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**Rankin nominates Avery Willis  
to new FMB overseas v.p. post**      **By Robert O'Brien**

**Baptist Press  
9/1/93**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Avery T. Willis Jr., a national leader in discipleship training and former missionary, was announced Sept. 1 as the president's nominee for a new senior overseas vice presidential role at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

FMB President Jerry Rankin, who announced his recommendation at a staff chapel service and in a memo to trustees, said Willis would join the board staff Dec. 1 if elected by trustees at their Oct. 11-13 meeting in Richmond. Rankin once served with Willis as a missionary in Indonesia.

Willis, 59, director of the discipleship and family adult department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, played a major role in developing the MasterLife discipleship training program used worldwide by Southern Baptists and others.

He also was among the top candidates considered for the FMB presidency before a search committee nominated Rankin. Rankin was elected June 14 to succeed Keith Parks, another former missionary to Indonesia.

In his memo to trustees, Rankin suggested they talk to search committee members who interviewed and researched Willis. Willis is "well grounded in mission methods and strategy" but would bring "the freshness and creativity of an 'outsider,'" he said.

During 14 years in Indonesia, 1964-78, Willis worked in evangelism and church development for six years, then served at Indonesia Baptist Theological Seminary for two years as a professor and six years as president.

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In Indonesia, Willis led in developing and pioneering innovative strategies and programs of Theological Education by Extension and worked with others to structure the MasterLife prototype, Rankin said. MasterLife has since been translated into more than 50 languages.

Rankin's nomination, which already has been affirmed by a joint committee of 10 trustees and staff, will recommend Willis' election as senior vice president for overseas, rather than the tentative title of executive vice president for overseas approved by trustees in August.

The joint committee also approved Rankin's recommendation that Executive Vice President Don Kammerdiener retain his position directly under the president and his role of relating to the entire organization. The former Latin America missionary and administrator was the board's interim president for nearly seven months.

The committee came to a consensus, Rankin said, that a parallel role of executive vice president for overseas could cause "a dichotomy that would fragment the organization into an overseas and home office division." The recommended alignment, he said, "would retain a unified organization focused on our overseas task."

Rankin, Kammerdiener and the senior vice president will work as an administrative team, with specific roles to be defined later. But the senior vice president will administer overseas operations rather than the five current regional vice presidents, who will assume other duties over an extended transition.

The function of the mission board's top-level Global Strategy Group will be filled by 10 area directors convening twice yearly. The changes will return most field administration and strategic development responsibilities to these area directors on the mission field. They will relate to the board through the new senior vice president for overseas.

Since returning from Indonesia, Willis has worked 15 years at the Sunday School Board as manager of the adult section, church training department, 1978-80; manager of the leadership development section, discipleship training department, 1980-90; manager of adult discipleship training, 1990-92; and director of the discipleship and family adult department since 1992.

He has served throughout the Southern Baptist Convention and in a dozen countries as a preacher, teacher, speaker, conference leader and chairman of denominational committees in such areas as discipleship training, prayer, evangelism, personal ministry, Bible training and spiritual renewal.

Willis has written five books on missions and discipleship, authored or co-authored five seminary textbooks in Indonesia and published numerous other materials during a 39-year career as a pastor, missionary and denominational leader.

Rankin praised Willis as a man whom Southern Baptists recognize as a spiritual leader and as one who has "exhibited outstanding administrative ability, academic attainment and relational skills."

"All of this would equip him uniquely to give direction to our overseas work, help provide improved training for new missionaries and assist in mobilizing the support and involvement of Southern Baptists in reaching the world for Christ," Rankin said.

"I'm excited about the possibility of Dr. Willis joining our administrative team to give direction to our overseas task. He would be an asset to our global strategy as we respond to the unique opportunities God is giving us and (as we) move toward the challenge of the 21st century."

Jimmy Draper, Sunday School Board president, predicted Willis "will make a tremendous contribution in this influential position."

"I don't know anyone who has a greater heart for the world," Draper said. "I commend him to the Foreign Mission Board ... and look forward to working closely with him and with the FMB in our task of winning the world to Christ."

Leon Hyatt of Louisiana, first vice chairman of the FMB trustees and a member of the joint trustee-staff committee, pointed out that "three of the names that received highest consideration by the presidential search committee were Jerry Rankin, Don Kammerdiener and Avery Willis. Nothing but the providence of God would make it possible that all three would be in top leadership positions at the Foreign Mission Board."

Kammerdiener added that Willis, because of his "rich background as a missionary and as a powerful friend of missions as a denominational leader," will provide "a major link between our wonderful missionary heritage and a creative and dynamic future."

Before becoming a missionary, Willis was pastor of three churches in Oklahoma and Texas from 1954-64.

A native of Lepanto, Ark., he received the bachelor of arts degree from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee and master of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Willis majored in missions in his doctoral studies and minored in preaching and philosophy of religion, all among subjects he taught at the seminary in Indonesia.

The son of A.T. Willis, a preacher and evangelist, Willis is married to the former Shirley Morris of Nowata, Okla. They have five grown children. His sister, Norma Willis Whitten, is a Southern Baptist missionary in Quevedo, Ecuador.

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(BP) photo (mugshot) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Sunday School Board for the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available on SBCNet Newsroom.

Other SBC leaders comment  
on Willis recommendation

Baptist Press  
9/1/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Additional reaction on the recommendation of Avery Willis as FMB senior vice president for overseas:

-- Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, said Willis' "missionary experience, spiritual depth, creative mind, burden for the unsaved and longing to seek spiritual awakening throughout the world will be vital ingredients in shaping the future of missions overseas. I believe God will use him to help (FMB President Jerry) Rankin and other board personnel lead Southern Baptists to heretofore unthinkable horizons in our missions outreach."

-- Roy Edgemon, director of the discipleship and family development division at the Sunday School Board, under whom Willis works as a department director, said, "We are thrilled that Avery has been offered this position. I have known all the years Avery has worked here that his heart is in world missions, and this is an opportunity for him to express his greatest desire to serve all the world's people."

-- Sam James, Foreign Mission Board vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, who worked with Willis as a missionary in Asia, said, "I'm pleased that someone with extensive missionary experience and a good sense of missiology is being brought into this position. I have worked personally with Avery in developing Theological Education by Extension programs in Southeast Asia and in spiritual retreats and have always found him to be extremely capable in whatever he does. He's a sharp guy."

-- Faye Pearson, Foreign Mission Board area director for East Asia: "I think (the missionaries) will be pleased that he's had missionary experience. He's a very creative person with very innovative ideas."

-- John Floyd, FMB area director for Europe and former missionary to the Philippines: "I've known Avery a long time and I know his heartbeat as expressed through his work at the Sunday School Board, plus what he did on the field in Indonesia. I look forward to working with him. He has a real evangelistic heart and we have the same ideas for mission strategy, church planting and evangelism."

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Hurricane Emily brushes N.C. coast;  
disaster units 'ready' but not called

By Steve Barber

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist disaster relief units from 11 state conventions were poised to provide assistance this week if Hurricane Emily came ashore, but the units never got the call to "move in."

Instead, the storm brushed by North Carolina's Outer Banks and headed back out to sea.

"We were prepared to go, just in case, but we're thankful the heavenly father pretty much spared us this time," said Douglas Beggs, vice president of program services for the

Brotherhood Commission, which coordinates multi-state disaster response for Southern Baptists.

Beggs said an early "flyover" assessment the morning of Sept. 1 did not show many damaged homes along the North Carolina coast.

Two disaster units -- one from North Carolina, the other from Ohio -- were based in Raleigh, N.C., as Emily approached. But the Ohio unit was released to go home Sept. 1 as on-site coordinators decided the North Carolinians could handle any needs resulting from the storm, including mass feeding. Early indications are that feeding units will not be needed.

Other state units ready to go but not called upon were those from Alabama, Georgia, Maryland, South Carolina and Virginia. Units from Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee were to provide further back-up, if needed.

The Brotherhood Commission's primary Southern Baptist program assignment is missions education for men and boys. Disaster relief is an outgrowth of the agency's emphasis on mission action."

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SBC Cooperative Program gifts  
up for August, behind for year

Baptist Press  
9/1/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for August were up slightly -- one half of 1 percent -- over the same period last year but receipts for the year-to-date remained below the previous year, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

Total gifts for August 1993, designated and Cooperative Program, were up for the month by 1.45 percent, \$13,934,187 compared to \$13,734,707 last year. However, the August CP figure of \$11,266,269 (compared to August 1992 of \$11,210,624) was 3.7 percent below the monthly SBC budget requirement of \$11,683,366.

With August the 11th month of the SBC fiscal year, which is October through September, the CP totals are \$126,101,303 compared with the 11-month budget requirement of \$128,517,028. The SBC budget for 1992-1993 is \$140,200,395.

Designated gifts for August were up 5.7 percent, \$2,667,917 compared to \$2,524,083 in 1992. The total for both CP and designated gifts for the year to date is 1.05 percent behind a year ago: \$251,412,331 compared to \$254,086,515.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions, world hunger and other special gifts.

State and regional conventions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining funds to the Executive Committee for national and international ministries. The percentage of distribution is at the discretion of each state or regional convention.

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EDITORS' NOTE: Just before deadline, Baptist Press received information that may prompt changes in the story below, and if changes are needed, those will be incorporated tomorrow.

Ed Young facing tax bill  
in property record mixup

Baptist Press  
9/1/93

HOUSTON (BP)--H. Edwin Young, pastor of Houston's Second Baptist Church and current president of the Southern Baptist Convention, will be paying an estimated \$60,000 in back taxes in an apparent mixup with property appraisal officials, the Houston Chronicle reported Sept. 1.

Young's Houston home, now valued at \$600,000, has been mistakenly listed as tax-exempt church property for some 10 years.

The Chronicle stated there has been no suggestion that taxes were avoided intentionally -- a point underscored by Lynn Carter, chairman of Second Baptists' deacons and a Houston attorney.

A Houston tax consultant representing church officials met with property appraisal officials in May, Carter told Baptist Press, to "give them all the facts ... and assist them in clearing all this up." Young and the church are awaiting word from the local officials of how much back taxes are owed, which Young will pay, Carter said.

There is no tax delinquency, as no tax bills were sent to Young, and there will be no penalties, Carter said.

Back interest, however, may be assessed at 1 percent per month, the newspaper said, "and could be thousands of dollars more."

Young declined comment to the newspaper and Carter was serving as church spokesman.

Carter said the mixup stemmed from a transition-type agreement between the church and Young when he became pastor in 1978 to give Young ownership of a new parsonage in 15 yearly installments.

At the outset, Second Baptist paid full taxes on the property but in 1983 learned it could, as a church, request an exemption, which was granted by local officials, the Chronicle reported. The problem was, Young already was one-third owner of the home, but that was not entered into the tax records. The property remained tax-exempt until officials began realizing the mistake after a local magazine did an article on noted Houstonians' homes earlier this year, the Chronicle said.

Young has received 14 of the 15 yearly deeds under the agreement, Carter said.

"This is just an odd situation," Sands Stiefer, chief of staff for the Harris County Appraisal District, told the Chronicle. "It's one of a kind, as far as I know."

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'New and improved' claim for  
Russian law a fraud, lawmaker says

Baptist Press  
9/1/93

By Marty Croll

MOSCOW (BP)--A Russian Parliament member has accused his lawmaking colleagues of "blatant fraud" for pretending to support President Boris Yeltsin Aug. 27 while passing religious freedom restrictions Yeltsin opposes.

Gleb Yakunin, a Russian Orthodox priest fighting an Orthodox and nationalist stand against open religious expression in Russia, called it "horrible" that the Parliament apparently fooled news reporters.

Several Western news services circulated accounts that a new religion law had been amended to provide freedom where an earlier version restricted it.

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Action on the floor of Parliament, however, indicated lawmakers were claiming to support Yeltsin at the same time they were passing amendments bitterly countering his intent to secure religious freedom for foreign missionaries and non-Orthodox Russians.

Under the new amendments, foreigners in Russia must obtain special permission to form religious societies from the Justice Department and local police. Permission will be revoked if the government determines the foreigners are offending Russians' religious feelings or unlawfully compelling them to change religions.

Initial news reports missed the point of what happened during a session in which lawmakers passed with "shameful enthusiasm" legal restrictions against Russians and foreigners not associated with the Orthodox church, Yakunin said.

The Associated Press reported Aug. 27 that Parliament had backed down from restrictions on missionaries because of a world outcry against the proposed first law draft, which it passed July 14 but Yeltsin refused to sign. The story was transmitted to media outlets worldwide -- about 1,500 newspapers and 3,000 broadcast stations in the United States and more than three times that number in other parts of the world.

Five days later the Associated Press had not changed its story. But it was scrambling to discern the truth over the din of the many voices in Moscow attached to anti-Yeltsin machinery.

"We're looking into it and expect to have another story about it soon," said Frank Crepeau, assistant foreign editor at AP world headquarters in New York City.

Human rights workers were baffled by the first reports. Sources who have been following the law's progress since it was introduced in April could see no substantive softening of the law between its first draft -- which Yeltsin sent back to Parliament Aug. 4 -- and the one passed Aug. 27. Some even said the newer version is more restrictive.

Human rights experts said Russian churches face harder times under the new amendments. Yakunin accused Parliament of stealing a line from Yeltsin's letter lamenting the spiritual condition of Russia, and using it to support an amendment saying the government will provide support to traditional confessions in Russia -- meaning the Orthodox Church.

The new law also would give the government the right to review charters and activities of Russian religious groups -- and petition the court to shut them down.

Yakunin said he hopes Yeltsin will ask Russia's constitutional court to strike down the law. If Yeltsin won't, Yakunin promised, he and other lawmakers will.

As late as Aug. 30, Yeltsin's legal advisers were unsure what the passage of the law means, Yakunin said. They were trying to determine whether Yeltsin is obligated to sign it, whether he must allow it to go into effect with or without his signature, or whether he could refuse to sign it and offer new amendments.

Patriarch Alexei, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, threatened earlier that if Yeltsin did not sign the law, his flock -- thought to number between 60 million and 80 million members -- would oppose his presidency.

The Orthodox Church is frightened by the influx of other religious movements that have been gaining momentum and power since Parliament opened the doors in 1990 with a religious freedom act. The act was meant to reverse decades of communist oppression and centuries of Orthodox domination before that.

U.S. lawmakers, headed by Sen. Richard Lugar, R.-Ind., were preparing a letter to Yeltsin signed by more than 170 congressmen protesting the newest amendments. They were sending reports analyzing the bill for examination by President Clinton's National Security Council.

Human rights activists asked the Clinton administration to intervene on behalf of democracy with Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin when he met with Vice President Al Gore in Washington, starting Aug. 31.

Before the new amendments were voted on, a Yeltsin representative urged Parliament to hold off addressing the issue of foreign citizens' freedom of religious expression. He accused lawmakers of rushing through a bill that clearly needed more work.

But the chairman of the committee that introduced the bill said Orthodox believers and Muslims fully supported it and only representatives of small Protestant groups needing Western money were fighting it.

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Mohler emphasizes importance  
of seminary doctrinal statement

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press  
9/1/93

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--The Abstract of Principles, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's doctrinal statement, is the institution's "platform for true academic excellence," stressed seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr.

During a convocation address opening fall semester classes at the Louisville, Ky., school, Mohler said Southern is a "pre-committed institution" on matters of doctrine.

"Teachers here should expose students to the full array of modern variants of thought related to their course of study," he said. "But these options are not value-neutral. The standard of judgment is found within the parameters of the Abstract."

In this document, Mohler added, "is found the standard for confessional fidelity to the churches and the denomination, for these fields of study and research are conducted by those who have established their own confessional commitments and who make these plain and evident to those who come here to study and to learn."

The Abstract was written by the seminary's founders in 1858, one year before the school was established as Southern Baptists' first institution. All faculty members at the school must agree "to teach in accordance with and not contrary to" the document. Every tenured faculty member in the history of Southern has signed the original copy of the Abstract.

In his address, Mohler, who became Southern's ninth president Aug. 1, identified four "operative convictions" which are revealed in the Abstract and in "the testimony of those who framed the confession":

-- "Truth is always confronted with error and the doctrinal depository of the church is always in danger of compromise."

-- "A confession of faith is a necessary and instrumental safeguard against theological atrophy or error."

-- "A theological institution bears a unique responsibility to protect the integrity of the gospel. ..."

-- "Those who teach the ministry bear the greatest burden of accountability to the churches and to the denomination."

Seminary founder James Boyce believed that a professor espousing false teachings in a seminary could have ruinous implications for the denomination, Mohler said. Therefore, Boyce attempted to safeguard the institution against heresy, Mohler observed. "The faculty at Southern Seminary would be held to a standard higher than that required of the churches, higher than that required of students, higher than that required of those who would teach at many sister institutions."

Mohler noted that his call to focus on the historic doctrines expressed in the Abstract comes at a time when Southern Baptists are putting less emphasis on theological matters. "As Southern Baptists, we are in danger of becoming God's most unembarrassed pragmatists -- much more enamored with statistics than invested in theological substance," he said.

The Abstract of Principles is a reminder to the seminary of its responsibility to Southern Baptists, said Mohler. "We bear the collective responsibility to call this denomination back to itself and its doctrinal inheritance. This is a true reformation and revival that only the sovereign God can accomplish, but we must strive to be acceptable and useable instruments of that renewal."

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During convocation, Mohler became the 188th person to sign the original copy of the Abstract. In addition, the document was signed by Marvin Anderson, a professor of church history, who came to Southern this fall from the faculty of Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.

The service also included the installation of David S. Dockery as vice president for academic administration and Diana R. Garland as dean of the Carver School of Church Social Work. Dockery, dean of the seminary's school of theology since 1992, will continue in that role in addition to his new assignment. Garland, a Southern faculty member since 1980, will continue her duties as a social work professor and director of the seminary's Gheens Center for Christian Family Ministry.

Two professors, David E. Garland and Douglas Smith, were installed into endowed chairs. Garland is the Ernest and Mildred Hogan professor of New Testament interpretation and Smith is the Mildred and Ernest Hogan professor of church music.

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Clinton says respect needed  
when people of faith disagree

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
9/1/93

WASHINGTON (BP)--People of faith must discuss their differences respectfully in order to work together for the country's common good, President Bill Clinton told 86 religious leaders at a recent White House interfaith breakfast.

"There must be some sense of common purpose and common strength and, ultimately, an end which helps us all, that reveals in the fact that there are people who honestly disagree about the most fundamental issues but can still approach one another with real respect," Clinton said in his 12-minute speech, "without assuming that if you disagree on issue X or Y, you've jumped off the moral and political cliff and deserve to be banished to some faraway place.

"If people of faith treat issues about which they disagree as nothing more than a cause for a screaming match, then we also trivialize religion in our country," the president said, according to a transcript obtained by Baptist Press.

"And we undermine the ability to approach one another with respect and trust and faith. And I say that not just to those who disagree with me on some of the particularly contentious issues but also to those who agree with me."

Clinton encouraged Americans to act based on their religious convictions.

"Sometimes I think the environment in which we operate is entirely too secular," the president said.

"The fact that we have freedom of religion doesn't mean we need to try to have freedom from religion. It doesn't mean that those of us who have faith shouldn't frankly admit that we are animated by that faith, that we try to live by it and that it does affect what we feel, what we think and what we do."

Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission said he was pleased the president "seems intuitively to feel that abject secularism is sterile and morally bankrupt."

"At this point, I would have to conclude that his diagnosis of the problem in America in our being too secular in our national life is more accurate than what I've heard so far of his prescribed solutions," said Land, the CLC's executive director, after seeing the text of Clinton's speech. "The recognition of the insufficiency of secularism is a good and necessary beginning.

"It would benefit him greatly to hear from and dialogue directly with his evangelical critics."

Neither Land nor any other official SBC representatives were invited to the breakfast. Likewise, the invitation list did not include official representation from the United States Catholic Conference or the National Association of Evangelicals. The Catholic Church is the largest religious denomination in the United States and the SBC is second.

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The CLC, NAE, as well as Catholic and other evangelical social conservatives, have opposed publicly the Clinton administration's positions supporting abortion and homosexual rights.

The participants at the Aug. 30 breakfast included pastors and leaders from several Baptist bodies, mainline Protestant denominations and Jewish and Catholic groups. While there were some evangelicals present, there appeared to be no one who has been outspoken in opposing the White House's policies on such issues as abortion and homosexuality.

Southern Baptists attending were Cecil Sherman, coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an organization started by moderates within the SBC; James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; Oliver Thomas, the BJC's general counsel, and Rex Horne, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark. Clinton is a member of Immanuel.

The BJC's Thomas called Clinton's speech a "pretty traditional Christian message."

"I think all of us need to hear that faith is important and that respect for one another is, too," Thomas said. "I think there is so much uncivil debate among religious leaders today" they need to hear that there is a right way and a wrong way to talk about these things.

The president reiterated his support of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, a bill which has passed the House of Representatives but has yet to be voted on in the Senate. A broad spectrum of religious groups, including the CLC and BJC, backs RFRA, which would restore religious liberty to a high standard of protection.

His administration is "committed to seeing (RFRA) through successfully," Clinton said.

The president also said Americans need to express their faith in the public arena "with a certain amount of humility. That we be careful when we say that because we seek to know and do God's will, God is on our side and, therefore, against our opponent.

"That is important for two reasons: One is we might be wrong," Clinton said. "The other is that the thing that has kept us together over time is that our Constitution and Bill of Rights gives us all the elbow room to seek to do God's will in our own life and that of our families and our communities. And that means that there will be inevitable conflicts, so that there will never be a time when everything that we think is wrong can also be illegal."

David Neff, managing editor of Christianity Today, said he sensed the speech was "very much from the heart."

While they did not discuss issues, Neff said he was able to discuss briefly with Clinton the "atmosphere of polarization" in the country and the need for people with diverse views to "be able to hear each other."

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Community assessment reveals  
needs, opportunities to minister

Baptist Press  
9/1/93

By Sarah Zimmerman

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--For Southern Baptists in Memphis, Tenn., a "community needs assessment" was an eye-opening and door-opening experience.

More than 100 people participated in the project by interviewing leaders of 79 community organizations about services they provide, problems they face, needs among residents and ways church members can help. Volunteers reported 288 requests for assistance.

Mary Smith of First Baptist Church of Memphis and Tina Willingham of Monument of Love Baptist Church in Memphis were assigned to visit two elementary schools.

The women expected to hear about the need for tutors or after-school programs, but one principal also said volunteers could landscape the campus, take students on field trips, teach children social skills and monitor behavior during lunch and recess.

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The door of opportunity opened when the principal said she had to choose between a science, art or music teacher due to budget restraints. The principal chose a science teacher, but she wanted volunteers to teach art and music. Smith, a former elementary school music teacher, found a place of service.

Such surveys help churches discover how they can be involved in meeting community needs without duplicating other efforts, said Nathan Porter, assistant director of the Home Mission Board's church and community ministries department. The surveys also build relationships with community leaders.

The Memphis assessment was coordinated by the Mississippi River Ministry Council of Shelby Baptist Association. Tim Cox, pastor of Brinkley Heights Baptist Church in Memphis and council chairman, said the assessment will help leaders assign volunteers for Mississippi River Ministry projects.

Begun last year, the Mississippi River Ministry is an attempt to meet physical and spiritual needs of people living along the Mississippi River, from New Orleans to Illinois.

Community assessments will help churches planning to participate in Hope for Hurting Humanity simultaneous ministry projects, Porter said. The project goal is for churches across the convention to conduct a ministry project between June 19 and July 31 next year.

In Memphis, the river ministry council recruited volunteers and made appointments with community leaders, ranging from police precinct commanders to social workers at the Veterans' Administration hospital.

The day of the assessment, volunteers met at Speedway Baptist Church for training. Each team of two or three people made two visits, spending 30 to 45 minutes at each site.

Volunteers asked if the leaders had a message for churches. An elementary school principal said, "Making social change is not just about money. Most of what we've talked about today involves time and caring."

The administrator of a homeless shelter said his message to churches is: "Come see what you can learn from these people, not just what you can do for them."

The objective of an assessment is to minister to people, not help agencies, Porter said. Being involved in community activities gives Christians an opportunity to share their faith through a lifestyle witness and a verbal testimony, he said.

Requests for volunteers outlined in a needs assessment can be overwhelming. A similar survey in White River Baptist Association in Arkansas produced a list of 108 ministry opportunities; Baptists in Stuttgart, Ark., discovered 85 needs; and a survey in Lee County Baptist Association in Mississippi revealed 124 needs.

Ann Putnam, associate director of the Home Mission Board church and community ministries department, offered four suggestions for choosing a ministry:

- 1) Address a neglected area. In communities with several clothing closets or food pantries, churches need to address other needs, such as literacy missions or medical ministries.
- 2) Consider available resources, including church buildings and people.
- 3) Seek God's leadership. "Pray through every step of the process," she said.
- 4) Design a ministry to let volunteers develop relationships with people rather than simply distribute material goods.

A planning notebook to help churches organize and evaluate a ministry project is available from the Home Mission Board. A series of brochures about starting specific ministries, from working with deaf people to developing a crisis pregnancy ministry, also is available. The HMB items, all free, can be ordered at 1-800-634-2462.

**Southwestern student shot  
during pizza delivery**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--A Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary student was in fair condition Sept. 1 at a Fort Worth, Texas, hospital after initial treatment for facial and dental injuries he sustained after being shot Aug. 30 while working as a pizza delivery driver.

Tim Pearcy's doctors are hopeful he will be released from Harris Methodist Hospital Sept. 3 or 4, according to Pearcy's wife, Sherri. He has undergone plastic surgery on his upper lip and jaw and will receive dental treatment on his top teeth. His employer, Pizza Hut, has agreed to pay all medical expenses, Mrs. Pearcy said.

Pearcy, 29, was attempting to deliver a pizza in southwest Fort Worth Aug. 30 when he was approached by a man with money. As the two men talked, another man reportedly approached from the opposite side of Pearcy's vehicle and shot Pearcy in the face while robbing him. The bullet entered the right side of Pearcy's upper lip before passing over his tongue and through his left upper lip area.

The amount of money stolen from Pearcy's vehicle is undisclosed.

Detectives with Fort Worth Police Department are investigating the incident. As of Sept. 1, no suspects had been named.

According to Mrs. Pearcy, her husband's only hope for the two men is that "they not rest until they accept Christ as their Savior and Lord."

The Pearcys and their 11-week-old son Riley reside in south Fort Worth. Pearcy is a second-year student in Southwestern's master of divinity program.

Lawrence Klempnauer, vice president for student services at Southwestern, has contacted the Pearcys' church to make them aware of the situation and he has assured the Pearcys financial aid is available for them and they would be in the seminary student body and staff's prayers.

"We have contacted Tim's professors and have assured his wife that his tuition would be refunded if he has to drop out for fall semester," Klempnauer said.

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**VISN/ACTS to highlight  
Habitat for Humanity**

**Baptist Press  
9/1/93**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--VISN/ACTS cable network will highlight Habitat for Humanity, which has completed its 20,000th home worldwide, in "Habitat Housewarming '93" to be aired Oct. 3. at 4 p.m. Eastern time.

The one-hour program will feature appearances by Habitat supporters Paul Newman, Bill Cosby and Willie Nelson and will be hosted by CNN's Judy Woodruff.

The program will include an interview with Habitat's most famous volunteer, former President Jimmy Carter; Habitat homeowners and volunteers sharing how Habitat for Humanity has changed their lives; news from projects in developing countries; and an update on Habitat's rebuilding efforts in the wake of Hurricane Andrew.

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing organization working in partnership with people in need throughout the world to build simple, decent homes that are sold to them at no profit through no-interest loans.

In many communities, people will gather in the homes of Habitat volunteers to view "Habitat Housewarming '93" and discuss ideas for generating support for Habitat's work in their area.

Seventeen years ago, founder and President Millard Fuller began work on his vision for eliminating poverty housing from the world. In less than two decades that vision has grown into a global housing ministry now building in more than 1,000 communities in 40 countries. In the United States last year, Habitat was ranked as the 22nd-largest home builder by Builder magazine.

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"Habitat works because it gives people an opportunity to put their faith into practice," Full r said. "It nables people from all walks of life to work together and make a difference. Habitat is a win-win proposition for the homeowners, volunteers and supporters."

Through volunteer labor, management expertise and tax-deductible donations of money and materials, Habitat builds and rehabilitates homes with the help of the potential homeowners, who are required to perform a minimum of 500 hours of "sweat equity" in Habitat projects. Houses are sold at no profit to partner families and no-interest mortgages are issued over a fixed period. Costs of homes differ relative to location, labor, land and materials.

Currently, Habitat estimates its houses in the United States cost homeowners an average of \$35,000 while houses in developing countries range from about \$500 to \$3,000. Small monthly mortgage payments, including taxes and insurance, are repaid over seven to 20 years and deposited into a revolving "Fund for Humanity" which supports the construction of more houses.

The ACTS portion of the VISN/ACTS cable channel is under the auspices of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

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Southwestern students score  
points for sports evangelism

By Bob Murdaugh

Baptist Press  
9/1/93

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--A basketball team of students from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, traveled to the Indian Ocean Islands this summer and scored points for world missions.

The Southwestern athletes' trip, which also involved two students on the women's team, was the first mission project sponsored by the International Sports Federation, an agency formed by Southern Baptist Foreign and Home Mission boards in June. Southwestern graduate Cheryl Wolfinger serves as the federation's program coordinator for the United States.

Mike Barrera, a Southwestern graduate diploma student in theology and the men's coach, said the U.S. teams showed "exemplary" sportsmanship in basketball and volleyball events during preliminaries for the Indian Ocean Islands International Games in Seychelles and Madagascar. He said representatives of the U.S. Embassy in Madagascar complimented the men's team on their positive attitudes.

When they were not on the courts, Barrera and the seminary students found p ople on Seychelles and Madagascar hungry to hear the gospel.

"The majority of the Seychelles people are 16 years of age and younger," Barrera said. "Christians there are starting to come together, and my teammates and I believe our trip helped Southern Baptist missionaries there to develop more contacts that will help them in their ministries."

Student Courtney Cash noted the American sports teams' mission trip helped Dennis Rivers, a new Southern Baptist missionary on Seychelles, to start a correspondence Bible study with staff members at the Seychelles hotel where the teams stayed.

"The Seychelles government put us up in the resort hotel and we witnessed to people from all over the world," Barrera said.

One of Barrera's most memorable witnessing opportunities on Seychelles resulted in a lesson on reconciliation for some of his American teammates, he said.

"One of our guys got beat hard physically during one of the games and was hot at a referee named Terrance," Barrera recalled. "Terrance had been one of the meanest guys we had encountered, until I got acquainted with him after the game and helped him rededicate his life to Christ. H came to our team's rap session later that day, shared about his rededication, and the brother that had been hot with him came over and gave him a hug."

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Two days after Terrance rededicated his life to Christ, a lady approached Barrera after he preached at her church. As tears trickled down her face, she introduced herself as Terrance's mother and thanked Barrera for reaching out to her son. A deacon at the same church approached Barrera later and said he had been praying for Terrance for many years.

"We couldn't just walk up to people in Madagascar and start sharing the gospel with them," Barrera said. "We did most of our witnessing in Madagascar with smiles, our T-shirts showing Christian messages and distribution of tracts. We have no way of knowing what long-range effects our efforts will have."

"We realized our attitudes on the court and our reactions to each other had big effects on the spectators," said Jackie Ard. "We were complimented for little things such as the way we would get up from the bench to make room for teammates."

In Madagascar, basketball games were played on gym floors covered by thick dust, Ard said. Play was further complicated by nails sticking up out of the floors.

Bruce McMinn likened playing basketball on the dusty gym floors in Madagascar to ice skating while trying to dribble a ball.

"After the U.S. men's first basketball game in Madagascar, a local newspaper article about us said that we were obviously not the U.S. Dream Team because our opponent didn't get slaughtered," McMinn said. "The U.S. Embassy representatives said it was strange to see Americans come walking into the gym in Madagascar. They knew our teams are American but they didn't know we are Christian-oriented."

Officials at the FMB and HMB are hoping this summer's first attempt at international sports evangelism will pave the way for future mission trips.

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Murdaugh is a newswriter at Southwestern Seminary. (BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the seminary.

Preacher intent on putting  
seminary lessons to work

By Scott Collins

Baptist Press  
9/1/93

HOUSTON (BP)--It's 9:30 Sunday morning and the line waiting to enter Brookhollow Baptist Church's worship center winds its way out the back door, down the sidewalk and into the parking lot.

Five security officers wave their arms in all directions, trying to maintain order. One lane of Houston's Bingle Road has been converted into part of the church's parking lot.

Inside, all 650 seats are filled for the 8 a.m. service, which, one and a half hours old, is beginning to hit high gear.

By 10 a.m., a mass of humanity fills the church as people leaving the first service merge with worshippers coming to the second service. It's a scene which will be repeated again at noon, when the third service of the day starts.

Shortly after 10, as the music begins to play, ushers are putting out extra chairs and at 10:30, people are still streaming into the worship center. By the time Ralph West steps to the pulpit, every seat is filled and people are standing. Taking energy from the crowd, West grins from ear to ear as he stands behind the cross-shaped pulpit.

"I'm a frustrated talk-show host," he says, to laughs and sporadic applause. "When I retire, I'm going to have my own show."

If his success as pastor of the five-year-old church in northwest Houston is any indication, West, 33, will set ratings records.

When he began Brookhollow Thanksgiving day in 1987, the church had 32 members and met in West's home.

Today, membership exceeds 2,300 and more than 20 people join each week. All three Sunday worship services fill the 650-seat auditorium to capacity. The same is true for the two Tuesday evening Bible studies. Donations are so strong that the church's banker, after following weekly deposits, visited one Sunday to see what was happening.

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In addition, Brookhollow has added six full-time staff members and continues to expand its ministries in the community.

That expansion is just beginning. In June, the church purchased 40 acres for a new building. Acquiring the land is "a miracle we can't explain," West says. Valued in 1983 at \$4.6 million, Brookhollow bought the property from Austin Presbyterian School of Theology for \$114,000.

The purchase of the land and the eventual construction of a new church plant are part of West's and Brookhollow's 40-year dream.

Like West, the dream is very much under the influence of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where West has been a student since 1988.

After completing his undergraduate work at Bishop College in Dallas and studying preaching at Princeton University, West returned to Houston where he enrolled in Southwestern's off-campus center.

West says Southwestern's program in Houston provides the only way he could have attended seminary. His schedule keeps him busy at Brookhollow, and West is constantly on the road, speaking at churches throughout the country.

But a busy schedule is not the only reason West is grateful for Southwestern's Houston program.

"It's important to be able to study at a seminary in the context where you minister," he says.

West puts that education to work through Brookhollow, especially lessons he learned in a preaching class taught by Al Fasol, professor of preaching.

"He always asked us if our sermons feed back into the Bible," West says. "You know, that's one of the questions we ask here in staff meetings. 'OK, that's a great idea. Now, what does the text say? Does God say anything about that at all?' If we can't find it in the text, we may not want to do it."

Keeping his ministry and Brookhollow tied closely to the Bible is important to West, who credits the biblical approach for the church's explosive growth.

"That's one of the things we credit the majority of our success to. We say that this church is where Jesus is exalted and the Word of God is explained."

West's commitment to completing his education comes from his desire to reverse the stereotype of African American preachers who have been accused of being "all sound and no substance. We (African Americans) believe that the calling of God is the equivalent of preparation, so we rely on the gifts that we have. If we are gifted to articulate or gifted to teach, then that's enough. For the most part, we have not had a lot of men in our tradition who have prepared themselves in seminary to actually encourage others."

The seminary education is proving crucial to West, whose congregation leans toward middle-class and upper-middle class blacks. Several Brookhollow members are college graduates and many have done graduate work.

"The person I'm trying to reach is the unchurched," West says. "But I'm trying to get another group of unchurched -- that group of the unchurched who has been in church and dropped out. I'm trying to get that group who said that the church is irrelevant and doesn't speak to my needs. And I'm trying to get that agnostic -- the one that has had enough injury in life to say God can't be trusted."

West's education has "put me on a path to say I have gone through what many of the people in my congregation have gone through. When you stand up and you're prepared, then this group that has gone through that says, 'I can talk to him. At least he's been through what I've gone through.'

"What I'm learning is not only practical but useable. I put it into practice right here."

West credits Southwestern, especially Fasol, for his passion to preach. "When he (Fasol) sits back and starts talking about preaching, I'm just all into that.

"Southwestern has not only helped kindle the flame of preaching and kept the fire burning, but it has given me what I believe is needed -- the biblical basis of how it needs to be done. You know that you're preaching a biblical sermon when you can take that text and you can say this is God's Word. This is not my opinion. This is God's Word."

Faithfulness is underscored  
in Dilday's words to students      By Brian Smith

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The faithfulness God expects of Christians can be found completely in God himself, the president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, told students at the school's opening chapel Aug. 31.

Using the text of the hymn "Great is Thy Faithfulness" as the theme for the new school year, Russell H. Dilday challenged students and faculty to remember "God is sufficient, his love never ends, he is always on call and he never changes."

"All those qualities of faithfulness we expect in one another and that God expects of us, we find in him in perfect form," Dilday said. "God expects us to be faithful. We are to adhere to duty firmly; we are to be true; we are to have allegiance and staunch consistency; we are to be incorruptible. That is what faithfulness means."

In concluding his message, Dilday told the students the word "faithfulness" as found in Lamentations comes from the same root as the word "amen." "So when we say, 'God is faithful,' it is as though we are saying 'amen and amen,'" he said.

The first chapel signals the opening of the 1993-94 school year at Southwestern, the school's 86th.

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Smith, a summer intern at the Foreign Mission Board, now is a newswriter at Southwestern Seminary. (BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the seminary.

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