



**-- BAPTIST PRESS**  
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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92-37

Convention relations office  
offers videos, CP defense

NASHVILLE (BP)--The convention relations office of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee is now offering churches three new denominational videos and a paper defending the Cooperative Program against alternative funding.

There has been a need for fresh denomination-wide videos, according to Mark Coppenger, vice president for convention relations (formerly public relations). Also, there have been calls from pastors and church members desiring to defend the Cooperative Program against the appeals of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Coppenger said.

Three video items are now available. A five-minute version of the "Meet Southern Baptists" brochure premiered at the recent session of the Executive Committee in Nashville.

"It's designed as an outreach tool, the sort of cassette church members could take on visitation. Since it comes in VHS format, it will play on a prospect's VCR. It includes a brief gospel presentation as a beginning point for evangelism. And it should also serve well as an orientation piece for old and new members alike," Coppenger said. Copies are available for \$7.00.

The other two video pieces are designed for use on television. One is a public service announcement called "Treasures." It begins with scenes of the Statue of Liberty, the St. Louis Arch, Lincoln Memorial and Mt. Rushmore but then shifts to a family walking together into church. The voice says, "Some of America's most priceless treasures are not found in concrete and steel or on the side of a mountain but in the faces of our children. In today's world they need a firm moral and spiritual foundation more than ever."

The second television spot, called "Safe Sex," presents a traditional wedding scene. As the camera shifts perspectives, the narrator says, "We've heard a lot about safe sex lately. God's had a plan all along."

Both carry a closing Southern Baptist identifier, are designed to give America a "wake-up call," according to Coppenger, come in one-inch commercial format and are available for loan. "Treasures" runs 30 seconds, "Safe Sex" 15 seconds.

The SBC Radio and Television Commission produced all three of the video items.

A fourth video, one featuring a geographically and ethnically diverse collection of Southern Baptists, is in production and should be ready by the Indianapolis SBC meeting in June, Coppenger said. This one-minute spot will lift up the character and work of Jesus, he added.

"To help in defense of the Cooperative Program, convention relations has prepared an open letter putting the charges of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in historical perspective," Coppenger said. The letter is essentially a collection of quotes from such Southern Baptist luminaries as J.M. Frost, John Broadus, J.B. Tidwell, James Boyce, A.T. Robertson, Basil Manly, John Sampey, Herschel Hobbs, John Dagg, E.Y. Mullins, B.H. Carroll, K. Owen White, Juliette Mather, Roland Leavell, Frank Leavell, L.R. Scarborough, W.B. Johnson, Carlyle Marney and George Truett."

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The letter does not presume to settle the question of theology, Coppenger said. It does, however, argue the Fellowship has failed to present the whole story and it attempts to supply some historical data that church denominational relations committees might miss. Copies are available upon request.

The convention relations office, now beginning its second year as an effort distinct from Baptist Press, continues to offer the new full-color version of the brochure, "Meet Southern Baptists," Coppenger said. Since mid-1991 it has sold 85,000 copies.

The forthcoming March and April issues of the monthly good news poster "Southern Baptist Celebrator!" will feature missionary martyrs and bivocational pastors.

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Information center established  
for Project Brotherhood

By Steve Barber

Baptist Press  
2/28/92

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission has established a Project Brotherhood Information Center at its Memphis headquarters.

The center will provide information to state conventions with questions about the agency's coordination of emergency food distribution in Russia.

"We will be happy to answer questions about Project Brotherhood," said Dr. James Williams, president of the Brotherhood Commission. "But I must urge all Southern Baptists considering service as volunteers within Russia, once the actual food distribution begins, to contact their state convention Brotherhood departments first. The approval process begins there."

The Project Brotherhood effort will focus initially on the delivery and distribution of 570 tons of USDA surplus food now on its way to Moscow. It is estimated that some 40,000 Russian families will benefit from the project.

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Youth Sunday school to pilot  
weekly teaching supplement

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press  
2/28/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--A computer network supplement for Southern Baptist youth Sunday school teachers will be piloted for six months following the success of a one-month test phase.

"Youth Life and Work Series: Extra!" will be available March 26 for first use on Sunday, April 4, for a six-month pilot on SBCNet, the Southern Baptist computer network operated by the Sunday School Board on CompuServe, a worldwide computer service.

The materials for use April 4 will be written by March 24 and posted on the computer network two days later, said Richard Barnes, design editor for youth Life and Work Series materials in the board's Sunday school division.

The computer supplement will be available on the network 10 days before the date of the Bible study session to allow teachers time to prepare, Barnes said.

"Some churches have workers meetings as early as the previous Sunday. This lets them use Extra! in their preparation," Barnes said.

Extra! will be available only for Life and Work Series materials during the pilot phase. Suggestions will be age-graded with sets of teaching supplements for seventh grade teachers, eighth and ninth grade teachers, 10th and 11th grade teachers and 12th grade teachers, Barnes said.

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While workers from 13 churches participated in the one-month test in November, Barnes said at least 20 other churches have requested information about receiving Extra!

Any church subscribing to SBCNet will be able to participate in the pilot.

Craig Kendall, minister of youth at Central Baptist Church in Aurora, Colo., wrote in an evaluation of the test that information in Extra! about teen music, sports and other topics sparked the interest of youth in Bible study.

Other teachers said the supplements gave them material for discussion on current topics that tied to the lesson theme, Barnes said.

Extra! will be available to any SBCNet subscriber at no charge other than the CompuServe usage fee, Barnes said.

An SBCNet kit providing access to CompuServe and all SBCNet materials is available for \$20 from the Sunday School Board customer service center.

Churches or individuals may purchase the kit and use SBCNet.

People interested in using SBCNet should contact David Haywood, SBCNet system operator, at (615) 251-2895. People with comments or questions about Extra! should contact Barnes at (615) 251-2707.

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Children with stress need  
leaders' immediate attention

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press  
2/28/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--A child arrives at the day care center or preschool class at church and immediately heads for a corner where he speaks to no one for the entire day.

Or perhaps, a normally good-natured child becomes irritable and restless. Maybe he even begins hitting other children or constantly crying.

"What you have is a stressed-out child," said Maurice Graham, a pastoral counselor and associate pastor of Bon Air Baptist Church of Richmond, Va.

"What we usually try to do, then, is fix the child, and what we should be doing is fixing the parent," Graham told participants in the Advanced Training for Preschool/Children's Workers Seminar VII. The Feb. 24-27 seminar was sponsored by the preschool/children's section of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship training department.

Understanding a child involves understanding at least two family generations above that child, Graham said. Church workers, as opposed to grade-school teachers, have an advantage here because they are probably acquainted with the child's parents and perhaps his grandparents, he added.

When leaders are familiar with a child's background, they usually find it easier to pinpoint the cause of stress, he said.

Graham said adults who see signs of stress in children usually tend to ignore those signals and say, "They are just children, they'll get over it," or "They're too young to know what's going on (in the family)." But, he said, "Children are more traumatized by stressful events than adults. They are deeply affected by life situations."

Most commonly, children experience stress because of the separation or divorce of their parents, Graham said. "Divorce is the most traumatic event a child can experience."

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Parents owe it to their children to tell them the truth about what is happening in their marriages, Graham said. Waiting and hiding the truth only delays the child's recovery from the trauma, he said.

Graham advised the children's workers not to adhere to the cliché that "time heals all wounds" when dealing with a child's pain.

"If you don't deal with that child's pain in a very short amount of time, they only get a deeper wound," he said. "If you wait too long, it's hard to get them back to experience that original pain."

Some signs of stress in children include irritability, impulsive behavior, restlessness, inability to concentrate, loss of sense of humor or sense of joy, fatigue, excessive sleeping or insomnia, verbal or physical aggressiveness, sudden weight loss or gain and hyperactivity.

When children's workers see little ones behaving differently than usual, don't ignore it, Graham advised. "Spend time unraveling their story."

Children often experience stress because their home life is hectic, Graham said.

"We need to be very careful as preschool/children's workers that we don't buy into this urgency," he said. "We need to help the child slow down. Our sense of urgency just raises the child's stress level."

Children with a high level of stress are unteachable, Graham said. "You cannot teach children until you get the stress out of their bodies."

"Help children learn the life skill of slowing down. Show them they can take their time and enjoy an activity without feeling like they will be left out of something else."

Graham warned overlooking and avoiding dealing with stress in children can translate into problems for them in adulthood.

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Family friendly culture needs  
hard-working advocates of change

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press  
2/28/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--A generation ago, children played in the woods by day and stared at the stars by night. Today, they still gaze at galaxies but the moon and stars are on a television monitor being manipulated by Nintendo controls.

"Kids are growing up in an electronic bubble," Richard Louv, an author and columnist, told participants attending the preschool/children's conference at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. "Kids don't get out and play anymore; they play indoors. Kids can't tell you very much about the last time they spent much time in the woods."

A child's sedate existence indoors is not entirely his or her fault, contended Louv, author of "Childhood's Future: Listening to the American Family -- New Hope for the Next Generation."

"Kids are doing what society is telling them to do," said the columnist with the San Diego Union. "Parents have such fear of what's outside."

Louv said when he was a child he would take off on his bike, daring to explore outside the physical boundaries set by his mother. He said his mother knew he would be safe because neighbors would watch as he passed their homes.

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"Today that physical boundary I had when I was a kid is replaced by an electronic boundary. Kids can go as far as Nintendo will take them," Louv said. "I don't know what we are doing to the next generation when we cut them off from nature. I think that relationship is extremely important."

Louv researched his book by spending hours recording thoughts and attitudes of parents and children. He said he interviewed about 3,000 children, young people, parents "and some teachers, not many," and listened to the fears, gripes and concerns of all.

He said he talked to parents about the reality of parenting and to children about what it's like to be a child today. What he discovered from his conversations with parents is that most feel isolated.

"Parents don't talk to each other about how it feels to be a parent," he said. Likewise, he noted, many do not see the church as the ideal place to discuss feelings of inadequate parenting skills or possible discord in family life.

"As a consequence of that isolation, parents turn to parenting books." What they really need, he said, is to talk to each other and discover that the feelings they experience are similar.

The common thread in his conversations with parents and children was a sense of grief, Louv said.

"There is a sense of grief that something has been taken from us. It's going, gone. But we don't know what it is."

Family time together has dropped 40 percent in the last 10 to 15 years, he said. People are working 164 more hours a year than they were two decades ago.

"You can forget the 40-hour week. We are under enormous pressure to increase our workload," he said. "A 40-hour work week is a thing of the past."

Family time is also sacrificed when both parents work. And the result of two working parents is usually angry children, he said.

"Kids are quite forgiving of their parents," Louv said. "They talk with compassion about their parents and how hard they work. But underneath there is this level of rage and they're not sure who to be angry at."

Kids of today are not getting positive adult interaction, Louv said. They need that positive influence to grow up happy and well-rounded.

"Children will not be productive, healthy or happy without positive adult interaction."

Teachers or parents don't have much time to spend with children, Louv said.

"The number one issue in education today is not the curriculum but the emotional health of the children, and that is linked to how much positive adult content they get."

Louv suggested parents take a proactive role in remedying the breakdown of family ties and closeness.

They can start by talking with other parents on a regular basis to eliminate their feeling of isolation, he said. Parents could become a part of a networking system or they could join parental workshops.

Employees with children might ask their employers to create a family friendly workplace which grants flexible working hours and a benefits plan that includes more time off to be with families.

He said teachers could broaden the discussion in the classroom to family issues, including divorce, remarriage and traditional values.

He encouraged parents to initiate legislation to create family-friendly cities. He cited an era when families spent time together in city parks, pitching ball, walking or riding bicycles.

"We are experiencing the mean world syndrome," he said. "Everybody now believes their neighborhoods are so dangerous that they really are. Everybody comes in the house off the streets and nobody is out there, except you know who."

Louv said senior adults could be the "winner soldiers" of the new family movement. They could spend time volunteering in classrooms or community activities.

"Our culture needs to give parenting a blessing," Louv said. "You need to become an advocate for preschoolers and children."

The Feb. 24-27 seminar was sponsored by the preschool/children's section of the board's discipleship training department.

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Missionaries hopeful  
despite Burundi unrest

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press  
2/28/92

BUJUMBURA, Burundi (BP)--Despite recent rebel attacks on the Burundian capital of Bujumbura, Southern Baptist missionaries in the central African country say they are more optimistic than ever about their work.

Burundi has a long history of ethnic conflict but the response of the government to the most recent fighting demonstrates a new day has arrived, they feel.

President Pierre Buyoya is forging ahead with plans to introduce multi-party democracy in the small African nation situated on the northeast side of Lake Tanganyika. Missionaries believe the democratization process will enhance their current positive situation.

"Since the installation of the Third Republic (in 1987), the freedom of the church has been greatly restored," said Jeff Polglase of Arizona, chairman of the Baptist Mission of Burundi. "We've gone from being required to leave the country by leaders of the Second Republic to a situation in which we have great freedom to preach the gospel."

Southern Baptists missionaries, who first entered Burundi in 1978, actually left in 1986 because of government restrictions. They re-entered the country in late 1988. They work alongside missionaries from the Danish Baptist Union, which started the work in 1928.

Polglase said the Baptist mission has helped eight churches "put up roofs" in the past year, many of them for new congregations. "That's good growth when you consider it took 63 years to start the first 72 Baptist churches in this country," he explained. "Burundian pastors are taking the initiative in organizing churches."

He pointed out the Baptist mission is taking advantage of the current openness to take big strides in evangelism and training. "We're sending missionaries places where there has never been a Baptist missionary," he said.

"By the end of April our mission will increase from two to five families," he said. "We plan to open a new area in southern Burundi with an agricultural center operated by Dennis and Margaret McCall, of Mississippi and Georgia, respectively."

"Another agricultural couple, Dave and Cathy Brandon of Kentucky, will open another new area in Burundi's second largest town, Gitega. His skills in entomology and soils will fit right into local agricultural needs. We want to link our human needs ministries with evangelism and thus bring about opportunities to witness about Christ."

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Steve and Tara Smith of Texas arrive in the next few months to implement a youth program.

The mission also has started construction of two residences and a pastor's training center in the northern city of Kayanza. The Union of Baptist Churches of Burundi has never had an ongoing pastoral training center, Polglase said, "so they see this as one of the biggest steps in the history of the development of their convention."

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Eggs say 'thank you'  
to Southern Baptists

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press  
2/28/92

MBEYA, Tanzania (BP)--How many four-wheel-drive trucks can you buy with five eggs?

None.

But the symbolic worth of those same eggs was priceless to Jon Lord because of the Tanzanian family who offered them in gratitude.

Lord, a Louisiana transplant to Tanzania, was puzzled when a young Tanzanian held out a small plastic bucket of eggs and explained in Swahili, "It's a gift. My wife is alive today because of what you did."

It took a few moments for the Southern Baptist missionary to make the connection but then he remembered a trip he had made several months earlier to attend a meeting in the rugged, mountainous area where Baptists have some strong churches.

The meeting had just started when word came from a local clinic that a woman was bleeding from a miscarriage. She would die unless she could make it to the Catholic hospital -- a trip across a mountain pass and down a winding track.

Thanks to the traction and power of Lord's four-wheel truck, the woman got there in time.

"That mission of mercy was possible because Southern Baptists support their missionaries and want to see we're equipped to do the job," Lord pointed out. "Four-wheel-drive vehicles are expensive to purchase and maintain -- but time and again they have proven their worth in countries like Tanzania.

"Five eggs don't go very far toward defraying the expense of my truck," he said. "So let them be a symbol of gratitude to all Southern Baptists who pray and give so the message of life may be carried around the world."

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Virginia committee warns  
of foreign mission changes

By Robert Dilday

Baptist Press  
2/28/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Virginia Baptists' denominational relations committee has warned of "ill-conceived efforts" by some trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board that may result in "radical change" in the denomination's overseas missions strategy.

"Open challenges to long-established, proven and effective mission strategies have been published and seriously considered," noted the statement, released Feb. 24 by committee chairman Ray Spence of Richmond.

"These disastrous actions continue to undermine and wreck the confidence and trust relationship that has marked Southern Baptists' cooperative mission endeavor for generations."

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However, the committee did not suggest severing ties between the FMB and Virginia Baptists, most of whom, it said, "are not yet ready to abandon the board as their primary vehicle for doing overseas missions."

"Faithful and productive missionaries continue to merit and to deserve our sacrificial support," the statement said.

The denominational relations committee is a standing committee of the 600,000-member Baptist General Association of Virginia and is assigned the task of making periodic assessments and recommendations regarding Southern Baptist life.

Controversy has swirled around the Foreign Mission Board since last October when trustees eliminated \$365,000 from the 1992 operating budget of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and redirected the money toward the other theological education efforts in Eastern Europe. Some trustees alleged the school teaches liberal theology.

A number of state conventions in the United States and Baptist unions in Europe decried the action, which the board reaffirmed in December. In January, two top FMB administrators resigned in protest, citing what they said was the board's attempt to impose theological hegemony over Baptists abroad.

FMB President R. Keith Parks' support of continued funding for Ruschlikon and his presence at a press conference in which the resigning administrators criticized the board's action put him at odds with some of the trustees.

Expected attempts to speed up the retirement of Parks, who is 64, did not materialize at the trustees' February meeting but the board sidestepped an opportunity to affirm his leadership through 1995 as he has requested. Instead, they scheduled a March spiritual retreat, closed to the public, where Parks' tenure presumably will be discussed. Any action likely would have to be ratified at the regularly scheduled April meeting.

These "events in the leadership of Southern Baptists' world mission agency ... have intensified Virginia Baptists' fear that the 'crown jewel' of our corporate life as a denomination is being threatened by ill-conceived efforts by some trustees to bring about radical change in the board's work," the denominational relations committee said.

The statement cited three examples of FMB trustees' "irresponsible exercise of power":

-- Unwarranted interference by trustees in administration. "Trustees are policy makers, not administrators. Their increasing effort to blur the line between policy-making and administration threatens the whole ministry of the board by bridling creativity and stifling initiative."

-- Abandonment of longstanding missions strategies. Much of the recent debate among trustees has focused on the "indigenous principle" by which the board works with nationals overseas as partners rather than as subordinates. "Some would turn back the clock and replace these foundational commitments with a neo-colonialistic and culturally imperialistic stance."

-- Lack of respect for Parks who announced a new missions emphasis last August to enhance the board's ministries through the end of the century. A trustee subcommittee has been studying the proposal since October. "(Parks') call to renew the reason for being of the Foreign Mission Board has all but been 'passed over' by the trustees."

The denominational relations committee urged FMB trustees to "develop more appropriate methodologies of oversight so the mission work may prosper. ..."

It also asked the board to "include all Southern Baptists in the world mission enterprise." Some Southern Baptists have charged that more moderate members of the denomination are being discouraged from applying for missionary service although trustees deny this.

The committee expressed "love and support" for the board's staff and for Parks, who they described as "the leader for these times among missionary-minded Baptists."

It also asked Virginia Baptists to pray "fervently and faithfully that the Holy Spirit will intervene in this deplorable situation and bring about a miracle of resolution and restoration of trust and confidence."

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Under the tamarind tree:  
Baptists in San Andres

By Kevin Devine

Baptist Press  
2/28/92

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--San Andres is a tranquil island community of Colombia, South America, where the people are gracious, the pace of life is slow, and the teal-blue waters of the Caribbean provide a natural shelter from the outside world. While most people would view such a place only in their dreams, Cipriano Stephens calls this vision home.

"Given the choice of living anywhere in the world, I would choose San Andres," said Stephens, a first year associate of divinity student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. "My family has lived on the island for almost two centuries, and like Dorothy (in 'The Wizard of Oz' said," Stephens added with a smile, "'There's no place like home.'"

As pastor of First Baptist Church, the island's largest congregation, Stephens has ministered to the needs of his people for more than a decade. Now he is in the process of setting aside those labors and following God's leadership into a new and entirely unknown area of service: becoming a professionally trained minister of Christian education.

"We have nothing of the quality which is being offered here," he said, referring to the many educational opportunities available to Southern Baptists in the United States.

Located 500 miles off the Colombian mainland, San Andres is unique in a primarily Spanish-speaking, Catholic-dominated hemisphere. San Andres is an English-speaking enclave that is deeply permeated in Baptist heritage.

For Stephens, the decision to alter his area of service was not an uncomplicated one. "I did not know how all of these things could be taken care of and still allow me to change directions," he said, concerning to his various responsibilities.

Serving as pastor -- and only staff member -- of a church welcoming over 500 worshippers to its services each Sunday is only the beginning of Stephens' responsibilities. He also is principal of First Baptist's K-12 school, the second largest school, public or private, on the island. In addition to the demands of his vocation, Stephens is also a husband and father to four children.

In the spring of 1988, unsure of how the details of ministry might be concluded, yet sure of God's call, Stephens consulted with then Southern Baptist missionary to Colombia and current NOBTS faculty member Billy Warren. After much discussion and prayer, Stephens began the process of making arrangements to travel to NOBTS and attend classes as time and funds would allow.

In the interim, God worked to provide continued ministry to the people of San Andres. Warren, supportive in "word and deed," according to Stephens, volunteered to serve as interim pastor during Stephens' first journey to the NOBTS campus in the spring of 1990. While attending classes for a second time in the fall of 1991, the deacons and laypeople of First Baptist took upon themselves the responsibilities of Stephens' ministry in order to allow him to continue his education.

Perhaps the most unexpected, yet vital, provision for the long-term future came when a former pastor volunteered to come out of retirement and serve as full-time pastor of First Baptist. "We were stunned," Stephens said, when the former pastor refused any salary, thus allowing the church to retain Stephens as a fully-paid staff member and at the same time provide funds for his continued education at NOBTS about one semester per year.

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It was not by chance Stephens consulted Warren, or chose a Southern Baptist seminary to further his education. "Our church and our island have long time ties with Southern Baptists, reaching back 150 years," Stephens said.

"A gentleman named Phillip Beatman Livingston first introduced the gospel to our island in 1845," Stephens said. Livingston -- his mother a native islander, his father an English merchant who had settled on San Andres -- was sent to the United States to pursue his college degree. "Along with the challenge of the university, Livingston was confronted by the gospel," said Stephens. So complete was Livingston's conversion to Christ, he surrendered to full-time Christian service and was ordained as a Baptist minister in the summer of 1845.

Upon his return to San Andres, once a British colonial possession which had supplied the empire with much of its raw cotton, Livingston was encouraged by his mother to minister to the spiritual and educational needs of the thousands of recently freed slaves on the island.

"Using the Bible as his text, Livingston began teaching the freedmen to read and write," Stephens said. To shelter themselves from the equatorial sun, Livingston and his students gathered under a large tamarind tree on a bluff above the village. "At first the Scripture was only a means to an end: learning to read and write. But as their lessons progressed, the truth of the gospel began to reach out to these men and women through the words on the page."

The impact of the gospel was profound. Without any indigenous religious system, and having seen no previous missionary effort, the island proved to be fertile ground for the gospel. Less than a year after those first lessons beneath the tamarind tree, the First Baptist Church of San Andres was established. Within a generation of Livingston's return, fully 95 percent of San Andreans were professing believers in Christ.

This deep root of Baptist heritage was more fully grounded when in 1879 donors in San Andres and from Baptist churches in the United States gave the money necessary for First Baptist to build a large sanctuary which is still in use more than 100 years later. Even while sponsoring mission churches and preaching points around the island, the membership of First Baptist continued to swell, having outgrown a succession of buildings.

The new sanctuary was fabricated in Mobile, Ala., then dismantled and shipped to San Andres. "Each individual piece was carried from the harbor up a small trail to a site overlooking town," Stephens said. Why hand-carry thousands of pieces of lumber and material uphill nearly two miles? "That is where the tamarind tree grows," he reminded.

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Kevin Devine is staff photographer in the public relations office at New Orleans Seminary. (BP) photos available upon request from New Orleans Seminary.