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April 10, 1992

92-63

**Baptist named president  
by Peru's dissolved Congress**

By Mary E. Speidel

LIMA, Peru (BP)--Opposing recent actions by President Alberto Fujimori, more than half of Peru's dissolved Congress named Peruvian Baptist Carlos Garcia president in a secret meeting April 9.

Garcia, a Baptist pastor and lawyer, was elected second vice president in June 1990 along with Fujimori, a Peruvian Roman Catholic of Japanese descent.

Fujimori announced April 5 he was suspending the constitution, dismissing Congress and declaring an emergency government. The president said his actions were necessary because legislative and judicial corruption was hampering his efforts to revive Peru's economy and curb guerrilla violence. Fujimori later sent troops into the streets, placed some politicians under house arrest and shut down some magazines and radio stations.

Peru's first vice president was out of the country at the time of Fujimori's decision. He reportedly is in the United States.

About an hour after Fujimori's surprise announcement, Garcia publicly opposed the president's decision during a radio interview, according to sources in Lima, Peru's capital. Later Garcia was quoted as condemning "the coup perpetrated by President Alberto Fujimori," according to Reuters news agency. He said he thought the president had installed a "civilian-military dictatorship."

Garcia announced April 9 he was going into hiding in protest of Fujimori's actions. Fujimori fired 13 Supreme Court justices and a number of other judges the same day.

One April 10 report indicated Garcia actually had been sworn in as Peru's president but that information could not be confirmed.

The Peruvian Baptist is reported to be safe at an undisclosed location in Peru. "He is well, he is fine, but we should pray for him and for Peru," said a source who asked not to be identified.

Although Garcia agrees corruption exists in governmental ranks, the Peruvian Baptist is a "constitutionalist" and opposes Fujimori's "drastic action," the source said.

Meanwhile, the Organization of American States has deplored Fujimori's decision and the United States has cut aid to Peru in protest.

But public opinion polls in Peru report the majority of Peruvians support Fujimori's steps. One observer in Lima said Fujimori had quickly become a kind of "folk hero" among the common people.

"Among many Peruvians there's almost euphoria," the observer said. "While the rest of the world is upset about what's going on, many Peruvians are happy."

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

Baptist mom opens her  
life to others in crisis

By Gary W. Griffith

LAKE CHARLES, La. (BP)--Cheryl O'Neal says she has one of the best qualifications for counseling unwed women facing unplanned pregnancies -- she was in the same situation in December 1979.

"I was a 'good Baptist girl' and had been raised in church all my life but I was not saved," Cheryl recalls. "I had a basic understanding of the Christian life and knew Scripture and even words to hymns but all I had was head knowledge."

She soon married Jeff O'Neal, the father of her child. He became a Christian two months later. Soon Cheryl gave birth to David, the first of their four sons. Two years later, she committed her life to Jesus Christ.

Now, the 31-year-old also is mother to Philip, 10, Michael, 8, and Timothy, 3. And she is director of ABC Crisis Pregnancy Center in Lake Charles, La., supported currently by 14 Louisiana Baptist congregations in the area.

"My crisis pregnancy is not something I've shyed away from. It's not something I'm ashamed of, but I wish it could've been different. Still, I'm so thankful for my son and my husband," says O'Neal, a member at First Baptist Church of Moss Bluff in Lake Charles.

Sharing her story doesn't make her husband uncomfortable, Cheryl says. "I couldn't do what I do if he was not as supportive as he is," she says.

Being able to share her experience with those she counsels is important, Cheryl stresses. "I think it's important they know I've been through it. I tell them they can take this situation, which wasn't planned, and give birth to a baby they, or someone else who desperately wants a baby, can love. I know what a beautiful experience it can be, even if it isn't planned," she says.

The opportunity to share her faith and experience with women and teen-agers in crisis pregnancies is the reason Cheryl got involved with the center, she says.

"As a Christian, I look at abortion as the wrong choice. And I wanted to do something positive in order to counter the negative impact abortion has on our society. With the crisis pregnancy center, most times we get the girls before they go to the abortion clinics.

"They come to us to see if they are pregnant. That gives us an opportunity to witness to these girls and let them know abortion is not their only alternative."

O'Neal credits pastor Danny Rollins with founding ABC Crisis Pregnancy Center. He is pastor of Westwood Baptist Church in Westlake, La., and shared his burden for such a ministry with area pastors in the fall of 1990.

The center's doors opened in June 1991, with the financial support of Westwood Baptist Church and five other local congregations as well as the training and resources of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's alternatives to abortion ministries department.

The center is staffed by 25 volunteer counselors who work several days each month. Cheryl directs the ministry with the help of an assistant and a promotion director.

Since its opening, the center has provided counseling to more than 150 "clients," with about 100 receiving positive results from pregnancy tests, Cheryl reports.

"There is not a certain stereotype for a girl in a crisis pregnancy. They come from all different economic, social, ethnic and religious backgrounds. They are rich, poor, in between. They are black, white. They are Baptist, Catholic, Pentecostal. The youngest girl we've seen was 13 and the oldest lady was in her mid-40s."

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However, Cheryl acknowledges more than half the center's clients are Southern Baptist and 17-to-19-year-olds. Also, one out of four clients said they needed the center's services due to incest or rape, she says.

Since last June, 12 clients have come to the center for pregnancy tests and immediately said they wanted an abortion, Cheryl says. Six of them went through with abortion, she notes. "Of those 12, 11 were Baptist girls. That's really been an eye-opener for us."

In cases where the clients indicate they are considering abortion, 90 percent of the time they are expressing their mother's wishes, Cheryl says.

"We had a mother who told us she was a Christian and didn't believe in abortion and even was glad when the state (legislature) passed the anti-abortion law. But she told us, 'When it comes to my child, it's a different story.' She was involved in a local Southern Baptist church," Cheryl relates.

"But probably the hardest situation we've dealt with was a 16-year-old who attended a Christian school and was Southern Baptist. When we told her she was pregnant, she told us she was going to have an abortion. When we asked her why she felt like she had to have an abortion, she said, 'Because I'm too good of a Christian to be unwed and have a pregnancy.' That broke our hearts."

In such situations, the counselors provide clients with information on abortion, such as the physical and psychological effects, and alternatives, Cheryl says.

"We give them all the facts and the alternatives, which usually opens their eyes to the fact that abortion is not the easy way out people have led them to believe," Cheryl says. "But if they are determined to abort, no matter how much we disagree with that, we can't do anything. We just pray and ask for God's intervention."

Many of the volunteer counselors at the center also have been through a crisis pregnancy, Cheryl says.

"It's great that we can sit down and really tell these girls we know what they're going through. We can tell them, 'I can't tell you what you should do but I can share with you what I did, what the result of that decision was and how I feel about it now.' That helps us a lot in counseling when we can share those things."

Regardless of the clients' pregnancy plans, Cheryl says counselors provide a Christian witness unless the person "shuts the door on it. We take every opportunity to witness to every person who comes in and talk to them about their sexual lifestyle."

As a result, 15 clients have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior, Cheryl reports. "We're starting a Bible study here at the center to provide some discipleship for these girls. If they're unwed and pregnant, they're uncomfortable going to a church or being baptized immediately. So we're bringing them in and discipling them to get them into church later.

"That's why we're here to see people better their life and hopefully give God control of it."

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(BP) photo available upon request from The Baptist Messenger, newsjournal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

Pastors' Conference takes  
look toward 21st century

By Art Toalston

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--A look at "The Church in the 21st Century" will be the thrust of the Pastors' Conference June 7-8 prior to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 9-11.

The conference, which began in 1935, will feature 14 speakers during four sessions in the Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis.

Jack Graham, Pastors' Conference president and pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas, paraphrased the meeting's theme saying, "As we approach the 21st century, what will it take for the church to reach this and the coming generations for Christ?"

Each of the four sessions will focus on "a specific area of the church's mission and ministry," Graham said. "We've all heard of great revivals and great spiritual awakenings in yesteryear but this is our time and God's time -- and it is past time for all of us to reach people and grow churches."

Graham described scheduled Pastors' Conference speakers as "well-known for their unique and contemporary ways of reaching people for Christ and for growing churches."

The opening session, June 7 at 6 p.m., will focus on the church's worship -- "our ministry upward, our vertical relationship with God," Graham said. Preachers will be Adrian Rogers, former SBC president and pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis; O.S. Hawkins, former Pastors' Conference president and pastor of First Baptist Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; and Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill.

The three sessions Monday, June 8, will be at 8:30 a.m., 1:15 and 6:10 p.m.

The morning session will focus on the witness of the church and its members. Preachers will be Jim Henry, another former Pastors' Conference president and pastor of First Baptist Church in Orlando; Larry Thompson, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., and national director of the 1992 SBC-wide Watchman National Prayer Alert; James Merritt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Snellville, Ga.; and Mike Hamlet, pastor of First Baptist Church in North Spartanburg, S.C.

The Monday afternoon session will address the church's "walk -- the personal walk of the pastor and the church's integrity and ethics," Graham said. Preachers will be Joel Gregory, pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas; Dallas evangelist Jay Strack; Joseph Stowell, president of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago; and Fred Lowrey, pastor of First Baptist Church in Bossier City, La.

The evening session will focus on the church's warfare -- "being spiritually and physically prepared for the battle, the church victorious in our day," Graham said. Featured speakers will be Kenneth Cooper, fitness author, founder of the Cooper Clinic in Dallas and a member of Prestonwood; Ed Young, one of three likely nominees for SBC president and pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston; and Tony Evans, pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas.

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Pastors' Conference  
Annual Meeting  
June 7-8, 1992  
Hoosier Dome, Indianapolis  
Theme: The Church in the 21st Century

Sunday, June 7

6:00 Choral Praise -- Prestonwood Baptist Church Choir and Orchestra, Dallas  
6:15 Welcome -- Jack Graham, pastor, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas  
6:20 Musical Praise -- Prestonwood Choir and Directory

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- 6:25 Message -- O.S. Hawkins, pastor, First Baptist Church, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
- 7:05 Praise and Worship -- Dick Baker, minister of music at-large, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas
- 7:10 Musical Praise -- Chris and Diane Machen, music evangelists, Dallas
- 7:20 Message -- Bill Hybels, pastor, Willow Creek Community Church, Chicago
- 8:10 Praise and Worship -- Dick Baker
- 8:15 Offertory and Prayer -- Kenneth Barnett, pastor, South Wadsworth Baptist Church, Denver
- 8:20 Musical Praise -- Prestonwood Choir and Orchestra
- 8:30 Message -- Adrian Rogers, pastor, Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.
- 9:10 Benediction -- Robert Graham, pastor, Field Street Baptist Church, Cleburne, Texas

Monday morning, June 8

- 8:30 Choral Praise -- Prestonwood Choir and Orchestra
- 8:50 Scripture and Prayer
- 8:55 Praise and Worship -- Dick Baker
- 9:00 Musical Praise -- Dawn Smith Jordan, musical evangelist, Fort Worth, Texas
- 9:05 Message -- Mike Hamlet, pastor, First Baptist Church, Spartanburg, S.C.
- 9:45 Special Music -- Dawn Smith Jordan
- 9:50 Message -- James Merritt, pastor, First Baptist Church, Snellville, Ga.
- 10:25 Prayer and Offering
- 10:30 Musical Praise -- Prestonwood Choir and Orchestra
- 10:40 Message -- Larry Thompson, Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala.
- 11:15 Praise and Worship -- Todd Bell, minister of music, Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala.
- 11:20 Message -- Jim Henry, pastor, First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.
- 11:55 Benediction

Monday afternoon, June 8

- 1:15 Mini Concert -- TRUTH
- 1:30 Praise and Worship -- Dick Baker
- 1:35 Scripture and Praise -- Rodney Gage, evangelist, Dallas
- 1:40 Musical Praise -- Jack Price, SBC music director, Dallas
- 1:45 Message -- Jay Strack, evangelist, Dallas
- 2:05 Praise and Worship -- Dick Baker
- 2:10 Musical Praise -- Michelle Gage, musician, Dallas
- 2:20 Message -- Fred Lowery, pastor, First Baptist Church, Bossier City, La.
- 2:50 Prayer and Offering
- 2:55 Praise and Worship -- Todd Bell
- 3:00 Election of Officers
- 3:15 Music and Praise -- TRUTH
- 3:20 Message -- Joseph Stowell, president, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago
- 3:50 Musical Praise -- Chris and Diane Machen
- 3:55 Message -- Joel Gregory, pastor, First Baptist Church, Dallas
- 4:40 Benediction

Monday evening, June 8

- 6:10 Choral Praise -- First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va.
- 6:30 Praise and Worship -- Todd Bell
- 6:35 Scripture and Prayer -- Wendell Estep, pastor, First Baptist Church, Columbia, S.C.
- 6:40 Musical Praise -- TRUTH
- 6:50 Message -- Kenneth Cooper, physician, founder, Cooper Fitness Center, Dallas
- 7:20 Welcome -- Morris Chapman, SBC president, pastor, First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas
- 7:25 Praise and Worship -- Todd Bell
- 7:35 Prayer and Offering -- Ed Young Jr., pastor, Las Colinas, Texas
- 7:40 Musical Praise -- Chris and Diane Machen
- 7:45 Message -- Ed Young, pastor, Second Baptist Church, Houston
- 8:20 Choral Praise -- First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va.
- 8:30 Message -- Tony Evans, pastor, Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, Dallas
- Introduction of New Officers
- Benediction -- New Pastors' Conference president

HMB public relations director  
takes position with World Vision

ATLANTA (BP)--Jim Newton, public relations director for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, has been named director of media relations for World Vision International.

Based in Monrovia, Calif., World Vision is an international relief and development organization which works with poor and hungry people around the world.

Newton will work with journalists at the Monrovia office as well as regional offices in London, England; Bangkok, Thailand; Nairobi, Kenya; and San Jose, Costa Rica. He will also help coordinate media relations in the 90 countries where World Vision works.

Newton has worked for the Home Mission Board 11 years, including eight as news and information director. He has also has been Atlanta bureau chief for Baptist Press for years.

"Jim is the dean of Baptist Press writers and editors," Herb Hollinger, vice president for Baptist Press, said. "His departure, although tremendous news for a fine World Vision organization, is sad news for Baptist Press. He will be sorely missed."

Before working for the Home Mission Board, Newton was editor of "World Mission Journal" published by the Brotherhood Commission. Earlier he was also assistant director of Baptist Press in Nashville.

A Texas native, Newton is a graduate of Baylor University in Waco, Texas. He began his 33-year career in Southern Baptist journalism as a press representative for the Baptist General Convention of Texas in 1959.

Newton is former director of communications for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and media director for the 1989 Lausanne II Congress on World Evangelization in Manila, The Philippines.

He was also news director for Amsterdam 83 and newsroom manager for Amsterdam 86. Both international conferences for itinerant evangelists were sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He has traveled to more than 55 countries.

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Opponents argue need  
for alcohol ad warnings

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
4/10/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--Warning messages in alcohol advertisements are counterproductive and will force sports programming off free television, a representative of the National Association of Broadcasters recently told a Senate subcommittee.

The proposed health and safety warnings are a "very modest proposal," a supporter of the legislation countered.

Representatives of the alcohol, advertising and broadcasting industries squared off against health, anti-drug and education representatives in a hearing before the Consumer Subcommittee of the Senate's Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee. Their testimony concerned the Alcoholic Beverage Advertisement Act, Senate Bill 664.

The bill will require health and safety messages in all alcohol advertising on television and radio as well as newspapers, magazines and promotional materials. Five rotating messages have been proposed. They warn about drinking during pregnancy, while driving and when taking other drugs. One warns about alcohol's addictive nature, while another says it is illegal for persons under 21 to buy the product.

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"One thing is for certain," said Wayne Vriesman, representing the National Association of Broadcasters. "If this law passes, the advertising of beer and wine on radio and television will dry up. No advertiser will spend money to buy time on radio or TV, of which a significant portion would be used to warn of the potential hazards of abuse. ... All it will mean is a broadcast industry which is stripped of an advertiser for a legal product, while the problem of alcohol abuse remains unaffected.

"Were that advertising to suddenly disappear," Vriesman said, "I can emphatically predict that we will see a hastening of the movement of sports from free TV to pay cable and pay-per-view."

The broadcasting industry already is working against alcohol problems by providing more than \$1 billion yearly in airtime and facilities to substance abuse prevention, said Vriesman, a vice president with Chicago's Tribune Broadcasting Co.

"These scare tactics are despicable demagoguery," James A. Smith of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission told Baptist Press. "Consumers and the U.S. Congress should be offended our opponents would be so threatening about legislation which simply seeks the truth about the potential harmful effects of alcohol consumption."

Smith, CLC director of government relations, is on the steering committee of the Coalition on Alcohol Advertising and Family Education.

Patricia Taylor, co-chair of the coalition, testified the bill is a modest solution in comparison to what other countries are doing about alcohol abuse. Beginning next year in France, alcohol advertising will be prohibited on TV and in movies, she said.

Many members of the coalition coordinate education programs but "these simply cannot compete" with the alcohol industry's advertising, Taylor said.

"Congress doesn't treat alcohol as a drug," Rep. Joseph Kennedy, D.-Mass., told the subcommittee. "The fundamental fact is alcohol kills three times as many people as all other drugs combined. ... The least we can do is create an atmosphere where it is not ... promoted."

Kennedy is chief sponsor of a House companion bill, the Sensible Advertising and Family Education Act (H.R. 1443). Sen. Strom Thurmond, R.-S.C., prime sponsor of the Senate bill, also testified at the April 2 hearing.

Jeff Becker, vice president of the Beer Institute, said four polls taken since 1990 revealed 97-100 percent of Americans already are aware of the information included in the proposed warnings. Ignorance is not the problem, he said.

"There is no reason to believe mandated warnings" will solve the problem when advertising does not cause abuse and nearly the entire public is aware of the dangers of irresponsible drinking, Becker said.

One of the bill's supporters questioned the reliability of the public awareness polling. Another contended information in a person's consciousness is not adequate but reinforcement of the message also is needed.

A mother of a 19-year-old daughter with fetal alcohol syndrome testified young women she speaks to as a representative of a Bethesda, Md., addiction treatment center are unaware of alcohol's dangers.

"Their information about alcohol comes from the messages they have received from Anheuser-Busch, Coors and other major alcohol advertisers," said Kathleen Tavenner, a recovering alcoholic.

"It seems to me a reasonable request to ask the alcohol industry and its advertisers to take some responsibility for some prevention efforts," she said. "They obviously are not around to help me pay my outrageous medical bills, my child-care bills. They don't help carry the emotional or lifestyle burden this presents to me and my family daily."

BJC may extend deadline in conciliation offer to SBC

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist Joint Committee's general counsel has recommended that the religious liberty agency consider extending its April 17 deadline offering Christian conciliation to settle a dispute over \$300,000 on deposit at the Southern Baptist Foundation.

Oliver S. Thomas made the recommendation after James P. Guenther, attorney for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, indicated the Executive Committee could not respond to the conciliation offer by the deadline, because it does not meet again until June 8.

In an April 9 letter, Thomas told Guenther he would contact him as soon as BJC's executive committee reaches an official decision affirming a deadline extension.

Although the possibility of compromise in the dispute has been aired in an exchange of between Thomas and Guenther, Thomas said in an interview, "What we have put on the table is this conciliation offer." He said the BJC is not prepared to propose any monetary compromise. Guenther likewise has not proposed a monetary compromise.

The foundation recently sent the Baptist Joint Committee a check for the approximately \$81,000 the account's principle had appreciated but has declined the BJC's request for the \$300,000 principal in the account, which in 1964 was approved by SBC messengers for capital needs. The funds were allocated in 1967 and 1968 and placed on deposit at the foundation.

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Innovation a must in San Francisco ministry

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press  
4/10/92

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--From Christian TV talk shows to "Breakfast with Jesus," Southern Baptists in San Francisco try innovative projects to spread the gospel to a city where less than 1 percent of the population is Southern Baptist.

"I think our walls are somewhat more fluid here than they are somewhere else," said Jim Pittman, pastor of Valley Baptist Church in San Francisco.

With a larger population of unchurched residents, pastors and missions workers say they have the liberty to pursue ministries that are effective, not just traditional.

"There's a freedom in the culture to try new stuff," said Pittman, whose church offers a tutorial program for elementary students that includes a Bible discovery period. If something doesn't work, he said, "there's a freedom to flush it and move on."

Such freedom has resulted in a variety of new programs such as a Christian TV talk show aimed at the region's 1 million Hispanics.

"We just decided that if we're going to reach unchurched people, we're going to have to go to TV," said James Page, pastor of a Hispanic Baptist church in the city's Mission District.

Twelve Hispanic churches co-produce "Sigüeme," or "Follow Me," a half-hour show each Saturday morning on the Bay area's Spanish-language TV station.

Page said a 30-minute sermon might bore non-Christians into changing the channel. "That's why we went to a talk show format." The show has segments for music, interviews, viewer mail, prayer and a short sermon. Viewers can call a prayer line for anything from prayer requests to spiritual counseling.

In its first year, the show has recorded 61 professions of faith and distributed 180 New Testaments, Page said.

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Although organizers "have always been up to our neck in financial problems," Page said the show won't solicit for money on the air. "We decided it was going to be a ministry of the local churches," he said. "We weren't going to spend half our time begging for money."

Page said the program is reaching thousands of Hispanics who would not darken the door of a church.

"There are not too many traditionally oriented people in San Francisco," he said. "To be able to reach them, you need to break out of the mold of the traditional church."

Kenneth Sampson is another pastor who is breaking Southern Baptist tradition in San Francisco. "Southern Baptists have a lot of good things but nobody knows about it," Sampson said. His church began an 8 a.m. Sunday service in nearby Pacifica for unchurched residents and for Christians who can't attend an 11 a.m. service.

"The church has gotten locked into this 11 o'clock time mold," said Sampson, pastor of New Home Baptist Church, a predominately black congregation.

Sampson calls the early service "Breakfast with Jesus." "We have to change to meet the schedules of the people."

The one-hour format for "Breakfast with Jesus" also is shorter than his 11 a.m. service, he said.

"Have you ever been to a black Southern Baptist church?" Sampson asked a visitor who asked why an hour is a short time for a worship service. "My 11 o'clock service starts at 11 o'clock and stops at, maybe, 1:30."

Since the first early service of 10 people in October, 65 people have been saved, he said. "It's still growing."

Sampson's church also holds Bible study groups at members' homes. "If they can get people to come for a Tupperware party," he said, "they can get people to their house to share the gospel."

Page said his church is trying to introduce the church to non-Christians through such nontraditional ministries as amnesty programs for illegal aliens, blood drives and garage sales. "Whatever that first purpose was for coming (to the church), the fact that they're here will make it easier for them to come back," he said.

"People on the street may have some very weird ideas about things that may go on in a Baptist church," Page said chuckling. "We need to do away with some of those ideas in any way we can."

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

Broadman Press author  
on media national tour

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press  
4/10/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--After suffering through a career collapse and divorce 12 years ago, Anita Bryant wanted only to avoid the press.

"I was like a wounded animal that went into hiding," the well-known Christian singer/entertainer remembered. "I really just wanted to dig a hole, jump in and pull the dirt in over me."

But in dealing with her pain in the last decade, Bryant said she learned a valuable truth.

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"When you get down to the depths of hell and you are ready to give up, you find that God has suffered as well and he is able to relate to you and minister to you," she said. "I had lost everything precious to me and yet I found the essence of the most precious treasure I had had all along, and that was my relationship with Jesus Christ."

Today, with a new story to tell of God's redemptive healing in her life, Bryant is facing the press once again on a national media tour promoting her new book, "A New Day."

Published by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman Press, the book sold more than 15,000 copies before its release and already is in its second printing. Copies were to begin arriving in book stores in April.

Broadman has committed about \$120,000 in national advertising to promote the book and Bryant's media tour will include appearances on several national television and radio talk shows, including "CBS This Morning," "Maury Povich," "One on One with John Tesh," "First Light (NBC Radio)" and Monitor TV (Marian Christy).

In addition, she will appear on local television and radio shows in New York, Boston, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Dallas, Tulsa, Oklahoma City and several other cities. She also will sign copies of her book at the 1992 conventions of the American Booksellers Association and Christian Booksellers Association.

Broadman officials are "very encouraged" by the initial success of the book, said Johnnie Godwin, vice president for general publishing at the Sunday School Board. "A New Day" is important, he said, because "it models the redemptive nature of the Christian message. It points out that we are all on a spiritual pilgrimage and God is constantly redeeming us."

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Also available upon request:

-- Feature by Teresa Dickens about a Missouri church's comeback after closing its doors in 1983.