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91-191

Record number involved
in student ministry programs

By Chip Alford

NASHVILLE (BP)--A record number of college students were reached through Southern Baptist student ministry programs in 1991, though the number of full-time directors of Baptist campus ministries declined.

According to the 1991 Student Ministry Report compiled by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's student ministry department from information sent in by state directors of student ministry, 192,680 students were reached through Baptist student ministry programs in 1991, up more than 3,000 students over the 1990 total of 189,410.

In contrast, the number of full-time directors of Baptist student ministries decreased from 525 in 1990 to 499 in 1991, and the total number of directors (including full-time, part-time and volunteer workers) dropped from 979 in 1990 to 949 in 1991.

The number of campuses with student ministry programs also declined from 1,036 in 1990 to 1,009 in 1991.

"We do have fewer laborers in the field, but (these figures) do speak well for the work they are doing," said David Hazelwood, planning and projects coordinator for the Sunday School Board's student ministry department. "I hope this means we are doing more with less and doing more only in fewer places."

The report, which was distributed to state convention directors of student ministry during their annual December planning meetings in Nashville, also showed a slight decrease in the number of student conversions through Baptist Student Unions. That number totaled 6,597 in 1990 and fell to 6,465 in 1991.

The number of students involved in witness training, however, was up from 12,508 in 1990 to 13,186 in 1991.

Student involvement in missions also was up, from 26,484 in 1990 to 27,751 in 1991.

"We had a good year in Southern Baptist student ministry," Charles Johnson, director of the Sunday School Board's student ministry department, told state directors. "This is a record we can legitimately be proud of."

The report also showed:

-- 10,373 African American students were involved in Baptist student ministry programs in 1991, up from 9,733 in 1990.

-- A drop in the number of other ethnic students involved (such as Hispanics, Asian Americans and Native Americans), from 6,273 in 1990 to 5,766 in 1991. The number of international students participating in BSU also was down, from 12,039 in 1990 to 10,720 in 1991.

-- Students helped start 182 churches, Sunday schools or missions in 1991, down from 195 in 1990.

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-- Students helped strengthen 3,342 established churches, Sunday schools or missions through teaching or helping with or leading outreach programs, revivals, surveys, music programs, Vacation Bible Schools and other programs. This is up from the 1990 total of 3,253.

-- 39,726 students were involved in Bible study groups in 1991, up from 38,346 in 1990.

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Bereaved parents look beyond
empty manger to an empty tomb

By Ken Camp

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DALLAS (BP)--Jeremy Taylor Mauldin was scheduled to play the part of a baby born to die for man's sins. Instead, through his own death, he pointed others to a deepened faith in the Risen Christ.

Jeremy was dedicated to the Lord publicly at Inglewood Baptist Church, Grand Prairie, Texas, on the first Sunday in December. That same day, his parents were asked if they would allow him to portray the baby Jesus in the church choir's Christmas pageant on Dec. 14 and 15.

On the Wednesday before the scheduled performance, Jeremy performed the role in dress rehearsal, resting in the manger under the watchful eye of his father, who was playing the part of Joseph.

The next morning, James Mauldin gave Jeremy his 5 a.m. bottle, and he remembers as he left for work hearing his son stir a bit. But at 9:30 a.m., Robin Mauldin found her tiny son dead in his crib, the apparent victim of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Jeremy was buried on Dec. 14, one day before he would have turned two months old.

A few hours after many of the Inglewood Church choir members attended Jeremy's funeral, they presented the first performance of their scheduled Christmas pageant.

"During that song when the baby Jesus was supposed to be there, you could see tears streaming down the faces of choir members," said J.R. Chaney, pastor of Inglewood Baptist Church.

The following morning, Jeremy's parents and his three-year-old brother, Joshua, attended the morning worship service. Although he considered changing his topic, Chaney stuck with his announced text.

"After discussing the provision God has made for His people, I tried to hit some practical things we can do to magnify the meaning of Christmas," he said. "One was to say the things you really want to say and share the things you really want to share with those you love while there is still time."

Though it was an emotional experience, that night the Mauldins attended the Christmas pageant, dedicated by the choir to Jeremy's memory.

"I was most effected when Mary sang the song she had sung a few nights before to Jeremy," James Mauldin said. "But we smiled all the way through the evening. God gave us such a peace."

Robin Mauldin said she felt almost as if Jeremy were present, "watching the whole thing with us."

Accompanying the Mauldins were several family members who had not attended church in many years. Other family members who belonged to another church but had not been faithful returned to worship services on the day after Jeremy's funeral.

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The Mauldins' example of a faith strengthened through adversity and their reliance on God's sustaining grace was an inspiration to all, according to Chaney.

James Mauldin said at least two close friends had the opportunity to share their faith in Jesus with others directly as a result of Jeremy's death. One was the student pastor of a church near Waco who shared Jeremy's story with his congregation on Sunday morning. The other was an instrumentalist in the orchestra that accompanied the Inglewood choir in the Christmas pageant.

"He brought several friends from the University of North Texas along. He told me he'd been praying for an opportunity to witness to them, and this experience opened the door," James said.

James Mauldin said his own family relationships have been strengthened as a result of Jeremy's death, and he predicted that God would continue to bring triumph out of tragedy.

Nevertheless, one week before the most celebrated day of the year, he was anticipating a difficult Christmas.

"The nativity scene has become a very important symbol in our lives," he said.

But instead of focusing on the empty manger in the Christmas pageant, James and Robin Mauldin prefer to dwell on the empty tomb and the assurance of God's love for children and all who come to Him like little children.

"We know Jeremy's in a good place, that he's being taken care of and that he's happy," James said. "We know God will bring good out of this. He already has."

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So. Baptist Center for evangelism
and church growth opens at NOBTS

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press
12/20/91

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Southern Baptists' first Center for Evangelism and Church Growth opened its doors on the campus of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary on Monday, Dec. 16, 1991.

Charles M. Lowry, of Greenbrier, Ark., is director of the center. He served with the Louisiana Baptist Convention for 23 years as director of the church training department, the Sunday school department, and the church programs division. He is the author of Acts Alive: How Your Church Can Grow and co-author of Oikos, A Practical Approach to Family Evangelism. He has been an associate pastor and minister of education/administration at First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas; First Baptist Church, Tampa, Fla.; Queensborough Baptist Church, Shreveport, La.; and Istrouma Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La.

Lowry also has coordinated over 25 partnership mission trips to Korea and developed a Sunday school program and curriculum, evangelism concepts and materials, and a Cooperative Program concept for the Korea Baptist Convention. He and his wife, Carolyn, have participated in partnership mission trips to India, Liberia, Kenya, and Guadaloupe. Lowry is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

"I've been involved in evangelism and church growth for over forty years," said Lowry, who has participated in growth seminars and consultations in 19 states and seven foreign countries.

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"I've actually never served on the staff of a church, in over forty years of ministry, where we did not grow. It has led me to believe that it is God's will that his churches grow. With fresh vision, goal-oriented leadership, and strategic priority planning and programming, any church can grow!" he said. "And it is our will, through the Center for Evangelism and Church Growth, to assist leaders as they fulfill God's will in their church and ministry."

A 9,000-square-foot building, the Center for Evangelism and Church Growth is a specialized facility including offices, library, seminar and conference rooms, and a computerized research lab, as well as a resource center which is in the process of assembling a complete collection of all available evangelism and church growth books, resources, and materials. Also, the center contains the latest computer software to provide churches with customized consultation and research to do demographic studies on their areas and personalized church decadal growth studies.

"We're going to be there to help you reach large segments of your area for God," Landrum P. Leavell II, NOBTS president, recently told alumni concerning the opening of the Center.

The first event taking place in the Center will be "The Southern Baptist Church Growth Plan," with specialized workshops for both large and small churches. The "Large Church Workshop" will be held Monday-Wednesday, Jan. 13-15; the "Small Church Workshop" will be held Thursday-Saturday, Jan. 16-18. Guest speakers for both conferences will be D.G. McCoury, pastoral ministries consultant in the Baptist Sunday School Board's Church Administration department; Bill May, director of the Arizona Baptist Church Growth and Development Division. McCoury and May co-authored The Southern Baptist Church Growth Plan.

A formal dedication will take place at noon Tuesday, Jan. 28, 1992, when the Louisiana Baptist Convention evangelism conference will be held on the New Orleans Seminary campus.

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(BP) photos available upon request from New Orleans Seminary public relations office

Kentucky couple spreads
electronic evangelism

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
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HENDERSON, Ky. (BP)--Electronic evangelism took a different channel when a Kentucky couple used a CB radio to share their faith.

Frank DeClue, pastor of Ambassador Baptist Church in Henderson, baptized Dwight and Marsha Rideout earlier this month after they heard the gospel presented on the CB by church members Norman and Carolyn Conrad.

The Conrads, both in their 40s, are disabled and not able to get out as much as they would like. But Conrad said that doesn't stop them from talking about the many things Jesus Christ has done for them.

"These people showed you can witness from your home," DeClue said. "If you can't get out, there are other ways you can witness."

Conrad suffers from a back injury, diabetes and other health problems. She has a severe case of Lupus that prevents her from getting out of the house most of the time.

About a year ago, the couple started talking to the Rideouts on their CB at night. The Conrads have been avid CBers since 1975.

"We just started witnessing to them about the Lord Jesus Christ," Conrad explained, "and now we have two new members added to our church."

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"The conversation between us lasted close to a year, and then it kind of went from a casual conversation once in a while on the CB to me witnessing to them about the Lord and my wife doing the same. Then Brother DeClue and I went to their home and presented the Lord to them. They asked the Lord to come into their hearts and save them right there on the spot."

The Conrads often talk about God on the CB, he said, but this is the first time they have seen such dramatic results.

"Sometimes you get talked to rather harshly," he explained. "We've been told to get that kind of stuff off the radio, that they didn't want to hear it."

The Conrads usually operate on channel 38 between 9 p.m. and 1 a.m. Often, they converse with other family members and friends about what God is doing in their lives.

Conrad said he and his wife never know how many people are listening to their witness: "When you key the mike, you may be talking to one person or to 150. ... A lot of times a person will come in and make a comment on their own. They've just been listening to what we were saying."

Recently, the Conrads began conversations with yet another couple interested in the gospel. They hope these new friends will place their faith in Jesus Christ as well. Talking on the CB "is one way I feel I can share the gospel," Conrad said. "I don't want to do it to be seen. I love the Lord and I tell people about the Lord Jesus Christ and what he can do for them."

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Romanians applaud seminary defunding; other Europeans to react in January" dated 12/18/91, paragraph 22 contains a numerical error. Please correct the paragraph to read:

Calls and letters continued to come in to Foreign Mission Board offices about the defunding action. By Dec. 18, the board has received 593 letters on the issue; 521 opposed to the defunding and 72 favoring it.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL FROM BAPTIST PRESS STAFF!