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May 21, 1992

**Carter to lead study
of racism by BWA**

By Wendy Ryan

WASHINGTON (BP)--Former President Jimmy Carter has agreed to serve as honorary chairman of the Special Commission of Baptists Against Racism being formed by the Baptist World Alliance.

In a May 14 letter of acceptance to the BWA, Carter, a Southern Baptist, said he is pleased to have his name listed and sent "warm, best wishes to fellow Baptists who are working to eliminate social discrimination."

Carter will head an international committee of Baptist leaders from the United States and other countries, many of which are currently embroiled in racial and ethnic conflict.

In inviting Carter to serve as commission chairman, Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary, told him "there is no Baptist anywhere in the world who has more visibility and courage and is known to be against racism than Jimmy Carter."

The special commission on racism is being appointed by the BWA general secretary to study the causes of racism, the biblical answer to racism and what Baptists can do to help defeat racism. The commission will be expected to make a report and recommendations for worldwide Baptists when the BWA general council meets in August 1993 in Harare, Zimbabwe.

The impetus for the commission was the recent Los Angeles riots but "it is also continuing conflicts in the former republics of Yugoslavia and the former USSR, South Africa and the Middle East," Lotz said.

"It is time that Baptists around the world make a strong statement against racism by word and deed," he said.

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**N.C. board votes to oust
Pullen, Binkley churches**

By R.G. Puckett

**Baptist Press
5/21/92**

ASHEBORO, N.C. (BP)--Stating "more than anything else, we must give a positive witness to the world," Kathryn H. Hamrick, president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's general board, presided over a historic session in which two churches were ousted from the convention over decisions regarding homosexuals.

The action was taken in the board's regular May 19-20 meeting at Caraway Conference Center in Asheboro.

In March, Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh voted to bless the "union" of two homosexual males. The service was held March 15 with pastor Mahan Siler officiating. In April, Binkley Memorial Baptist Church in Chapel Hill voted to license a homosexual student at Duke University to the ministry.

The two decisions set off a firestorm of reaction among Baptists in the state and nation, one North Carolina executive director/treasurer Roy J. Smith described as "without equal in my 30 years with the convention."

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Officers of the state convention and its board proposed in March the financial policies be changed to exclude "any church which knowingly takes, or has taken, any official action which manifests public approval, promotion or blessing of homosexuality." The change states "Any such church shall not therefore qualify as a 'cooperating church' as defined in Article IV, A, 3 of the Constitution of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina."

The approval of the officers' recommendation was by ballot vote, 59-28 with one abstention, a 67-33 percent split.

E. Glen Holt, convention president, presented the recommendation on behalf of the six officers. "The officers ... made our decision only after serious soul-searching and fervent prayer.

"We made our decision with troubled hearts and grieved spirits, yet we bring this decision out of a deep sense of conviction," the pastor of First Baptist Church in Fayetteville said.

"We tried to be faithful to our understanding of Scripture and true to our Baptist heritage. We made our decision out of our best understanding of human sexuality yet with compassion and concern for individuals and the two churches involved. We made our decision out of concern for our Baptist image and witness," he insisted.

John H. Hewett, pastor of First Baptist Church in Asheville, spoke in opposition to the recommendation, opening with a commendation of the officers.

"I rise first to honor the motives and intentions of our officers. They are our friends, they are our brothers and sisters in Christ. I voted for them. I love them with the love of the Lord," Hewett said.

"In my judgment, the decisions of these two congregations was misguided and faulty and wrong. While I am ignorant of all the causes of homosexual orientation, I am offended by homosexual practice and behavior. And I support efforts to send a clear word about what the Bible teaches about homosexuality.

"However, I am unwilling to let my offense at homosexuality cause me to throw out Baptist polity, corporate priesthood and congregational autonomy," Hewett insisted.

Hewett argued the officers' recommendation "effectively amends" the "primary" document, Article IV of the convention constitution, by a "lesser document."

"Kicking a sister church out of our family, sending them away from the table is serious business. And if it is ever done -- it has never been done -- it ought to be done in broad daylight by the book with everybody present," Hewett contended.

In calm discussion of the proposal following Holt's presentation and Hewett's response, two substitute motions failed.

Lamar King, pastor of First Baptist Church in High Point, offered a substitute motion calling for a special committee from the general board of persons who have not taken a position on the issue to meet with the two churches in the spirit of Galatians 6 and Matthew 18. The committee would bring a report to the September meeting of the board at which time action would be taken.

King's motion lost 52-32 on a standing vote.

Later, Clay Warf, pastor of Durham's Temple Baptist Church, offered a substitute motion to censor the two congregations without expelling them from the state convention.

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Warf urged the board to take this step in the hopes of redemptive action rather than expulsion. His motion was defeated on a standing vote, 51-33.

The debate in the general board followed the same pattern as the discussion in its executive committee on two earlier occasions.

On March 3, the executive committee discussed the issue for two hours but did not take a vote or any action other than to affirm the leadership of executive director Roy J. Smith and express concern for the stress and pressure he was under.

On April 7, the executive committee, meeting on the campus of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, voted 9-8 not to join the officers in the recommendation. In nearly two hours of discussion, the committee struggled with the best procedure, the language of the proposal as it affects agencies and institutions of the convention and whether the executive committee had authority to take any action. The proposal of the officers was directed to the general board and no request was made for the executive committee's approval or disapproval.

At no point in the three-month debate among North Carolina Baptists has there been any suggestion to accept homosexuality as an acceptable Christian lifestyle. Rather, the discussion has centered on what is the best and proper procedure in the crisis precipitated by the two churches' actions.

After the general board's May 19 decision, convention president Holt told secular reporters the vote reflected the view of most Baptists in North Carolina. "There were no winners tonight," Holt said. "We all feel compassion and a sense of pain, but this was necessary."

Opponents of the action who also reject homosexuality expressed concern that a dangerous precedent was set.

"I'm afraid this will snowball," Mike Jamison, pastor of Greensboro's College Park Baptist Church, told reporters. "We may have instituted a witch-hunt. We have no guarantee that this easy, quick procedure won't be used again."

Board president Hamrick had cautioned the group against any outburst in response to the report of the vote's results. At the close of the morning session, the new president declared her intentions to have a harmonious meeting that evening, regardless of the outcome. "We have a lot of pain and I request that there be no reaction when the voting results are given," the Boiling Springs resident said.

The gallery was filled with interested persons but only board members were permitted to speak. The chair set parameters at the beginning which called for an hour for the matter to be discussed unless the body extended the time. Speeches were limited to three minutes with pro and con positions alternating.

The Raleigh Baptist Association excluded Pullen Memorial May 5 in a special called session by a margin of 8-2. Binkley Memorial is not a member of its local Baptist association.

As far as is known, certainly in recent years, Binkley and Pullen are the first two congregations to be excluded from the North Carolina convention in its 162-year history. Longtime observers of the Southern Baptist scene said it was also the first time any Southern Baptist church has been excluded from state and associational participation concerning the homosexual issue.

Baptists plan ministry in
Mississippi River region

By David Winfrey

ATLANTA (BP)--In a part of America where the standard of living sometimes resembles that of Third World countries, Southern Baptists along the Mississippi River hope several new ministries will improve life for residents and help spread the gospel.

Coordinators with the Mississippi River Ministry began last year trying to boost awareness of the region's needs after a U.S. government report suggested churches be involved in self-help efforts, said Tommy Goode, director of church and community ministries for the Arkansas Baptist Convention.

The area encompasses some 4.3 million residents in 127 counties or parishes along or near the Mississippi River in Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi or Louisiana.

Among the government report's findings:

-- 75 percent of employed Delta residents lack basic reading skills and therefore can't be trained for technical jobs.

-- About half the 792,000 rental housing units in the Delta region are dilapidated beyond repair.

-- 15 counties have infant mortality rates higher than Chile, Cuba and Malaysia.

"There's an extraordinary -- almost Third World -- need for human assistance in this area," Goode said.

"You've got people who have been left behind," added Gary Farley, associate director of town and country missions with the Home Mission Board.

"Most people just don't have regular work," he said. "The kind of jobs that poor people on limited education can do have been shipped overseas."

Baptist volunteers could offer a range of services, from literacy missions and medical services to home weatherization and revitalization and food and clothing distribution.

A weekend convocation in Memphis August 7-8 will serve as a kick-off for the ministry as well as improve awareness of the needs for the region, Goode said.

"It's going to be confrontational and we hope that it unsettles us enough to challenge us."

He said churches are a logical resource for community development programs.

"The last two institutions left in a socio-economically deprived area are the schools and the churches," he said. "We're telling people in Arkansas, 'Missions opportunities are right here.'"

Although poverty is a big factor in that region, Farley said the ministries will offer something else.

"The key is to give people hope and, I think, spiritual hope," he said. "It needs to be more than just shipping a bunch of clothes and food down there."

Goode said he hopes the ministry will coordinate the existing 2,375 Southern Baptist churches in the area with help from outside the Delta region.

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Arkansas and Mississippi Baptists already have formed a partnership to send volunteers from one state to the other. "Sometimes it's easier to go right across the river and do something than it is to do something right where you live," Goode said.

Although the region is about 21 percent Southern Baptist, Goode compares the region to a pioneer mission field because "we're going to want to reach people groups we're not presently reaching through our churches."

The program is being organized by the state Baptist associations from the areas affected, with support from the Home Mission Board, WMU and the Brotherhood Commission.

In light of recent riots in Los Angeles and elsewhere, Goode said the ministry will also work to improve race relations in the Delta.

"I see that as a real challenge that can either make or break a lot that we do," Goode said. "We're also going to have to deal with the kind of cynicism among people who have been abused by systems."

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A graphic to accompany this story has been sent to state Baptist papers by the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press.

Seminary Extension shares
new mission statement

By Lesley S. Vance

Baptist Press
5/21/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Seminary Extension personnel of the Southern Baptist Convention have announced the office's new mission statement.

"We are changing with the times and found it necessary to rejuvenate our mission statement, Doran McCarty, SE executive director, said. "It is now concise and to the point -- 'Seminary Extension serves people seeking to perform Christian ministries in their communities by developing and providing appropriate educational opportunities, resources and experiences.'"

SE is an arm of the six Southern Baptist seminaries founded in 1951 and provides theological education with non-traditional methods. SE offers courses by correspondence as well as in a classroom setting at more than 350 centers across the country and abroad.

SE works in cooperation with consultants representing state Baptist conventions who act as liaisons between Seminary Extension centers in their states and the state convention offices.

"As consultants we provide resources and training awareness (via Seminary Extension) to churches and associations in order for them to reach people," Richard Faling, SE consultant at the Baptist General Convention of Texas, said.

In addition, SE has announced its new reorganization of its educational services and marketing and development program which has been approved by its governing board -- the presidents of the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

"There is room to grow and we have only just begun," McCarty said.

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Lesley Vance is a writer for Seminary Extension.

SBC architecture service
born of Sunday school need

By Charles Willis

NASHVILLE (BP)--The impact of a 1910 book on age-graded Sunday school work continues to be felt today in Baptist churches all over the world.

Members of individual congregations may not specifically know Harvey Beauchamp's "The Graded Sunday School" but likely they know today's church buildings are designed with program needs in mind.

"Beauchamp's book started a revolution in the philosophy of Southern Baptist church architecture that continues today," observed Gwenn McCormick, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church architecture department.

"The Graded Sunday School" contained suggested floor plans for a new concept of age-graded Sunday school classes. Such innovation rendered every existing Southern Baptist church building inadequate, McCormick said. Not even the leading church architects of the day knew how to plan a building to house all the departments of the Sunday school.

In 1915, P.E. Burroughs, who headed the Sunday School Board's education department, conducted a survey to determine services that might be offered to pastors, church building committees and architects. In 1917, he established the church architecture department.

In 1992, its 75th anniversary year, the department's purpose continues to include assisting churches in planning, financing, furnishing, equipping and using property.

Last year, the staff of 23 provided services for almost 2,900 churches and denominational organizations and for Southern Baptists in 32 locations around the world. Reviews of plans for Home Mission Board loans and on-site and Nashville office consultations exceeded 600. More than 2,500 units of technical work were done for churches, with an average turn-around time of 20 days.

Many small, new and mission churches use the department's low-cost plans, designed with volunteer construction crews in mind. Interior design, landscape architecture and master planning are among other services added over the years.

As part of ongoing services and to celebrate their diamond anniversary, the staff will conduct a national church building seminar in Nashville Sept. 14-17 for church staff people and building committees and a church architecture workshop for architects Oct. 2-3.

The release of two books, "Planning and Building Church Facilities" in September and "Architect's Guide" in October, also are a part of the observance.

McCormick said he believes the challenge of designing buildings for growth and effective ministry "is as critical today as it was 75 years ago."

"As church programs and ministries grow and demographics change, buildings must be designed to accommodate that growth and change. Our role is to work with churches and architects to design the best facility to achieve the vision of reaching the world for Christ."

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

US-2 missionary launches
ministry at America's Cup

By Karen Perry

SAN DIEGO (BP)--America's Cup. Yacht clubs. Multimillion dollar boats. Competitors from 10 nations. And one US-2 missionary.

The sunny southern California port is home to all of these and more during the 28th defense of the oldest trophy in international sports.

Last September, Vicki Underwood recognized an opportunity, seized it and ran. And she hasn't stopped yet. Underwood oversees the California Leisure and Marketplace Ministry (CALMM), a ministry aimed at serving spectators, competitors and staff at the America's Cup and sharing the gospel with them.

For 11 weeks, Underwood and members of six San Diego Baptist churches have entertained children at the Cup's International Centre, an area where visitors can watch the races on big-screen TV and buy America's Cup merchandise from participating teams.

"In this ministry we want to be their friend," Underwood said. "We're starting from the bottom. We have to earn the right to share with people."

In a tent in a corner of the International Centre, next to one of the sleek racing boats on display, ministry volunteers offer puppet shows, face painting, clowns and balloons Saturdays and Sundays during race weeks. Puppets are choreographed to sing secular and Christian songs. Face painters decorate children's faces and hands with palm trees, sail boats, Christian symbols and ice cream cones.

Ministry volunteers distribute cards printed with race schedules, helpful phone numbers and John 3:16-17. Underwood said all but one of the merchants in the International Centre accepted the cards to give to their customers. Local shops around town distribute them as well.

Before the America's Cup competitors leave San Diego, Underwood plans to give them Bibles as a memento of their participation in this international event -- each in their language.

Underwood also has worked as an America's Cup volunteer since last September. Volunteering four days a week in the America's Cup Organizing Committee office, Underwood likes being on the inside. It also helps her ministry. The Leighton, Ala., native said most of her co-workers know she is involved in a Christian ministry; some even ask how it's going.

"Just being there is important," she said. "God could use that opportunity to click something in their minds. God can open so many doors."

Underwood said the America's Cup ministry was designed as a starting point for CALMM. She hopes to continue developing the ministry after the races are over.

"God's not limited to our words," she said. "Being visible in the community is very important. We get so caught up in (other things), there comes a point in time where we have to get involved in the community. How are you going to reach them if you don't know them?"

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Karen Perry, a native of Virginia, is a summer intern for "MissionsUSA" magazine. (BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press.

Student with epilepsy
says 'handi-capable'

By Lesley S. Vance

WICHITA, Kan. (BP)--"I do not consider myself handicapped, I am handi-capable. Don't let any handicap hold you back," Ralph L. Leonard, Seminary Extension student, said.

Those are the words of a 37-year-old man with epilepsy. Since the age of 8 Leonard has had epilepsy. After graduating from high school he began working at Kansas State Grain Inspection in Wichita, where he has worked 20 years.

Eight years ago Leonard wanted to further his education. He never attended college and, without a degree, the doors seemed closed.

Fortunately one day he saw a Seminary Extension advertisement with a picture of a teacher he knew. The advertisement was for a class on the Gospels in the New Testament. Leonard had been wanting to study the Bible and theological subjects with the goal of becoming a minister.

Leonard called Seminary Extension and found it provided theological education and ministry training to those who cannot or for any reason do not attend a regular institution of learning. He also learned he could study to receive a diploma or a certificate in his chosen area of interest.

He also learned Seminary Extension offered correspondence courses and even had centers in every state where classes were held. As it turned out, there was a center in his town. Thus began his studies with Seminary Extension.

After taking 32 classes through Seminary Extension, Leonard is a minister and has been licensed by his church.

"Taking Seminary Extension classes has enriched me spiritually. I have grown closer in my walk with the Lord," Leonard said as he reflected upon the past eight years.

"I have learned how to be more sensitive and have more respect toward others. The most important thing I have learned is how the Bible pertains to my everyday life," he added.

Often, Leonard is asked to deliver a sermon. He said the Seminary Extension courses have helped him learn how to prepare sermons and given him confidence in understanding the Bible and presenting it.

"The courses taught me about the history of Christianity. You read in the Bible about the washing of feet. Although most denominations do not practice that now, I still learned why it was a practice in Christian history," Leonard said.

"Learning through Seminary Extension can be a very rewarding experience for everyone. Go for it," Leonard said.

Seminary Extension is one of the largest theological training programs in the world. It was established following World War II in 1951 when Southern Baptists became aware many of their pastors had only limited formal education for ministry. Seminary Extension is an arm of the six Southern Baptist seminaries. It has about 1,500 students who take courses by correspondence and more than 4,000 students who take courses at 350-plus Seminary Extension centers in the U.S. and 22 in foreign countries.

Seminary Extension has more than 87 courses available from "How to Understand the Bible" to "Systematic Theology." In addition, it has courses in several languages such as Spanish, Korean, Laotian, Cambodian and one course in modern Greek. It is open to people from all denominations. At one of its centers in Maryland, 95 percent of the students who take courses are from other denominations.

For further information contact Seminary Extension at (615) 242-2453.

Southwestern providing
education for inmates

By Matthew Brady

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Students in Gerald Saffel's class must be mature in their faith and feel called into Christian ministry. The average age of class members is 26 and each must have an endorsement to enroll.

When they complete the course, they receive credit from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. But for these ministers-in-training, the toughest test isn't from a book. They are charter members of Texas' first seminary extension course in a state penitentiary.

For these students, "The rock is Christ, the guideline is the Word and they stand on it. These students are gut serious about Christianity and they don't tolerate any criticism of the Bible," Saffel said.

The extension course is part of Southwestern's Inmate Discippler Fellowship. Since its beginning in 1989, IDF has offered correspondence courses to inmates with accreditation through the Seminary External Education Department in Nashville. Those credits can be applied toward a certificate in Christian studies and eventually a diploma in ministry training from Southwestern.

In addition to class work, IDF also pairs an inmate with a Southwestern student who becomes a friend and prayer partner.

Prison and seminary officials are pleased with the correspondence program but all agree the extension class being taught at the maximum security Ferguson Unit in Midway, Texas, is a giant step.

"I can add to it (the course) the things I've learned through the Word and 30 years of preaching and studying the Word," said Saffel, a Southern Baptist and chaplain at the Ferguson Unit. He said the classroom setting makes the material "come alive" for the inmates in a way correspondence courses can't match.

The Ferguson unit holds about 2,000 inmates, with an average age of 20. Most of Saffel's students have at least two years of prison remaining.

To participate in IDF, inmates must have a high school diploma, be mature in their faith and feel called into ministry. In addition, they must be interviewed by the IDF chaplain intern and endorsed by their prison chaplain.

Chaplain intern Mark Hollis, a Southwestern student, said "some of the best future chaplains" will be people who have been incarcerated.

Hollis, a former inmate himself, said many of the men he talks to felt a call to ministry early in life but ignored it. For them, God has used prison like he used the belly of the whale with Jonah, he said. The result is that God is "building an army behind prison walls," he said.

Bill Vinson, conference coordinator for the continuing education department and IDF supervisor, said Southwestern is on the cutting edge of a growing movement toward prison ministry.

"We want to stay there and be proactive," he said. "I think this seminary can make a significant impact on the crime problem of this country."

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

Leavell tells graduates
to be their utmost for God

By Debbie Moore

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Ministers need to examine three areas -- their public and private lives, their talk and walk and their accountability and responsibility -- to be their utmost for God, Landrum P. Leavell II said during May commencement exercises at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

President of New Orleans Seminary since 1975, Leavell addressed 193 candidates for graduation, including 23 who received doctorates, in the 74th annual graduation exercises.

Considering first the public and private lives, Leavell said, "If your private life is not in sync with your public life, you have no business in the ministry of our Lord. If you're going to try to live by two different standards, ... you're in the wrong business.

"If your public and private lives do not match, you're going to destroy churches, devastate Christians and decimate the kingdom of God. ... Who you are and the amount of money you may make in your ministry does not provide ministerial immunity (for you to) sin promiscuously, even if you think you're doing it in your private life."

Concerning a minister's "talk and walk," Leavell said a minister lacks integrity if he talks of winning his community to Christ and makes "fervent appeals from the pulpit for the members to make an impact for Christ on their city, county or state" yet he is not personally involved.

Admonishing graduates to look at their accountability and responsibility, Leavell said. "You will have more unsupervised freedom in the ministry than anywhere I know. ... No one is going to require you to keep office hours. No one is going to require you to be available, not only eight hours a day, but 24 hours a day. Nobody is going to require you to come to work on time ... No one is going to require you to give a day's work for a day's pay. But if you don't do these as a result of your call from God, then your call (to the ministry) is questionable. ..."

"The ministry is no haven for mediocrity and laziness," Leavell said. "How did Jesus walk? He walked with an unerring sense of accountability and responsibility to the Father. ... In the vernacular of our day, Jesus Christ had a fire in his belly that never quit burning. Get near his fire and stay there."

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(BP) photo available upon request from New Orleans Seminary.

New Hope Biography among
Gold Medallion finalists

Baptist Press
5/21/92

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--New Hope Press has been selected as a finalist in the Gold Medallion Award competition for "Faithful Witness: The Life and Mission of William Carey."

New Hope Press, a publishing arm of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, commissioned Timothy George to write the book to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the beginning of the modern missions movement. George is the dean of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School.

"We're excited our attempts to reach more people with the missions story has resulted in this kind of recognition," said Karen Simons, a member of New Hope's management team. "New Hope started seven years ago with the intent of increasing missions awareness. It's gratifying to be recognized by our peers even though we are relatively new to the industry."

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The Gold Medallion Awards, given each year by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association, are one of Christian publishing's top honors. Finalists in the competition will be named in June.

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Two small church pastors
honored for outstanding work

Baptist Press
5/21/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Leon "Tip" Harwood of Libby, Mont., and Ron Geiger of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., have been named the Southern Baptist Convention's outstanding small church pastors for 1992.

Chosen by a special committee of pastors and SBC program leaders, the men were selected for "noteworthy and meritorious achievement in pastoral ministry and denominational service," according to Charles Belt, consultant in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church administration department.

The selection committee considered nominations from each state convention, Belt said. Only pastors of churches with fewer than 300 members are eligible for the award.

During his five-year tenure as pastor of Libby Baptist Church in Libby, Mont., Harwood has led the congregation to build a new sanctuary and remodel the original building for Sunday school space. The church's Sunday school has grown from an enrollment of 47 to 180 and average attendance has increased from 32 to approximately 100.

Libby Baptist also has been one of the leaders in baptisms in the Montana Glacier Association, baptizing 18 people last year. The church has doubled its gifts to missions during Harwood's tenure.

Harwood also serves as chaplain at a county jail and local hospital and has a twice-a-week ministry at a local nursing home.

Geiger is pastor of Riverland Baptist Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. During his three-year tenure he has led the church to participate in and support a Sunday school enrollment training clinic. Within a year, Sunday school attendance grew from 89 to 143, a 14 percent increase.

He led a six-week self-study course on the mission of the church and helped the congregation develop a mission statement. As a result of his leadership, the church was selected to pilot the Great Commission Breakthrough project for the Sunday School Board.

Several improvements to Riverland's building and grounds have been made during Geiger's tenure and he has helped lead the church out of debt.

Belt said the pastors will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Bible-Preaching-Administration Weeks at the Baptist conference centers this summer -- Harwood to Glorieta, N.M., and Geiger to Ridgecrest, N.C. The two men also have been asked to preach at a service during the conferences.

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Southwestern couple
makes home sweet home

By Matthew Brady

Baptist Press
5/21/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Kerry and Rachel Williamson spend their evenings doing what most parents do -- helping the kids with homework, fixing supper, washing clothes.

But for the Williamsons, raising 16 children is anything but normal, especially since none of the kids is their own.

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The couple's role as house parents at Fort Worth's All Church Home for Children is more than a job to get through Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Basically we're their parents," said Kerry, a master of arts in marriage and family counseling student. "You do a lot of listening."

The eight boys and eight girls under their care range from 5 to 13 years of age. The majority come from dysfunctional homes. Some have experienced physical or sexual abuse; some have been placed at the home until the parents get back on their feet financially.

Kerry said God has used the experience to define his call to ministry. "It (the job) helped me find some hidden talents," he said.

Their job is also training Rachel for her calling. "I want to have five Godly children. That's how I feel I can impact the world," she said.

Southwestern students play a significant role in the life of All Church Home. Assistant director Carole Copeland, a 1987 graduate of the seminary, said students make up almost 40 percent of the 45-member staff.

The home is a not-for-profit private agency licensed by the state as a basic childcare and child placement facility. It was founded in 1915 by a group of women from various churches and continues to be operated by an all-female board of directors.

Copeland said most of the 66 children at the facility are placed voluntarily by their parents. About 10 percent are placed by the state.

Bil and Brenda Barkley have served at the home for two years. Bil, who graduated from Southwestern in May with a degree in marriage and family counseling, serves as a caseworker. He said his job involves discovering why the children are there and what they need.

Many of the parents he deals with have financial difficulties and a lack of child-rearing skills, he said.

"The kids end up being neglected or not being taken care of like they need to be," he said. The home works with the parents and children, with the ultimate goal of reuniting the family.

"We want to empower the parents to be what they need to be as parents," he said.

But Barkley said he must walk a tightrope in his relationship with parents: pushing them to change yet not angering them to the point they take their child from the home.

He said the strength of the parent-child bond has amazed him. No matter how much abuse has taken place in the relationship, "most kids want to go home," he said. "There's that natural bond I think God has created that is there."

Most of the children are at the home on a short-term basis. About 12 to 18 months is an average stay, Barkley said. But he said it seems "an increasing number of children will grow up here."

In working with the kids "you don't see a lot of changes real quickly. That can be discouraging," he said. "But if we didn't believe what we are doing will eventually make a difference, then we are in the wrong job."

"What we do in the lives of these kids," Barkley said, "will change the generations to come."

High School Baptist Young Men
name National Speak Out winner

By Steve Barber

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--John Highsmith of Antioch, Tenn., has been selected as the winner of the 1992 Jerry Clower National High School Baptist Young Men Missions Speak Out. The annual competition is sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Highsmith, a junior at Overton High School in Nashville, won the award in competition with finalists representing eight SBC state conventions.

Highsmith's original speech, "The Value of Worship," was videotaped and sent to Memphis for judging at the Brotherhood Commission.

As the national winner, Highsmith will receive an expense-paid trip to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis where he will deliver his winning speech during the annual Brotherhood Breakfast Wednesday, June 10.

He also will receive a college scholarship award and a tour of a home or foreign mission site provided by the Brotherhood Commission's trustees.

Highsmith is an active member of Tusculum Hills Baptist Church in Nashville and its High School Baptist Young Men's unit. He is the son of Bill and Peggy Highsmith.

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Stewardship Commission's
Patterson to retire

Baptist Press
5/21/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Leon B. "Pat" Patterson has announced his retirement June 30 as executive vice president of endowment and capital giving for the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission.

During his five-year tenure as executive vice president of the endowment and capital giving division, he and his staff have led Southern Baptist churches to give \$172,922,876 over and above their regular gifts in programs to bolster churches in their funding of mission programs and ministries.

Patterson became a consultant for Together We Build fund-raising programs in March 1977 and led churches to give \$74,914,830 over their regular gifts for major building projects.

Patterson and his wife, Emily, will move to Grapevine, Texas, and he will continue to serve the Stewardship Commission as a contract consultant in Together We Build.

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Oklahoma's John Heath:
dean of BSU directors

By Dave Parker

Baptist Press
5/21/92

DURANT, Okla. (BP)--When John Heath became Baptist Student Union director at Southeastern Oklahoma College, John F. Kennedy was president, religion and education coexisted peacefully and most students went to college straight out of high school.

The college is now a university, educators shy from mentioning religion, the average student comes to college out of the workforce -- and Heath is there to help them with basic needs that remain unchanged.

Heath, described by Oklahoma student work director Bob Lee as "the dean of BSU directors in the United States," started at Southeastern in 1962. He weathered the hippie era, the protest era and the Jesus movement. But he said students have been constant.

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"I don't believe there has been a change in the students," he said. "Styles change, the things they know change and the things they go through change but the students remain the same."

"The 18-year-old freshman still comes in starry-eyed, wondering, 'Who am I and where am I going?'" Heath said. "They have the same problems with religion, with mom and dad, the same problems in boy/girl relationships and changing their majors two or three times."

During the turmoil of the 1960s, Heath said the Durant university, like most of Oklahoma, remained calm, but all religious work was affected. "It was a time when students were disenchanted with any kind of organization," he said. "Even during that time, though, there was a lot of personal work. They didn't go to church but they were still available for one-on-one contact." He said he felt it was a good time for the country because people realized they didn't have to go along with the status quo.

Heath said his outlook on his job has changed, as BSU has changed to better meet the needs of students. One big change has been the movement of BSU work away from a centralized building into the dorms and campus cafeterias.

"We wanted student leadership, so we have Bible studies led by students," he explained. "It is done where the students are. It is us going to the students instead of the students coming to us."

"I feel I'm a better BSU director than ever before," he said. "In one sense I feel I'm just beginning. I see a continued need for ministry on campus. I think it's the greatest mission field Baptists have."

One thing that has surprised Heath over the years is the number of students touched by BSU who never step inside a BSU but whose lives are changed because of contact with another student involved in BSU.

"A person can come on the campus and sense a difference," he said. "I think we make a difference. If we don't we should get out."

Of his three decades of service at Southeastern, Heath said, "It's been my life. When we moved here we had three small children and we had another later. They are all grown now and the youngest is 24. BSU was their lives, too. I could never have done it without my wife; she has had to be very understanding.

"To be a good BSU worker, you have to be sold out to it and to the needs of the students."

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Midwestern to honor
alumni of the year

Baptist Press
5/21/92

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Two graduates of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., selected as 1992 alumni of the year will be recognized during the institution's annual alumni luncheon June 10.

Tom Blase, a military chaplain at Galena Airport in Alaska, and John Burns, associate director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma's student work department, are being recognized by the MBTS alumni association for significant contributions to Christian ministry.

The recipients will be honored by Midwestern alumni and friends at the luncheon at the Embassy Suites Hotel immediately after the close of the Wednesday morning session of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Blase has been the U.S. Air Force chaplain at Galena Airport since June 1991. Previously he was chaplain at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyo., for three years and chaplain at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois for five years. In early 1991 Blase was deployed to Greece in support of Operation Desert Storm.

From 1983-88, Blase was director of church extension and language missions for the St. Louis Metro Baptist Association as a home missionary of the Home Mission Board.

While a student at Midwestern, he was associate pastor of Downtown Baptist Church in Kansas City, Mo., three years and received the master of divinity degree in 1983.

Burns is a 1979 doctor of ministry graduate of Midwestern. Before accepting his post with the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, he was director of the Baptist Student Union at Central State University in Edmond, Okla., from 1966-79.

Burns has served as pastor of three Oklahoma churches: First Baptist Church in Taloga; Rexroat Baptist Church in Wilson; and First Baptist Church in Tecumseh.

He has been an adjunct professor in the area of religious education for Midwestern and currently is a consultative supervisor for the doctor of ministry degree program at the seminary.

Advance tickets for Midwestern's luncheon may be purchased for \$13 from Midwestern's alumni office, 5001 N. Oak Street Trafficway, Kansas City, MO 64118. Or tickets may be obtained for \$17 at the seminary booth in the convention exhibit hall.

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