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92-49

Draper responds to concerns
about use of BSSB video facilities By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE (BP)--Responding to concerns the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's television production studio and uplink facilities were used for a program featuring country music singer Hank Williams Jr., President James T. Draper Jr. said, "We made a mistake."

During the Feb. 12 live uplink, Williams urged viewers to attend his Budweiser Rockin' Country Tour. That reference was the first Sunday School Board officials knew of the involvement of the beer company with the program.

Draper said the board contracted in early February 1992 with On the Scene Productions of Los Angeles for use of the board's television studio and uplink facilities. On the Scene had used the studio on one previous occasion.

Since the termination of the board's satellite telecommunication network in 1990, Draper said the board has regularly contracted with production companies to use its facilities to "uplink" live programs. The board is one of only a few sites in Nashville equipped for live feeds and generates income to offset operating expenses through the service.

At the conclusion of the program, a Sunday School Board video producer went to an official of On the Scene Productions and explained the board would not have agreed to produce the live feed had they known the nature of the tour and its Budweiser sponsorship. Guidelines regarding content of programs originating from board facilities had been shared with On the Scene Productions prior to its first use of board video facilities.

A weekend entertainment and arts feature released March 13 by Associated Press noted the contrast of Hank Williams Jr. sitting in a television studio at the Baptist Sunday School Board. Draper said he first learned of the article when a trustee, George Kinchen of Parkersburg, W.Va., called after the article appeared in a local paper.

"We made a mistake in assuming that guidelines given to the company previously would be followed on this occasion. Those guidelines stipulate that programming and sponsorship originating from our facilities must be entirely consistent with the values and lifestyle espoused by the Baptist Sunday School Board," Draper said.

Draper said immediately after the incident video personnel concluded they needed to reiterate policies regarding values and lifestyles with companies with whom they had previously done business. Such practice is followed in all first-time contact with client companies.

"In the future we will use both verbal and written means to clarify the kinds of programming and sponsors which may use our facilities," Draper said. "We regret any false implications this has given regarding the witness of Southern Baptists."

He said employees in the video/audiovisuals department are in the process of assembling a packet of materials to use as a witnessing opportunity with all visitors using the facilities. The packet will include the plan of salvation, a New Testament and other items.

Accident Baptist Church
birth not accidental

By Craig Bird

BUKOPA, Tanzania (BP)--The car exploded out of the swirling dust and rammed his vehicle head-on -- a horrifying shock to Rob Moor.

But a satisfying shock followed when he learned two weeks later the accident had led directly to the establishment of a new church.

Moor, a Southern Baptist missionary from Chesapeake, Va., was driving about 60 miles from his home in Bukoba Jan. 28 when he encountered "crash evangelism." He and Tanzanian pastor Sostenes Karoli were following a large truck along a recently graded dirt highway and reviewing the day's Baptist association leadership meeting.

Unknown to them, a car traveling the opposite direction pulled off the road to let the truck pass, then pulled back onto the road. "It just appeared out of the dust," Moor said. "I barely had time to hit my breaks before we hit head-on."

The car struck Moor's four-wheel drive and bounced back about 40 feet. One man was thrown through the windshield of the car, while Moor's seat was ripped from the floor. He and Karoli were spared serious injury by the grasp of their seat belts.

"When we got out and saw that all five people in the other car were hurt and one man looked like he was going to die, I just sat beside the car and cried," Moor admitted. "Pastor Karoli was OK and I just felt some bruises but we were really afraid for (the seriously injured man)."

But as it became apparent the man would make it to a hospital for treatment (he later had his spleen removed), the two Baptist preachers began rejoicing. "We prayed for everyone in the accident and started praising the Lord for delivering all of us and passing out tracts to the crowd that had gathered," Moor said.

Eventually Moor caught a ride into Bukoba, leaving Karoli with the vehicle. Two days passed before a truck returned to haul the vehicle and Karoli into Bukoba. But Karoli used the time well.

Two Baptist laymen who recently had moved to the area heard a missionary had been in an accident and came to investigate. They found Karoli counseling three spectators who had stopped to view the damage and wound up listening to Karoli preach. When the tow truck arrived 48 hours later, 14 people had become Christians through the witness of Karoli, the laymen and another pastor who happened by and stopped to help preach.

Two weeks after the crash a new preaching point was organized at a village about a mile from the crash site. It is named Kanisa la Ajali -- Swahili for "Accident Baptist Church."

"Not because it was an accident that a church was started here," Karoli explained. "But because God used a bad accident to do something good so a church is in that village now."

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Evangelist calls Noriega
"brother in the Lord"

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
3/17/92

ATLANTA (BP)--As prosecution in the drug trafficking trial of Manuel Noriega nears an end, a Texas evangelist says, "Whatever the court decision, we have a brother in the Lord."

Rudy Hernandez, vocational evangelist based in San Antonio, Texas, has visited Noriega several times while the disposed leader of Panama waited for his trial.

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Hernandez was with Noriega May 15, 1990, when Noriega made a profession of faith. Hernandez says repeated visits with Noriega have convinced him Noriega was sincere.

The last visit Hernandez had with Noriega was in December and he plans to see Noriega again in April. Hernandez said during his December visit, one of the prison guards, who is a Christian, told him, "There is no question that Gen. Noriega is born again."

Also on his last visit, Hernandez said Noriega showed him his Bible and it was covered with notes from Noriega's personal Bible study.

During their last visit, "General Noriega told me that he felt strengthened in the strength of the Lord," Hernandez said. "He wanted me to thank everyone who has prayed for him. But I asked him to pray for us."

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President not supporting
homosexual rights, aide says

By Tom Strobe

Baptist Press
3/17/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--President George Bush is not committed to a new agenda supporting homosexual rights, a White House aide has told two Southern Baptist leaders.

The March 10 letter from a Bush administration official came as a response to a Feb. 19 letter from Morris Chapman, Southern Baptist Convention president, and Richard D. Land, Christian Life Commission executive director, asking the president to "disavow any support or sympathy for the homosexual civil rights agenda." Chapman and Land made the request of President Bush after Robert Mosbacher, chairman of the Bush/Quayle campaign, met with homosexual activists Feb. 13.

"The president has not made any policy changes that reflect a departure from his commitment to family values," Leigh Ann Metzger said in the letter, "and I assure you that this meeting was not related to any new policy agenda.

"This meeting was of a personal nature and did not include administration officials," said Metzger, who is deputy assistant to the president for public liaison.

President Bush again declared his faithfulness to traditional family values in a March 3 speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, Metzger said. In his address, the president expressed support for protection of the unborn, educational choice, the fight against obscenity and child pornography, and prayer in public schools.

The Christian Life Commission and National Association of Evangelicals both asked the White House to use the NAE speech as an opportunity to disclaim support for homosexual rights. The president did not mention the issue in his 21-minute address.

President Bush would like to discuss family issues with evangelical leaders, Metzger said in her letter.

In October 1990 Chapman, Land and 16 other evangelical leaders met with the president after the White House twice hosted homosexual activists at bill-signing ceremonies. They were told the invitations did not reflect support for the homosexual rights agenda.

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Parks urges 'uncluttered'
response to world missions

By Pat Cole

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks urged students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to be "uncluttered by confusion about denomination or organizations or institutions" as they ponder a call to world missions.

"I say to you without hesitation that God has chosen you to live at a moment in human history that has as great a potential for spiritual victory and harvest than any other generation of Christians ever created," said Parks during the concluding service of Foreign Missions Week at the Louisville, Ky., seminary March 13. "I cannot find a time in human history where so much has happened so quickly creating such an openness for the sharing of the gospel."

Parks' address came a week prior to a called meeting with FMB trustees in Dallas to discuss his future as president. Parks, whose leadership has been criticized by some trustees, has asked the board to affirm his intention to remain as president until his retirement in 1995.

Parks said his appeal for students to consider foreign mission service was "above and beyond institutional boundaries or limits." He asked the students, "What is God saying to you about your life, now?"

"There is no way to describe how in all parts of the world, (though) not in every country, there are these people who are responsive, waiting and giving of themselves once they have the opportunity," Parks said. In addition to doors that have opened rapidly in Eastern Europe, Parks also cited examples of "phenomenal growth" among churches in Africa, Latin America and Korea.

"There's a world dead in sin reaching out, pleading begging for direction, for guidance for values for love," Parks said. "No one in all the world can give it to them except Jesus Christ, and he has chosen to do it through people whom he calls and sends."

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Tennessee pastor moves
to ethicist role at CLC

By Lonnie Wilkey

Baptist Press
3/17/92

WASHINGTON--(BP) "My pulpit has been expanded," says former Tennessee Baptist pastor C. Ben Mitchell.

Instead of preaching every Sunday as he once did, Mitchell now is adjusting to his new role as a Southern Baptist ethicist, which involves education and research. Mitchell joined the staff of the SBC Christian Life Commission in January as director of biomedical ethics and life concerns.

Ethical issues and applied Christianity have long interested the Florida native, he said in an interview during the CLC's 25th annual seminar in Washington.

After serving as pastor for some years and dealing with ethical issues in counseling situations, Mitchell notes he became especially interested in medical ethics. The former pastor of Middle Valley Church in Hixson, Tenn., was elected as a commissioner of the CLC in 1986. Serving as a trustee for Southern Baptists' moral concerns and ethics agency further sparked his interest in that field, he says.

After attending a bioethics consultation in 1986, Mitchell began investigating schools with doctoral programs in medical ethics. He discovered the University of Tennessee in Knoxville offered such a program. On his day off at Middle Valley he commuted to Knoxville and took an orientation to medical ethics course and "became hooked. I realized it was the Lord's will for me to pursue doctoral work in that area," he recalls.

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One year later he resigned the pastorate at Middle Valley, where he had served five years, to move to Knoxville and attend graduate school full time. While in Knoxville he also was interim pastor of Immanuel Church for 11 months.

Mitchell has completed his course work and needs only to finish his dissertation to earn a Ph.D. in philosophy with a concentration in medical ethics. He also holds degrees from Mississippi State University in Starkville and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

The CLC's newest staffer has set some goals. "I hope to help our staff as we update our pamphlets and produce new materials to address some of the cutting-edge issues we have not yet addressed," he says.

He says the CLC has not been a "one-horse" commission. "Our very purpose and the emphasis Sundays Southern Baptists have assigned us to observe prevent us from being a one-issue agency," he says, adding "God also has mandated us not to be concerned about only one issue of human suffering."

An issue Mitchell expects to be "the issue of the next several decades" is genetic engineering.

Already under way is a 15-year project begun about two years ago. It is called the Human Genome Project and is sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Energy and is based in Washington, D.C.

A genome is all the genetic material which makes up one human being, Mitchell explains.

The goal of the effort is to map the entire human genetic structure, Mitchell says, adding that it has implications for practically every area of life.

While the project could raise some sticky ethical problems, it also can do much good such as finding treatments for human diseases with genetic causes, Mitchell observes.

He sees his function as a provider of information so Southern Baptists can be aware of the project and also as an encourager of the project's useful functions while at the same time cautioning researchers about potential dilemmas.

"Because it is a relatively new endeavor, we can help raise awareness before technology outstrips the ability to think carefully about the issue," he says. Mitchell also has responsibility on the CLC staff for issues such as alcohol and drug abuse prevention, race relations and world hunger.

He already has begun planning a national seminar in Nashville for March 1-3, 1993, on "Life at Risk: Crises in Medical Ethics." The conference will apply biblical principles to euthanasia, living wills, AIDS, "safe sex," genetic engineering, surrogate motherhood, abortion and other difficult controversial issues, Mitchell says.

The former Tennessee pastor admits he misses the "regular preaching of the Word. But I also enjoy speaking about those issues I find to be crucial for society and Southern Baptists should be examining."

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(BP) photo available upon request from the Christian Life Commission.

Quilt ministry keeps
Kentucky church in stitches

By Melanie Childers

PARIS, Ky. (BP)--A women's group at Central Baptist Church in Paris, Ky., is keeping hundreds of people in stitches.

The Willing Hands Quilters meet weekly to piece, stitch and sew squares of fabric into colorful quilts. In the past five years they have produced about 350 quilts and all but one have been given away.

The quilts are scattered all over the state. Students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College and Oneida Baptist Institute, individuals in hospitals and nursing homes and fire victims all have been recipients of Willing Hands quilts.

In January, 10 quilts were delivered to the Baptist Youth Ranch, a long-term residential treatment facility for boys ages 13-16. The last quilts completed were presented to the Baptist Youth Shelter at Morehead, Ky., March 10.

Under the direction of Ruth Pittman, the quilting group was organized in 1987 to make a quilt commemorating the 100th anniversary of Woman's Missionary Union. Twenty-one women and one male honorary WMU member started on the squares. Even the young members of Mission Friends joined the work to add a few stitches.

That quilt has long been completed and hung in the church. But the needles and fabric never were tucked away.

"We liked it so much we wanted to keep working together," Pittman said. The WMU president at the time saw an opportunity to combine fellowship and quilting skills with an effort to meet needs in Kentucky, Pittman said.

A group of seven to 13 people began meeting each Monday at the church, establishing a tradition is still strong five years later.

"We all bring a sack lunch and come to the fellowship hall about 10," Pittman said. "Usually, someone brings a dessert, too. It's a wonderful fellowship time." Eight women working together can produce four quilts in a day.

All the material for the quilts is donated by the group and by church members. Of course, the time and talent is donated too, but the Willing Hands Quilters are glad to offer it, Pittman said. "That's what church is all about ... people helping people."

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Melanie Childers is staff writer for the Kentucky Western Recorder.

Brotherhood president, state leaders issue
call to prayer for Project Brotherhood

Baptist Press
3/17/92

By Steve Barber

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--James D. Williams, president of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, has joined with state convention leaders in issuing a call to daily prayer for Project Brotherhood to begin Sunday, March 29.

Project Brotherhood is the effort to distribute food and medical supplies in the Commonwealth of Independent States coordinated by the Brotherhood Commission. Organizers expect the project, first announced Jan. 21, to continue for at least four to six more months.

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"Project Brotherhood is a great way for Southern Baptists to reach out to those suffering in the former Soviet Union, not only through their contributions but through prayer," Williams said. "I am asking our people to pray that God will continue to use this effort to more fully open the door to evangelism in that part of the world. That is the driving force behind this effort and prayer can help make it happen."

Williams urged that the Bold Mission Prayer Thrust networks in many states be employed to organize and strengthen the prayer effort.

"We need organized, concentrated, specific prayer daily for this entire project," said Williams, adding that prayer has been a characteristic of the project from the very beginning. The commission's state program leadership prayed as a group about their involvement for more than two hours at their January meetings in Memphis, he noted.

"We felt a great moving of the Holy Spirit regarding Brotherhood's involvement after that prayer meeting and decided to move ahead with the project," Williams said. "This effort was born in prayer, is sustained in prayer and will continue in prayer. I hope thousands of Southern Baptists will join with us."

More information about specific prayer needs now is available on the Project Brotherhood Prayer Update line, (901) 278-7839.

Contributions for financial support of the effort should be sent to Project Brotherhood, Brotherhood Commission, SBC, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104, or to Baptist World Alliance, 6733 Curran St., McLean, VA 22101. All contributions should be clearly marked, "For Project Brotherhood."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Brotherhood Commission.

Daylight witness counters
dark-of-night terror in Kenya

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
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KERICHO, Kenya (BP)--The warning arrived in the dead of night: "We don't want to hurt you. You are free to go back where you belong."

The unwritten threat: "If you stay, we'll burn you out. If you fight back, we'll attack."

But the gospel, and humanitarian aid accompanying it, arrived in bright sunshine for 150 families in the Kericho District of western Kenya. They had stayed but not fought back when raiders came to burn their village. Although unharmed, they owned only the clothes they wore and a handful of items they had hidden in the woods.

They are just a few of more than 20,000 people displaced in the past year by ethnic clashes over land. The trouble exploded in late 1991 when tribes indigenous to Kenya's Rift Valley began demanding that other ethnic groups in their areas get out.

The government (run by the Kenya African National Union or KANU) and newly legalized opposition parties blame each other for the trouble. KANU says tribal tensions are the natural result of allowing multiple parties as each ethnic group forms its own power base. The opposition, led by the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy, insists KANU is fomenting unrest to scare people into keeping the current government in power.

But political debate won't keep off the cold night winds that patrol the hills of Kericho District, and charges and countercharges don't fill the empty stomachs of refugees.

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So when Samson Kisia, chairman of the Baptist Convention of Kenya, got word from a Baptist pastor that the village of Kepkelion had been burned out, he contacted Southern Baptist missionaries in Kenya. The missionaries agreed to help provide relief supplies, then asked Kisia to handle the distribution.

Each of the 150 families received blankets, cornmeal (the basic food for Kenyans), cooking oil, plates and cups.

"We felt that would meet the immediate needs and we knew if any other aid did come it likely would be just cornmeal," Kisia said. "This way they had something to cook in, something to eat from and blankets to keep warm." The project cost about \$3,000.

But Kisia, the local Baptist pastors and missionary Ben Hess had even more to give away: a testimony to the saving power of Jesus Christ and a witness of Christian love being impartial.

Almost all of the 150 families belonged either to the local Baptist church or a sect that considers itself Christian but teaches exclusion of groups outside its own fellowship. The Baptist church had been spared a torching but the sect's building had been razed, probably "because they sing and preach and worship in Kikuyu (their tribal language) and all members are Kikuyu while the Baptist church services are in Swahili (the national language) and the membership includes several tribes," Kisia said.

The white-turbaned sect members were pleased but skeptical when Kisia announced the relief assistance would not be limited to Baptists. But the sect's pastor stood beside the Baptist pastor during the aid distribution to verify that each family being helped had indeed been burned out and was from the area. It was impossible to say which had more impact -- the sermons the Baptist pastors preached or the fairness in distribution of the aid.

"We handed out everything in the open where everyone could see it," Kisia explained. "Kenyan Baptists believe Jesus' commandment to take care of the needy doesn't leave room for including needy Baptists and leaving other people out. Of course it was pretty clear who the food and blankets were coming from."

Kisia spent the night with one local pastor who had not been burned out. "When we got to his house it was empty," he said. "They had hidden everything they had in the woods and were even sleeping in the woods. They expected the raiders to come every night." Some families had even removed the thatch roofs from their houses and hidden them.

The Baptist leader suggested the household goods be brought back inside, "and then let's pray for God's protection." The wife was obviously touched, Kisia reported, "and we all had a really good night's sleep too."

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Churches join 'bandwagon'
by growing own orchestras

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
3/17/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist churches are hopping on the bandwagon of growing their own orchestras and instrumental ensembles, according to a national church music consultant.

"A significant trend of the 1990s is the proliferation of what some are calling 'fine arts schools,'" said Gerald Armstrong, a consultant in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church music department. "By whatever name, they are an effort to provide private and group music instruction in a Christian setting. The concept has been wonderfully successful in reaching hundreds of families."

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One of the churches that has led the way in the movement to train future orchestra and ensemble players is First Baptist Church of Atlanta. In 1974 the church began an organized instrumental program and in 1987 it added what has become the "Academy of Performing Arts."

The formalized music curriculum, designed with the goal of preparing each participant for future service in musical performance, ministry and personal enjoyment, came at a time when public school music education was vanishing.

"Schools in counties around the Atlanta area were cutting out music education," recalled John Glover, minister of music at the church.

Since offering instrumental lessons for modest fees, Glover said the program "has just grown by leaps and bounds."

Instruction is offered in piano, organ, voice, violin, cello, harp, flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, french horn, percussion, guitar, as well as the Suzuki method for piano, violin and cello.

While not every instrument is requested for every term, for the fall of 1991 almost 40 persons signed up for lessons from a faculty of seven persons.

John Innes, music assistant for the church and dean of the academy, said he believes for children "there is an incentive to see the orchestra and realize they could eventually arrive at a point of doing that."

Numerous opportunities for such inspiration exist at First Baptist in Atlanta, with the regular participation in services of two orchestras, a variety of ensembles and solo instruments.

While Glover acknowledged being in a large church provides a larger pool of potential instrumental teachers, he said church musicians in all sizes of churches should consider similar programs.

"No matter what size church, I'd have an instrumental program because I believe in it with all my heart," he declared. "I'd evaluate what we have and look at what we need to get where we need to be."

"The right blend of instruments supports everything the choir does. There is a special quality about everything that happens when the 'color' of the orchestra is added," he observed.

Brian Hedrick of Casa Adobes Baptist Church in Tucson, Ariz., began a similar program in 1986, with class offerings that include a variety of music and other fine arts, in addition to instrumental training.

Of the 400 persons enrolled in classes this year, approximately 40 are studying instruments other than piano and more than 20 of those are violin students.

"We have discovered well over 50 percent of our students come from other churches or are unchurched," he said. "We are not only preparing students for service in our church, but also other churches, and we are using the school as an evangelistic tool."

Armstrong agrees "music and music participation are critical concerns in growing churches because church growth is synonymous with reaching people. Instrumental music participation, which had a dramatic surge in the 1980s, continues to lead music growth in this decade."

Churches reporting an instrumental music program on the 1991 Uniform Church Letter numbered 8,119, according to figures provided by the Sunday School Board's corporate planning and research department. Participating in those instrumental programs were 51,891 persons.

While the UCL does not tally how many churches are offering a formal instrumental teaching program, the statistics show almost 3,300 of the total number of instrumental music programs were in churches of fewer than 300 members. Churches with 1,000 or more members accounted for slightly more than 1,600 of the programs.

In contrast, 1969 UCL figures showed 4,994 persons participating in instrumental programs in 1,216 churches. By 1981, totals had risen to 23,980 persons in 3,716 churches.

Armstrong said he is aware of almost 100 churches with full-time instrumental music directors and at least 20 offering full-fledged schools. But he said organizing a fine arts school is not the only means to train instrumental musicians for the years ahead.

"In even the smallest church, instrumental music training can be offered," Armstrong said. "If a music leader encourages just one person in their music training by letting them lead from time to time in the worship experience of the church, that is an investment in the future."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the SSB bureau of Baptist Press.

Church instrumental program
nets accomplished trombonist

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
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ATLANTA (BP)--Since taking up the trombone as a fourth grader at First Baptist Church of Atlanta, Kevin Collier has experienced a lifetime of worship participation, musical opportunity and personal enjoyment.

"I give the church credit because they are the ones who got me started," said the 26-year-old accomplished trombonist and church orchestra member.

But it is the church that benefits from the weekly ministry of Collier, who plays in the church orchestra every week and is sought after for a variety of music opportunities from jazz bands to Christian recording sessions.

When Collier joined the church as a third grader, he had been taking piano lessons for a year. He was introduced to the trombone by George Rawlin, then instrumental director at the church.

Private lessons once a week from Rawlin led Collier on a fast track to participation in the church's youth orchestra after only a year. By age 11, he began to practice with the sanctuary orchestra and a few months later he began to play with the orchestra on Sunday mornings.

"I played for the Passion Play," Collier recalled excitedly. The annual Easter pageant, produced by the church's music ministry and widely attended by the public, has become a highlight for Collier's orchestral participation at church each year.

"It was a great opportunity," he recalled, "and George was the one who gave me that opportunity. I've played for every Passion Play since then."

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Collier's opportunities, however, have extended far beyond church participation. His already acquired skills led him through public school instrumental groups from beginning band to symphonic band to jazz band. In junior high school he was chosen for all-state band for two years and in high school he participated in three bands. His achievements included all-state band for three years, all-state orchestra, all-state band and all-state jazz band for a year each.

Following high school graduation, he auditioned for the National Honor Band and Chorus to tour with a production called "Sound of America National Honor Band and Chorus." After a week's rehearsal in Pennsylvania, he toured Europe with the group for six weeks. And if that were not enough excitement for a teen-ager from Fayetteville, Ga., Collier also made first chair in the trombone section.

At the University of Georgia, he played trombone for five seasons in the Redcoat Marching Band, as well as playing in the symphonic band and the jazz band. He earned two music scholarships.

But after two years, he changed majors from music to physical geography, having decided he wanted to become an airline pilot.

Today, Collier works as a mechanic for Delta Airlines, hoping to become a pilot soon. Meanwhile, he plays for Christian recording sessions and he pursues his love of music with the orchestra of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, where he got his musical beginning.

For Kevin Collier, the romance of flying an airplane will never replace the meaningful role music has in his life.

"I feel I can minister through playing my horn," he said.

And it all began at church.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the SSB bureau of Baptist Press.

As times change, churches
seek what's hot, what's not

By C. Lacy Thompson

Baptist Press
3/17/92

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Times have changed, and now time will tell if and how Southern Baptists will adapt to the new world of need.

In the 1940s and 1950s Southern Baptists used a combination of decisional preaching, personal evangelism, Sunday school and revival meetings to record tremendous growth, notes Chuck Kelley, associate professor of evangelism at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. "I think we had the pulse of the country in the '40s and '50s. But now the world has changed and we're left with a tradition that is no longer as meaningful perhaps."

Thus, Southern Baptists are left with two choices: Do the same things better or start doing things differently. "We're trying to sort out whether we are looking at a paradigm shift, a new paradigm, a new way of reaching people or whether we need to go back and do the same thing we've been doing and just do it better," Kelley says.

Many churches have responded by looking at new ways of reaching people with the gospel. In the process, some ideas have proven productive and become "hot." And some traditional ideas have fallen away a bit, not receiving the attention they once did.

So what's hot and what's not in church life these days?

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Kelley explored that area during a seminar at the Louisiana Baptist Evangelism Conference and in an interview with the Baptist Message, the Louisiana convention's newspaper. In his seminar, Kelley emphasized he was not promoting all the changes but simply identifying the hot topics, several of which follow:

What's hot: Saturday nights.

What's not: Sunday nights.

Some churches are experimenting with Saturday night services as a means of reaching more people and introducing a new format of worship, Kelley says. And churches are "playing around" with Sunday night services, even dropping them in some cases, which can create a problem of how to continue traditional Sunday evening programs like choir and discipleship training. It is an idea fueled by a cultural emphasis on family time. "We're finding that Sunday night is the nation's family night, the number one night people want to spend at home," Kelley says.

What's hot: visitor parking.

What's not: staff parking.

Churches are undergoing a general reorientation, from an emphasis on members to an emphasis on visitors. Part of this is seen in the shift away from traditional staff parking spots which, Kelley suggests, a church really does not need. During the weekdays there is plenty of parking available for staff members. And on Sunday they can afford to park elsewhere in order to provide guest spaces.

What's hot: directions.

What's not: assumptions.

Kelley urges pastors and others to walk carefully through their buildings and ask how long would it take for a nonmember to find the nursery, restroom and auditorium. "If a visitor can't walk in and find those three things, then he's an outsider and he's going to know he's an outsider and this is an insider-oriented church."

Churches need to provide clear directions and signs, Kelley says. "Signs tell people they are welcome."

What's hot: welcome time.

What's not: visitor time.

Even though guests want to feel welcome in a church, they do not necessarily want to be identified, Kelley notes. Some churches are responding by not registering guests, depending on members to do so. Other churches are asking everyone in a worship service to fill out an attendance card, even members. Thus, guests do not feel singled out.

In a related development, some churches are experimenting with cards during invitation times, allowing people who do not wish to announce a decision in front of everyone to indicate that action on a card. Staff members then can follow up on the decision.

What's hot: special events.

What's not: special event.

The emphasis in many churches has shifted from building a church year around an annual event, such as a revival, to a church hosting several events targeted at specific groups, Kelley notes. "The idea is not just to keep people busy but to give them a reason to come to church and give members a chance to invite visitors."

What's hot: quality.

What's not: intentions.

People are spoiled and looking for quality choices in churches, Kelley says. "The word for the '90s is 'choices.' If you don't provide choices, you're history." But those choices must be quality programs, especially in those aimed at children, Kelley adds. "People want the best. They don't want good intentions. They want delivery."

What's hot: women's ministry.

What's not: Woman's Missionary Union.

Kelley emphasizes his support of WMU but notes the organization does not seem to be capturing the attention of younger women. Meanwhile, other forms of women's ministry, especially needs-based ones, are working. At the same time, however, he credited WMU with recent initiatives to promote itself to all ages.

This is a key area, since women are one of the most responsive groups to the gospel. In reaching them, though, one must give earnest attention to how to educate younger women on missions, Kelley says.

What's hot: preaching that trains.

What's not: preaching that informs.

People are interested in knowing what God has to say about living life, Kelley says. Sermons can be topical or expository but their emphasis must be on life application. "A pastor needs to ask himself if his preaching is giving the Bible a voice people can understand."

In addition, a pastor must find a way to give people doctrinal foundations to enable them to handle the crises of life. As in other areas, the key will be to present doctrine in a life-based manner, Kelley says.

What's hot: worship evangelism.

What's not: revival evangelism.

The shift in many churches is to worship and praise as the contact point for bringing the unchurched into contact with the gospel. This is especially effective for a generation hungry for the experience of God, Kelley says.

However, he also emphasizes the tried-and-true Southern Baptist way of reaching people is not dead. "Don't write off the revival meeting. It will always be with us in some form. But it may not be the basis of our evangelistic strategy any longer."

What's hot: gift-driven ministry.

What's not: slot-driven ministry.

In the past, Southern Baptists churches have "filled slots," simply found persons to fill positions in existing programs. That has to change so churches begin looking at what gifts are available and building programs around those, Kelley insists. "This is an area where Southern Baptists really need to grow. We must take seriously the concept of recognizing spiritual gifts, cultivating them, developing them and getting people involved in ministry based on their gifts. This is going to be a key principle for our future growth."

But there are other principles involved in this whole process as well. After all, it is one thing to identify what's hot and what's not. It is another thing to build a church ministry that holds true to the gospel charge.

For one thing, churches must realize there is no magic program that works in every situation, Kelley says. "There's just no 'McProgram' out there that's going to grow everything. It starts with just coming to grips with who you are and what God has gifted you to do."

That process must include both pastor and congregation. "A church has to look at its personality and see who it has and what the people it has can do. You have to start with where you are, what your real goals are for that church based on its possibilities and gifts."

A church also must examine its community, Kelley says. "You have to look at the context of where you are and what are the people you want to come to your church most likely to want. You try to match up what they want with the gifts you have and see if you can find a match. Where you find a match is where you get started."

In following that process, however, a church must not turn away from God's direction, Kelley adds. "We can't be so caught up in trying to reach the contemporary world that we lose sight of God's agenda for the church. And that is a temptation. So we have to hang onto to the principle of God's direction."

In addition, a church must hold to a principle of accessibility, Kelley says. He urges churches to be user accessible, so that they are "doing things in a manner that does not exclude people who aren't in the know."

A church also must promote the principles of gift-driven ministry and church growth driven by evangelism rather than transfer of members from other churches. "Transfer growth makes other churches smaller," Kelley says. "Evangelism growth makes the pagan pool smaller. That's what we want to do."

Finally, a church must not lose sight of the importance of meeting needs and depending on God, Kelley says.

"People follow where their needs are met. When people start thinking of the church as a helping place, they will start coming. Now, many people think of the church as just a building on a block or in terms of just a particular religious philosophy or something like that. They need to learn to think of it as a helping place. Then when life brings the hurts, we will have an opportunity to minister. So we need to have a needs focus."

A church needs to have a prayer focus as well, Kelley adds. "It is the undergirding thing. God is never going to honor a mechanical process. A mechanical process tends to lead us to put our confidence in the process. But processes don't change people. The Holy Spirit does."

At times Southern Baptists have forgotten this, putting their confidence in their massive structure and its enviable programs, Kelley says. Prayer is a way to offset that tendency. "We have wonderful resources but I think we've developed kind of an institutional confidence that everything is going to work because we're Southern Baptists and we're the people of God and God is always going to bless Southern Baptists. Well, the Jews didn't think anything was going to happen to Jerusalem because that's where God decided he was going to live. And he had to show them it wasn't the place that mattered but the Lord.

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"So right now, we're sort of rediscovering or emphasizing prayer in the strongest way we've ever done. Churches are beginning to cry out to God for revival, for direction and for help. And that is one of the most exciting factors in our denomination and what our future is going to be.

"I think it's absolutely critical. I think it's a real key to building our churches."

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WMU leader addresses
importance of remembering

By Lydia Murphy

Baptist Press
3/17/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptists must remember to love others and live relationally, remember God's creation and live redemptively, and remember the poor and live responsively, the leader of the denomination's largest women's organization told an audience during Founders Day at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dellanna O'Brien, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, Ala., spoke March 13 at the 84th annual celebration in Fort Worth, Texas.

"Memory is a gift, allowing us to relive pleasant experiences or to diminish the effects of unpleasant ones," O'Brien said. "Bringing to mind those who have passed on; dissipating the distance which separates; challenging us to build on successes of the past and to learn from the failures."

Among the things which should be remembered, O'Brien said, is the biblical call to love one another and live relationally.

That call should be heard by institutions as well as individuals, she said. O'Brien used the relationship between WMU and Southwestern Seminary as an example of institutions which live relationally.

"Today, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has great impact on the work of Woman's Missionary Union," O'Brien said. "Many of your professors have taught and led in leadership seminars through the years. In return, representatives from WMU are invited each year to present our work in religious education classes. We could not imagine the work of our staff without the training many have received as students of Southwestern."

O'Brien said the second challenge, to remember God's creation and live redemptively, calls Christians to take the gospel to every nation.

"The most significant of God's creation is humankind and our responsibility toward others in our world today commands our most profound obedience and our deepest commitment," said O'Brien.

"Most every adult in our Southern Baptist churches can quote the Great Commission, and yet two-thirds of the world does not know Christ as Savior and 1.2 billion people in our world have never even heard the gospel story."

Changes in Europe and the new openness in the former Soviet Union have led to opportunities for evangelism that "boggle the mind," O'Brien said.

"Missiologists tell us there is but a narrow window of opportunity in Eastern Europe," she said. "We can only hope for three to five years of this golden openness. God forbid that we look back on this time in regret that we have not seized the opportunity to bring former enemies to salvation in order that we may then embrace them as brothers and sisters in Christ."

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But O'Brien said Baptists must not overlook needs in the United States. Citing the growth of Islam in this country, she said an estimated 4 to 6 million people worship in mosques in all major U.S. cities.

Finally, the WMU director said Christians face the challenge to remember the poor and live responsively.

"Responding to the needs of others, whether they be needs of the body, the soul or the spirit, allows us to minister to Christ himself as we obey his admonition to love one another," O'Brien said.

Four couples received the seminary's B.H. Carroll Founders Award during the Founders Day celebration: Robert and Oleta Carmack of Hinton, Okla.; Paul and Ernestine Henry of Tulsa, Okla.; Bill and Melba Justice of Dallas; and Myra Slover and her late husband, J. Roy Slover of Liberty, Texas. The award is given annually to recognize extraordinary service to Southwestern.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southwestern Seminary.

Plane crash was 'terrible'
but opened doors for witness

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
3/17/92

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Tom Curry often calls his work as a military reserve chaplain exposure to the "real world," but that world took on a new reality Feb. 13 when a C-130 cargo plane crashed in Evansville, Ind., killing 16 people.

Curry, pastor of Parkland Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., said the experience was terrible to live through but opened wonderful opportunities for ministry.

He compares what has transpired since the crash to the biblical parting of the Red Sea: "I have an open door to do ministry like never before."

As chaplain to the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Tactical Airlift Wing based at Standiford Field in Louisville, Curry led a ministry of consolation and comfort for families of the crash victims and the 1,500 people who work at the base.

He organized and preached at a memorial service attended by the governor, a congressman and National Guard officials from Washington and broadcast live on a Louisville television station.

"Ever since that day, the relationships I have with the base have been different," he explained. "Now people want to talk to me. They are open to ministry. You can't imagine the difference in the way people treat you."

Curry said he foresees many more opportunities for personal evangelism and grief counseling.

And today, as he walks through the base, Curry is greeted warmly by nearly everyone he passes. People call to him by name and pull him to the side of the walkway to talk.

This new opportunity for ministry did not come easily, however. In the hours after the crash, Curry and other chaplains worked constantly to meet the needs of the victims' families and to counsel others grieving over the loss.

The memorial service was put together in less than 24 hours, all with volunteer labor. The flow of people seeking counseling seemed endless -- to the point Curry said he found himself putting his own grief aside repeatedly to help others deal with theirs.

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And the family notifications, funeral home visits and hospital visits were traumatic. From the hour he arrived at the base after the crash, Curry was face-to-face with grieving spouses, children and friends.

He also visited the crash site when bodies were removed and attempted to offer consolation to the families of civilians killed.

At one of the civilian funerals, Curry introduced himself to the victim's father, who angrily told him, "I hate you guys." Curry thanked the man for sharing his feelings and then put his arm around him in a hug. The man immediately broke into tears and both of them cried together.

From moments like these, Curry finds reasons to thank God in the midst of tragedy. "You feel like you've been used of God in a critical time and you are grateful to God that he used you," he said.

He explained his life is different because he was able to "see all this compassion, to see the doors of ministry open up."

And the response of his church in ministering to his needs was overwhelming, Curry said. "I had never asked the church to pastor me before. They did and I felt it."

Chapel services at subsequent drill weekends will be well-attended because so many are still grieving, he predicted. "That will be one of those opportunities when you can say something in the name of the Lord and it will be heard."

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Jimmy Allen named chaplain of
Georgia mountain community

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
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ATLANTA (BP)--Former Southern Baptist Convention President Jimmy Allen has been named chaplain of an interdenominational chapel in the North Georgia mountain community of Big Canoe.

He was called by the chapel Feb. 23, according to officials at Big Canoe, about 55 miles north of Atlanta.

Allen said he will preach "about three Sundays a month" at the chapel, which also has a pastor who handles other ministerial duties.

"This is a beautiful ministry opportunity," said Allen, who adds he will probably retire there. "I feel the Lord leading me to (move)."

Allen was elected SBC president in 1978 and 1979. He was president of the SBC Radio and Television Commission from 1980-89.

He formerly chaired the moderate organization Baptists Committed to the SBC. He co-chairs the Global Missions Group of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Allen has been a pastor at several SBC churches in Texas and is president of his own business, Faith and Family Communications Ministry Inc., a consulting company for churches and institutions.

He said he will remain a member of First Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, and will be an associate member of the chapel.

"The chapel is not my church. It is the place of my preaching and my chaplain ministry," he said.

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