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Richmond newspaper identifies Elliff as FMB president nominee By Art Toalston Baptist Press 1/25/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A Jan. 23 story in the Richmond Times-Dispatch quoting Foreign Mission Board "sources" has identified Tom Elliff as the nominee of a search committee to become the Southern Baptist agency's next president.

Elliff, 48, has been pastor of 8,300-resident-member First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., since 1985 and is a former FMB missionary to Zimbabwe.

However, Joel Gregory, search committee chairman and former pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, told Baptist Press: "The search committee has voted that there will be no comment until it is time for comment to be made. We've done that heartily and unanimously. When it's time to make a comment, I will make a comment. We feel very strongly about this."

The Richmond newspaper's story, by religion writer Ed Briggs, named "board sources" only once in the story identifying Elliff as the 15-member committee's nominee.

Elliff was appointed as an evangelist for the African country in May 1981 and resigned in August 1983 after returning to the United States that summer for medical treatment for their daughter, Beth, then 14. The youth had suffered multiple fractures of the pelvis and burns needing plastic surgery in an automobile accident in October 1982.

Elliff also is the brother-in-law of Bailey Smith, 1980-82 president of the Southern Baptist Convention and former pastor of the Del City congregation. Elliff was president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.

If elected by FMB trustees during their Feb. 8-10 meeting in Richmond, Elliff will succeed R. Keith Parks, who retired last October after heading the agency since 1980.

Elliff and his wife, Jeannie, have four children.

He was pastor of Applewood Baptist Church in suburban Denver from 1983-85 and delivered theme interpretation messages during the 1985 Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas. Before his missionary appointment, he had been pastor of 5,000-member Eastwood Baptist Church in Tulsa, Okla., from 1972-81. He is the author of a 1978 Broadman book, "Praying for Others."

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A native of Paris, Texas, and a graduate of Hall High School in Little Rock, Ark., he earned an undergraduate degree from Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., in 1966 and a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1970. He was pastor of churches in Warren and Little Rock, Ark., while in college and churches in Dallas and Mansfield, Texas, while attending seminary.

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EDITORS' NOTE: In a story E-mailed to editors earlier in the day, membership of the Del City church was incorrectly listed at 18,000, an outdated figure.

Clinton rescinds abortion policies;
pro-lifers won't retreat, Land says By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
1/25/93

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Bill Clinton's Jan. 22 reversal of four anti-abortion federal policies was an attempt "to break the will of the pro-life movement," but he will not succeed, said the head of the Southern Baptist Convention's ethics agency.

On his third day in office, Clinton, a member of a Southern Baptist church, rescinded policies implemented by the Reagan and Bush administrations during the previous three terms. They included bans on federal funding of abortion counseling and referral by non-physicians at family planning clinics and on funding of fetal tissue transplantation research.

In a fifth memorandum, the new president directed the Food and Drug Administration to decide if the import ban on RU 486, the French abortion pill, should be maintained.

The symbolism of the date on which Clinton acted was not lost on pro-life or pro-choice advocates. On Jan. 22, 1973, the Supreme Court declared abortion a constitutional right. Clinton signed the presidential memoranda as about 75,000 pro-lifers concluded their annual March for Life from the Ellipse, just south of the White House, to the Supreme Court.

"Today is a sad day for America and a horrifying day for unborn children," said Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"As if to add insult to injury, President Clinton takes these actions on the 20th anniversary of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision. These are truly cruel and spiteful acts meant to break the will of the pro-life movement. ... It will not work."

Kate Michelman, president of the National Abortion Rights Action League, said in a written statement, "Today's action has special significance on the historic 20th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, because it signals the dramatic and decisive shift in White House policy on a woman's freedom to choose.

"President Clinton has, indeed, ushered in a new day for choice in America. Today's action is only the beginning," said Michelman, who said NARAL will work with Clinton and Congress to pass the Freedom of Choice Act, an abortion rights bill.

The pro-life movement will not falter under a pro-choice administration, Land said.

"We are more resolved than ever that unborn human life is sacred and must be accorded equal protection under the laws and Constitution of our land," he said. "We will not retreat from our conviction that a nation which allows the slaughter of the most defenseless human beings of our society is a nation which will reap a whirlwind of cheapened and degraded life at all points in the life cycle.

"If our nation continues its present path of exalting a 'quality of life' ethic over a 'sanctity of human life' ethic, President Clinton himself may one day reap the consequences of this exchange when the logical conclusion of his policies is applied to him in his 'golden years.'

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"It is clear to us that President Clinton has begun his presidency by rapidly accelerating America's drift toward neo-paganism," Land said. "The gauntlet has been thrown down in the struggle for our nation's conscience and soul."

The four policies rescinded by Clinton were:

-- The regulations in the Title X program preventing federal funding of family planning clinics which allow non-physicians to do abortion counseling or referral. The regulations were first adopted in 1988. They were upheld by the Supreme Court in 1991. In the past, about \$140 million annually has been provided under Title X for about 4,000 family planning clinics.

-- The moratorium on federal funding of transplantation research using tissue from elective abortions. A temporary ban was established in 1988. It was extended indefinitely in 1989 despite a conflicting recommendation from a National Institutes of Health panel. Under the moratorium, tissue from ectopic pregnancies and miscarriages was allowed for use. Some private research using fetal tissue transplantation reportedly has proven successful in treating Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, diabetes and other diseases.

-- The policy prohibiting the Agency for International Development from funding family planning organizations which perform abortions, provide abortion counseling or lobby foreign governments to legalize abortion. Known as the Mexico City Policy, it was adopted in 1984. The American and international Planned Parenthood federations lost their U.S. funding because of this policy.

-- The ban on privately funded abortions in overseas U.S. military medical facilities. The policy was adopted through memoranda in 1987 and 1988.

"As a nation, our goal should be to protect individual freedom while fostering responsible decision-making, an approach that seeks to protect the right to choose while reducing the number of abortions," Clinton said at the signing ceremony for the presidential memoranda. "Our vision should be of an America where abortion is safe and legal, but rare."

Pro-life leaders denied Clinton's directives would help reduce abortions.

They "will result in the deaths of untold millions at the hands of abortionists," Land said.

Clinton's "actions will ensure that the federal government will now promote the use of abortion as birth control, and increase the numbers of abortions worldwide," said Wanda Franz, president of the National Right to Life Committee.

In lifting the moratorium on fetal tissue transplantation, Clinton said the government "must let medicine and science proceed unencumbered by anti-abortion politics."

Land said, "History will look back on Jan. 22, 1993, as the day on which the American government began its descent into a grotesque and obscene exploitation of human life in the name of 'medical progress' unlike the world has known since the barbarism of Hitler's Germany. It will now be permissible to snuff out one life in order to save another.

"President Clinton has bought the lie of the pro-abortion movement that unborn children are not human beings and thus can be experimented with and that without this tissue medical progress will be stymied."

The president's revocation of the Title X pro-life regulations would be harmful to women and their right to information on fetal development and the abortion procedure, Land said.

"It is hypocritical for an administration that pays such lip service to women's rights to violate those rights by legislating a plan of conscious and deliberate misinformation at taxpayers' expense," he said.

"That President Clinton's actions will now permit federally funded family planning clinics to counsel teen-age girls to have abortions without so much as parental notification is especially reprehensible. Do President and Mrs. Clinton realize that their own daughter, as well as millions of young girls like her, will be vulnerable under this despicable policy?"

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The FDA's importation ban on RU 486 affects individuals bringing the drug into the country for personal use. The ban does not impact research uses of the drug, which is used in some European countries as a method of abortion.

"Lifting the ban on RU 486, the French 'kill pill,' will give pharmacological abortion a glamour which is totally unwarranted," the CLC's Land said. "If the ban is lifted, the president of the world's greatest nation will be an accomplice in the death of millions of unborn babies."

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1992 was tough year,
but missions went on

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
1/25/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Few would deny 1992 was a rough year for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. But it was also a year in which foreign missions made significant advances.

Still recovering from a dispute over the defunding of a European seminary deemed too liberal by board trustees, the mission agency in 1992 saw some missionaries resign in protest, the departure of several key administrators and the reluctant retirement of R. Keith Parks, its president for nearly 13 years and a 38-year veteran of foreign missions. Parks then agreed to head the mission arm of the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Some predicted the end of Southern Baptists' traditional unity in missions. Others said there are plenty of world mission needs to be met by all -- and plenty of mission support to go around.

But foreign missions went on while Southern Baptists at home debated how foreign missions should be administered and speculated on Parks' successor. Final statistics on baptisms, church starts and the like aren't yet available, but some historic things happened.

"In at least three unevangelized people groups, we have seen the first person in history come to know the Lord and be baptized," reported board vice president Lewis Myers.

Southern Baptist missionaries and other workers continued to move into the vast former Soviet Union -- unimaginable only a few years ago. Risking their lives amid threats from Muslim opponents as well as trigger-happy thugs, Southern Baptist aid workers helped save lives in Somalia, one of the most Muslim countries in the world. Missionaries in Croatia and Serbia also took risks to help refugees from a brutal ethnic war.

Those were just the headline grabbers. Missionaries continued to put their lives on the line daily in other hot spots: the Middle East, South Africa, Angola, Liberia, Mozambique, Colombia, Peru. One missionary was briefly kidnapped and threatened before being released. Other workers were beaten and robbed. One young worker died in an auto accident while serving a persecuted people.

In less dangerous places, 3,900 Southern Baptist missionaries quietly continued to serve and evangelize. They even surpassed their Bold Mission Thrust goal of having missionaries in 125 countries by the year 2000. They now personally work in 128, assist ministries in 27 others and have a Christian witness in 11 other nations. The splintering of some countries where missionaries already were working helped meet the goal, but meeting it eight years early was a landmark nevertheless.

Few new world trends emerged in 1992. Several very old ones reasserted themselves, like the savage inhumanity people can inflict on one another and the second law of thermodynamics that says all things left uncontrolled tend toward chaos.

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One 1991 event continued to affect the whole world: the breakup of the Soviet Union. "We saw only the beginning of the pebble tossed into the pond that had very heavy waves immediately in 1992," said FMB research director Clark Scanlon. "It will have continuing impact into the future. This opened suddenly many countries that had been closed to us before. It also meant a great demand for having people to go in and cover them."

Perhaps most significant for world evangelization, missionaries actually planted churches in "World A" -- that part of humanity virtually untouched by the gospel and hostile to it. Southern Baptists have begun focusing on entirely unreached peoples in recent years. In 1992 the effort began to pay off, with small groups of believers meeting among an estimated 20 previously unreached people groups.

"It's not just a matter of trying to approach these areas, or elicit prayer for these areas, or have someone researching," said Mike Stroope, area director of Cooperative Services International, which works in restricted areas. "It's a matter of planting churches. To me that's thrilling. In some places it's the first church among a people group, in other places the first believer among a people group. That's why we're there. It's history-making. It's their first-century (church)."

Other highlights, as reported by regional mission offices:

* EUROPE AND THE FORMER SOVIET UNION -- "I think the most significant thing in the whole region is the tremendous response of our missionaries (to transfer to the former Soviet Union) -- people willing to leave countries they've settled into and uproot their families and move into a very difficult and shaky part of the world," said Tom Warrington, associate director for Europe. "We've gotten phenomenal response from missionaries. Some are in their mid- or late 50s but will learn a new language and establish a ministry. That to me speaks volumes."

Added interim FMB President Don Kammerdiener: "We're going the slow route, as we always do, of sending committed, long-term people, teaching them the language and all the rest. But I'm enormously excited by what we can do by having those people in place in the years ahead."

* THE MIDDLE EAST -- New Baptist Sunday school literature has been accepted "across the whole Arab world," reported Dale Thorne, area director for the Middle East and North Africa. "We've seen tremendous results in church growth. A whole revival broke out among Assembly of God churches in Egypt -- as many as 20,000 new believers."

* EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA -- The drought in southern Africa altered many missionaries' ministries in 1992, said Jim Houser, associate area director for mission work in the region. The lack of rain wiped out between 50 to 90 percent of the region's staple corn crop. Relief groups called the drought the worst in 80 years. Missionaries from Somalia to South Africa sought ways to ease suffering and starvation. They channeled more than \$1.5 million in Southern Baptist relief aid to Somalia. In Zimbabwe, government officials were so impressed with the hunger relief work of missionaries and Baptists that the officials offered to fund similar programs if Baptists would set them up. The missionaries, lacking necessary personnel, had to decline the offer.

* WEST AFRICA -- "One of the most significant developments in our region is the expansion of 'storying' techniques," explained Betty Kay Yamaoka, associate area director for mission work in west Africa. "Storying" focuses on presenting the Christian message to semiliterate people through biblical storytelling. Missionaries in Mali, for example, tell Bible stories through storying techniques to local women waiting for medical exams for their young children. At one center the clinic does not open until 8 a.m., yet women arrive around 5:30 a.m. to hear talks about nutrition and Bible stories.

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* EAST ASIA -- Successful church starts in Japan pushed missionaries well ahead of their goal of starting 50 churches by 1995, reported Judy Robertson, associate area director for east Asia. The missionaries believe enough Bible studies and preaching points will mature into churches in the next two years to bring church starts to 53 by the end of 1994. Japanese Baptists, working in one of the countries least responsive to the gospel, have grown from 16 churches just after World War II to 300 churches.

* SOUTHERN ASIA -- In Thailand, a provincial governor accepted Christ as Savior in July. Missionaries who helped evangelize the governor say he faces tough opposition to his decision, which rejects the state's official Buddhist religion. Thailand's population of 59 million people is at least 95 percent Buddhist, with only some 300,000 Christians.

* LATIN AMERICA -- The watershed event of 1992 was July's Consultation on Global Evangelization in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, reported Betty Law, who retired Jan. 15 as vice president for the Americas. Inspired by a challenge by outgoing FMB President Keith Parks, Baptist leaders captured a vision for doing missions beyond their own culture and language, committing themselves to do their part in sharing the gospel with the world's unreached peoples.

For Latin American Baptists and other evangelicals, continued rapid growth was another highlight. The growth represents a broad cultural shift in the region, where Roman Catholicism has been the dominant religion for four centuries. Roman Catholics continue to grow demographically and are now putting new emphasis on evangelism. But strong growth is occurring as part of the charismatic movement in mainline Protestant groups, and Pentecostals and Baptists also are showing rapid increases, according to researchers.

Foreign Mission Board officials who visited Cuba also reported rapid growth. Cuban Baptist churches are "packed every time the doors open," said Caribbean area director Ronald B. Wilson. "There's standing room only." Wilson said he observed a "powerful movement of God's Spirit" and "overwhelming openness" to the gospel during his most recent trips to Cuba.

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Donald D. Martin and Mary E. Speidel contributed to this story. (BP) photos (two horizontal and one vertical) mailed Jan. 22 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press to accompany this story and the accompanying highlights. Cutlines available on SBCNet Newsroom.

EDITORS' NOTE: The following "bullets" contain highlights of foreign dateline stories from 1992.

Glimpses reveal
the world of 1992

Baptist Press
1/25/93

Compiled By Erich Bridges

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--What happened around the world in 1992? Here are some glimpses through the eyes of Southern Baptist missionaries and workers, overseas Baptists and others:

-- Ignoring repeated warnings, Southern Baptist representative Nela Williams flew home to embattled Croatia New Year's Day 1992 after a break in the United States. A single parent of three (her husband died in 1978), she made the journey alone. Her teen-agers remained in the United States with their grandparents to attend school. "Now's really the time for missionaries to be here (in Croatia)," said Williams, who ministers to refugees from crumbling Yugoslavia's civil war. "Since other people are suffering, I should be here also."

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-- The white-haired man, dressed in a graying officer's uniform proudly displaying Soviet medals, shuffled into a hallway in the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan. Southern Baptist volunteer Ed Mason handed him a bottle of shampoo. Through an interpreter, Mason explained the gift was from "Christians in America." The tarnished Russian soldier began to weep in the hallway of the Home for the Aged. Later the volunteers met him again. This time his tears were overtaken by bursts of excitement. "Americanskis! Hurrah!" he shouted. "Americans and Russians are friends! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

-- Missionary Jon Lord was puzzled when a young Tanzanian held out a small plastic bucket of eggs and explained in Swahili, "It's a gift. My wife is alive today because of you." Then Lord remembered being in a rugged, mountainous area several months earlier. He learned that a woman bleeding from a miscarriage would die unless she got to the hospital across a mountain pass. Lord got her there in his four-wheel-drive truck. "Five eggs don't go far toward defraying the expense of my truck," Lord admitted. "So let them be a symbol of gratitude to all Southern Baptists who pray and give so the message of life may be carried around the world."

-- The car exploded out of the swirling dust in Tanzania and rammed his vehicle head-on -- a horrifying shock to missionary Rob Moor. Two Baptist laymen in the area heard he had been in an accident and came to investigate. They found Moor's passenger, a Tanzanian preacher, counseling three spectators who stopped to view the damage and wound up listening to him preach. When the tow truck arrived 48 hours later, 14 people had become Christians. Two weeks later a new preaching point was organized about a mile from the crash site. Its name: "Accident Baptist Church."

-- Three million Chinese have joined the Communist Party since 1988 -- but at least the same number joined Chinese Protestant or Roman Catholic churches. "If this continues, will there be more religious believers than communist believers?" an irritated communist official asked a group of Communist Party propagandists. "Overlooking this situation could spell an end to the party's cause." He scolded party members for halfhearted commitment to duties and dues-paying, while Christians and other religious believers faithfully worship and "donations in churches and temples have never stopped."

-- Billy Graham stormed one of communism's last bastions -- and had a friendly lunch with its general. He visited North Korea March 31-April 4 and discussed religion with President Kim Il Sung -- the nation's absolute ruler for nearly half a century. He also spoke about Christianity to leading scholars. He was invited to the atheist nation by the government-sanctioned organization for Christians. Believers make up only a tiny -- and strictly regulated -- minority of the country's 22 million people. "They have much to teach those from other parts of the world about dedication and what it means to follow Jesus Christ regardless of the cost," Graham said.

-- Gunmen failed to hijack a Baptist shipment of flour sent to ease food shortages in Albania when delivery drivers of five 18-wheel trucks refused to hand it over. Drivers said three men stopped their convoy soon after they crossed into Albania from Yugoslavia in April. One aimed a pistol at the lead driver and demanded the keys to the vehicles. But he refused, telling the gunman to shoot if he wanted to. The hijackers, impressed with his bravery, let them proceed. The trucks, filled with 142 tons of flour provided by Baptists, arrived safely at a bakery in Tirana, Albania's capital city.

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-- Amina Abdul once sold drugs, home-brewed liquor and herself. Months after she stopped those activities, a mob showed up in the middle of night with torches and threats -- upset because she had become a Christian. Pinned between the burning house and the crowd, she fell to her knees crying "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus." They mocked her, yelling that Jesus could not stop the flames. And to their delight, he didn't. "People said surely I would run, but I knew I had to stay, so I told them Jesus would still protect me," she said. Today she wears a new scarf, pulled to the side to cover the ear mutilated because she left Islam, and a new Christian name, Sarah Abdul. "All my brothers and other Muslims treat me like I'm dead since I became a Christian," she admits. "But I'm not going back to Islam. I'm just a woman, and I have no power. But I have peace. I have Jesus."

-- Five years ago Katie Neal was a walking time bomb. A brain tumor grew off her hearing nerve, attaching itself to facial nerves too. Doctors said she would die. Plans she made as an Oklahoma Baptist teen-ager to go to China apparently would die with her. At 25 years old, she had to plan her own funeral. But she didn't die. Today she teaches at China Pharmaceutical University in Nanjing, China. "I'm healthy and attribute it all to God giving me everything, even the use of my facial muscles," Neal says. The left side of her face has slight paralysis. She can't lift her left eyebrow, and that eye "still doesn't cry," she says. But tears fill the eyes of many who hear her story.

-- Before American and United Nations forces moved in to help establish some degree of order in Somalia, a young boy in a Somali town begged food from aid workers. They didn't have any, but gave him some money to buy a small bowl of lentils in a nearby cafe. Later they saw him again and offered to buy him a cup of tea. "No, I do not want any tea," he answered. "I just want you to tell your guard to shoot me. It is better to die now than starve later."

-- President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan personally thanked Southern Baptist teachers for coming to his nation. They are, he said, "missionaries to the economy" of Kazakhstan, which continues to suffer under hyperinflation and product deficits. Nazarbayev, one of the most influential leaders in formerly Soviet-dominated Central Asia, spoke Oct. 2 at the opening ceremony of the Kazakhstan Institute for Marketing, Economics and Strategic Research. Nine Southern Baptist volunteer faculty members currently teach there. "You are all a part of the president's team," he said. The institute has turned from a Communist Party school into a top economic institute.

-- Masked Hindu men waited near the bus stop on the dusty road in India. One clutched a rusty chain; another, a wooden club. Still others carried large rocks. They knew a chaplain from the Baptist hospital would come. The chaplains always visit outpatients in villages around Bangalore. Hindus fear they will convert villagers to Christianity. Chaplain G.S. Gangaiah arrived on a bus. Before he could react, the men were upon him, pushing aside his wife, Elizabeth. The club-wielding man hammered his knees. One with chains lashed the chaplain's back and arms. Others stoned him as he withered on the ground. Elizabeth could only scream for help. None came. Finally, she agreed to take him and never return. Somehow Gangaiah survived, but he didn't stop preaching. When he finally could speak, he said he had prayed in his mind: "Lord, help me. Please heal my legs. I want to preach the gospel. Let me walk again." Fully recovered now, he has rejoined Elizabeth as hospital chaplain reaching out into the villages. Still fearless, they visit hospital outpatients every weekday and lead Bible studies.

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Various other bulleted highlights are available by fax from the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

EDITORS' NOTE: The following story is a companion piece to the (BP) article dated 1/22/93, "Church involvement vital to healing of inner cities, L.A. pastors say."

**Rally planned on riot anniversary
to share Christ, build bridges**

LOS ANGELES (BP)--While community ministries and business training are vital to improving conditions in south-central Los Angeles, a black church leader here says any lasting improvement will require changing the spiritual dimension of the city.

"We can't get by with just a restructuring of programs. There is going to have to be a heart change," Robert Wilson, the California Southern Baptist Convention's black church extension coordinator for south-central L.A., said in a recent interview.

"There is still a lot of violence and gang activity going on. Many in Los Angeles -- not just African-Americans -- are without hope. They don't even see a reason for existence.

"We need to be involved in helping to change the spiritual dimension of this city. Unless we change the inner man, we won't make any real difference."

With that in mind, Wilson said the South Central Los Angeles Planning Committee -- a group of four black Southern Baptist pastors -- is developing plans for a "No Jesus, No Peace Rally" campaign beginning April 29, the anniversary of the beginning of the L.A. riots.

"A cry of 'No justice, no peace!' came out of these riots, but we want to turn that around by helping people see that without Jesus they won't have peace either," Wilson explained. "We want to make this a positive expression, so at some point during the meetings we'll probably add some letters to the name of the event so it will read, 'Know Jesus, Know Peace.'"

Wilson said as many as 100 churches are expected to be involved, adding the rally will feature well-known preachers, speakers and singers. Organizers also plan to enlist churches and individuals to form "prayer satellites" to pray for peace from April 29 to May 4.

In addition to sharing Christ with the community, Wilson said the rally is designed to build unity among the varied racial, cultural and socioeconomic groups in the city. The event is being sponsored by African-American, Korean and Anglo churches from several denominations, he said.

Race relations in the city are slowly improving, Wilson said, helped by the formation of groups like the African-American/Korean-American Christian Alliance which has sponsored joint services and cultural exchanges between the two races.

"The alliance is doing well, but we have a long way to go. Those involved in this group are from churches, and that represents only a fragment of the community," said Lonnie Dawson, pastor of New Mount Calvary Baptist Church, one of the largest black congregations in Los Angeles.

Sung K. Park, pastor of Berendo Street Baptist Church in L.A., said he, too, has seen improvement in race relations, though healing will be an ongoing process.

"I think many of our people have recovered spiritually and mentally from the riots, but some are still struggling financially," he said.

Park said the riots "awakened" the Korean community out of a state of isolation.

"We have encouraged our people to become more involved in the community. Korean churches must widen our views and be more concerned about the people around us. We are trying to let our people know that if they want to be American, they have to get to know Americans.

"Life is not easy," he said. "But we cannot have any hope in the material world. Christ is our hope. He's our only hope."

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

California Baptist youth
in Super Bowl extravaganza

By Mark A. Wyatt

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--What do 32 Southern Baptist youth from California have in common with pop megastar Michael Jackson?

They are all scheduled to perform together during halftime at the Super Bowl Jan. 31 before what is expected to be the largest viewing audience in history -- a potential 1.3 billion viewers in 87 countries.

Plus another 103,000 spectators jammed into the Rose Bowl in Pasadena for this year's National Football League championship.

The youth are members of the California Southern Baptist Convention All-state Youth Choir which performed Dec. 30 at the annual State Youth Conference in Santa Clara.

Their involvement in the Super Bowl show began the next day when two members of the group, Megan Carpenter, 13, and her brother, Trevor, 17, returned home to Camarillo near Los Angeles. They have worked in television and film for several years and needed to renew their contract with a Hollywood talent agent.

"One thing led to another," recounted Shirley Carpenter, mother of Megan and Trevor. The agent asked about the youths' appearance at the State Youth Conference and learned Megan also had gone on a concert tour last summer with other All-state Youth Choir members performing as The New America Singers.

"She said, 'I need another group to sing with Michael Jackson,'" said Carpenter, who responded, "I think they'd be very interested."

For Megan, an eighth-grade student at Monte Vista Junior High School in Camarillo, "interested" was an understatement.

"As the days went on more things were happening," Megan said. "I kept getting more and more excited."

After hearing a tape of the group performing, Radio City Music Hall producers putting together the halftime show agreed to include several Baptist youth among 4,000 singers, band and drill team members in the Super Bowl extravaganza. But it didn't stop there.

"The next day they called again and said, 'We need group leaders, 25 to 30 kids who are dependable,'" said Ted Campbell, director of the All-state Youth Choir and music minister at College Baptist Church in Moreno Valley.

Because of the event's location, Campbell knew he would have to rely on choir members who live in Southern California. He soon enlisted 32 youth and with Carpenter's help began working through piles of paperwork involved with the show.

"I've been on the phone every day with the kids and the production company and faxing back and forth," Carpenter said. "It involves a lot of paperwork with the kids for medical releases and that sort of thing," she explained.

Those performing in the Super Bowl show come from a range of churches, and at least one of them plans to include the Super Bowl in its schedule Jan. 31. Dale Lacquement, pastor of College Baptist Church, said the Moreno Valley congregation plans to "set up a monitor to view the festivities" before and after regular Sunday evening services at the church.

Rehearsals began Jan. 16. "It was an all-day rehearsal for just our kids, the leaders," Carpenter said. They learned the staging first so they could instruct others in the groups they were assigned to supervise.

Megan's assignment provided one of her surprises.

"I got an all-boys school and they're all 16 to 19 years old," Megan said. "Half of 'em are really good and the other half are really talkative."

But being a girl in charge of 16 older boys doesn't intimidate Megan, whose film credits includes work as a photo double for actors in movies including "Beethoven" and "Arachnophobia."

"I only had one little problem. One guy kept talking and wouldn't be quiet," Megan explained. Soon, however, the boys fell in line, although Megan admits it was not entirely her doing. "They knew if they talked they'd get kicked out."

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Like the other youth, Megan isn't getting paid for her part in the show. But she knows it is a chance to "put on my resume good leadership" in addition to her film roles.

Five days after the group leaders began learning the show, rehearsals started for everyone else -- except Jackson, who recorded his part for the practice sessions. The reclusive singer wasn't scheduled to rehearse the show live until Jan. 23.

But before appearing in person, Jackson sent "rules" for the youth who would be performing with him. "He doesn't want anyone to run up and hug him or touch him," Shirley Carpenter said. "Apparently he's really shy."

At the actual performance, however, Jackson "will be holding hands with a lot of the kids," Carpenter said. Plans call for shooting a video of Jackson's new song, "Heal the World," during the Super Bowl halftime show. It's one of the tunes Jackson performed at a pre-inaugural gala for President Clinton.

"It's definitely gonna be pretty awesome!" declared Trevor Carpenter, a junior at Camarillo High School. A veteran of numerous TV commercials, he said the Super Bowl halftime show is the biggest production he's ever been in. But Trevor is not planning on a career in show business. Instead, ministry may be his calling.

"It's at the top of the list right now," Trevor said. And while he thinks he may become a pastor one day, Trevor said at present he sees "a great opportunity for ministry" among the other youthful performers.

The 500-voice choir, including the 30 Baptist group leaders, will wear bright red, orange or yellow choir robes for the Super Bowl performance. "On the corner of every section is one of our people," said Shirley Carpenter, the designated chaperone for the Baptist youth. "Unless you know who they are, you probably won't be able to pick them out, except that they're on each corner."

Although the Baptist youth will not be identified during the show, their touring group, the New America Singers, will be listed in the program. Carpenter said her children will use the program "in their presentations when they go to groups around our city" raising funds for a planned choir trip to the Baptist World Alliance Youth Conference Aug. 11-15 in Africa.

Carpenter's husband, Dennis, is a sergeant with the Ventura County Sheriff's Department. The couple and their children are members of Mission Oaks Community Church in Camarillo.

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N.Y. Baptist worker's wife
killed in auto accident

Baptist Press
1/25/93

FAYETTEVILLE, N.Y. (BP)--Junita "June" Virginia Dowdy Day, wife of Clayton E. Day, evangelism director for the Baptist Convention of New York, died from injuries received in a Jan. 16 collision with a truck a few miles from their home in Fayetteville, N.Y.

Mrs. Day, 67, was airlifted to a Syracuse hospital but died in surgery. Day suffered an injury to his right knee.

A native of Whitehouse, Texas, she and her husband lived in Fort Worth prior to moving to New York.

Mrs. Day was a member of Clinton Road Baptist Church in New Hartford, N.Y., and was on the Baptist History Association of New York. She was active in Woman's Missionary Union in Texas and New York. In Fort Worth, she was president of the Optimist Club four years and the Museum Garden Club two years.

Survivors include her husband; two sons, Clayton E. Jr. of Florence, Italy, and Robert M. of Harvey, La.; and three grandchildren.

A memorial service was Jan. 23 at the Eaton-Tubbs-Shepp Funeral Home in Fayetteville, N.Y. The funeral will be Jan. 26 at Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, with burial in Chambers Cemetery in Palestine, Texas.

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**Geo-demographics helps
growth, ministry planning**

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist church A has declined in membership and attendance five consecutive years. Leaders want to know why.

Church B is considering whether a day-care ministry for senior adults will meet the needs of people in the community.

Church C is working with its association to sponsor a mission, and the planning committee is seeking to determine the best location.

All three churches could benefit from geo-demographics, according to Earl Nobles, who recently assumed the newly created position of geo-demographics information specialist in the Baptist Sunday School Board's marketing research department.

Using a computer and information such as U.S. census data and Uniform Church Letter statistics, information can be generated about the makeup of a state, county, zip code or church ministry area.

The result is "high-quality information that directly impacts decisions about ministry in a highly communicative form," said Nobles, who joined the board after six years as general missionary in the Louisiana Baptist Convention's missions division.

Geo-demographics is especially useful in church growth planning and is in current use in several Baptist state conventions, he said.

"Geo-demographics is a really good way of understanding how communities change over time," Nobles said. "If we can understand where a community is in its life cycle, it's relatively safe to predict where it will be in five years."

By understanding the makeup of a community and the makeup of the membership of a church in the community, patterns of growth or decline are fairly easy to predict, he said.

"In a plateaued or declining church, the people groups in the church tend to be significantly different from those in the community," Nobles said. "In a growing church, the makeup of the membership tends to mirror the community more closely, or the church is making very intentional efforts to offer ministries tailored to the needs of its membership."

Geo-demographics is not new, he emphasized. He cited Chester Davidson of the Baptist General Convention of Texas as a Southern Baptist pioneer in the field. However, geo-demographics is a rapidly changing field due to constant changes and improvement in technology and software.

Nobles views his role as that of a coordinator, working closely with state conventions, SBC agencies and seminaries to "increase the level of collaboration of different users so appropriate materials will emerge. Our idea is to help more fully develop our ability to use this tool."

A second role is facilitator, "to get everyone to speak the same language, even if different systems are used," he added.

For the immediate future, Nobles sees geo-demographics as a vital tool for solving problems related to church relocation issues, finding new people groups for ministry, conducting associational strategy planning, selecting sites for new congregations and making decisions about closing the doors of a church.

"There are some churches, as much as we don't like to admit it, which no longer have the resources to recover and redirect energies for a long-term future ministry. That's the unpleasant side we don't like to deal with," Nobles said.

He cited a predominantly white church at the point of death which assisted its association to relocate a black church into its facility. Attendance has doubled.

"When you give people good information, they can understand the opportunities and make responsible decisions in light of their own Christian commitment," Nobles said.

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At the BSSB, Nobles said geo-demographics provides invaluable information "to understand who our customers are. Products have life cycles. Geo-demographic information systems are an ideal way of tracking customers and knowing how to respond to their needs."

He said he envisions the board "becoming a primary provider of geo-demographics information to other components of the convention. If we work cooperatively we can reduce the cost and improve the quality of information by supplementing it with some of our own internal information."

Nobles said he also anticipates taking a leadership role in getting support materials produced "for persons in the field attempting to apply geo-demographics information to church growth and development."

He said he foresees a network of SBC agencies, state conventions and associations. It will provide geo-demographics information and help churches to understand and apply the information to church growth and ministry planning.

"Geo-demographic systems help us summarize massive quantities of information so we can focus on key trends," Nobles said. "These trends are the most useful material we need to communicate to congregations."

He said questions about geo-demographics may be directed to him in care of the BSSB, 127 Ninth Ave. N., Nashville, TN 37234, (615) 251-2705.

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

CORRECTION: In the (BP) story titled "CP budget proposal takes from Executive Committee, gives to CLC," dated 1/22/93, please correct the last words of the fourth paragraph to "fiscal year 1991-92," not 1990-91.

Thanks,
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