," Terry said.

"We are simply not going to let the Republican Party drift into the camp of the pro-aborts nor are we going to ignore the children who are scheduled to die in Houston at that time."