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91-168

**CP begins new fiscal year
behind last year, budget**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists gave \$10,693,592 to the Cooperative Program unified budget in October, the first month of the 1991-92 fiscal year, according to Executive Committee President/Treasurer Harold C. Bennett.

The total compares to \$11,075,515 given in October of 1990, a decrease of \$381,922, or 3.45 percent. Looking back, the October 1990 gifts were 4.2 percent below 1989 but the November 1990 gifts rebounded 8.6 percent over the 1989 monthly figure.

The October gifts also fell short of the monthly basic operating budget requirement for the 1991-92 year of \$11,725,856.

Designated gifts totaled \$1,479,520 for October of this year, up 1.64 percent or \$23,879 from the same month in 1990.

Designated contributions include Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Home Mission Board's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, world hunger, and other special gifts.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting ministry and missions through state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. State and regional conventions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining funds to the Executive Committee for national and international ministries.

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**Conservative pastors win appeal
for reinstatement of Patterson** By Tammi Reed Ledbetter

Baptist Press
11/7/91

DALLAS (BP)--Trustees of Criswell College in Dallas met Nov. 5 and reinstated Paige Patterson as president of the 335-student Bible College.

After 25 of the 30 school regents resigned Nov. 1 to protest "the untimely and ill-advised dismissal" of Patterson, and more than 80 percent of the student body threatened to leave, trustees agreed to reconvene. Trustees had voted, 14-1, to fire Patterson in an executive session Oct. 28.

The trustees are the college's governing board while regents are an advisory board of prominent Southern Baptists who primarily assist the school in fund raising.

Joel Gregory, pastor First Baptist Church of Dallas, organized a meeting at the Hyatt Regency D-FW where he met with trustees, a half dozen regent advisors, and school chancellor W.A. Criswell to consider the ramifications of the earlier action.

Criswell had founded the school which bears his name in 1970. First Baptist Church, where he was pastor for 47 years, gave financial support to the effort. After becoming president of the school in 1975, Patterson led the school to a degree-granting status with bachelor and master level studies.

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Appeals for Patterson's reinstatement were made in person by board of regents chairman Jack Graham of Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas; Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, suburban Memphis, Tenn.; Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta; Jerry Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.; Tom Eliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla.; and Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church, Springfield, Ark.

Graham reported the regents and trustees met to "mediate existing difficulties between the trustees" and Patterson. Criswell and Gregory urged the trustees to "wait on the Lord" before making any leadership changes at the college.

Criswell's earlier statement he would not advise trustees on the matter of Patterson's future left conservative admirers of the 82-year-old patriarch baffled and offended.

Student Ergun Caner who left a Vincennes, Ind., youth ministry to enroll in the school, charged Criswell with "condoning the trustees' action by saying he's not intervening." Caner predicted, "All it would take would be a word from Dr. Criswell and they would not remove Dr. Patterson."

A joint release issued by trustees noted the future involvement of Criswell and Gregory in "bringing an equitable solution to the issues of concern of the trustees." The six regents present "enthusiastically affirmed" their continued relationship with the college with the hope of "developing the institution into the very finest college for the training of ministers and missionaries," according to Graham.

School supporters have objected to the absence of alumni and ministers on the board of trustees. Deacons at First Baptist Church approve the trustee nominees and the board has evolved in its 21-year history to be composed entirely of businessmen. Pastors who served in recent years were not re-elected for second terms. Trustees refused comment on such objections.

While saying he was elated over reinstatement, Patterson, 49, acknowledged doubts "that the matter has been entirely resolved."

"There are philosophical differences in how an institution ought to function," he said Wednesday. However, he said he is encouraged by the coming together of trustees, chancellor, pastor of the church to which the school is organically tied, and the president to say, "We'll find a way to work this out for the greater good of the kingdom of God and Criswell College."

He said he eagerly anticipates Criswell and Gregory having "greater involvement and influences in the work of the trustees, administration and the school."

Trustees remained unavailable or were unwilling to comment further as to the content of their discussions during the eight-hour closed-door session.

Patterson discounted rumors the infighting at the school is a case study of what a Baylor University official termed the "narrow mentality of fundamentalists" who "purge the moderates and now purge each other."

Noting similar philosophical differences can be found throughout upper level educational institutions, Patterson said, "There were very divided opinions on how to handle it."

"We are fortunate Christian men can get together and work through this."

Critics of the school trustees charged the timing of the surprise move by the governing body was intentional to throw conservatives into disarray one week before the Baptist General Convention Texas meets in Waco to decide the fate of Baylor University.

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Houston layman Walter Carpenter said, "The timing was guaranteed to cause maximum embarrassment to those who wish to retain Baylor as a Christian institution."

Gregory has led the charge by Texas Baptists who object to the self-initiated transfer of governance by Baylor's trustees. One-fourth of the Criswell trustees have family ties to Baylor and some pastors have alleged an ulterior motive for opposing Patterson, and indirectly, Gregory.

Others say they see it as an attempt by trustees to move Patterson from a supervisory role as retaliation for his high profile stance in the conservative resurgence of the Southern Baptist Convention. SBC Executive Committee Secretary Eldridge Miller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Sallisaw, Okla., said, "I detest the attitude that guys that have fought the fight and won the battle are no longer usable."

Miller portrayed Patterson as a "man of faith and venture," adding "some of the trustees appear to be more fiscally conservative."

Sources confirm trustees had pressured Patterson to spend more of his time raising funds for the school. The original trustee action was defended as a "move to strengthen and administrative and financial aspects of the school."

Though removed as president of the school, Patterson was offered a vice-chancellor position that "would provide him with greater opportunity to support the conservative movement" in the Southern Baptist Convention.

After receiving an avalanche of protests, trustee vice chairman Mark Lavvorn of Dallas had clarified the offer was actually "a promotion." Miller counted with the accusation trustees were "trying to put a good face" on what he termed "forcing" Patterson out.

Patterson said he was "in the midst of struggling with the proposal" when trustees decided to reinstate him as president.

In spite of efforts to dismiss him, Patterson maintains supporters of the school can continue to have confidence in the unchanged doctrinal stance and missionary commitment of Criswell College. "There is no church or institution in the world that does not have its moments of disagreement and times of reaffirmation."

He has no regrets over his involvement in what he characterizes as an "effort to return the denomination to the faith of our fathers," adding he would 'do it all again regardless of the cost to me personally."

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Supreme Court hears arguments
in Lee V. Weisman case

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
11/7/91

WASHINGTON (BP)--The United States Supreme Court, treading once again into the contentious arena of church-state relations, heard arguments Nov. 6 on whether it should change its test for determining if a government activity is an unconstitutional establishment of religion.

In the Lee v. Weisman case, a Rhode Island school board and the U.S. Justice Department asked the court to construct a new test based on whether a governmental action coerces persons into a religious belief or practice.

An attorney for a family which sued the school board argued prayers at public school graduation ceremonies are an unconstitutional mixture of government and religion. She also requested the court reject a test based on coercion and uphold its 20-year-old standard on Establishment Clause cases.

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The case has divided religious and civil liberties groups.

The diversity of opinions also was obvious on the Supreme Court. The justices challenged arguments on both sides. Some proposed potential problems to each side and expressed a lack of understanding of each side's reasoning. Only Justice Clarence Thomas, in his first week on the bench, did not ask a question.

"It was a very hot panel," said Oliver Thomas, general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

"The court gave this case the careful, rigorous and spirited examination it deserved," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"The court seems to be struggling to find some clear, concise statement of principles which will preserve the Establishment Clause doctrine of government neutrality while avoiding the perception of government hostility toward religion in public life."

The CLC and BJC filed briefs on opposite sides in the case. The CLC argued for a different test, while the BJC asked the court to maintain its current standard.

The focus of the disagreement is a test adopted by the court in the 1971 *Lemon v. Kurtzman* case. The Lemon test requires a government practice to: have a secular purpose; neither promote nor restrain religion, and avoid excessive entanglement with religion.

Under the test, the lower courts ruled as unconstitutional a rabbi's invocation and benediction mentioning God at a 1989 junior high commencement in Providence, R.I. Daniel Weisman, who is Jewish and whose daughter, Deborah, was in the graduation class, filed suit. Weisman said he first complained to the school in 1986, when his older daughter, Merith, was in a junior high graduation which included a request by a Baptist minister for participants to express gratitude to Jesus Christ.

Prayer at a voluntary ceremony such as a graduation differs from such an activity in a classroom where attendance is required, said Charles Cooper, attorney for the Providence school.

Religious expression even by government, minus any effort to coerce, is constitutional, Cooper told reporters afterward.

"The graduation ceremony is just that, a ceremony quite analogous to any number of civic ceremonies that are familiar in our society," Cooper told reporters. "Most civic ceremonies have some type of reference to God accompanying them."

Under questioning by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Cooper even said the founding fathers' view of religious establishment would allow a state to adopt an official religion. U.S. Solicitor General Kenneth Starr did not seem to agree with that view.

Afterward, the CLC's Whitehead strongly disagreed with Cooper.

"While we urged the Court to adopt a test which permits prayer, we deplore any test that would be so weak as to permit 'state churches,'" he said. "Mr. Cooper's comments about history cannot be seriously considered as a test for the present. The test we proposed demands separation of the institutions of state and church."

The BJC's Thomas said, "I don't think (the Court) would go as far as Cooper. I don't think there are many people who would support the notion that the state can actually establish a religion in noncoercive ways."

The court should "accommodate the tradition of a nation" and see graduation prayers as noncoercive, Starr said. He urged the justices "to think long and hard before deciding a graduation prayer is the same as classroom prayer led by a teacher" where there is a "subtle, powerful" influence on students to remain in the room.

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"I think this case is essentially a school prayer case ...," Sandra Blanding, attorney for the Weismans, told the court.

"I don't think there is any difference at all," Blanding told reporters afterward. "... it is all part of the public education system. To suggest that her relationship with the public school was different on her last day of (eighth grade) and on her first day of the ninth grade than it was at graduation is just unrealistic."

Under the proposed coercion test, a graduation "could open with a Roman Catholic mass," Blanding told the justices.

Forrest Montgomery, general counsel of the National Association of Evangelicals, was discouraged by the proceedings. NAE filed a brief siding with the school.

"I don't think that our position was advocated as well as it could have been," he said. "I don't think the questions asked by the court were the right questions."

"I think the court is still trying to find some sort of a test, some sort of a bright line to decide all of these Establishment Clause cases, and I'm not sure that there is any one test that'll do that. They seemed to me to be all over the lot, which is where they've been."

Both the CLC's Whitehead and the BJC's Thomas observed the oral arguments.

"I believe that Justices Scalia, Kennedy, Rehnquist and Thomas will vote to uphold graduation prayers which are noncoercive and nonsectarian," Whitehead said.

"I believe that Justices O'Connor and Souter will agree that high school commencements may have prayers, but they have concern about younger students who cannot discern the subtle distinction between government endorsement of religion and government accommodation of religious expression at civic meetings," Whitehead said.

"Justices Stevens and Blackmun will probably vote to prohibit prayer, under a Lemon analysis. Justice White may go either way but seems inclined to apply a modified Lemon test."

Thomas said, "I don't think (the court) would go as far as Cooper. I don't think there are many people who would support the notion that the state can actually establish a religion in noncoercive ways."

"I think it's a close call," Thomas said. "Four of the justices have indicated their displeasure with Lemon. Justice Souter seemed to identify himself more today with the traditional separationist posture that's embodied in Lemon. I think the big question mark is Clarence Thomas, frankly, and of course he didn't ask a single question."

An opinion on the case is not expected for several months.

The Christian Life Commission argued in its brief Lemon has created an environment hostile to religion, especially in the public school. Lemon should be replaced with a test protecting against an establishment of religion while accommodating freedom of religious expression.

The CLC's proposed test, adapted from a law review article by University of Chicago Law School professor Michael McConnell, is:

"Does the official accommodation facilitate the exercise of religious beliefs and practices, adopted through private, family, church and community influences, independent from State influence, rather than inducing or coercing beliefs and practices acceptable to the government?"

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"Does the accommodation interfere with the religious liberty of others by forcing them to participate in religious observances?"

"Does the accommodation favor one form of religious belief over another?"

"Does the accommodation use the government's taxing power, or its expenditure of public funds structured so the effect will be (1) to induce, coerce or distort individual religious choice, or (2) to interfere with the religious autonomy or a religious institution, or (3) to promote religion, or discriminate against a religion, by providing direct subsidy to religious indoctrination of belief?"

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Texas voters OK
state-run lottery

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
11/7/91

DALLAS (BP)--Lone Star State lottery opponents expressed surprise and disappointment when Texans on Nov. 5 voted by a nearly two-to-one margin to legalize the state-run numbers game.

However, anti-lottery activists pledged to police state-paid advertisements promoting the lottery, to challenge the media to report the whole truth about the lottery, and to monitor enforcement of guidelines built into the state's lottery law. They also promised to oppose further expansion of legalized gambling in Texas.

Proposition 11, which reversed a 146-year-old constitutional ban on lotteries, drew a majority in every region of the state, but approval was particularly lopsided in south Texas and the upper Gulf coast, including Houston. Approval of the constitutional amendment makes Texas the 34th state to legalize lotteries.

"We regret that our state will never be the same," said Sue Cox, executive director of the Texans Who Care anti-gambling coalition. "No longer will we be able to watch television, to go to our neighborhood convenience store, or shop unencumbered at our favorite grocery store without being bombarded with messages that gambling on a lottery is what our state government wants us to do with our money."

Weston Ware, citizenship associate with the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, called the vote a blow to moral values in Texas.

"It is one thing for the state to permit gambling or other forms of destructive behavior because of individual freedoms. But it is something else for state government to own and operate a gambling business that cannot succeed unless it takes its own citizens to the cleaners," Ware said.

Instant "scratch off" lottery tickets will go on sale by next July, and computerized, million dollar "lotto" games will be on-line by January 1993, said State Comptroller John Sharp.

Ware said he was "really disappointed and surprised" only about 700,000 Texans voted against the lottery, adding political strategists had estimated 1.3 million votes would be needed to defeat Proposition 11.

"We had believed that if we could communicate to the people of Texas what lotteries really are, they would turn them down. We were unable to communicate that message, and now we face a state-operated lottery," he said.

While the leaders of nearly every denomination in Texas were virtually unanimous in opposing the lottery, "The people in the pews didn't heed their leadership," Cox said.

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The number of Texans voting in favor of the lottery was roughly equal to the number who in 1987 voted in favor of legalizing pari-mutuel gambling, she said. In that referendum, pari-mutuel betting was approved by a 57 to 43 percent margin.

"The difference is we lost about 200,000 people who didn't come back to vote this time," she said.

Saying "the idea of being a good neighbor lost," Ware acknowledged some Baptists who do not plan to buy lottery tickets probably voted for the constitutional amendment in the hope it would prevent a tax increase.

"Truth and reality were losers," he added, pointing to the claims of the gambling industry "nobody gets hurt" playing the lottery.

"They talked about the average player -- the \$100 a year individual. But the truth is that 10 percent of the lottery players -- those called heavy players in the studies -- buy 65 percent of the tickets in the hope of a dream," he said.

"These tens of thousands who play as a way out of the ghetto are the big losers in this vote. Those folks and their children are going to suffer with a lottery," Ware continued.

"It hurts to know the facts really were strongly on our side," Cox added, "but the voters were on the other."

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Cooperation nets
music in Moscow

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
11/7/91

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (BP)--Cooperation between Columbia Baptist Church of Falls Church, Va., and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board has provided an opportunity for instrumental music education in the Soviet Union.

A gift from the Sunday School Board of orchestra and keyboard music has been delivered to Eugeni Goncharenko, choir director of the Moscow Baptist Church, by 42 members of the music ministry at Columbia Baptist.

The board provided multiple copies of instrumental books from volumes II and III of the "Baptist Hymnal, 1975, instrumental edition."

Billy Orton, minister of music at Columbia Baptist, said his church's partnership with Moscow Baptist Church had provided an opportunity to discover some of the Soviet congregation's needs.

In October 1990, an advance team of Columbia members traveled to Moscow to lay foundations for a mission tour in October 1991. Later that same month, the Columbia church hosted the Moscow church's Logos Choir, which also visited the Sunday School Board. Though the choir traveled with an orchestra on that visit, the instrumentalists came from all over the Soviet Union, much like an "all-state band" in the United States.

When the Columbia church group began planning to help with the Moscow church's music ministry, they knew materials were a great need.

"There is a pressing, crying need for materials," Orton observed. "They have a folk orchestra, and they have a group who play stringed instruments, but we knew without a doubt they needed music. We decided to take a set of the "Baptist Hymnal, 1975 edition," because it is scored in a way that any combination of instruments will work."

But when Elaine Payne, music assistant for Columbia Baptist, tried to purchase the needed copies, she learned the 1975 edition is out of print since the publication of "The Baptist Hymnal" this year.

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In a conversation with Kerry Morell, inventory support coordinator in the board's distribution services division, Payne explained the need and asked if any copies might still be in the board's warehouse.

Though the instrumental books are officially out of print, a few copies did remain on the shelves, Morell found. In consultation with her manager, Allen Adcox of inventory management, Morell was able to tell Payne not only that copies were available, but also that the board would donate them to the project.

Sharyn Byer, director of Columbia's youth orchestra, led a workshop for the Soviet instrumentalists, using the 1975 books and the instrumentalists from Columbia church demonstrated the use of instruments in worship.

"We tried to demonstrate the use of instruments in a way that would be meaningful," said Orton. "What happened was definitely a boost to instrumental music in that country."

Byer, who was accompanied by her physician husband, admitted to being apprehensive.

"I didn't know what to expect," Byer reflected. "They are just now starting to do age-group Sunday school and music. Until a few years ago, the Soviet government would not allow church attendance until age 18 nor membership until age 30. So my workshop dealt with instruments in worship using an outline of how we use them."

Byer had her syllabus translated into Russian before leaving for Moscow, a touch that she believes impressed Goncharenko. But the high point for everyone may have been when Columbia church instrumentalists played with the Moscow church musicians.

"We had oboe, flute, cello, violin, viola, clarinet, trumpet and trombone," Byer listed with excitement. "We played together out of the '75 books and showed them how the keyboard fits in with any instrumental combination.

"Young people are very interested in using instruments in worship," she observed. "I believe our visit was an investment in the future."

Orton agreed that the gift of music literature "was received like bread to a hungry man. They were just thrilled!"

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

Association finds excitement
in joint project involvement

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
11/7/91

ELIZABETHTOWN, Ky. (BP)--While the Great Commission Breakthrough project was designed to focus on the growth-related needs of individual churches, one association has found a shared excitement and benefits from group involvement.

Creators of the Great Commission Breakthrough in the Sunday school division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board have just completed a year-long pilot project and entered a training phase before launch of the 1992-95 effort to provide customized growth help to each of the 42,000 Southern Baptist churches and missions.

During the pilot phase, leaders of Severns Valley Baptist Association in Elizabethtown, Ky., insisted churches in their association be allowed to participate together.

"We feel like we can gain strength from each other. It draws us together when we do things together," said Delores Baugh, co-director of missions for the association.

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Great Commission Breakthrough planners asked that associational participation be limited to 15 churches. Fourteen churches held Great Commission Breakthrough events and worked simultaneously with outside consultants on growth needs and plans.

The association has not yet evaluated numbers to determine the impact of the project on growth, but Baugh said the total association Sunday school enrollment has increased over last year and "I also think the quality of Sunday school work has increased."

Ken Cummins said he had been looking for a tool that would involve the whole church since he became pastor of Buffalo Baptist Church in May 1990. The project was presented just when he needed it.

Although the church has not noted an increase in Sunday school enrollment, "people are working together and I project that this year growth is going to happen."

In a rural community of 500 people the church must reach into the surrounding countryside for growth but also needs to focus on a finding from the Breakthrough project that 221 church members were not enrolled in Sunday school.

People in the church have had a mindset that growth was not possible, Cummins said. A survey found prospects in a three-mile radius of the church.

He said a long-range planning study has been developed from the project with people realizing that building plans may be needed.

Rineyville Baptist Church moved from a rural community in 1962 to a main highway location. The move is an indication the church is willing to do what would help them grow, said pastor Odis Weaver.

The church has continued to grow, but the project gave church members an opportunity to develop ideas that were their own. "If the pastor stands up and says this is what we need to do, they may do it. If they come up with the idea, it becomes their own dream," he said.

Developing a church dream may be the strongest outcome of the project for Youngers Creek Baptist Church, according to pastor Henry White.

The church organized as a rural church more than 100 years ago and gradually changed to what White calls a suburban church.

White said he saw a renewed enthusiasm among church members during the project. "There was an idea that it was going to cause us to explode with growth. That didn't happen, but it did help us dream again."

The church set some goals and is talking in terms of getting land for future growth, White said. He identified the church as plateaued in membership.

Growth has not been a problem for Immanuel Baptist Church in Elizabethtown with enrollment increasing from 360 to 500 in the past five years, according to pastor Chuck Darland.

"We wanted Great Commission to show us if there was something else we needed to do," he said. The project helped reinforce the excitement of being in a growing situation.

As a result, the church is training potential workers and seeing an average of 15 visitors each Sunday because of a new focus on outreach, he said.

At Severns Valley Baptist Church, the association's oldest and largest church, the project provided "a springboard to deal with major points in the Sunday school program that we had been reluctant to deal with," said Tim Clark, minister of education.

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Although he can't attribute the increase entirely to the project, the church's Sunday school is averaging 20 more now than last year, Clark said.

Some pastors in the association have expressed concern that the project didn't produce immediate breakthrough in numerical gains, Clark said.

"You don't turn it all around in a weekend. It's a long haul process," Clark said. "My goal is that we will do better Sunday school work this year than we did last year. Great Commission Breakthrough is a part of that process."

The association's directors of missions had the foresight to get churches involved in the project, Clark said. "The finest gift our directors of missions have is seeing what is coming and getting us plugged in."

As Great Commission Breakthrough consultants are trained in state training sessions next year, state Sunday school departments will be enlisting churches to participate in the project. Planners say they hope as many as 7,000 churches will participate each year.

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Natural laws point
to God, lecturer says

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press
11/7/91

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Human beings live in a "potent universe" whose fundamental structures point to a purposeful creator, emphasized a British philosopher at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Persons who believe in God should view the laws of nature as "reflections of the perfect will of God," said John Polkinghorne, president of Queens College in Cambridge, England, during the Louisville, Ky., school's Norton Lectures.

"We must therefore expect that his purpose will be made manifest, not in the occasional abrogation of those laws -- as if God were suddenly to change his mind -- but in the very nature of the laws themselves."

The detailed and precise forms of the laws of nature are a "necessary pre-condition for the universe's fruitful history," said Polkinghorne, a former professor of mathematical physics at the University of Cambridge.

By its nature, science takes the laws of nature for granted as a means of understanding reality, he said.

But such assumptions in the field of science do not preclude "a wider search for understanding," he added.

During the lectures, Polkinghorne said a scientific recognition of the universe's "special character" has spawned "a kind of anti-Copernican revolution."

"We do not live at the center of the universe, but the fabric of the world has written into it just those delicate balances which are necessary for us to have emerged from its history," he said. Those delicate balances are signs of God's purpose within the "remarkable potentiality" of the universe, Polkinghorne concluded.

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Missionaries to Egypt
not living in a fantasy

By Breena Kent Paine

Baptist Press
11/7/91

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Picking one's way through a dump of half-eaten, decomposing animal carcasses to save dehydrated children may not be every Christian's fantasy of foreign missions; neither may be leaving a comfortable pastorate to live in a country where many are hostile to the Christian message.

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But for Mike and Madelyn Edens, Southern Baptist fraternal representatives to Cairo, Egypt, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's 1991-92 missionaries-in-residence, serving God in the land natives refer to as the "Mother of Civilization" was a calling from God they could not turn down.

Born in Guthrie, Okla., and raised in Franklin, La., Edens was pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Elkhart, Texas, and New Hope Baptist Church in Albany, La. But after a message by former Foreign Mission Board President Baker James Cothen, he was hit with the need for ministers overseas and felt God calling him to foreign missions.

Not sharing her husband's call at the time, Mrs. Edens prayed, "Lord, either you close the door to foreign missions or you change me."

"It was actually in the interview process that I was called," explained Mrs. Edens, a native of Baton Rouge, La., "and I was not called to foreign missions in general; I was called specifically to Egypt."

"It was really important for Madelyn to have a specific call to Egypt," Edens added, because of the status of women there, the difficult living conditions, and "because you either love Cairo or you hate it; we happen to love it."

Edens has spent much of the past 10 years strengthening existing Egyptian churches through evangelistic preaching and teaching Survival Kit, MasterLife, and theological education by extension. But he also works with small groups of young men who are committed to personal evangelism, encouraging them, providing them with training tools and materials, and modeling for them "how to witness without being offensive or so overt that a person is scared."

Mrs. Edens's work in Egypt has taken a different path. She teaches church music to students from a variety of denominations; and the past two years, she has worked with expatriate women in coordinating the distribution of money to Egyptian charities for the needy in Cairo, keeping in touch with follow-up on how the funds are used.

One such needy area is "Garbage City," a trash dump where recycling workers live with their families in poor, unsanitary conditions. A clinic has been established in the heart of the area, mainly to help keep alive babies who have become dehydrated.

In order to reach the clinic, however, Madelyn and the other charity workers must pass through a dump of dead animals, stepping over and around the unavoidable, dog-eaten carcasses of pigs and an occasional donkey. Madelyn said their technique for getting through the experience is to "hold our noses and run."

She also works with a cancer clinic, teaches women how to clean their babies, and searches out the needs of hospitals, clinics, orphanages, and schools, each year working with about 60 charities.

This year, however, while the Edenses are on furlough in the seminary's missionary residence, he is completing a doctor of philosophy degree in theology at New Orleans Seminary, and she is studying for a master's degree in family relations at Louisiana State University, hoping to use that training in their ministry to young couples in Egypt.

The Edenses will also be using this time to get to know their daughter Angela's new husband, Ken FitzGerald; and "to get used to the empty-nest syndrome," as their youngest daughter, Vicki, has begun college.

But their hearts remain with their calling -- in Egypt.

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(BP) photo available upon request from New Orleans Seminary