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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Samford selects Drummond
as professor of evangelism

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Lewis A. Drummond, retiring president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in North Carolina, has been named the first Billy Graham professor of evangelism and church growth at Samford University's Beeson School of Divinity, effective July 1.

Before assuming Southeastern's presidency in 1988, Drummond was the Billy Graham professor of evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., for 16 years.

A 1950 Samford graduate, Drummond also has taught at Spurgeon's College in London, England.

He has written or edited 17 books. His 1978 volume, "The Awakening That Must Come," is considered a noted work among evangelical Christians. His latest work is a two-volume biography of church leader C.H. Spurgeon, who died 100 years ago this year.

"No man in the Southern Baptist Convention is more experienced in the scholarly field of evangelism," said Samford President Thomas E. Corts. "He comes highly recommended by Dr. Billy Graham, is an expert teacher at the graduate level and is a leading authority with worldwide stature in his subject area. In the current theological turbulence, he has kept his balance and his focus on his subject specialty."

Beeson Divinity School dean Timothy F. George described Drummond as "a pioneering scholar in the field of evangelism. His appointment will help us make a major stride toward becoming a leading center for evangelism and church growth in keeping with the expressed desire of our founding benefactor, Ralph Waldo Beeson."

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Six members of homosexual groups
disrupt Easter service in Chicago By Ferrell Foster

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CHICAGO (BP)--Police arrested six people identified with radical homosexual groups after they allegedly tried to disrupt an Easter Sunday worship service at Armitage Baptist Church here.

The six were charged with disorderly conduct and released from custody the same day, according to police records.

Ushers spotted eight people identified with "Act Up" and "Queer Nation" as they entered the 9:30 a.m. service and Chicago police were called, said Dave Lilligren, administrative pastor at the church.

Armitage members recognized the eight as members of the radical groups from contacts during church anti-abortion protests at a nearby abortion clinic. The homosexuals also wore buttons and handed out pamphlets identifying themselves with the two groups.

"We have a weekly picket at the closest abortion mill," Lilligren said. "So when we saw them we knew something was up."

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The eight seated themselves in pairs. "I would say they had a plan," building superintendent Dan Schustek said. "They placed themselves strategically around the auditorium."

Five minutes into pastor Charles Lyons' sermon, two of them walked to the front of the auditorium "to disrupt the preaching," according to a release from the church.

Last year, church leaders made plans for dealing with such a disruption, Lilligren said. So when Lyons saw the two coming forward, he stepped back, pointed to the band, about 75 members stood up with others following their lead, and the congregation began singing "rousing gospel songs."

Four ushers "walked very quickly down the aisle" and seized the pair before they had a chance to speak, Schustek said.

Lyons resumed his sermon and five minutes later a woman stood and blew a whistle. The congregation stood again and began to sing. By that time police had arrived and the woman and her partner were led from the service.

After the sermon, two more activists were arrested as they attempted to place condoms in an offering plate as it was passed, Lilligren said.

The other two then stood and left.

"I think they had planned to do a lot more," Lilligren said.

He stressed that the six were not arrested because they are homosexuals. "We did not escort these people from our service because of who they were, rather because they were disrupting a worship service. And we would do the same for anybody."

Lilligren and Schustek noted church members had witnessed to the homosexuals who confronted them at the abortion clinic and had invited them to church. The church also has two former homosexuals who are members.

One of the homosexual pamphlets accused Armitage of preaching hatred and told the church to "stop abusing gay and lesbian youth."

Lilligren responded: "It's simply not true. We give them hope because they're in bondage. ... Homosexuality is a bondage that cannot be broken without the power of the Holy Spirit."

The church has not been active opposing homosexuality outside the church, Lilligren said, but the homosexual groups apparently targeted Armitage because of its opposition to abortion.

"Pro-life Christians are those that are most visible," he said. The radical homosexuals "perceive Bible-believing Christians to be their enemy and the pro-life movement is where we become visible and identifiable."

Schustek put it another way. "They know that our ministry out there is against abortion," he said. "They see a connection. It is a moral issue we are fighting. ... They're thinking, 'If you guys succeed in stopping abortion we're going to be the next ones you come after.'"

Chinese student's Christian pilgrimage
leads her to Missouri Baptist College

By Vicki Stamps

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Most Americans take religious freedom for granted except when confronted by world events, such as the startling scenes on the evening news a few years ago of China's Tiananmen Square massacre.

Students at Missouri Baptist College in St. Louis have a daily reminder of the importance of religious liberty in Jue (Ruth) Ye, a Christian student from China. Because of her Christian faith, her pilgrimage to the United States has not been easy.

"My parents are well-educated by Chinese standards," she explained. "My mother is a statistician and my father an engineer but they only earn \$30 a month. Education is difficult to obtain in China and then when you have it, it makes little difference in your quality of life."

For this reason, her father sought to get Ruth to the United States to study. He persuaded a cousin living in Boston to return to China to marry her.

However, Ruth's new faith in Christ prevented her from marrying an unbeliever. Since her father also was an unbeliever, he found it difficult to understand her resistance.

"God is greater," Ruth said. "Even though it hurt my father, my father will be healed. It was a painful choice for me because I want to please my father. He has always sacrificed for others."

After her decision to accept Christ as her Savior in 1988, Ruth's life in China grew more complicated. "I had never heard about Jesus until 1988 when a college student from Canada shared with me. The more I heard, the more I wanted to know, so I began attending a Bible study."

The Christians involved in the Bible study helped Ruth grow in her faith. "There were about 10 members of the study and they were all educated and they could all speak good English," she said. "We discussed many topics from the Bible It was in this Bible study I first learned that a Christian should not marry an unbeliever."

Ruth also made her first American connection through the Bible study. Mindy Martin-Thompson, a Southern Baptist language student in China, offered Ruth guidance and support. "Mindy said she would pray for the situation and try to help. She told me that if God wanted me in the United States that he would provide the way."

Ruth's first example of God's provision came as she tried to obtain a visa. Her father and her pastor advised her not to record her Christian belief on her application form. "My pastor spent 16 years in jail for his Christian belief and I believe he thought I would go further by not writing it on the application," Ruth said. "However, I believe God honors our decisions for him although we can't see into the future.

"My pastor also gave me a letter of recommendation to take with me to Canton to obtain my visa," she recalled. "The first government officer turned me down, so I took the letter to the officer suggested by my pastor. The second officer sent me back to the first officer and I discovered he had been impressed with the way I handled the rejection. Most people in China argue or beg, but I had a special peace from God and just looked at him."

With that visit, Ruth earned the first visa of 1990 to come to the United States. In 1989, only three students from her home city were granted the right to leave for the U.S.

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As Ruth left China, Martin-Thompson's assistance became a reality. She arranged for Ruth to have a place to live and helped with her eventual location in Colorado.

Ruth began working and studying in Colorado. As she sought the Lord's direction in seeking her goal of becoming a missionary nurse, she talked with her pastor, Rick Ferguson of Riverside Baptist Church.

Ferguson is an alumnus of Missouri Baptist College and past chairman of the school's board of trustees. Ferguson realized Ruth's potential and thought of the resources available through the college.

George Hutchings, director of special projects for Missouri Baptist College, said college administrators believed helping Ruth was important enough to focus fund-raising attention on her.

As the initial request for Ruth's sponsorship went out to supporters of the college, the response was gratifying. More than 230 contributors responded to help provide a nursing education for her.

Ruth is keenly aware of the gospel starvation in her country. "I feel great pain for my people, for my country and my family. Millions will never hear and I feel a great urgency to finish my training and to go back to China to spread the gospel before the second coming.

"The Chinese culture makes it very difficult to bear fruit," she said. "But they still need the gospel. I hope to go back as an American citizen and my words and message will be more powerful."

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Vicki Stamps is a correspondent for Word & Way, journal of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Chapman's challenge
sparks new churches

By Sarah Zimmerman

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DAYTON, OHIO (BP)--Two churches begun in April are examples of the response Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman wanted from his challenge to start 1,000 churches by Easter.

Miami Valley Community Church in Dayton, Ohio, held its first service Palm Sunday with 170 people. On Easter, 109 people worshiped with the infant congregation.

In O'Fallon, Mo., 53 people attended the first service of Shepherd Fellowship SBC on Easter.

Michael Castle, home missionary and pastor of the church in Dayton, began laying groundwork for the new church last October. Volunteers helped make 18,553 phone calls, resulting in 1,200 prospects.

Castle then began to develop brochures, find a meeting place and identify other church leaders. In addition to Castle, the church has four associate ministers who work part-time for the church.

Before the first service at Miami Valley, 33,000 brochures were mailed to homes near the elementary school where the church meets. On May 31 the church will move from the school to a rented storefront facility near a Dayton mall.

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The church began with two morning worship services to offer people options, Castle said. He said the church may start a Saturday night service when it moves to its new location because several people expressed an interest in such a program during the telephone surveys.

Peter Miller, church starter strategist for the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, said Miami Valley Community Church is one of 27 churches the state plans to start before Aug. 30. Goal for the state is 40 churches a year.

Gary and Beth Steffaniak took a different approach in starting the church in O'Fallon. Last year, Steffaniak left his position as a minister of education in Wichita, Kan., to begin a church even though he said he "didn't know where or how."

The couple moved to St. Louis to live with Mrs. Steffaniak's parents while they waited for God's leadership. Last fall they became aware of an area that was rapidly developing but did not have a church. They prayed for God's leadership and began knocking on doors.

The couple in the first home they visited said they had been praying about their church membership because they had recently moved to the area. As they continued to knock on doors, Steffaniak said they found "some interest and a lot of hesitation."

As they prayed for a place to meet, they found a rental house in the subdivision where they wanted to start the church. Last November they began Sunday evening Bible studies in their home. Attendance averaged 14 although more than 60 people visited.

Before the first Sunday morning service volunteers distributed 4,000 packets of information about the church to neighboring homes.

Though the Sunday morning services are held in a school, Steffaniak said the church "is not going to outgrow the home." He expects the church to have shepherd groups in homes throughout the community as it grows.

In January Chapman sent a letter to Southern Baptist pastors asking them to respond to his church-starting challenge. More than 370 pastors returned the response card accompanying the letter.

Seventeen pastors said their church planned to start a church by Easter, 105 said they planned to start a church by the end of the year and 179 said they would co-sponsor a church this year. Several pastors marked more than one response and 24 pastors said their church already was sponsoring a mission. Nine pastors returned negative comments on the cards.

The response cards have been given to David Bunch, Home Mission Board vice president for strategy development, for follow-up. The Home Mission Board goal is to start 1,500 churches a year.

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Southwest Baptist University
offers lifestyle witness week

By Tamera L. Heitz

Baptist Press
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BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP)--Mr. Johnson, a retired businessman, was at his home when a young man came and asked, "Mr. Johnson, could I talk to you about a business proposition?"

Johnson told the young man, "That is fine but before we talk about the business proposition I want to ask you if you are a Christian."

"No, I am not," the young man said.

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"Before we talk," the retired businessman said, "would you mind if I take the Bible and explain to you how to become a Christian?"

The puzzled young man consented. In about 15 minutes Johnson led the man whom he had never met before to pray and trust Jesus Christ as his Savior.

"Would you excuse me?" Mr. Johnson asked. "I need to go to the restroom." He got up and never came back. He died in the bathroom. The last thing he ever did was to lead someone to faith in Jesus.

This story was shared by Ralph Smith, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, with Southwest Baptist University students, faculty, staff and guests during SBU's second annual Christian lifestyle witness week.

Focused around the theme "Dynamics of the Marketplace," the April 13-15 week was sponsored by the Wallace E. Johnson and Alma McCool Johnson Chair of Christian Lifestyle Witness at SBU's International Institute of Evangelism in cooperation with Students in Free Enterprise.

The "Mr. Johnson" to whom Smith referred was Wallace E. Johnson, for whom the Chair of Christian Lifestyle Witness is named tandem with his wife. Johnson was co-founder of Holiday Inns of America, Inc.

The main focus of the week, according to institute associate director Granville Watson Jr., was involving the SBU campus, area churches and the community in "creating an awareness that all Christians have a responsibility to be a witness of their faith .. as opportunities present themselves."

All three groups were reached. Students were ministered to in chapel and in classes. More than 100 area church leaders and members registered for evening workshops on campus. Community civic clubs were invited to a dinner workshop at Citizens Memorial Hospital and approximately 65 businessmen accepted the offer.

Roland Maddox, a Memphis, Tenn., businessman and church leader, spoke to local civic clubs on "Ethics in the Marketplace" and to workshop participants on "Men Who Make a Difference" and "Lifestyle Witness in the Marketplace." Maddox's wife, Sarah, spoke on "Family Lifestyle Witness," "An Open Heart-An Open Home" and "Praying for Your Children" in her sessions. She is the founder of a moral concerns organization for women with convictions about the home and its place in Christian life, FLARE (Family, Life, America, Responsible Education under God) and is an active conference speaker.

During one of his sessions, Maddox shared his personal testimony and how Wallace Johnson had touched his life. "As I was preparing to graduate (from college), I went through all the interview processes and looked at the available jobs. In those days people were saying jobs were scarce but I managed to come up with three job offers. As I prayed ... I really didn't feel at peace with any of them. So I said, 'Lord, I am just going to turn all of these job offers down and I'm going to look to you for my job.'"

Within 48 hours a friend told Maddox a mutual friend had suggested he work for a man named Wallace Johnson. On Monday morning following the conversation, Maddox went for a series of interviews. At the end of the day the interviewer asked him to return the next day because Johnson wanted to speak with him.

Maddox went back the next day to Johnson's office at Holiday Inn, a small but dynamically growing company at that time. "He asked me three or four questions," Maddox recounted. "The last question seemed to seal the interview. He asked me, 'Young man, what do you want out of life?'" Maddox thought for a moment and told Johnson, "I am a Christian. I believe God has called me to the business world and I want to be the very finest Christian businessman I can be."

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Johnson took Maddox to lunch with a few other men. After they had discussed a real estate development, Johnson turned to Maddox and said, "The job is yours if you want it. It pays \$75 a week." Maddox didn't even know what the job was. The pay was about half what was offered from the other jobs he turned down. "I will take it, Mr. Johnson," Maddox said.

"I had no idea what the job was but I knew this was where God had called me," Maddox said. "I worked as his administrative assistant for three years and continued to work for him in real estate development and building for 17 years. Mr. Johnson taught me so many things. I am very grateful for his friendship."

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Chad Betts, a reporter for Omnibus, student newspaper at Southwest Baptist University, contributed to this report.