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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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91-177

Tennessee amends budget,
hospital relationship changed

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Meeting at Broadmoor Baptist Church in Memphis, Nov. 19-20, 1,530 messengers to the Tennessee Baptist Convention's 117th annual meeting voted in favor of an amended budget, approved a new relationship with Nashville's Baptist Hospital, and elected Hixson pastor Ron Phillips as president.

The convention met for only two days and messengers voted to continue the abbreviated schedule.

A highlight on Wednesday was a 100th anniversary celebration for the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, featuring the children from all four campuses.

Messengers to one of the most poorly-attended sessions in recent years OK'd a ten-point agreement with the hospital. Two points include a one-time gift of \$1.7 million from the hospital to the TBC and agreement on trustee election. The executive board voted to pay off the Baptist Center's indebtedness with the \$1.7 million.

Convention and hospital leaders developed the plan, stemming from last December's decision of the hospital to elect its own trustees and change its relationship to the TBC.

The hospital plan and the budget occupied several hours of Tuesday and Wednesday's business session. Discussions swirled around budgeting and missions.

Under the new relationship, Baptist Hospital, Inc. becomes the parent company and Baptist Health Care System is the subsidiary to which the TBC will relate.

Trustees will be elected from a pool of previously-elected Tennessee Baptists for at least five years. Messengers by ballot voted 785-56 in favor of the proposal.

The budget recommended by the executive board included a plan to equalize funding for Carson-Newman College, Belmont University and Union University. Carson-Newman would have been held at the present level of \$1.7 million and the other two would have been increased to that amount by using 2.9 percent of the current SBC portion of Cooperative Program gifts.

Several attempts were made to amend the 1991-92 budget before messengers agreed on a plan. Wayne Allen, pastor of Briarwood Baptist Church, Cordova, proposed a plan which would have reduced Carson-Newman's allocation while increasing those of Belmont and Union over a three-year period.

An amendment to that plan, offered by former TBC Executive Director Tom Madden, favored the executive board's equalization plan and would give all income beyond the budget goal to the SBC Cooperative Program. Madden's amendment passed 538-526.

On Wednesday afternoon, Bill Bargiol, director of missions, Big Emory Association, offered a "compromise amendment" to the Madden amendment which had been adopted earlier.

Bargiol said his amendment "would reach out a hand to both issues which have divided us."

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The amendment increased the basic CP budget goal from \$27,333,817 to \$28,290,960, a 5.57 percent increase over the 1990-91 budget. Under his amendment CP receipts would be distributed 62.5 percent through the TBC and 37.5 percent through the SBC, the same division as last year's budget. All three colleges will receive \$1,755,355.

Bargiol said his motion will keep in place all line items while restoring the 2.9 percent back to the SBC portion of the budget.

"This will allow most of us to have something as we go home and support wholeheartedly," said Bargiol.

Lowrie pointed out to messengers the \$160,000 designated for debt retirement on the Baptist Center would be eliminated from the budget. He noted they had hoped to use that money for capital funds, but "for the sake of bringing us together," that could wait.

Prior to the vote, Allen and Madden came to the platform to jointly support Bargiol's amendment.

Larry Gilmore, chairman of the budget and program committee, also endorsed the amendment. "It shows we're willing to come together, compromise and move forward," said Gilmore.

The TBC executive board has sought for several years to provide equal financial support for Carson-Newman, Belmont and Union.

Convention business was stalled by long discussions on the budget's equalization plan and the hospital relationship. There were dozens of "points of order" and calls for clarification and information that seemed to stymie convention officers and messengers alike.

Newly-elected president Phillips pledged to help Tennessee Baptists "love each other more." He told messengers, "It is time to stop talking about the Cooperative Program -- we must go back to the churches and give sacrificially."

Other officers include Clint Oakley, retired Memphis pastor, first vice president, and Gary Anderson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dunlap, second vice president.

The 1992 convention meeting will be Nov. 17-18 in Gatlinburg.

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Alabama Baptists approve
partnerships with Hawaii, Korea

By D.S. Casolaro

Baptist Press
11/22/91

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Messengers to the Alabama Baptist Convention approved partnerships with the Hawaii and Korea Baptist conventions, a \$40 million budget, and re-elected officers during their Nov. 19-20 meeting at Samford University in Birmingham.

Messengers also passed resolutions on the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, alcohol advertising, gambling, and abortion.

The partnership with Hawaii, the first between the island state and another state, will last from 1991 to 1995, and the partnership with the 1,700-church Korea Baptist Convention will continue through 1994.

"God has opened the doors to Alabama Baptists to strategic missions opportunities," Troy Morrison, executive secretary-treasurer of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, told the 1,806 messengers.

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Alabama's 1991-92 budget includes a base Cooperative Program budget of \$28.5 million, a 4.2 percent increase over last year. Of that, 42.3 percent will go to SBC causes and 57.1 percent to state missions causes, the same percentages as during 1990-91. Messengers also approved a special "challenge" Cooperative Program budget of \$29.5 million and goals of \$10,575,000 for special missions offerings.

Rick Lance, pastor of First Baptist Church of Tuscaloosa, was re-elected as president, as were all other officers. They are Dewey Corder, pastor of First Baptist Church of Trussville, first vice-president; and Fred Lackey, pastor of First Baptist Church of Athens, second vice-president. All were unopposed.

The resolution on the Ruschlikon seminary, which was debated about 20 minutes, calls on the trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the seminary to "resolve the issues surrounding the October 1991 action in such a way as to continue the good relationship" between European Baptists and the SBC.

The Foreign Mission Board deleted the seminary's 1992 allocation from its budget in October. The Alabama resolution does not specifically ask that funding be restored.

Other resolutions affirmed support for efforts to curtail alcoholic beverage advertising, expressed a strong, public position against gambling and thanked those who helped defeat greyhound racing in the state's largest county, and reaffirmed the convention's opposition to abortion on demand and as a form of birth control.

The 1991 convention was held at Samford in recognition of the Baptist institution's 150th anniversary.

The 1992 Alabama Baptist State Convention will be Nov. 17-18 at the Montgomery Civic Center.

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Californians elect officers, approve budget,
try to define 'cooperative program'

Baptist Press
11/22/91

By Mark A. Wyatt

OAKLAND, Calif. (BP)--Messengers to the 51st annual meeting of the California Southern Baptist Convention elected a new president, approved a \$13.9 million basic 1992 budget, wrestled with how to define "Cooperative Program" and continued work to strengthen relationships between the state convention and its college and foundation.

Attendance figures for the Nov. 12-13 meeting in Oakland totaled 1,351. That number included 1,026 elected messengers and 348 visitors.

Scott Williamson, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Salinas, was elected president, collecting 283 of 530 votes cast during the opening session.

Rob Zinn, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in San Bernardino and 1991 CSBC president, declined to be nominated for a second term.

Other officers elected were E.W. McCall, pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church, La Puente, first vice president; James Murcray, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Long Beach, second vice president; and Mark Cook, a businessman and music minister at First Southern Baptist Church, El Monte, music director.

Messengers approved without discussion the executive board's 1992 budget recommendation. Nearly half of the \$13,975,377 in the convention spending plan is expected to come from California Southern Baptist congregations through the Cooperative Program.

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Of the money given by California churches through the Cooperative Program, 28.85 percent, the same as last year, will be sent to the Southern Baptist Convention executive committee which distributes it among various mission causes. In 1992, that amount will be \$1,950,837.

On more than one occasion messengers debated how to define "Cooperative Program" and whether to enforce constitutional provisions requiring that messengers be elected from churches which contribute money through the Cooperative Program.

The issue arose soon after the convention was called to order. Dewey Squyres Jr., Pasadena pastor and chairman of the CSBC committee on credentials, presented his committee's report recommending changing the constitution to define "Cooperative Program" or use different terms to describe acceptable financial support from churches.

Squyres said existing guidelines "cannot be interpreted with any precision because of confusion about the definition of Cooperative Program."

The Cooperative Program is the unified missions funding plan used by the California and Southern Baptist conventions.

The CSBC constitution defines messengers as "members in good standing of Baptist churches cooperating with the convention . . ." Criteria for determining "cooperating" churches include a requirement that they "have contributed financially to the work of this Convention . . . through the Cooperative Program." Some messengers, however, wanted the definition broadened to include money given to special offerings. That apparently prompted two proposed constitutional amendments which will be considered at the 1992 convention meeting.

The matter surfaced again when messengers were asked to approve a "Vision California" objective to "Enlist our churches to increase their giving to the Cooperative Program by at least three percent."

"How do we increase our giving to something when we don't know what it is?" questioned Ron Fullerton, pastor and messenger from First Baptist, El Sobrante.

Zinn drew a smattering of applause as he responded to the question.

"My understanding of the Cooperative Program is giving through my state to my denomination to reach the world for Christ," Zinn said, although he conceded his personal view is not necessarily a definitive response.

Messengers approved all 10 "Vision California" objectives derived from 32 goals and objectives adopted at the 1986 convention in Stockton. Another executive board recommendation setting a \$500,000 goal for the 1992 S.G. Posey Offering for State Missions also was approved.

Messengers heard the report of a constitution study committee appointed after 1990 convention meeting. John Jackson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Fairfield and committee chairman, described changes the committee recommended as "simply window-dressing" designed to "clean up our constitution and bylaws and try to make them in harmony."

Jackson, immediate past president of the CSBC, gave an example of replacing the term "messenger" with "members," to provide consistent language among the convention's various legal documents. He said committee members were satisfied with similar studies done by Cal Baptist trustees and California Baptist Foundation directors. Both boards reaffirmed ties to the convention.

"We feel very comfortable that we are protected from anything happening that has happened in other states," Jackson said. It was an apparent reference to a year-long Texas Baptist struggle over Baylor University.

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Another concern was voiced about the number of women serving on boards and committees.

"It is disheartening to me that of 91 recommendations only seven are women, and of the seven none are serving on church staff," observed Julie Pennington-Russell, associate pastor and messenger from Nineteenth Avenue Baptist, San Francisco.

"I feel this is not representative of women's participation in Southern Baptist churches in California," Pennington-Russell said.

Woodall said committee members "have tried to keep a balance -- laymen, women, ethnics...," and asked for cooperation from associations when they are asked to submit the names of prospective nominees.

"We'll do our best to work with that," pledged Woodall.

But the vote by messengers approving this year's nominees did not settle the issue. Several messengers presented motions to change the way nominations are made and the number of executive board members.

Larry Fisher, director of missions for the East Bay Baptist Association which hosted the convention, welcomed messengers with a reference to two disasters which rocked the Bay Area in as many years.

"We have gone to a great deal of pain and trouble to squeeze this convention in between earthquakes and hillside fires," Fisher said, referring to the devastating 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and last month's Oakland-Berkeley firestorm.

"I hope before you leave, your witness in Oakland will produce a different kind of earthquake and a different kind of fire," he said.

Fisher thanked Southern Baptists everywhere for their support in time of need.

"You helped us touch the lives of hundreds of thousands of people -- feeding them, clothing them, and helping to rebuild churches" following the October 1989 temblor, Fisher said. "We have found the same kind of response in the firestorm."

The next CSBC annual meeting will be held at Riverside's Raincross Center Nov. 10-11, 1992.

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House upholds Bush's veto
for pro-life win on Title 10

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
11/22/91

WASHINGTON (BP)--A narrow margin in the House of Representatives Nov. 19 provided pro-life forces with a critical victory and left abortion advocates incensed after a heated battle lasting nearly six months.

The House sustained President George Bush's veto of a spending bill including a provision that would have negated regulations preventing abortion counseling, referral and promotion at family-planning clinics receiving federal funds. The House voted, 276-156, to override the veto but fell 12 votes short of the two-thirds majority required.

"I think all Southern Baptists ought to applaud the courage of both President Bush and all of those representatives who resisted the pressure to turn family planning clinics into abortion referral clinics," said Richard D. Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "The unborn children of America owe President Bush and all the congressmen who supported his position an incalculable debt of gratitude."

Pro-choice leaders made political threats against the President in statements after the House vote.

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"Mr. Bush should take no comfort in his narrow victory over Congress," said Faye Wattleton, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America. "His cynical and wrong-headed pursuit of right-wing voters at the expense of responsible medicine long will be remembered by the American people."

"Once again it is apparent that President Bush is the political captive of an extremist anti-choice minority that is determined to take away women's fundamental rights and liberties," said Kate Michelman, executive director of the National Abortion Rights Action League.

"Nothing can underscore pro-choice America's most urgent priority more vividly than today's actions: We must elect a pro-choice President or a veto-proof Congress."

The most hotly contested abortion debate in 1991 began May 23, when the Supreme Court ruled as constitutional pro-life restrictions for participants in the Title 10 program. The regulations prohibiting abortion counseling, referral and advocacy in such federally funded, family-planning clinics were established in 1988 by the Reagan administration and continued under President Bush.

Planned Parenthood, other abortion advocates as well as pro-choice representatives and senators decried the Court's ruling, calling for a legislative remedy. Although free-standing bills in both houses of Congress were passed, the attempt to stop the Title 10 pro-life rules reached President Bush's desk in early November as part of an appropriations bill for the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education departments (H.R. 2707). The bill withheld money to enforce the regulations.

On Nov. 5, the President sent a memorandum to HHS Secretary Louis Sullivan specifying the regulations should protect the doctor-patient relationship and enable women to be fully informed about their condition by physicians. This failed to satisfy abortion advocates and congressional pro-choicers.

Saying he would approve the same bill without language preventing implementation of the pro-life rules, President Bush vetoed it Nov. 19. The House of Representatives leadership sought an override vote the same day. Although the Speaker of the House, Rep. Tom Foley, D.-Wash., made the unusual move of leaving the chair and urging his colleagues to override the veto, the effort narrowly failed. The President's streak of successful vetoes, now 24, remained intact.

"While we take great pleasure in the result of this vote, a note of caution and concern is also justified," said James A. Smith, the Christian Life Commission's director of government relations. "The fact that we were only able to muster 156 votes for the proposition that tax dollars should not be used to promote abortion as a method of birth control does not bode well for the future.

"This battle has just begun. An intense campaign will be waged against these regulations next year in the attempt to make it an issue in the upcoming presidential and congressional elections," Smith said.

"Despite the biggest lobbying push by abortion advocates that we've ever seen in Congress, the pro-life side held," said Wendy Stone of Americans United for Life, "and I think that's because the American people are going to hold their congressmen accountable in that they really do believe that abortion should not be promoted as a method of family planning in any federal program."

During the months of public debate, pro-choice supporters labeled the regulations the "gag rule." They portrayed the restrictions as a violation of free speech and the doctor-patient relationship.

Pro-life forces, including the Christian Life Commission, countered by saying some federally funded clinics were espousing abortion as just another form of birth control. Nonphysicians did abortion counseling and referrals in Title 10 clinics more than 75 percent of the time, pro-lifers pointed out.

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At least \$140 million for about 4,000 family-planning clinics was at stake.

Planned Parenthood, which is the country's No. 1 abortion provider through its affiliates, said previously it would not abide by the rules if upheld. Apparently, it will forfeit about \$37 million in federal funds.

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Draper says Sunday School Board
for all Southern Baptists

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
11/22/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--The president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board said he is committed to being the "best public relations person" he can be to let Southern Baptists know the institution is committed to meeting the publishing needs of all Southern Baptists.

The best way the board can serve all Southern Baptists is by producing the highest quality of Bible-based materials and providing the best services, James T. Draper Jr. told state convention church administration leaders at their annual planning meetings Nov. 21 in Nashville.

"I don't think the Sunday School Board is so firmly attached or identified with one element of the Southern Baptist Convention that we cannot serve everybody," said Draper.

While Draper has made no secret of his support for the conservative resurgence in the SBC, he said he has worked hard during his first three months as president of the board to make others aware he knows "how to work with people who don't have the same view (as I do).

"I am not someone who feels that you have to agree with me to have fellowship," he said.

Responding to a question about the job security of current Sunday School Board employees, Draper said he feels he has developed a "very stable relationship" with employees and has no "litmus test" for them to pass.

"I did not come here with a bad attitude about the Sunday School Board," Draper said. "I view my job as helping (employees) be successful."

Draper also was asked his feelings about the future of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"There are a lot of elements that could determine what happens," he said. "If there were some event or perception that brings out the worst in some of our brethren on either side so that we have an angry confrontation, I think there could be a splintering of support -- which has already taken place to some degree with the Cooperative Program."

But Draper added he is optimistic the majority of Southern Baptists "will find a way to work together and stay together because our mission is very strong."

Discussing what he called an "incredible opportunity" for expansion of the Sunday School Board's ministries, Draper said the SSB is working with the Foreign Mission Board, seeking to provide materials in Russian and other languages, especially those used in Eastern European countries.

"We ought to think globally," Draper said.

Draper also told the state leaders the biggest problem he has with the board's church administration department is its name.

"It doesn't adequately describe everything that you do," he explained. "You are involved in so many things (besides administration)."

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When asked if he had considered changing the Sunday School Board's name for the same reason, he said he had. However, he added, "I don't have the same enthusiasm for it."

"Obviously we are ministering in so many ways besides Sunday school materials," said Draper. However, he added, Sunday school still is the board's primary assignment.

Draper also:

-- Expressed hope the board would be able to market more of its products to the wider evangelical market;

-- Said the board needs to come up with a uniform definition of marketing that includes traditional avenues such as advertising but also recognizes that the board's field service representatives are a key part of marketing efforts. The board must be "customer sensitive" to be successful, he said, "and you can only do that through contact with your people;"

-- Encouraged the state church administration workers to be a "positive voice" for the Sunday School Board and provide feedback about its products and programs.

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Volunteer sparks Brotherhood work
in Detroit association

By Steve Barber

Baptist Press
11/22/91

DETROIT, Mich. (BP)--Wayne Vann is a prime example of the impact one man can make for Brotherhood work in a Southern Baptist association.

Vann, 44, has done Brotherhood work in his native Detroit area for 14 years, and much of it has been a solitary effort in a state considered a pioneer area by his denomination. Yet his most recent annual report to the Greater Detroit Baptist Association indicates a remarkable level of activity by Royal Ambassadors, High School Baptist Young Men and Baptist Men.

For Vann, it started with having the right motivation.

"When I became the associational director four years ago, I decided to do it not for me, but for the people who need help in this area," Vann says, who at the time would have qualified for some of the help himself.

"The Lord had broken my own will and restructured my life. I was self-employed at the time. I had lost my home and was on crutches for a year and a half after a serious fall on some ice. Even my car was stolen."

Vann went back to work and became a leading marketing representative in the Detroit area for the National Federation of Independent Business. In mid-1990, however, Vann says the Lord "laid on my heart that I should do Brotherhood work full-time."

He quit his job in September and two months later was assigned as a Mission Service Corps volunteer by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. As such, he is responsible for raising his own financial support.

"My pastor discouraged me at first from raising my own funds as a volunteer because of the experience of some others who tried and were not so successful," he says. "But he and others have seen God work in my life in so many ways. There's no doubt he's in it."

His experience gives added credibility when he advises other Brotherhood leaders to "stay positive and be enthusiastic."

Another key to being an effective leader, he adds, is being a "communicating" leader.

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Vann started building up a mailing list and sending out a quarterly newsletter to leaders at the church level. He also took the time to meet with local pastors and explain how the Brotherhood program could expand the impact of the church's ongoing work. The support of pastors, Vann says, is vitally important.

Because he worked alone for so many years, he relied entirely on the leadership materials produced by the Brotherhood Commission.

"It sounds so simple, I know, but I would advise any leader or prospective leader to just dive into their literature, get familiar with it, and really make use of it. You can supplement that with training at any time."

During the last 12 months, some of the most notable activity in an association that counts a Brotherhood enrollment of just over 400 -- compared with several thousand each in Southern Baptist strongholds like Atlanta, Birmingham, and Nashville -- includes:

-- A Baptist Men's Rally focusing on marketplace evangelism that drew more than 60 participants;

-- A family life workshop and an international festival coordinated with Woman's Missionary Union;

-- First-time participation by Michigan Baptists in Southern Baptist disaster relief efforts following Hurricane Bob;

-- A men's breakfast and work day at the local Baptist Center involving 17 men in landscaping, floor refinishing, and plumbing repair;

-- A Royal Ambassador World Walk Dec. 1 that involved 40 young hikers and raised \$1,100 for foreign missions, and another walk March 9 that raised \$1,450 for home missions.

"About ten years ago I came up with the theme, 'Let the Men of the Church Reach Out'," Vann says. "If the men of the church reach out, you can be assured the rest of the church will follow."

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Pastor teaches
students to fight

By Breena Kent Paine

Baptist Press
11/22/91

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Paul Gregoire is a Southern Baptist pastor with an unusual ministry -- he teaches seminarians how to "fight."

As a taekwondo instructor for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's recreation center, Gregoire sees the sport more as a form of recreation and self-discipline than as a set of defensive and offensive maneuvers.

"In the 21 years I've training, I've never used it on the street," said Gregoire, a New Orleans native who is working toward achieving a third-degree black belt by the end of the year. He has, however, used taekwondo as a Christian witness.

His students are seminary administrators, professors, students, their wives, and their children; and in tournaments with those from other walks of life, they make a difference.

"There are always comments like 'You can tell Paul's students; there's just something different about them,'" said Gregoire, who feels the seminarians' Christian attitudes in the competitive atmosphere make a positive reflection of Christ's love to many who may not otherwise think about God.

But Gregoire feels his main ministry -- where he has made the most difference -- has been in the lives of the children he teaches.

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Several times here on campus, parents have come up to and said, 'You don't know what a difference you've made in my child's life,'" Gregoire explained.

"I've seen how the children have grown in confidence, self-esteem, and over-all maturing," he continued. "I've seen kids walk in here who would trip over the lines in the gym, and in three years they have a black belt.

"As they feel better about themselves, they can have a better idea of what Christ can do for them. Philippians 4:13 is our motto, even in taekwondo class.

"I consider myself not only a taekwondo teacher, but also a counselor for those teenagers who have been relocated; some of them think they are dislocated," said Gregoire, who is pursuing a doctorate in counseling at the seminary.

"I've seen when some of these students have exhibited real frustration and anxiety," he continued. "By getting a hard workout (in taekwondo class), they can get their frustrations out."

In addition, Gregoire offers his help to those whose fathers are in school during the day and working at night. Sometimes his students will even call him at home wanting to talk with him or ask his advice.

Gregoire first became interested in taekwondo at age 19, when he won three months of free lessons. "Being small, 125 pounds, it was a sport I could get into that didn't matter how small or how large or how tall you are, so I liked it," he said.

With an Oriental instructor whose philosophy was "you are dedicated to nothing else but taekwondo," Gregoire originally learned the commands for the sport in Korean.

Gregoire was strongly opposed to the teaching of the khee, the "inner force" one draws upon to perform such acts as splitting an apple on a man's throat with a Samurai sword while blindfolded or breaking cement blocks on a man's chest with a sledgehammer while he is lying on a bed of nails. So he has disregarded such teaching, and as many other taekwondo schools in the United States today, does not incorporate it into his instruction.

"My instructor never could understand why I went to church," Gregoire said. "Then one day, while he was shooting pool in a bar, someone drove by and shot him, and he died. So all his philosophy was in vain."

A 1973 Colorado state taekwondo champion who ranked fifth in the nation in the light-weight division, Gregoire also teaches classes off campus. There, many of his students come from single-parent families, and he has been able to be a positive male role model for them. As a result of his influence, many of his students have begun attending church and become more involved in Christian activities.

Gregoire's wife, Mae, also has a black belt. Together, they have performed demonstrations at day camps and youth camps, both Christian and non-Christian, and Gregoire has taken the opportunity to share with others his calling to share the gospel as pastor of St. Bernard Baptist Church in Chalmette, La.

"There's probably a respect beyond the belt for the calling I have," Gregoire explained. "We open every one of our rank tests with a prayer and close with a prayer."

Some of his Christian students have gone on to begin taekwondo classes of their own in other cities, using it as a ministry just as their instructor has.

"But probably the reason why I've been doing this as long as I have is because of the changes I have seen in the kids; to see their maturity, self-confidence, and hope is better than any plaque or trophy I could ever get."

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(BP) photos available upon request from New Orleans Seminary