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92-24

Overseas baptisms set record, yet  
critical need for leaders remains By Donald D. Martin

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist foreign missionaries and their national partners baptized more people in 1991 than ever before, yet declines in Christian training threaten long-term church growth.

A record 233,334 baptisms in 1991 reversed a decline in 1990, when baptisms fell by 19 percent. This was the third year since 1987 that worldwide baptisms set a new record.

However, mission planners express concern about the need to develop church leadership, said Jim Slack, church growth consultant for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Slack prepares the board's annual statistical review.

Bible teaching ministries, which include Sunday school, continued to slip when compared to total church membership. Although 1991's Sunday school enrollment climbed by 6.4 percent to 1.7 million, the percentage of church members enrolled in this type of regular Bible study actually fell to 57 percent of total church membership.

For most of the 1980s Sunday school enrollment accounted for more than 70 percent of total church membership. The percentage has slowly dropped for the past 20 years, Slack said. Church growth begins to suffer when the percentage falls below 75 percent, he warned.

Also, an inadequate supply of seminary-trained leaders for church planting disturbs mission planners, Slack said. Enrollment in seminary extension programs dropped nearly 14 percent from 13,105 in 1990 to 11,285 in 1991. Enrollment in residential seminaries climbed from 12,586 in 1990 to 14,579 in 1991. But only a small percentage of seminary graduates actually become church planters, Slack said.

Most church growth gauges, however, signal healthy expansion, Slack noted. New church starts, preaching points and world wide church membership all made gains in 1991.

"We had positive growth in all major areas but we can't be happy with what we've achieved when you consider how many people are lost in the world," Slack said.

In 1991 missionaries and overseas Baptists started 1,576 new churches, a 6.5 percent advance over 1990.

The number of overseas churches related to Foreign Mission Board work also increased from 24,122 in 1990 to 27,932 in 1991. This net gain of 3,810 churches reflects a strong growth of 15.8 percent, Slack said.

The board tracks new church starts separately from net growth in the number of churches missionaries work with, Slack explained. Net church growth may increase in several different ways -- new church starts, existing churches affiliating with a national convention or improved record keeping overseas. In singling out new church starts, mission planners can best judge the board's evangelistic efforts since church starts highlight direct results of church planting in a given year.

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Still, the net church growth rate is used to evaluate the board's progress in reaching a major Bold Mission Thrust goal. Bold Mission Thrust is the plan adopted by Southern Baptists in 1976 for spreading the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000 and for achieving a tenfold expansion of overseas Baptist work. In 1991, the net church growth rate easily surpassed the 12 percent needed to stay on track to meet the Bold Mission Thrust expansion goal.

Other good news, Slack said, included growth in worldwide church membership and preaching points. Overseas Baptist church membership grew by about 12 percent from 2.6 million in 1990 to nearly 3 million in 1991. In 1991 preaching points, the early stage in forming a church, rose by 2,319 to 22,736. This 11 percent increase marked a welcome improvement over 1990 when preaching points fell from 21,234 in 1989 to 20,417.

Yet the average time to mature a preaching point into a church is too long, Slack said. Preaching points take about 13 years on a world average to mature into a churches. However, based on average growth rates of the Foreign Mission Board and other mission agencies, maturing a preaching point should only take about four years, Slack said.

The percentage of preaching points that become churches each year is also too low, he said. In 1991 only 7.4 percent of the preaching points became churches. A healthy maturity rate is 25 percent.

"Overall we had an excellent year," Slack said. "We've reached some new heights but we're not completely happy. There are things here that concern us and weaknesses that we know we have. If we can solve these problems we can spread God's Word like we never have before."

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(BP) graphic mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

1991: one of 'God's  
surprises in history'

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press  
2/10/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--It may never top 1492 in the textbooks, but 1991 ranks with 1917 and 1945 as one of the most significant years of this century.

Historians will remember 1991 as the year Soviet communism -- long in intensive care -- finally expired, unleashing forces of change worldwide in all spheres of life, including religious faith.

Several world watchers associated with the work of Southern Baptists abroad recently reflected on the significance of the year. Christians should celebrate the Soviet empire's demise, they agreed. But they cautioned that the church faces plenty of other challenges to its global advance.

"The demise of communist control is obvious in the big changes that have come in Eastern Europe," said Clark Scanlon, director of research and planning at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. "What's not readily apparent is that this has a domino effect all over where you had strong Soviet and communist influence -- Nicaragua, El Salvador, Angola and Ethiopia. We're talking about a rock thrown into a pond that continues to have a ripple effect in many places.

"I see what happened in 1991 as one of God's surprises in history, and this warns you once again of the danger of just extrapolating, projecting what's happening today into the future -- because we have some things like this that fundamentally change alignment," Scanlon said.

Anglican mission researcher David Barrett also admits the danger of forecasting the future. Several years ago he predicted communism would collapse -- in about 2010.

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By the end of 1991 "roughly 1 billion people in the world who formerly were attached to non-Christian ideologies suddenly found themselves rootless," said Barrett, who researches the unevangelized world for the Foreign Mission Board and other mission agencies.

"Obviously, this is mostly the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe but it also applies to all their ideological colleagues throughout the world. I knew Marxism had fallen into evil times for maybe 20 years with young people but the total collapse of anti-Christian ideology like that is something nobody could forecast. We were all caught napping by the speed of events."

Unfortunately, the church is still napping, Barrett contends.

"You get the greatest missionary situation in 2,000 years suddenly happening over a period of weeks and the reaction of the churches is quite extraordinary," he said. "It's almost a cynical reaction, very similar to (the reaction to) Kublai Khan. (In 1266 A.D.) the famous Mongol emperor of China specifically invited the Western church to send 100 missionaries ... and was (virtually) ignored. Up to now, that was the greatest missed opportunity in Christian history. Well, this one could be the same if we don't do better than what has been happening the last four months."

Western Christians aren't ignoring the opening of the former Soviet world, Barrett stressed. Many groups, including Southern Baptists, strive to respond to countless new evangelism and mission opportunities. But as in the past, Christianity's fragmentation prevents unified response. And while different denominations dither or compete, changing conditions or another military coup could close the open window in the former Soviet Union at any time.

Often in history Christians "pray for China to open up or they pray that Genghis Khan may be overthrown or something like that," Barrett said. "The situation that evolves is in effect what we've been praying for but in an unrecognizable form and we don't know what to do with it. Well, our prayers have been answered. The 1 billion (formerly closed) people can now (be reached) ... . The bad news is that God is not offering them to us already converted on a plate. We now have to proceed with your part of the bargain."

Other challenges face the church in the wake of 1991:

-- Government opposition. "Totalitarianism is alive and well" in many countries despite the Soviet collapse, said David Garrison of Southern Baptists' Cooperative Services International aid organization. Even communism is alive -- if not well -- in China where it still rules the lives of 20 percent of humanity. Legal and social hostility to Christian missions prevail in much of the unevangelized world.

-- Tribalism and nationalism. The explosive reemergence of old ethnic and national identities in the Soviet republics, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, South Africa and many other places threatens the existence of the modern nation state. At its worst, such ethnic identity becomes "corporate self-worship," Scanlon said. In some areas Christians "will be caught in the middle ... . The Christian church will have the challenge of showing that in Christ there's no East or West, that the family of God" transcends ethnic groups.

-- Islam. Like Christians, Muslims face numerous internal divisions. But Islam is growing rapidly and has always had a "missionary impulse," Garrison said. Iranian, Saudi and Pakistani Muslims are mounting a "staggering effort" to spread their faith across the traditionally Islamic republics of Soviet Central Asia, he added. "I think they see the former Soviet Union as a place they want to reclaim."

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-- Secularism and materialism. The rapid spread of democracy and capitalism around the globe could create as many problems as opportunities for Christianity. Eastern European church leaders already bemoan the corrupting influence of Western culture on their nations' young people. The West's ceaseless pursuit of pleasure and possessions is "practical atheism," according to Scanlon -- "life lived without reference to God."

Concluded Garrison: "The communist system hasn't yet been replaced; it's simply been dismantled. The question is: What's going to follow? It's going to be a very chaotic time, probably for years to come. But there's a lot of cause for hope and optimism. There probably has never been a greater time for ministry needs and opportunities."

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

Moments, emotions  
reveal impact of 1991

Baptist Press  
2/10/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A year as tumultuous as 1991 cannot be summarized in simplistic phrases like "the collapse of communism" and "the Gulf war."

But a glimpse of the spiritual impact of this world-shaking year can be gained through the eyes of missionaries and other Christians in obscure places -- or right in the middle of unfolding history:

-- When Iraqi Scud missiles rained down on Israel in January, Southern Baptist workers joined others huddling in makeshift "sealed rooms." The missiles "came in quickly with little advance warning," said missionary Thomas Hocutt, who took cover with his wife and children. "It probably was the most frightening experience I've ever been through." Missile fragments showered Baptist Village in Petah Tiqva the week of Feb. 10.

-- As Westerners in the Middle East faced threats of revenge for the allied bombing of Iraq, an American Christian worker prepared to evacuate after an agonizing decision. "I hope this won't change your feelings towards me," she told an Arab woman friend. "She looked at me numbly and said, 'I don't know how I feel,'" recounted the worker, weeping at the memory. Many mission workers faced such responses, even from church people.

-- A Muslim leader in Kenya saw Southern Baptist volunteers giving free medical care to everyone regardless of religion. "Our God wants these people to be healthy," a volunteer told him. The leader allowed his wife to receive treatment and decided to back Baptists' efforts to build a new church in the Muslim-dominated area. "You serve a good God," he said. "He deserves a house here. I'll pay half of the price of the land for a building site."

-- Southern Baptist teacher Erin Thomas stepped back into her English class in China March 14, five months after crawling from a crashed Chinese airliner that killed 132 people, including Thomas' Southern Baptist colleague and friend Mary Anna Gilbert. Thomas knew she would return after her recuperation. "God ... called me to do this," she said. "I can't explain why (the crash) happened but I don't believe God has changed his call to me." When she walked into her classroom, students burst into applause.

-- Elsewhere in China, a communist publication complained, so many party members attended religious services it was hard to get them together and hold meetings.

-- Civil war in Sudan produced a martyr -- Mamma, crippled pastor of a church among the Murle people. His people became refugees, carrying him along on a stretcher. But rebel fighters killed him as he taught a group of believers. "Mamma had nothing materially in this world but he has treasures in heaven," missionary Sam Cannata said. "We believe he's walking and leaping and praising his Lord for all the churches that will spring up -- because the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church."

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-- Her heart aching for people made refugees by warfare in the Middle East, 10-year-old Kitty Marie Thornton sent \$32.88 to the Foreign Mission Board. "Here is all my money to help them," wrote Kitty Marie, daughter of missionaries Harold and Susan Thornton in Costa Rica.

-- Ezekiel Bambolo of Liberia trembled. His words dissolved into cries like a wounded animal. He shook his head in disbelief and hugged missionaries John Carpenter and Jim and Jane Park. "You made it through ... . Thank God you made it through," Carpenter whispered as Bambolo embraced him. "I thought I was going to die," said Bambolo, a Baptist educator who was jailed and abused by rebel soldiers. "But God delivered me." When missionaries returned to Monrovia, Liberia, they found a city numb from killing, slowly recovering from starvation caused by the civil war. "It reminded me of the psalm, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,'" Mrs. Park said. "I thought, 'This really is the shadow of death.'"

-- "God is just a coolie of Saddam Hussein," the Kurdish man said bitterly. He sat by a fire in front of the "tent" -- a few blankets thrown over sticks -- at a camp holding some 175,000 Kurdish refugees in Turkey. They had little food or clothing, no sanitation and clean water. Saddam had chased them and dropped napalm on them, said Southern Baptist worker Mike Stroope. Then one of the worst storms they'd ever seen came up and beat them down for about a week and a half. They felt betrayed and forgotten, that even God had forsaken them. Baptist aid workers labored to change their minds.

-- Smiles lit the faces of Kurdish refugees May 21 at a camp in Iran as they received pots of rice cooked by Southern Baptist volunteers. Iranian soldiers introduced the Baptists to two imams (Muslim leaders). "These men aren't like other Westerners we know," a major said. "They don't smoke or drink or chase our women. They're really good men." The older imam blessed them and anointed their hands with rose oil. "It was amazing," a volunteer said. The troops saluted them by firing their weapons into the air.

-- Open Christian worship in Ethiopia once meant serving time in prison. Christians often worshiped secretly to avoid arrest. But some Baptist prisoners once asked the missionaries to drop efforts to free them. "They had won so many prisoners to the Lord they needed time to disciple them," said missionary Sam Cannata. But since the collapse of the communist government last May, Christians have enjoyed freedoms once unimaginable.

-- Romanian President Ion Iliescu asked Baptists in May to help rebuild Romania. "The deepest crisis we face in this country is not economical or political, but moral," Iliescu observed. "The church has an important role to play in the future of our nation. We hope you as Baptists can help us rebuild our nation and restore the moral values in our people."

-- Two thousand Baptists from former East and West Germany watched their leaders sign their official unification document May 10. Then, with tear-filled eyes, they sang "Blest Be the Tie That Binds." The decades of separation forced by the Berlin Wall had ended. "This unification has been brought about by the Lord," said East German Baptist leader Manfred Sult. "It's a miracle."

-- Southern Baptist workers Bruce and Gloria Carlton still sense spiritual oppression in Cambodia, where about 1 million died during the communist Khmer Rouge's three-year genocide in the '70s. "An evil pervades this country," Carlton said. A year after "official" government recognition, the Protestant church in Cambodia still was besieged. Pol Pot's overthrown Khmer Rouge marked Christians for death. Government figures show 8,000 believers remain -- 2,000 Protestants, 3,000 Catholics and 3,000 in cults. "Pol Pot can't pay for his crimes," one Cambodian said. "His crimes are so great, no revenge would be enough. To kill him would be too easy; to torture him would be no use." Tears welled up in Carlton's eyes: "When we look at all this, as Christians, how can we not respond (to the people's spiritual needs)? The time is ripe."

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-- Once savagely persecuted in a nation proclaimed "the world's first atheist state," religious faith emerged from the ashes in Albania. Christians held the first public Easter celebrations since 1967. Mother Teresa, a native Albanian, attended Mass at the reopened Roman Catholic cathedral in Tirana in March and opened a Sisters of Charity home. More than 2,000 Albanians crowded into a former communist headquarters building Dec. 14 to see a movie about Jesus Christ. The tickets cost about \$1, a day's wages in Albania, but many people were turned away and police had to control the crowd outside. The event was the first showing of a religious movie in post-communist Albania.

-- The first large-scale cultural exchange between Americans and predominantly Muslim Kazakhs created an array of humanitarian, business and social projects in Kazakhstan, second largest of 15 former Soviet republics. A Southern Baptist-initiated cultural festival drew 330 Americans and 100,000 Kazakhs. With a tear running down her cheek, the headmistress of a communist-sponsored youth camp said: "My impression of Americans was that they were people with cold hearts. But now I've seen warm souls."

-- How did it feel to be in Moscow during perhaps the most important days since the 1917 communist revolution? "Amazing ... like you can't really comprehend everything," admitted Veda Rae Lozuk. She and her husband, George, Southern Baptists' first missionaries to the Soviet Union, arrived in Moscow earlier in 1991. Before summer's end tanks rolled in a failed coup attempt. The Lozuks prayed with Russian believers during the coup attempt. "They just said, 'Let's worship God, let's continue,'" Mrs. Lozuk said.

-- During the attempted Soviet coup, Christians confronted tanks with Bibles and words of peace from the gospel. Vera Kadaeva, a Ukrainian Baptist, and others approached tanks near where crowds stood between the tanks and Russian President Boris Yeltsin. "We began to distribute the New Testaments to the tank crews," she said. "I ended up in front of an officer with a New Testament. 'Brother,' I said to him, 'this is the Word of God. He says to you, 'Thou shalt not kill.' This commandment is above all your orders. Take this Testament and may God help you!' He looked at the gospel. Someone from the crowd shouted, 'Take the gospel, Captain!' Everyone joined in: 'Take the gospel!' The officer slowly took the New Testament. That was a sign for the people that he would not turn his tanks on them. ... (Another) soldier hurried towards me. 'Brother, take a gospel!' I said. He looked at me with eyes wide: 'Really?!' With dirty hands he clasped it to his bosom. Then, remembering his mates: 'Give me three more, for the guys.'"

-- A gospel music concert with preaching by Korean evangelist Billy Kim was held in September in the Kremlin's Palace of Congress, where the now-defunct Soviet Parliament met. More than half of the crowd indicated they had prayed to receive Christ. Soviet soldiers helped unload 6,500 Russian-language New Testaments inside the Kremlin walls to give to concert-goers.

-- Volunteer Buddy Kellett helped launch a water project in August for Kurds in Iraq. When finding a drilling rig seemed bleak, he was discouraged. "What's wrong?" a Kurd asked. "I'm brokenhearted," Kellett said. "I came to do a job and have nothing to do it with." Kellett realized the man thought he was being paid and explained he had paid his own way. "Why would you come halfway around the world without pay?" the man asked. "I see your Kurdish people without water," Kellett replied. "You and I are brothers ... When you hurt, I hurt." Before Kellett left, a well-drilling rig was found.

-- Southern Baptist worker Nela Williams refused to leave the breakaway Yugoslavian republic of Croatia, her native land, even when shelling became a daily terror. "It's a crucial time for missionaries to be here," she said. When Zagreb came under artillery fire in mid-September, she joined others in bomb shelters. She carried her Bible and shared some of the Psalms. "It's a great opportunity for contact (with people) now."

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-- The evacuation of Americans from turmoil-ridden Zaire at the end of September was a frightening time. Some missionaries had close calls. Steve and Anne Seaberry told of almost continuous fighting and gunfire across from their home. They retreated to a storage building with their three children. "We prayed God would make us invisible and I believe he did," Mrs. Seaberry recounted. As the evacuation ferry cast off from Kinshasa, missionary Duane Falk said, "You have to tell yourself you're coming back soon and picking up the work. But you don't know for sure." Then he cried.

-- Missionary Charles "T" Thomas told protesters in Romania about Christ's peace during a violent demonstration by 4,000 coal miners that left three dead during days of savage street fighting. Tear gas swirled around the home of Thomas and his wife, Kathie, in late September as miners swarmed onto their street pursued by police and troops. Thomas went outside and talked to the miners. They told him all Romanian leaders had let them down. "I replied that when we put our hope and faith in men, we're always discouraged but when we put our trust in God we're never discouraged," Thomas said.

-- Southern Baptist nurse Donna Rye returned to Iraq Oct. 24 to fill a critical need in mobile clinics for displaced Kurds. The threat of hostilities continues among Saddam Hussein's troops, Kurdish freedom fighters and others. But Rye doesn't fear for her safety. "I'm not safe in any place except in the hands of God," she said. "It's not where we are, but who's protecting us."

-- Retired missionary Les Watson died of cancer Nov. 10, but not before giving perhaps his most precious material possession to missions. Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks visited him during his final days and found him asleep. Watson awoke as his wife bent close to tell him Parks was there. He tried to take off his wedding ring but he was weak and his daughter helped him. "He gave it to me and whispered, 'This is for the Lottie Moon Offering,' Parks said. Overcome with emotion, Parks called it "one of most moving moments" he has ever had. FMB staffers later collected an offering in honor of the ring and returned it to Mrs. Watson.

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

EDITOR'S NOTE: Baptist Press first posted this story on SBCNet at 12 a.m. Jan. 7.

Administration wants churches  
to report charitable donations

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press  
2/10/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Bush administration wants to require churches and other tax-exempt organizations to report to the Internal Revenue Service the charitable contributions of donors who give more than \$500 annually.

The proposal, part of the administration's fiscal 1993 budget plan, is aimed at helping IRS catch taxpayers who inflate the amount of deductible contributions. According to an administration document, preliminary IRS data shows taxpayers frequently have overstated charitable contributions in filing income tax returns.

The proposal drew criticism from Baptist church-state relations specialists. "It is yet another ill-informed attempt of government officials who apparently have no depth of understanding regarding the dangers of church-state entanglement," said Baptist Joint Committee Executive Director James M. Dunn. "It is more serious than a superficial reading would indicate because it represents a recurring pattern of willingness to use the churches for government's purposes. It is none of the business of religion to be a government agent."

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Existing law requires most tax-exempt organizations that receive tax deductible contributions to file annual reports (Form 990) identifying donors who give \$5,000 or more in one year. Churches and their related organizations have been exempt from this requirement.

"That's the way it should be," said J. Brent Walker, associate general counsel at the Baptist Joint Committee. "This proposal opens the door even more for government to intrude into religious affairs and would result in unwholesome church-state entanglements. Proposals like this one belie Mr. Bush's public rhetoric about the importance of religion in our country."

Walker said the proposed reporting requirements, which the administration wants in place by July 1, also would create a record-keeping nightmare for churches.

"It would be awfully burdensome for big and small churches alike," Walker said. "Any member who gives as little as \$10 a week will hit the \$500 figure. Multiply that by the millions of church members and you've got a monumental mass of red tape."

The administration's proposal would require churches and other tax-exempt organizations to determine whether the amount is potentially deductible as a charitable gift or whether it is nondeductible because it was received for goods and services -- a requirement Walker said could put churches in a "dubious position."

"That should be between the IRS and the taxpayer," he said. "Churches should not be asked to give tax advice."

According to the Treasury Department, the proposal is designed to remedy the problem IRS has in distinguishing between gifts and payments for goods and services such as admission to entertainment events or purchases made at charity auctions.

Charities with annual gross receipts of less than \$25,000 would be exempt from the reporting requirements. The Treasury Department indicated IRS likely would revise its tax forms to require separate rather than aggregate reporting of charitable gifts.

The administration estimates the change would save the federal treasury \$100 million annually through 1996 and recover \$200 million in 1997. The administration would use the savings to offset the amounts it would lose in providing more favorable tax treatment for gifts of appreciated property and gifts by multinational corporations to charities.

The House Ways and Means Committee is expected to begin taking action on the administration's tax proposals Feb. 12.

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Seminary professors hope for  
closure with trustees' concerns

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press  
2/10/92

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Trustees must be true to their word if recent warnings handed down to two Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professors will close the doors of controversy in their lives, the teachers said.

Meanwhile, a third professor under conflict is left awaiting his fate.

The seminary's trustee academic personnel committee issued warnings but also "brought to a conclusion several years of continuing concern related to certain writings" of church history professor E. Glenn Hinson and theology professor Molly T. Marshall.

The personnel committee reported its action in a closed-door session with the trustee executive committee Feb. 4 in Louisville. The action was reported in a statement prepared by President Roy Honeycutt and trustee Chairman Wayne Allen of suburban Memphis, Tenn.

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The personnel committee told Honeycutt to "warn the professors that if in the future one should teach the positions which someone interpreted them to have expressed, he or she might be in violation of the Abstract of Principles (the seminary's governing document) and thus be in jeopardy of dismissal," Honeycutt and Allen's statement said.

Marshall and Hinson later said trustees are responsible for maintaining the "closure" they reportedly achieved.

"I am hopeful that the action of the trustees will give me the freedom to pursue my vocation as an equipper of ministers," Marshall said. "And I am counting on our trustees to make sure the issues of concern are closed."

Hinson, who is on sabbatical in England, said he hopes he will not be "hounded for the things I wrote way back there."

But he added: "On the other hand, what is it that you do when you teach? Someone asks you a question and honestly you have to answer. ... Some student reports to John Michael (the trustee who raised charges against Hinson), and he's on your back again. To me, it does not take away the threat even of things of the past."

Hinson interpreted the warning as saying, "'If you say something that gets these people upset again then your job is in jeopardy.'"

Michael, who has been critical of Marshall as well as Hinson, said the cases are closed.

"I am very supportive of the action and I am glad and in agreement that this will bring closure to concerns of the past," he said. "I am very much looking forward to proceeding on with the mission of the seminary without the need for continued discussion on these issues."

The third faculty member, ethics professor Paul Simmons, got no such relief from trustees.

Simmons said he was told Honeycutt's "report (to the personnel committee) that there were no grounds for dismissing me was not accepted. ... The committee said: 'We don't accept that at this stage. We're going to receive that as information and try and get further counsel on it.'"

Seminary Provost Larry McSwain said Simmons' relationship to the school has not changed. "There is no change in his status at this time," said McSwain, who noted rules of the closed session prevented him from elaborating on the details of the trustees' discussions. "The trustees have taken no action relative to Paul Simmons at this time."

Trustees who participated in the closed session of the executive committee declined to comment on the cases of Simmons, Marshall or Hinson.

Gerald Keown, professor of Old Testament and president of the Faculty Association, said professors have mixed feelings.

"We are disturbed on the one hand that the trustees continue to address issues we thought should have been closed long ago," he said. "At the same time we are pleased to hear that this should bring closure."

Indiana Baptists respond  
to Evansville tragedy

By Tammi Ledbetter

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (BP)--When the call for emergency personnel came minutes after the Feb. 6 crash of a C-130 military cargo plane in Evansville, Christian social ministries director Vanda Bartlett was just minutes away.

Arriving on the scene within 30 minutes to serve with the Red Cross, Bartlett was asked if she knew anyone who could counsel survivors and victims' families. With the statewide evangelism conference drawing at least 700 Southern Baptists to the city that day, Bartlett promised "all the pastors you want."

Evansville associate pastor Eddie Lee of Grace Baptist Church led the dozen or so who volunteered to help with grief counseling at the city's community center. Relatives had waited there all day to meet with the county coroner to provide information to assist in identifying the bodies. At least three Southern Baptist churches in Indiana had close ties to relatives of the victims.

In an area known for a strong Catholic influence, the presence of Southern Baptist pastors and emergency personnel is noticed. "They had people he could call that would be paid to do this," Bartlett said, "and I said to him we've got folks who are more than willing to help." Bartlett believes the contacts will open the door to further ministry at a later time.

The Kentucky Air National Guard cargo plane hit the four-story Drury Inn and neighboring JoJo's Restaurant at 9:48 a.m. Bartlett was paired with a Catholic volunteer for duty with the Red Cross. While she had been certified in all of the Red Cross disaster relief courses, this was the first opportunity for Bartlett to put her training to the test.

"There's the anticipation of what you would be seeing and yet you don't want to come in and gawk at what is happening," she recalled. "You're there to do a job," which in this case involved feeding personnel from the military, emergency services, utility companies and the news media.

Her shift ran until midnight and she returned at daybreak Friday, giving Bartlett ample opportunity to share her faith as she talked with military people from across the United States. As firemen removed survivors from the motel, they were handed over to Red Cross volunteers for support.

Bartlett was able to offer reassurance to one individual who knew one of the victims to be a Christian, but remained distraught over the badly burned body. "As we were talking I was able to say that once you've accepted Christ, you go immediately to heaven, and that body no longer has the person within it."

Many of the firemen related to Bartlett the difficulty of dealing with the memories of the crash site. She added, "There's a lot that you see -- the relatives of the victims as they are brought by military personnel to the scene and told how their loved ones died. You see their reactions, their emotions, and you hear people crying."

Much of the time words were unnecessary, she said. After offering one victim's family some coffee, Bartlett recalled that "we didn't want them to suffer anymore by talking about the crash. Just being there was something to them. A lot of people think they have to say something but it's not necessary all the time."

While admitting the difficulty of witnessing the scene soon after a tragedy strikes, Bartlett is anxious to be available next time a need arises for disaster relief. "It was almost like the Home Mission Board was sitting there at that one spot ready to help."

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The chief pilot of the military transport plane was a member of First Southern Baptist Church in Floyds Knobs, Ind. Pastor David Wood had just baptized 39-year-old Richard Strang Jan. 19. He had been a Christian for several years but had moved his membership from a Methodist church to become an active part of the Southern Baptist congregation.

On Monday morning prior to the crash Thursday, Wood had met with Strang for a time of prayer -- a pattern the two had developed since the pilot had affiliated with the church. "The first time I visited in his home, Rick said, 'The church we join means a lot to us,' and he proceeded to ask a lot of serious questions" to decide whether to move his membership.

"In every way Rick Strang lived the faith he believed. He was the kind of person you get to know quickly and was highly regarded by his fellow pilots."

Officials have not determined whether Strang or one of the two co-pilots was at the controls when the C-130 plane crashed about a mile south of the Evansville Regional Airport where he was in charge of a routine pilot proficiency training mission.

Officials believe fuel from the plane ignited into a massive fireball that burned up around the hotel and restaurant. Nine bodies were found in a room on the Drury Inn's fourth floor where a quality-control seminar was being conducted by employees of a local firm. Two restaurant employees were killed when trapped in the devastation, and all five members of the flight crew died.

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(BP) photos of Bartlett available on request from The Indiana Baptist, newsjournal of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana. She is a native of Oklahoma and a graduate of Southwestern Seminary.

Bivocational leaders  
set national strategies

Baptist Press  
2/10/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--No one would mistake Kentucky pastor Chuck Stewart for a surfer but his imagery was unmistakable: "If bivocationalism is the wave of the future, those of us engaged in bivocational ministry today should be catching the crest of that wave."

Stewart met with other officers and directors of the National Council on Bivocational Ministries for two days on the campus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to hammer out strategies for strengthening and supporting bivocational ministries across the Southern Baptist Convention. Stewart is current president of the council and pastor of Rose Hill Baptist Church in Ashland, Ky.

The six priorities identified by the steering committee are expected to set the direction and agenda for the organization the next several years.

One goal will be to increase representation of bivocational ministers on denominational boards and committees and on programs of state and national meetings. Participants in the meeting agreed that at present such assignments almost always go to fully supported ministers, even though one-fourth of all SBC churches have bivocational pastors.

Matching bivocational ministers with both ministry and marketplace opportunities was another concern addressed by the group. They expect to work with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and other entities to develop a network for such connections.

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The group also plans to encourage development of resources and continuous training opportunities for bivocational ministers. "Because of their difficult schedules, whatever training bivocational ministers get has to be done 'on the fly,'" says Dale Holloway, national program consultant for the Home Mission Board and advisor to the council.

Three other strategies will seek to affirm bivocational ministers, in part by getting them involved with each other. Each state convention will be urged to designate a staff person to promote and coordinate bivocational ministries within the state. The council will develop materials to help local Baptist associations establish bivocational fellowships. Every bivocational minister in the convention also will be encouraged to join the Southern Baptist Bivocational Ministers' Association, a national fellowship organized just over a year ago.

"Everything we do through the council or the association is aimed at affirming these 'double-duty' ministers or helping them grow," Holloway said.

Assignments made to members of the steering committee will result in reports to the annual meeting of the two groups, scheduled for Gambrell Street Baptist Church in Fort Worth Dec. 10-12. Participating on the steering committee were four bivocational ministers, four staff members from national SBC offices, three from associations, one from a state convention and two from the seminary.

In other actions, the committee recommended that the association create an "associate member" classification for non-bivocationals with all privileges of membership except voting. The committee also adopted a resolution commending Lee Holloway for his contribution to the work of bivocationalism and as editor of the group's newsletter, the Bivocational Beacon. A report received from the Baptist General Convention of Texas indicated results of a recent needs survey of bivocational ministers will be shared when they are tabulated and may serve as a model for similar studies in other states.

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Committee OKs lifting  
fetal-tissue moratorium

Baptist Press  
2/10/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Senate committee has approved legislation lifting a White House-supported ban on federal funding of transplantation research using fetal tissue from induced abortions.

The Labor and Human Resources Committee, chaired by Sen. Edward Kennedy, D.-Mass., voted, 13-4, Feb. 5 in favor of a National Institutes of Health reauthorization bill permitting federal funding of experimental fetal-tissue transplantation and establishing government guidelines for such research.

The bill also prevents the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services from blocking funding for human sexuality surveys unless an advisory board agrees. In July, HHS Secretary Louis Sullivan canceled a graphic, \$18 million sexuality survey of junior- and senior-high students.

The bill (H.R. 2507) passed the House of Representatives in July. President George Bush has threatened to veto legislation lifting the ban.

The committee rejected, also by a 13-4 margin, an amendment by Sen. Orrin Hatch, R.-Utah, which would have had the effect of maintaining the moratorium. Hatch's amendment also would have established a feasibility study into creating a physician registry and fetal-tissue bank using tissue from noncontroversial sources exempted from the ban.

The nearly four-year-old ban applies to fetal tissue from induced abortions. It does not prohibit federally sponsored research using tissue from ectopic pregnancies or miscarriages, Sullivan has said.

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The ban was established in 1988. It was continued indefinitely in 1989 by Sullivan because of concern it would increase the number of abortions. His extension of the ban came despite a special panel's recommendation to lift it.

Promising, though unproven, results in curing such diseases as diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's have been reported by some privately funded researchers.

Sen. Kennedy, D.-Mass., and Sen. Brock Adams, D.-Wash., are the prime sponsors of the Senate bill. Rep. Henry Waxman, D.-Calif., was the chief sponsor of the House legislation.

"We are distressed that the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee has taken this action," said James A. Smith, Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission director of government relations.

"There is an enormous distortion of the truth concerning this issue. Sen. Kennedy and Rep. Waxman would have Americans believe that fetal tissue will definitely a host of diseases. Furthermore, they suggest the federal government cannot or will not take action to address these diseases. This is simply false.

"We commend Sen. Hatch for demonstrating that pro-lifers do care about people who suffer by offering an amendment to encourage ethical research using fetal tissue and the development of cell lines," Smith said. "The fact that Sen. Kennedy and the other members who are in favor of lifting the moratorium would reject this compromise clearly shows that they have no regard for the ethical dilemma created by some fetal-tissue research or for the value and sanctity of human life."

His amendment would not "cut, but untie, the tightening Gordian Knot between the science of human fetal-tissue research and the difficult politics surrounding the ethical issues associated with abortion," Hatch said.

Among the reasons the Christian Life Commission gives for its opposition to overturning the ban are: 1) a resultant, close-knit, unethical collaboration between federally sponsored research and the abortion industry; 2) a potential increase in abortions because of added justification for a woman to make such a decision and 3) the current availability of tissue that is ethically permissible under the moratorium, such as that from ectopic pregnancies.

Messengers to the 1991 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention approved a resolution on the sanctity of human life supporting the moratorium.

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Drummond retirement package  
from trustees equals \$115,000

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press  
2/10/92

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--The retirement package for President Lewis A. Drummond which Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees have been asked to approve amounts to a one-time cash gift of \$115,000 plus normal retirement benefits.

A seminary trustee, who asked not to be identified, told Baptist Press the package includes Drummond's base salary of \$70,000 for one year, plus seven months of that salary as sabbatic pay plus his seminary car and some furnishings from the presidential residence.

However, he reiterated that the agreement, worked out by the trustees' executive committee Jan. 30 on the Wake Forest campus, must be approved by the full board of trustees March 9-11. A mail ballot has been asked by the executive committee for the trustees to approve Drummond's resignation so the search process could begin immediately.

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He also told Baptist Press, contrary to a published report by Associated Baptist Press, that Drummond did not ask for "much more" in earlier negotiations. The trustee said Drummond contacted trustee leadership in December and indicated he wanted to retire.

Drummond and trustee leadership met in Nashville in early January but Drummond did not ask for "much more."

Drummond, 65, has been president of Southeastern since April 1988. Drummond's retirement is effective June 30, 1992.

Normal retirement benefits for an administrator of Drummond's level and 10 years of service would include a one-time payment of 10 percent of his salary, a life insurance policy valued at \$20,000, vacation pay due, a Medicare supplement and use of the seminary's health center. Drummond's salary and benefit package has been reported to be about \$100,000, of which \$70,000 is the base salary.

Associated Baptist Press reported Drummond had asked for an ongoing salary commitment but the trustee said that was untrue.

"The only part of the agreement which is not part of a normal retirement package would be the \$70,000 one-time gift plus giving Drummond the seminary car which has more than 50,000 miles on it," the trustee told Baptist Press. "That's not a golden parachute."

Trustees earlier released a statement about Drummond's wife, Betty, noting her contribution to the seminary community. The trustee told Baptist Press such a statement was the "right thing to do."

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Historic Iowa church  
destroyed by fire

Baptist Press  
2/10/92

WINTERSET, Iowa (BP)--After a fire destroyed the historic First Baptist Church of Winterset Feb. 5, the congregation recorded its highest-ever Sunday school attendance Feb. 9 -- 223 adults, youth and children in the local high school.

"We're sad but we'll make it," church member Norma Junkin told a Des Moines TV station after the fire.

The church was founded in 1856. Later in the 1800s, George Washington Carver was a member of the church and sang in the choir after coming to Iowa, having heard of the state's openness to blacks, according to Dennis Hansen, evangelism and stewardship director of the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship.

After a 1902 fire destroyed the church, it was rebuilt as a two-story brick structure, with timbers from the St. Louis World's Fair and stained glass from Europe.

"We know that the Lord hasn't stopped being the Lord," pastor John Shaull told Baptist Press Feb. 10.

Most likely cause of the fire was a faulty furnace, Shaull said. Only church records and Shaull's belongings in the office somehow survived the early morning blaze, which was battled by fire departments from Winterset and five surrounding communities. The congregation had dedicated its new hymnals Feb. 2.

The church and its contents were insured for \$640,000. The Farmers and Merchants State Bank of Winterset has opened a building fund for the congregation. Within a week, the fund received \$4,000, including a check from a woman in a nursing home two hours away, Shaull said.

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The congregation affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention in the early 1960s. Winterset, a town of 4,300, also is the birthplace of actor John Wayne.

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Meacham gets unanimous vote  
as Nevada Baptists' new exec

Baptist Press  
2/10/92

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--The Nevada Baptist Convention's executive board, in a unanimous vote Feb. 6, named David F. Meacham the convention's new executive director.

Meacham, 46, will assume office no later than April 1, succeeding Ernest B. Myers, the convention's first-ever executive director who has announced his retirement effective March 15. Meacham has been director of missions for the Las Vegas area Southern Nevada Baptist Association the past 10-plus years.

"I've heard a lot of comments that changes are needed," Meacham told the 18-member executive board after his election, "but I believe we have done a lot of things right in Nevada. ... I will evaluate before we make any changes and establish a vision for the future ... but we must also keep on doing those things that we are doing right."

Meacham commended Myers as a leader "who has given me the privilege and freedom to do my job in Southern Nevada Baptist Association." He said that cooperative spirit also will mark his leadership. "My mission in life is to help people to do their ministry. ... I don't have to be in the spotlight. I work with a teamwork philosophy."

On evangelism, Meacham recounted his collegiate experience with Campus Crusade for Christ. "It was from (Campus Crusade founder) Bill Bright that I learned personal evangelism and the Great Commission should be a personal mandate for my life. ... Our vision will be to continue to fulfill the Great Commission from Virginia Street to Virginia City, from the world famous (Las Vegas) 'Strip' to the strip mines, from Lovelock to Laughlin, from Wildhorse to Duckwater."

Prior to his associational work, Meacham was a pastoral missionary with the Home Mission Board's church extension department, serving as pastor of Big Bear Baptist Chapel in Big Bear, Calif. He also has been a pastor in Sunnymead, Calif., and youth director in California and Mississippi. He and his wife, Sue, have three daughters.

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Mike McCullough, editor of The Nevada Baptist, newsjournal of the Nevada Baptist Convention, contributed to this report.

Pastor is first black leader  
of Penn/Jersey convention

Baptist Press  
2/10/92

HARRISBURG, Pa. (BP)--Philadelphia pastor Bill Johnson has assumed the presidency of the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey -- the first black Baptist to hold the position.

Johnson presided during the Feb. 8 meeting of the convention's executive board.

Convention staff member Peggy Masters also was elected editor of the Penn/Jersey Baptist during the board meeting.

Johnson, pastor of Christian Mission Fellowship Church in Philadelphia, succeeded Lamar Duke, who was elected convention president last November but resigned to take a pastorate in Savannah, Ga. Johnson had been elected first vice president. The convention encompasses 35 black Baptist churches.

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Johnson has preached during conferences at Baptist conference centers in Ridgecrest, N.C., and Glorieta, N.M. He also has been pastor or assistant pastor at other Philadelphia churches. A graduate of Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pa., he holds a master's degree in theological studies from Eastern Baptist Seminary in Philadelphia.

Masters has worked with Penn/Jersey's newspaper since 1979. She also is the convention's director for Christian social ministries and Woman's Missionary Union. She was Baptist Student Union director at Baptist Hospital in Nashville 1961-67 and the University of Alabama 1967-74 and an Alabama WMU staff member 1974-78. A native of Commerce, Texas, and graduate of East Texas State University there, she holds the master of religious education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

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Johnson: reaching Mexico City  
neighborhood by neighborhood

By Breena Kent Paine

Baptist Press  
2/10/92

MEXICO CITY (BP)--In a city of more than 20 million people, Dennis Johnson makes a difference neighborhood by neighborhood.

Johnson, a Southern Baptist representative in Mexico, is a church planter in Mexico City, known as the "City of Cities." He has revolutionized Mexican Baptists' church-planting strategies through a pilot project that has produced six church starts since it began in 1990.

When he first arrived five years ago, Johnson said he helped out in a lot of different missions, "driving myself crazy accepting invitation after invitation."

That left him no time to start Baptist work in the more than 2,000 communities without evangelical work in Mexico's capital.

Now, as director of church planting for Mexico City Baptist Association, he works as a team member with Mexican Baptists. Together they choose an area where no evangelical work exists and conduct a socioeconomic study to decide strategies for reaching residents. Next they train church leaders and gather financial support. Finally, a pastor is called to lead the new mission.

Johnson acts as a behind-the-scenes adviser and moral supporter for the pastor. "I'm a part of the team until it grows enough on its own to where I can disappear," said Johnson, a native of Fort Worth, Texas.

He and his wife, Mary, grew up in church-planting families as children of Southern Baptist missionaries. Her parents, Gene and Eva Nell Kimler, work in Venezuela; his parents, Glen and Rayella Johnson, work in Argentina.

Johnson learned from his father, whom he called a "man of prayer," that "I've got to feel the power of God working through me," he said. "If not, what am I doing here? ... It's not me reaching the city, it's God."

To reach the city's millions, Johnson varies church-planting strategies according to the ethnic and socioeconomic makeup of each neighborhood. In poor areas, Baptists may start clinics and food and clothing distribution. In gang and crime-plagued neighborhoods, they may show Christian movies at night outdoors. Other methods include Christian concerts, Vacation Bible Schools, businessmen's breakfasts, tutoring for children and child-care centers. The goal of each is to begin a Bible study that will grow into a mission.

"The greatest need is to reach the men," said Johnson, who has found that women who stay home with their children are more receptive to the gospel than their husbands. The men usually work long hours and are too tired or busy to come to church, he said.

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To reach them, leaders plan Bible studies after 8 p.m., giving men time to have dinner with their families. "Sometimes I don't get home until midnight but it's important to reach the men. If you reach them, you can reach the whole family in this society. Otherwise, you have weak churches," Johnson said.

To catch men's interest, Baptists usually show Christian videos for several weeks, then begin Bible studies. One new mission sponsors 25 of these Bible studies in its neighborhood.

But lately, finding people to help develop new work is becoming difficult in Mexico City. The city has a Baptist seminary but last year 17 churches were without pastor.

Laymen have started a lot of churches, Johnson said. "If we could plant two or three (such) couples in each area of the city, we could do so much more." Awareness is growing among established churches as more missions form and more Christians get involved.

Besides planting churches, Johnson feels Baptists could make a greater impact on Mexico City by starting a rehabilitation center for the city's many alcoholics. "I've known some (alcoholics) who have given their lives to Christ and never drink again; for others, the struggle continues," he said.

He recalled meeting an alcoholic devoted to the Virgin Mary. The man's wife was a Jehovah's Witness. The couple passed by one day when Johnson was at a candy stand showing another Jehovah's Witness some Scriptures about Jesus. They stopped to talk.

"You need to tell my husband he shouldn't worship saints and idols," the wife said.

"And you need to tell her that Jesus is God," the husband retorted.

The arguing couple invited Johnson into their home, a shack shadowed by a tall office building. Eventually, the man accepted Christ, followed by his wife three months later.

"He had changed so much she thought this must be the answer," Johnson said. But later during a crisis, the husband got drunk again. "I told (the wife), 'You need to make a firm decision not based on whether or not your husband drinks. You alone must make the decision.' She did."

Since then, Johnson has visited the family often to help them through problems, sometimes receiving calls at 2 or 3 a.m. to go to their home.

Such ministry opportunities abound in what's been called one of the least-evangelized cities in Central America. About 225 Indian language groups live there but New Testaments are available in only about 84 languages. "Millions of people have heard about Coca Cola, but they don't know who Jesus is," said a Baptist pastor in Mexico City.

The city keeps on growing as people settle on the outskirts, Johnson said. Soon, a new community is born, each with its need for Christ.

And reaching them can only be done one step at a time.