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Los Alamos church addressing
sci ntific community's mind-set By Mark Kelly

Baptist Press
1/26/93

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. (BP)--Out on the frontiers of science, brilliant researchers strive to unravel the mysteries of the universe.

They often disdain Christian faith as ignorant superstition, said Chuck McCullough, pastor of White Rock Baptist Church in Los Alamos, N.M. Some even mock peers who openly share their faith in Jesus.

"For all their skepticism, though, many are searching for meaning and purpose in life," said McCullough, 40, whose 300-member congregation ministers to staff members of the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Some Los Alamos staffers seek understanding in the intellectual agnosticism of Unitarianism. A few even join the crystal-toting New Agers that flock to nearby Santa Fe.

Most, however, have made science their god, McCullough said.

White Rock is one of two Southern Baptist congregations in this picturesque town of 20,000 people nestled in the Jemez Mountains of north-central New Mexico. The community thrives on its sole industry: the Los Alamos National Laboratory, one of the world's most prominent centers of scientific research.

The lab was born in 1943 under the auspices of the Manhattan Project, which built and tested the world's first nuclear bomb. Over the last 50 years, the facility has grown beyond its nuclear weapons research to cutting-edge experimentation in energy, the environment, human genetics, supercomputing, astrophysics and national security. Its \$1 billion budget supports more than 5,000 scientists and technicians.

"The majority of scientists out there have made science their religion," observed McCullough, a former lab employee who has been White Rock church's pastor since 1986. "They believe science holds all the answers, if they will just keep working long enough and keep unfolding the secrets of the universe.

"For a lot of these people, science is the god and education is the means to that god," McCullough said. "The big-name scientists are the high priests. They even spread their own brand of evangelism. The 'good news' is that science is the answer."

The White Rock church counts several top-flight scientists among its members: physicists, chemists, geneticists, computer scientists. McCullough said each one takes a different approach in sharing their faith with their peers.

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"Some are very straightforward," McCullough said. "Some are a bit more philosophical. Only a few are given to debate. Most share their faith at a very personal level, day by day, bit by bit."

McCullough noted one church member, a nuclear chemist who works with particle accelerators, who says he looks for opportunities to "just be honest with people and tell them about a personal faith that's made a difference" in his life.

None of White Rock's members feels compelled to choose between faith in Christ and scientific integrity, McCullough said.

"I don't know one scientist who has a real sense of conflict between the science that he or she does and personal Christian faith," he said. "Science doesn't set you apart from other people. You still have questions in your heart about your origins and destiny."

"There isn't a creation-evolution debate for them. That's a moot issue," he said. "We want to get past the polemics to people and where they are in their own search."

Developing personal relationships is the key to reaching the Los Alamos scientific community, McCullough said.

"It's in crisis that they turn to us," he explained. "When somebody's marriage is falling apart ... when they discover their kid is strung out on drugs ... when they find out they've got terminal cancer --that's when we are able to make connections with them."

Crisis is common in the scientific community, McCullough pointed out. Researchers work under enormous stress as they race to meet deadlines and fulfill the expectations of those who fund their work. Workaholism, alcoholism, divorce, child abuse and neglect -- all take their toll, regardless of one's educational attainment.

That's why the White Rock church concentrates on developing a "family friendly" ministry, McCullough said.

"We are trying to move away from the tendency of churches to fragment families," he said. "We've got to focus on meeting the needs of families -- counseling, educating, equipping and supporting them."

Toward that end, McCullough has led the congregation to replace its Sunday evening service with small groups that meet in homes around the city. In those settings, family units can receive the intense attention and support they need, he said.

The church also has reworked its Wednesday evening schedule to provide activities for entire families, as well as children and adults separately, he said. The church also has interviewed prospects for a second staff position that will focus on family ministry.

"We want everything we do -- Sunday school, worship, outreach, evangelism, missions, ministry, fellowship -- to be family friendly," McCullough said. "Everything ought to be done to build up families as a whole."

The White Rock church has adapted itself in other ways to meet the needs of his highly educated membership, said McCullough, who is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

The church completely revamped its adult education program last fall, setting up a "mini-seminary" diploma program. Members can earn certificates in biblical studies, Christian ministry and family studies, among other areas, McCullough said.

"This is a community where people can come and take courses that will equip them to do something," he said. "We want people to be able to lead a worship service or develop a ministry or go out on a mission trip or administer a church program."

The ultimate purpose is to encourage and equip physicists and engineers to be evangelists in their daily lives, McCullough said.

"The scientific community is a different kind of people who think differently and who have a pretty strong resistance to organized religion," he noted.

"We want to minister to families and equip people the best we can. We want our worship experience and everything our members do as Christians to aim them back at their workplace so they are capable, confident, consistent Christian witnesses five days a week."

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Annuity Board files shareholder
resolution with Kmart Corporation

Baptist Press
1/26/93

By Thomas E. Miller Jr.

DALLAS (BP)--The Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has filed a resolution with Kmart Corporation, requesting its inclusion in proxy materials and its consideration by shareholders at their annual meeting May 25.

The resolution asks Kmart's board of directors to "instruct the management of Kmart Corporation to stop the promotion, display and sale in its Waldenbooks subsidiary of literature and other media that is largely devoted to the description of sexual encounters or that has a graphic depiction of exploitative sex and/or gratuitous violence."

Paul W. Powell, Annuity Board president, said he has asked every church pension board in the nation to study and support the resolution.

In addition, Powell has written to and asked support of all Baptist foundations and state conventions.

"We have no way of knowing who is holding Kmart stock," said Powell, "so we wrote to all our possible allies in the effort to curb the sale of pornography."

The resolution is a result of trustee action on Nov. 3, 1992, following full discussion of alternatives including divesting the stock.

Powell noted, "We could simply have sold our Kmart holdings, but selling stock has no influence on the company. Our trustees wanted to attempt a meaningful attack on the sale of pornographic publications rather than just protest.

"If we get no satisfactory response, we'll sell the stock in a prudent manner," Powell said. "But I hope we can reach the shareholders and secure their agreement that the materials in question are not appropriate products for Waldenbooks to market.

The Annuity Board has been addressing the Waldenbooks practice since late spring 1992. After the August trustee meeting Powell wrote a letter to Joseph E. Antonini, Kmart's chairman and chief executive officer, in which he said, "Our own independent investigation has caused us to conclude that Waldenbooks does, indeed, offer products we consider grossly offensive to prevailing community standards.

"It is obviously impossible for you to monitor every product, service and title in your corporate family," Powell wrote, "but when a title or publisher becomes identified with sexual exploitation and you choose to sell that product, you are making a conscious decision to pander to baser instincts."

Powell said he is thus far dismayed at corporate response by Kmart. "In spite of the official communiques to chairman Antonini, he has not had the courtesy to reply. Such executive insensitivity is as surprising as it is disappointing. The first reply -- from the corporate secretary -- came only after we filed a legal shareholder resolution request. We have never heard from the chairman.

"In the light of such management intransigence, we have no option except to plea the rights of Kmart's owners against the abuse of management," Powell said. "The refusal of management to enter into dialogue is unacceptable and anti-shareholder behavior."

In November the trustees decided to attempt a shareholder action. Powell said the Annuity Board resolution is one of at least two that have been submitted to Antonini. The other was entered by the United Methodist General Board of Pensions.

"We are wholeheartedly in favor of the Methodist resolution and will cast our votes in favor," Powell said, "but it is different in initial intent from ours."

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The Methodist resolution asks Kmart directors to prepare and provide shareholders with a special report on Waldenbooks policies and practices relative to selection of adult fiction and magazines and the policy on display and sale of such material.

"The Methodist board is expected to cast its proxy votes in favor of our resolution just as we will cast our votes for their resolution," Powell said, "but we are not permitted by corporate rules to sponsor more than one resolution."

The two pension boards together hold more than 1 million shares of Kmart stock. The Annuity Board held 221,200 shares on Dec. 10, 1992.

Powell said other pension boards have notified him of their support for the Annuity Board resolution. "Some will not be empowered by their trustees or directors to make public endorsement, but we expect most, if not all, will cast their proxy votes in favor of the resolution," he said. For some, official endorsement would require a meeting of trustees.

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'East/West Challenge' boosting
newer convention student work

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
1/26/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--From providing funds to help pay salaries and housing costs of student ministers to linking college campuses for prayer and missions support, the "East/West Challenge" is "nothing short of a miracle," one student ministry leader said.

"God is meeting so many specific needs through this program, it's really amazing," said Frank Cofer, director of Baptist Student Ministry for the Chicago Metro Baptist Association in Illinois. "It's really been a reminder to me of something I've known all along -- students believe in sharing the gospel with other students."

Coordinated by the Baptist Sunday School Board's national student ministry, East/West Challenge is designed to strengthen student work and extend the gospel outreach in newer convention areas. The program is currently focusing on three target areas: Boston, Chicago and the state of California.

Baptist Student Unions and student groups from Southern Baptist churches can get involved in East/West Challenge in one of three ways -- by "adopting" and committing to pray for a student group in a newer convention area, making financial contributions or making a mission trip to one of the target areas.

According to student ministry leaders, student groups from across the country already are responding in all three ways. Examples include:

-- Approximately \$35,000 in gifts and pledges already have been received to boost student work in the three target areas.

-- The BSU at Westark Community College in Fort Smith, Ark., has decided to donate offerings collected at its noon program meetings to help pay the salary of a student minister at Chicago's Truman College.

-- The Ohio State University BSU has adopted and committed to pray for the Northwestern University BSU in Chicago.

-- Funds channeled to Boston already have been used to pay for a much-needed fax machine and housing costs for a semester missionary doing student work.

-- A student who wishes to remain anonymous donated \$350 to help pay the way for seven Chicago-area students to attend the 1993 Student Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

-- Tennessee BSUs raised \$1,000 to help pay the salary of a student minister at the College of Dupage/Wheaton College in Chicago. A student at one of the Chicago area BSUs heard about the need for a printer for the student ministry office at the same colleges, so he bought one and donated it himself.

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-- California state student ministry director Dale "Gino" Robinson said funds funneled to his state through East/West Challenge have been used to help support Mission Service Corps volunteers working with students and to meet a personal emergency need of one student worker.

-- The BSU at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, adopted the University of Southern California's BSU. Twelve members of the Texas group made a "vision trip" to the Los Angeles campus in early January. They helped hand out New Testaments on campus, attended the USC group's Vespers service and spent time learning about other cultural and religious groups.

"We are hopeful (the East/West Challenge) will spark something in the heart of students who visit our state," Robinson said. "We want them to realize the unique kind of challenges we face here, to understand what we're dealing with everyday. Hopefully, it will broaden their horizons a little bit and give some of them a vision for future ministry here."

The need for help is clear. More than 1.7 million students converge on California's 300 college and university campuses each semester, and Southern Baptists currently have student work at only 32 schools.

"We have some really strong work in several areas, but there is a lot that could be done if we had the personnel and financial resources," Robinson said, adding he hopes more local churches and associations will soon realize the importance and benefits of student ministry and get involved, too.

The opportunity for ministry is just as great in Chicago and Boston. In the latter city, about 250,000 students attend classes on 76 college and university campuses, but Baptist student ministries are active at only 11 schools. In Chicago, more than 330,000 students crowd onto 83 college and university campuses each week, but there are student ministries active on only six campuses.

For more information about how to get involved in the East/West Challenge, contact Bob Hartman at the BSSB's National Student Ministry, 127 Ninth Ave. N., Nashville, TN 37234; (615) 251-2773.

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College students get vision
for ministry on California trip By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
1/26/93

LOS ANGELES (BP)--Twelve college students from the Baptist Student Union at Texas Christian University returned to Fort Worth, Texas, from a week-long tour of Los Angeles earlier this month with something far more valuable than souvenirs.

They brought back a vision for ministry.

Sure, they visited Disneyland, drove down Hollywood Boulevard and walked along the beach, but their trip to California was designed for more than entertainment.

Neil Walker, director of student work for the Los Angeles area and one of the hosts for the students, explained the purpose of the trip this way:

"So many times students go on a mission trip and work in areas they have never been before and know very little about. But it's hard to minister in a culture you don't understand, so we organized a 'vision trip' to expose them to the many different religions, racial and cultural groups we have in the city.

"We wanted to help them see the danger of having too narrow of an understanding of what a 'normal' Christian should be like and how easy it is to have the gospel way too culturalized," Walker said. "We wanted them to see the importance of learning how to minister to people in different cultural settings."

The students were certainly exposed to a variety of experiences. While on their trip they:

-- toured Buddhist, Mormon and Hare Krishna temples, then talked with members of Church in the Valley (a Southern Baptist church in Diamond Bar) about innovative approaches to ministry and visited the U.S. Center for World Missions in Pasadena to learn about unreached people groups.

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-- drank rice milk bought at a Spanish grocery store and used chopsticks to eat their lunch in Chinatown.

-- drove through both exclusive areas of Beverly Hills and portions of inner-city Los Angeles hard hit by the riots.

-- spent an afternoon helping BSU students at the University of Southern California hand out New Testaments on campus and another doing mission work at black and Chinese Southern Baptist churches in the heart of the city.

"I really feel like we benefitted from everything we did," said Greg Snyder, a TCU junior. "It was a week of real contrasts and it helped me see the need to be able to relate to people from different backgrounds and cultures. It was a very motivational trip."

Kathryn Luton, BSU president at TCU, agreed.

"This trip really made me take a look at what I know about Christianity and how I can share my faith with other people who have different (religious) beliefs. I think it gave me more of a heart to reach people for Christ," she said.

According to Cindy Stephens, BSU director at TCU, the trip was organized as a result of the "East/West Challenge," a program coordinated by the Baptist Sunday School Board's national student ministry. Designed to strengthen student work and extend the gospel outreach in newer convention areas, the program teams student groups from across the country with BSUs in newer convention areas. The program's current emphasis is strengthening work in Boston, Chicago and the state of California.

Student groups from BSUs and churches help through prayer support for their "adopted" campus, financial contributions and mission trips like the TCU group's.

The TCU Baptist student ministry's adoption of ministry at USC has helped strengthen both programs, according to students from the two schools.

"It was really an encouragement to us to have them here. They helped us hand out Bibles, came to our vespers service and just spent time hanging out with us. (Their visit) helped give me a broader perspective of what's going on (in student ministry) in other states, too," said Cate Edwards, a member of the BSU ministry team at USC.

"It was awesome," Snyder added. "We really enjoyed staying with the USC students in their dorms and apartments. They matched us with students we had things in common with. It kind of made me want to stay out there."

Snyder said he also was challenged by the commitment level of some of the USC students.

"There are so many different religions out there and so many people that aren't open at all to the gospel. It seems like you would really have to take more of a risk to share your faith out there," he said. "To see (the USC students) excited and living out their faith on campus was a real encouragement to me. It challenged me to be more committed to reaching others myself."

"It really brought our own group closer together," Luton said. "It made us look at whether we are really strong in our faith or if we are just straddling the fence."

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

California Baptists tackle
Tijuana flood victims' needs

By Terry Barone

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TIJUANA, Mexico (BP)--A California Southern Baptist disaster relief unit and volunteer team are preparing meals and serving as a distribution point for groceries in an area of Tijuana, Mexico, hit hard by recent flooding.

The 18-wheel, tractor-trailer rig was requested through the Mexican Red Cross and set up Jan. 16. It was located initially at the largest of the city shelters operated by the government. The shelter housed about 700 people in central Tijuana, according to Don Hargis, CSBC Brotherhood/Men's Ministries director.

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Tijuana has been hard hit by a series of Pacific storms that have drenched the Mexican border city just south of San Diego. At least 30 people died as a result of the storms and Baja officials report more than 5,000 have been left homeless, a number Hargis believes has been underestimated.

Initially, local Baptists and Southern Baptist representatives worked with government officials to coordinate Baptist relief efforts.

Hargis said a team of eight volunteers prepared more than 5,600 meals during a three-day period at the shelter. He added at least six people made professions of faith through the witness of California Southern Baptist volunteers.

Jan. 20, the unit was set up at a Southern Baptist mission in El Florido, a section in Tijuana hard hit by the floods where the largest of the government shelters is operating.

California Baptist volunteers are working with Allen and Rebecca Alexander, the only Southern Baptist representatives in Tijuana. There are nine Baptist churches in the city, according to Larry Gay, administrator of the organization of Southern Baptist representatives in Mexico (based in Mexico City). Primera Iglesia Bautista in Tijuana has been designated as Baptist relief headquarters, Gay said.

No deaths or injuries associated with the flooding were reported among Tijuana Baptists, Gay said. None of the city's Baptist churches received major damage.

Hargis said the tractor-trailer rig was relocated to Bautista Mision Eternal Vida (a mission of Primera Iglesia Bautista) where volunteers were "greeted by at least 300 members of the community who came out because they heard (Southern Baptists) were coming to help."

He noted the unit was "barely able to get to church because of the muddy road conditions."

"This was one of the neatest experiences I have had since beginning my work at the convention almost a year ago," Hargis said. "When you feel needed, as expressed by these people, it is easy to minister."

He described El Florido as an area with a population of about 500,000, with most residents living in shanties on the sides of hills.

Hargis said the Red Cross used the volunteers only a few days at the city's center shelter but "it looks like we could be in the El Florido area two or three weeks."

He said volunteers and funds are needed for the relief operation.

"These people are wide open to being fed not only physically, but spiritually. I guarantee it will be a real privilege to minister to these people because I have seen how they have opened their arms to literally welcome us into their community."

John Cheyne, associate director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's research and planning office, said \$2,000 in hunger relief funds for meal preparation and grocery distribution were released. He added \$3,000 could be offered if needed for use later.

Hargis explained "food and other items often are donated. That has not been the case so far."

He added if the operation is extended for a few weeks, new volunteer teams will be needed.

People interested in volunteering should contact Men's Ministries by calling (209) 229-9533 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. PST, Monday through Friday. Monetary donations for disaster relief may be sent to California Southern Baptist Convention, Business Services Division, 678 E. Shaw, Fresno, CA 93710. Checks should be clearly marked for "Disaster Relief."

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Mary Speidel also contributed to this report.

**Broadman releasing series
of Chuck Swindoll books**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Popular author Charles "Chuck" Swindoll is featured in a new five-book study series being released in February by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman Press.

The series breaks down the text of Swindoll's best-selling book, "Growing Deep in the Christian Faith," into five separate books. Titles in the series include: Salvation, Eternity, The Bible, The Trinity and The Family of God.

Broadman Press editor Vicki Crumpton said study questions have been added throughout each chapter of the books by long-time Sunday school curriculum writer and conference leader Val Harvey of Franklin, Tenn. With the questions, the books can be used in individual or small-group Bible studies.

"I see these books as a helpful resource for anyone interested in gaining a deeper appreciation and understanding of God's Word and how it applies to their lives," Harvey said. "I can also see them helping anyone who is a little fuzzy on doctrinal questions."

Swindoll, pastor of First Evangelical Free Church in Fullerton, Calif., wrote in the introduction to the books that his goal is "to build a bridge of theological understanding with the common man, the uninitiated individual, the person who has never been to seminary -- and doesn't care to go -- but really does want to develop a solid network of doctrinal roots."

Harvey said the series "is not your usual doctrinal work. It's very readable. That's one of the great things about Swindoll. He takes complex issues and makes them enjoyable to read about and easier to understand."

The books will be available through Baptist Book Stores, other Christian bookstores and the Sunday School Board's customer service center.

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