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Baptist curriculum project
sensitive to Arab culture

By Stan Guthrie

Baptist Press
1/27/93

LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)--Frances Fuller has rarely ducked a challenge.

After a suicide truck bomb killed 241 Marines at the U.S. Embassy in 1983, the Arkansas-born Southern Baptist worker and her husband, Wayne, were determined to stay in Beirut with the people they had grown to love. But they finally had to evacuate when the embassy sent a driver and vehicle and ordered them out.

"I feel perfectly comfortable in Lebanon," said Fuller, a fluent speaker of Arabic who for the last three decades has worked in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

Since 1970 she has directed Baptist Publications. "We didn't leave because we wanted to leave. There have been plenty of times when nobody was safe in Lebanon, but we were there, nonetheless. We were just simply enduring the same thing our neighbors were enduring."

The latest challenge for Fuller, who now must work out of the agency's international office in Cyprus while the staff of about a dozen Lebanese workers remain in Beirut, while not as dramatic, shows the same commitment to people in the Arabic-speaking world. Fuller is overseeing the publication of the world's only indigenous Arabic Sunday school curriculum. Arab Baptist Publications, with about 130 current book titles, serves the Arab world from Morocco to Iraq.

The project had an unlikely beginning a decade ago when Baptist leaders in the Middle East requested that the red-haired mother of five produce a Sunday school curriculum. (There are 62 churches in the Middle East and North Africa with which Southern Baptist representatives work.) This jolted Fuller, who knew her five or six workers could not compare with the 1,400 employees at the Baptist Sunday School Board in America.

"I can't talk with you about how Baptist Publications and Frances Fuller will produce a curriculum and give it to you," Fuller said she told them at the special meeting. "The only thing I can talk about is how we together might become a community of people who could produce its own curriculum."

"So with fear and trembling," Fuller said in her Arkansas drawl, "we all made the decision to try."

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In 1991, the first year of the Faith and Life Curriculum was marketed for ages 5-6, 7-9 and 10-11. It included teachers' manuals, student activity leaflets, teaching pictures, flannelgraph figures, a song book and cassette as well as a self-instruction manual on how to use the material and a teacher-training video.

Last summer the second-year lessons were introduced, along with the first years for ages 12-13 and 14-16. Fuller expects the entire project to be largely completed in 1993.

Robert Reekie, a longtime friend and advisor who is the head of Media Associates International, an international print consulting agency in Bloomingdale, Ill., calls the curriculum "totally unique."

"It is the only truly indigenous curriculum anywhere in the Middle East today. It was a risky thing for Mrs. Fuller to do since the usual practice would be to simply adapt and translate the existing Southern Baptist curriculum," Reekie said. "She avoided that by really starting from scratch and developing a curriculum that is truly right out of the heart and soul of the people there."

Fuller said the interdenominational curriculum team "realized that the resource materials in America aren't the same as what we have (in the Middle East). Every time they said, 'Use a glue stick,' ... We'd know it's not ours, and in a few years we'd want to throw it out and do our own."

What they have instead is a curriculum sensitive to the Arab world. Because memorization is the "primary learning method" there, Fuller said, the curriculum, available in general and Egyptian versions, stresses it.

"Another thing we talked about was the culture of the Arab world, how everything is based on relationships," Fuller said. "You can't have a business conversation on the telephone without first establishing relationships: 'How is your mother? How are your children?'"

Thus, each lesson has a "welcome" section that re-establishes the relationship of teacher and students before the teacher ever opens the Bible, she continued. "So it's unique; it's special; it's Middle Eastern."

So far, according to Fuller, the curriculum -- called "House of the Source of Life" -- has been received warmly not only by Baptists, but also by Nazarene, Brethren and Coptic churches, as well as a group of Chaldean churches in Iraq.

"I really see that churches are going to be lifted up and much better grounded in the Scripture from the beginning," Fuller said. "Children are going to have solid education in the Scripture, and they're enjoying Sunday school. They are excited about it."

"When we were testing the materials," Fuller said, "one teacher took the pilot lesson that we had given her, and when she had done the first one, the children jumped up and said, 'Are we going to do it like that every time?'"

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Reprinted from Pulse (Jan. 22, 1993), Box 794, Wheaton, IL 60189. Guthrie is a staff writer for the evangelical missions newsletter. (BP) photo available from the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Atlanta church opens doors to
16 Kazakh business interns

By James Dotson

Baptist Press
1/27/93

ATLANTA (BP)--It's not often that Sunday services in a Georgia Baptist Church are translated into Russian. But such was the case Jan. 17 when Atlanta's Mount Vernon Baptist Church hosted 16 visiting business men and women from the formerly Soviet republic of Kazakhstan.

The group was in Atlanta Jan. 10-22 for the first half of a four-week internship sponsored by a SENIM, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board-supported cooperative venture designed to introduce American business practices to the formerly communist republic. They were to spend the final two weeks as guests of Windemere Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla.

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"The main purpose is simply to introduce them to American methods of business, essentially to try to teach them capitalism 101," said Steve Farish, minister of missions and discipleship at Mount Vernon.

The project is a part of an ongoing relationship between Southern Baptists and the Kazakh people that has included a Kazakh-American Festival in 1992 and one planned for this year.

A similar internship project in 1991 was hosted by Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta.

"The basic thrust of it is to try to develop relationships with the Kazakh people to the end that they would want to know why we care about them so much. Then we'll tell them we care about them because Jesus cared about them," Farish said, adding the approach to missions in Kazakhstan is somewhat nontraditional because it is a predominantly Muslim country.

During the Atlanta visit, the interns were teamed with host families who were involved in a similar business when possible, Farish said. Interns accompanied their hosts to work and observed their businesses firsthand.

The group also toured several Atlanta-area companies, including Delta Air Lines, Coca Cola, Harry's Farmers Market, Lithonia Lighting, Sony and Cable News Network.

"On the whole, the companies were amazingly receptive to going out of their way to try to help the interns and to give insight into American ways of doing business," Farish said.

But the trip was not all about business. The translated services, for instance, were a part of the church's attempt to share their faith in Jesus Christ.

"As we told the (host) families, they would earn a right to talk to the interns about their faith and about Jesus Christ by giving them first of all a good business experience. So the first goal was the business aspect, but more important to the overall scheme of things was to introduce them to the Christian faith."

Most of the interns were either Muslim or had no religious belief, Farish said. "One of them ... said, 'We have no frame of reference from which even to think about God after 75 years of official atheism' (under Soviet communism)," Farish said.

But through private conversations and the service, the doors were opened.

"They began to ask, 'Why are you so concerned about us,'" Farish recounted. "One question they asked is, 'Why do you smile so much?' So all of the host families got to discuss their faith in some respect with the interns."

Kanat Naurzbaeva, through an interpreter, said she found the services "fascinating."

"I'm a Christian myself and I enjoyed it," she said. "I loved the spirit of the service so much."

Norlan Norpics, a Muslim who spoke English, said he was particularly impressed with one testimony he heard of a member of Mount Vernon whom God had delivered from addiction to alcohol and drugs. "With the help of the church, now he's the best husband and father, and he's a good gentleman. So I want to have our belief in God like he believes in God," he said.

Islam Kalanov, another Muslim, said he was surprised to find America such a religious country. And like the others, he commented on the higher standard of living apparent in the United States. "American people believe in God, and God loves American people," he said.

Sergei Marchenko, another intern, said they all were grateful to the hosts. "We were met with a hearty welcome, and we are leaving with unforgettable memories for life," he said.

Mount Vernon also gained a greater appreciation for world missions and for people of other cultures, Farish said.

"We have a clear sense that God wants our church to be involved with Kazakhstan, and specifically with the Kazakh people, and this is the first step that he has led us on in the process," he said, noting the church will return to the country this summer for the Kazakh-American Festival.

"At an even more basic level," Farish added, "we made some really good friends. When they left there were lots of tears and lots of hugs. ... The Kazakhs by nature are just very friendly and open people. They took to us and we took to them."

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Arthur L. Walker Jr. to retire
as Education Commission director By Tim Fields

Baptist Press
1/27/93

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Education Commission since 1978, has announced he will retire effective Sept. 1.

Walker also will retire as executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary which, along with the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., operates American Baptist College (ABC) in Nashville, a four-year Bible college established to provide education primarily for black church leaders.

Walker, who will be 67 in April, is the longest-tenured director in the Education Commission's history. The commission promotes and supports the work of 71 Southern Baptist-related seminaries, universities, colleges, Bible colleges and academies. Walker also serves as executive secretary for the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

Last June, the Education Commission gave Walker the Charles D Johnson Outstanding Educator Award which is given annually to a person who has made a significant contribution to Southern Baptist higher education.

Walker, who also is an authority in parliamentary procedure, Baptist polity and governance and trustee responsibility, has served twice as parliamentarian for the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting and for numerous state convention annual sessions. He has just finished a new book, "Southern Baptist Trusteeship," to be published in February in conjunction with Seminary, College and School Day.

Walker previously was vice president for student affairs at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and, earlier, was dean of students and director of the Ministry Training Center.

He also was on the faculty of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., and was dean of students, vice president for student affairs and vice president for administrative affairs.

Walker has chaired the Secretariat of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and been a member of the board of directors.

Van Quick, chairman of the Education Commission and vice president for student personnel at Mississippi College, said "Arthur Walker is synonymous with Southern Baptist higher education. He has given his life to promoting and improving higher education in our denomination. Dr. Walker has worked tirelessly at his task and he has earned the highest respect of Southern Baptist educators and other denominational leaders.

"The Education Commission greatly appreciates Dr. Walker's many accomplishments during his 15 years of service with the agency," Quick said.

Quick said he has named a search committee which will meet soon to establish guidelines to fill the executive director position.

Committee members are Jerry M. Henry, pastor of Elkdale Baptist Church, Selma, Ala., chairman; Gregory W. Brockman, layman and retired soil scientist from Morrison, Colo.; Patrick O. Copley, retired president of Missouri Baptist College, Osage Beach, Mo.; Betty Jo Cooley, layperson and peach farmer from Chesnee, S.C.; and Thomas A. Kinchen, president, Florida Baptist Theological College, Graceville.

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(BP) photo available upon request from the Education Commission.

**Seminary Extension institute
earns council's reaccreditation By Lesley S. Vance**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Seminary Extension's Independent Study Institute has been reaccredited by the National Home Study Council, the standard-setting agency for home study schools which has accredited the institute since 1972.

"Being accredited means we have maintained educational and ethical business standards. We are not a fly-by-night school," said Sue Conn, registrar for the Southern Baptist-sponsored institute.

In order for Seminary Extension Independent Study Institute to be accredited it had to meet the following standards: maintaining a competent faculty; sound and up-to-date courses; screening students for admission; providing satisfactory educational services; demonstrating student success and satisfaction; advertising about courses truthfully and being financially able to deliver high-quality services.

"Being accredited is our promise that we will provide the best quality theological education and ministry training we can offer," said Doran McCarty, Seminary Extension's executive director.

Seminary Extension Independent Study Institute has almost 2,000 active students. Last year some 220 students asked for their institute transcripts to be sent to universities and colleges.

"For Seminary Extension Independent Study Institute students the accreditation means many universities and colleges will accept our credit by transfer," Conn said. "Our students have confidence in us as a quality educational institution."

Students in the Seminary Extension Independent Study Institute can choose from two diploma plans:

- diplomas awarded by Seminary Extension in pastoral ministries, educational ministries, biblical studies and advanced studies.
- diplomas awarded by individual Southern Baptist seminaries in ministry training.

Also available are certificate plans in Christian studies, biblical backgrounds, church leadership and pastoral training.

Seminary Extension Independent Study Institute enrollment information, catalogs and brochures are available by writing to 901 Commerce St., Suite 500, Nashville, TN 37203-3631 or calling (615) 242-2453.

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**Aerobics innovator urges
seminarians to fitness**

By Mark Christie

**Baptist Press
1/27/93**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The internationally known founder of the aerobics movement challenged students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Jan. 22 to "glorify God with your bodies."

Kenneth Cooper, founder and president of the Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas, asked students during a chapel service at the Fort Worth, Texas, school to commit to some form of aerobic exercise in light of evidence of high levels of stress among ministers.

Cooper cited a 1991 Southern Baptist Convention report that placed ministers below average in physical fitness, with heart attacks being the leading cause of death among males and cancer the leading cause among females. He revealed statistics showing that people who do some type of weekly aerobic exercise increased longevity by two and a half years.

"If I could get everyone here today, all ages, to dedicate 30 minutes three times a week to some type of sustained physical activity, it could improve the quantity, I assure you, as well as the quality of your lives," said Cooper, who is chairman of Southwestern's Advisory Council.

According to Cooper, studies show that the average minister works 56 hours a week, while only 16 percent have memberships in health clubs.

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"Of professional groups, pastors are the most deconditioned people I see," he said.

In a survey of hospital costs for Southern Baptist ministers, Cooper found that psychosis was the leading expenditure with \$1.6 million spent in 1991. Maternity costs were second and heart bypass surgeries were third. Cooper's study showed that twice as much was spent for psychosis than for heart surgery.

"God hath not given us a spirit of fear but of power and love and of sound mind. That's what we're teaching and preaching, but are we practicing it?" Cooper said.

The study also showed the top two prescription drugs used by ministers were for high blood pressure and stomach ulcers.

"Since when is a bleeding ulcer a sign of spirituality? When will we learn that efficiency is enhanced not by what we accomplish but by what we delegate or relinquish?" he said.

Cooper is the author of 11 books which have sold more than 20 million copies in 41 languages and Braille.

Cooper's chapel message coincided with the annual meeting of Southwestern's Advisory Council of lay people from across the United States who offer support and advice to the seminary.

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Land defends pro-lifers for
effort to 'legislate morality'

Baptist Press
1/27/93

ATLANTA (BP)--The nation's pro-life movement is not mired in an impossible attempt to "legislate morality," said Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, in a Jan. 22 rally on the steps of the Georgia capitol.

The event, with Land as keynote speaker, attracted more than 10,000 people to downtown Atlanta for a rally and a "silent march" against abortion. It was sponsored by the Georgia Right To Life chapter to mark the 20th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision which struck down laws against abortion.

Land, citing Romans 13, said the New Testament passage teaches that God established civil government to "punish those who do evil and to reward those who do that which is right," which is why society has laws against such moral failures as murder, theft and rape. The laws are not so much to impose a morality on the offenders, he said, but to prevent them from imposing their immorality on others.

"When we seek to restrict abortion, we are not seeking to impose our morality on mothers," Land said. "We are trying to keep them from imposing their immorality on their victims. And it is always a fatal imposition because the baby dies.

"And we must never forget the primary reason that we are in the pro-life movement -- the children. We must seek to save the children.

"We have sacrificed our unborn children to the pagan idols of material well-being, social convention and convenience," Land said, noting "one third of all babies conceived since 1973 have been killed by their mothers," because these 30 million were considered to be "too embarrassing, too ill or too inconvenient."

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Southwestern professors named
church growth institute fellows

Baptist Press
1/27/93

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--A church-growth think tank of 14 scholars has begun work as part of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's new L.R. Scarborough Institute for Church Growth, according to the institute's director.

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Daniel Sanchez, who was appointed by President Russell H. Dilday to direct the institute, said the fellows will serve as a think tank to guide the institute and to help determine directions for the seminary's church growth emphasis.

In addition, Dilday recently appointed Ebbie Smith, professor of Christian ethics and missions, as associate director of the institute.

Sanchez said an advisory council of pastors and denominational leaders outside the seminary will be formed to lend guidance to the institute.

The institute will provide church-growth education to ministers through training, research and publications, Sanchez said.

"I think we are in a unique position here at Southwestern to address issues relating to church growth because of our academic setting on one hand and our involvement in practical ministry on the other," Sanchez said.

Southwestern Seminary professors appointed as Scarborough Institute Fellows are Rick Yount, Ebbie Smith, research/teaching; Calvin Miller, publication/leadership; Roy Fish, Malcolm McDow, evangelism; Ray Higgins, theological; Dan Crawford, church starting; Gary Waller, religious education; Stanley Moore, church music/worship; Ebbie Smith, church development; Grant Lovejoy, preaching; Paul Stevens, bivocational/mentorships; Sanchez, ethnic church growth; Darrel Watkins, social ministries; Bruce Leafblad, spiritual factors.

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Jack Terry to serve seminary
as fund-raising consultant

Baptist Press
1/27/93

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Jack Terry, dean of the school of religious education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been named consultant for planned giving by seminary President Russell H. Dilday.

Terry will help the seminary develop, promote and maintain its program of deferred or planned giving, according to Tom Chism, executive director of development.

"Dr. Terry is a natural for the position because he comes out of many years of service with the seminary and involvement in the denomination," Chism said. "He's well known and respected."

Chism said Terry, as dean, has helped Southwestern raise "numerous major gifts." Terry also has been active in major fund-raising campaigns.

Terry was elected as dean of the school of religious education in 1973 and has taught at the seminary since 1969.

Terry and his wife, Barbara, are members of North Fort Worth Baptist Church.

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