



BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

February 25, 1992

92-34

16-year-old missionary kid
ends courageous cancer battle

By Marty Croll

LITTLETON, Colo. (BP)--Trevor Woods, 16-year-old son of Southern Baptist missionaries to Japan, died Feb. 22 after a courageous eight-month fight with leukemia.

Doctors told his parents, Tony and Marsha Woods of Evergreen, Colo., they had never seen a more mature response than Trevor's when they told him days before his death his blood was half cancerous and he was about to die.

"It's okay if I die. I'm ready to die," he said. "But I want to die in Japan, and I want to be buried in Japan."

Trevor was born in San Francisco but, except for furloughs in the United States, had lived in Japan since the Woods began their church-starting missionary career when he was 3.

"He had three best friends in Japan -- Japanese he grew up with," Mrs. Woods said. "They've all become Christians through the years. They're buddies; best, best friends. They're kind of 'the gang' at church."

The four boys had decided early they would all be baptized, although one boy's parents held out until just last year before allowing their son to become a Christian, she said. The group planned to form a Christian rock band and then be together throughout eternity.

Unable to make the trip to Japan, Trevor lay in a coma in a Colorado hospital for three days before his parents realized he was waiting to experience one last time with his buddies. The Woodses arranged for them to talk to him over the phone. About 30 minutes later, Trevor died.

The Woodses were preparing to return to Japan last July after their third furlough when their son was diagnosed as having leukemia. The following months brought much pain as the disease and chemotherapy treatments progressed.

At the hospital, Trevor's character prevailed. "He would just attach himself to little children. He would tell me he would pray for these children because he'd hear them crying," his mother said. "He really had a heart like that."

At a young age, Trevor "had become aware that his life's calling" was to be a missionary. "He was really committed to that," she said.

But about a month before he died, doctors told him the cancer was winning over his treatments. He and his parents took a final trip together to Disney World in Orlando, Fla. "We had a fabulous trip," Mrs. Woods said. "He had a ball. (Cancer) didn't stop him from doing anything. We did it all. It was incredible. I was exhausted."

Coming back from Orlando, he was very sick but told a flight attendant: "I've been around the world twice. I've never thrown up on airplane and I don't intend to now." And he didn't.

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During Christmas, Trevor told his parents that 1991 was the best year of his life. Trevor loved cars, "anything with wheels," she said. Just before he became ill, Trevor had learned to drive. He drove much of the way to Alaska on a three-week camping trip with his parents and 11-year-old brother, Nathan.

As soon as he was diagnosed with leukemia, his father called a dealer and arranged a ride for him in a Ferrari. "He thought it was a ball, the fact that the guy said, 'Don't tell your parents we went 120 miles an hour,'" Mrs. Woods said. "We were all a little envious."

The Woodses ask that anyone wanting to give memorial gifts make a donation through the Foreign Mission Board for work in Taitomi, Japan.

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CORRECTION/UPDATE: In (BP) story titled "Executive Committee Wrap-up: Transition plan revealed for Chapman and Bennett" dated 2/19/92, the ninth paragraph should be changed. According to new figures released by the Executive Committee's business office, the last sentence in that paragraph should read:

" ... The figure is a 5.52 percent increase over the current year's budget."

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Southern Baptists believe in literal
Word of God more than most Americans

Baptist Press
2/25/92

By Sarah Zimmerman

ATLANTA (BP)--Sixty percent of Southern Baptists, compared with 32 percent of Americans in general, believe the Bible is the literal Word of God, according to a survey by the Princeton Religion Research Center.

Results of the survey were published in "Emerging Trends," the Princeton, N.J., research center's monthly publication.

"Only in the South does a plurality of 46 percent of the adult population continue to believe in the literal truth of the Bible," according to the research. "This reflects the high concentration of several groups in the South who maintain much-higher-than-average belief in biblical literalness."

Southern Baptists were listed as one such group, with 60 percent of Southern Baptists who were questioned saying they believe the Bible is the actual Word of God, to be taken literally in all instances.

Survey results were based on telephone interviews with a randomly selected national sample of 1,005 adults last November. The survey results allow for an error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The current report of 32 percent of Americans believing in a literal Bible is an all-time low. In 1963, 65 percent said they believed in the absolute truth of all the words in the Bible. In 1978, that rate had dropped to 38 percent.

Nationwide, 49 percent of the people polled said the Bible is the inspired Word of God, but it should not be interpreted as literally true in every instance. The number of Southern Baptists who agreed with that statement was not reported.

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In 1963, percent of people questioned said the Bible was God inspired but not literal word, compared to 45 percent in 1978.

Sixteen percent of the people questioned in November said the Bible is nothing more than a book of ancient fables, legends, history and moral precepts written by man.

The report says changes in the education levels of the general population in recent years "appear to account for a large part of the variance in biblical beliefs."

The research shows 58 percent of people who identify themselves as biblical literalists did not complete high school.

"Growth in the belief that the Bible represents the inspired Word of God matches the spread of higher education among the general public, with a majority of high school graduates and college attendees taking this view," the report said.

The report said 29 percent of those who rejected the claims the Bible is the literal or inspired Word of God are college graduates.

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Virginia association directors
send protest letter to seminary

Baptist Press
2/25/92

DANVILLE, Va. (BP)--The directors of the Pittsylvania Baptist Association voted Feb. 18 to send protest letters to Averett College in Danville and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., regarding a seminary professor's lecture at the college.

The association's board of directors voted, reportedly 60 percent for and 40 percent against, to send the letter on a motion by William C. Blalock, pastor of Woodlawn Baptist Church in Danville. Blalock said there also was a motion to table the letter but it was defeated.

The association represents 16,000 members in 48 churches in the Danville area, home of Averett College. The college is affiliated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

Alden L. Hicks, executive director of the association, confirmed the letter had been sent to the college and the seminary. He declined to comment on the matter further.

Molly T. Marshall, professor of theology at Southern Seminary, delivered two lectures in January at Averett College. A conservative group, Concerned Baptist Laymen based in Danville, protested what was reported to have been said by Marshall regarding biblical images of God.

The text of the Pittsylvania association motion expressed "our displeasure and disapproval of your (Averett) allowing professor Molly Marshall, or any other professor, whether guest speaker or as a member of the faculty, to express and expound such views as God having no gender."

"Jesus is always presented to us in the New Testament with a masculine gender and He certainly referred to His father in the masculine gender. For example: John 10:10 and John 14:9.

"We respectfully request that you give prayerful consideration for this matter and take corrective action."

Blalock said he was not in attendance at the Marshall lectures but her remarks were conveyed to him by a pastor friend who was there. One person at the associational meeting, who asked not to be identified, said only one person there indicated he had been present at the Marshall lectures.

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The dis, over what Marshall said at the lectures created a 1, including criticism of a Feb. 12 Baptist Press release which reported the conservative group's protest and responses from Averett College and Southern Seminary.

A statement from Larry L. McSwain, Southern Seminary provost, was sent Feb. 21 to state Baptist editors decrying the Baptist Press story.

"In a Feb. 12 news release, which some Baptist state papers have chosen to print, Baptist Press perpetuated false and misleading claims about a member of the Southern Seminary faculty," McSwain said in his statement. "Despite an appeal from the seminary, Baptist Press chose to report erroneous quotations attributed to theology professor Molly Marshall in a Danville, Va., newspaper story and in a letter and news release from Mr. Austin E. Jones Sr., representing a group of Concerned Baptist Laymen.

"Mr. Jones' misguided claims are unfair to Dr. Marshall and to Averett College. In choosing to echo these erroneous charges without checking the accuracy of the statements attributed to Dr. Marshall, Baptist Press has needlessly and recklessly inflamed this unfortunate incident. The resulting misperceptions are a disservice to Dr. Marshall, to Averett College, to Southern Baptists and, most importantly, to the truth," McSwain said.

Herb Hollinger, vice president of Baptist Press, said he was aware seminary officials were upset with the story but did not interpret their anxiety as a request to not release the story. Hollinger said seminary officials provided Baptist Press with a response and also told Baptist Press Marshall did not want to comment on the charges.

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CLARIFICATION: In (BP) story titled "Pastoral tenure increasing slowly in SBC churches" dated 2/19/92, please replace the sixth paragraph with the following:

"Though the amount of time Southern Baptist pastors are staying at one church is slowly increasing, Shelton's long tenure at Haywood Hills is unusual. The latest statistics, garnered from a question in the 1991 Uniform Church Letter which asked pastors what year their current pastorate began, show the mean (or average) pastoral tenure in the SBC is 5.5 years. A 4.3-year average was reported in 1975. It rose to 4.6 years in 1980, and to 5.1 years in 1985."

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Frozen seminary funding
formula to thaw in 1993

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
2/25/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--The six seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention have agreed to restore the controversial seminary funding formula in a three-step adjustment beginning with fiscal year 1993-94.

The formula, by which a Cooperative Program allocation is divided among the seminaries each year, was "frozen" beginning with the 1990-91 fiscal year primarily to help Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. The Wake Forest, N.C., seminary had suffered almost a 50 percent decline in student enrollment following major changes in administration, faculty and trustees in the late 1980s.

The Seminary Funding Formula Study Committee, created by the SBC Executive Committee, met in Nashville Feb. 19 in an ongoing study of the formula which is primarily enrollment driven.

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Following the meeting, Executive Committee executive vice president Ernest E. Mosley, who is the staff coordinator with the funding formula group, told Baptist Press the committee had agreed to recommend to the Executive Committee the restoration of the formula in thirds, beginning with the 1993-94 fiscal year. The SBC fiscal year is from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30.

As a result of the decision, the complex formula adjustment will be applied in stages to help Southeastern progressively absorb the shock of reduced Cooperative Program revenue that would have resulted (from the reduced enrollment decline experienced) had the "freeze" not been applied. The formula which has been in effect since 1976 is adjusted from time to time. Seminary presidents refer to it as equally objectional to the seminaries but a better system has yet to be developed.

The funding study group also agreed to give special attention to three items in the formula: the cost of living at each seminary location, off-campus "full-time-equivalents" (FTEs), and elimination of "tapers." The FTE is the total number of credit hours taught at a seminary in an academic year divided by 24, according to Mosley. A taper is a scale for decreasing the value of an FTE in relation to increased size (of the seminary) to account for the greater efficiency and endowment potential of larger seminary enrollments, Mosley said.

Special attention will be focused on whether the cost of living that affects Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., should be borne by only the five other seminaries or by all the entities participating in the SBC Cooperative Program allocation budget.

The group was also looking at whether the Home Mission Board and the Foreign Mission Board could help share the cost of living burden because of Golden Gate's unique mission role in the West and the Pacific Rim, Mosley said.

The funding committee agreed it was "not necessary or practical to re-invent the wheel," Mosley said. In other words, committee members felt the enrollment driven formula is an effective base from which to operate, he said.

Members of the committee include William Tanner, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma; James Sells, chancellor of Southwest Baptist College in Bolivar, Mo.; David Maddox, real estate developer from Santa Barbara, Calif., and a former Executive Committee chairman; James E. Jones, pastor and former Executive Committee member from Campbellsville, Ky.; Larry Forgy, attorney from Lexington, Ky.; and the six seminary presidents: Russell H. Dilday, Southwestern; Roy Honeycutt, Southern; Landrum Leavell, New Orleans; Milton Ferguson, Midwestern; William Crews, Golden Gate; and Lewis Drummond, Southeastern. Drummond was not at the meeting but concurred with the group's decision regarding the three-step formula implementation, Mosley said. Southeastern was represented in the meeting by Paul Fletcher, vice president for internal affairs.

Executive Committee staff participating included Harold C. Bennett, president/treasurer; Richard P. Rosenbaum Jr., vice president for business and finance; and Mosley. The funding committee will meet again May 25.

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White House pulls support
for church reports on donors

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
2/25/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--The White House has withdrawn support for a proposal requiring churches to file reports with the Internal Revenue Service on contributors giving more than \$500 annually, Vice President Dan Quayle said.

Quayle, appearing on NBC's "Meet the Press" Feb. 23, called the reporting requirement a "nonsense regulation" neither President George Bush nor he was aware was in the budget.

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"I can assure you that I didn't know it was in (the budget), the president didn't know it was in there and, unfortunately, sometimes these things get in there, and when it's brought up to us and brought to our attention, we do what is right," Quayle said. "And what is right is to say that piece of legislation is not going to have our support."

"Now, Congress can go ahead and pass it if they want to, but it's not going to have our support."

The administration is "backing off" the measure, a White House source confirmed Feb. 24.

It appears unlikely the proposal will go anywhere in Congress. On Feb. 20, the Democrats, who control Congress, introduced an alternative tax package without the reporting requirement. President Bush's tax package, which includes the requirement, was reported to the House of Representatives without recommendation by the Ways and Means Committee Feb. 12.

The reporting requirement, included in the president's recently introduced fiscal 1993 budget, would force churches, religious organizations and other charitable groups to report to the IRS the name, address, Taxpayer Identification Number, amount given and the circumstances under which contributions were made on every person who gave more than \$500 during the calendar year. The Taxpayer Identification Number usually is the person's Social Security number.

Evangelical and religious liberty groups in particular protested requiring churches to be participants in the government's tax-enforcement process and burdening many churches with unnecessary work.

Richard D. Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, said, "Such a reporting requirement would put an overwhelming and onerous burden on that large number of churches which do not have computerized formal record-keeping or full-time bookkeepers."

"The Christian Life Commission made White House officials aware of the deep concerns of Southern Baptists and other evangelicals about the proposed reporting requirement within a few days after the president's budget was released," said James A. Smith, the Christian Life Commission's director of government relations.

"Administration sources informed me that once the vice president was made aware of the concerns of evangelicals, he and his staff lobbied to have the administration back away from it. We are pleased that Mr. Quayle's public statements confirm that the Bush administration no longer supports this highly intrusive and burdensome proposal," Smith said.

"However, we urge Southern Baptists to stay on guard. This reporting requirement is supported by some in the administration and Congress who are looking for additional revenue."

The CLC and the National Association of Evangelicals also opposed the proposal in a joint letter to the chairman and ranking minority member of the Ways and Means Committee and the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee. The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs criticized the proposed requirement in a letter to all members of Ways and Means.

The reason given for the reporting requirement was to help IRS distinguish between gifts to churches/charities and payments to churches/charities for such goods or services as entertainment events or items purchased at charity auctions. The requirement would be a double check enabling IRS to catch donors who deduct the full amount on their tax return rather than reducing it by the value of the items or services received.

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If passed the reporting requirement would affect about 80 per cent of Southern Baptist churches. Churches with receipts of less than \$25,000 in a year would not be required to make such reports. About 7,500 of the Convention's 38,000 churches report annual contributions of less than \$25,000, said a staff member in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's corporate planning and research department.

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Oklahoma city police officers
unite to form witness

By Dana Williamson

Baptist Press
2/25/92

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Zimbabwe is his parents' mission field. His is the streets of Oklahoma City.

Oklahoma City police sergeant Kevin Johnson knows the heartache, death, ungodliness, temptation and stress facing police officers daily. To counter all that, he started a Christian law enforcement organization.

The Fellowship of Christian Law Enforcement was organized in 1989 with four police officers -- Charles Bingham, Jim Kennedy, Richard Smith and Johnson -- who saw a need in law enforcement for a Christian witness.

"It's tough to walk a Christian life in this type of work," Johnson said.

He was raised in the home of Baptist preacher, Ernest Johnson, who became a missionary in Zimbabwe three years ago. Ernest Johnson was pastor of Wilmont Place Baptist Church in Oklahoma City 13 years before his call to missions.

Johnson, who felt the call to be a missionary at Falls Creek, Oklahoma Baptists' summer youth camp, said he sees his role on the police force as mission work.

"If I were a preacher, I would be serving in a closed Christian environment but here it's a lifestyle in relating to others."

Johnson was influenced while he was growing up by two police officers at church, Bingham and Jeff Barnett. He went riding in the police car with Bingham one night and although it scared him he still was excited by the action.

He had worked for a paint contractor since he was 14 and started his own paint contracting business when he was 20 -- two months before he married his wife, Tara. But after the ride in the police car with Bingham, Johnson and his wife began to pray and felt the Lord calling him into police work.

"I was guilt-ridden and had an inferiority complex," Johnson said, "not characteristics for a police officer. But the more I prayed, the more I began to understand about police work and the more I felt called."

Johnson joined the police force in 1985 and was shocked by what he saw. "There is stuff going on out there which most people can't imagine," he said. "I had a sheltered Christian background and all of a sudden I'm seeing nude bars with fights and people blowing each other's heads off."

In addition to the Oklahoma City Police Department, FCLE encompasses other metro area police departments, Oklahoma Highway Patrol and Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office.

The organization, which now has between 130 and 150 members, is funded through donations. The basic ministry is within the police force but there also is a desire for the community to know there are Christian police officers.

FCLE has four goals. First is to evangelize by sharing the gospel to those involved in law enforcement and everyone they influence. Second is to encourage by providing Christian support and love and offering fellowship to strengthen officers' families.

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Third is to equip through Bible studies, devotionals and guest speakers, teaching biblical principles for Christian living. And fourth is to educate by developing biblical devotional material relating directly to those in law enforcement and to assist in educating communities to the dangers of drugs and crime.

The organization, which holds monthly meetings, is recognized by police department heads although no official business is done on department time. Oklahoma City's new police chief, Sam Gonzales, a member of Village Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, has expressed an interest in the organization and has said he wants to be involved in it.

Johnson's missions approach to police work includes numerous examples of how he has been an influence in the lives of those who are hurting or in trouble with the law.

"When you have someone in the back seat of a police car," he said with a smile, "you have a captive audience."

Johnny and Kyla McFarland now are attending church after being witnessed to in jail following a drug bust. Johnson, as an undercover police officer, bought drugs from the McFarlands. Kyla later told Johnson she tried to hate him because of what he did to them but she couldn't because it was so obvious he cared for them.

Kyla received Christ after the incident and, although Johnny was already a member of a church, he returned to Christ. They are now active members at Westmore Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

On another occasion Johnson talked to a jailer who was separated from her police officer husband. He encouraged her to go to church, and she and her husband are back together and working in the church's youth department.

Johnson and his wife, along with their children, Matthew, 4, and Amber, 2, are active members at Wilmont Place Baptist Church. They both teach in the young married department and, at 28, Johnson is the youngest deacon in the church. He also has been licensed to preach.

Johnson's brother, Kendall, is an Oklahoma Highway Patrolman, and president of the Tillman County chapter of FCLE. As of now, the Tillman County chapter is the only other FCLE chapter in Oklahoma, although Johnson said other areas of the state have shown interest in starting chapters of their own.

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Businessman urges students
to help laity do great things

By Erin Price

Baptist Press
2/25/92

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--People in business need the help of their ministers to live their Christianity to the fullest, said Frank Land, a Florida real estate executive.

Land, president of Land Realty, Inc., in Fort Myers, Fla., was the guest speaker for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's recent James H. Tharp Lecture Series, presented annually by an outstanding Baptist layman.

Land encouraged NOBTS students to "help us overcome whatever we've got to overcome" to fully embrace Jesus as Lord and Savior and "(to help us) do great things for God, to come out of the womb ... from where we are as businessmen."

Land used his early football days as an example of one type of mentality present in churches today. "We didn't (talk about church) in the locker room," he said. "You don't talk about things like that when you're knockin' and blockin.' I had a mental attitude to overcome."

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4/22/74 Page 2

Outlining attitudes pastors need in order to impact lay people. Land said, "Pastors who don't get bored doing the fundamentals become the superstars. If you're ever going to do something great for God, you've got to start now, you've got to take that stand, you've got to concentrate on winning ... you've got to have no fear of failure. You've got to have that uncommon dream to do something great for God."

"When you do, we laymen will know it," Land said, "and ... we'll want to get in there with you to accomplish and achieve and do great things for God."

"We have the 'want to' but (we) have to depend on you for that help that only you can give us," Land told NOBTS students. "We need leaders to follow." But leaders must be growing in their faith experiences, he added, saying, "You can't lead us where you can't go, and you can't lead us back from where you haven't been."