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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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September 8, 1993

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Yeltsin plans to reject  
revised law on religion

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press  
9/8/93

MOSCOW (BP)--Russian President Boris Yeltsin plans a second veto of laws Parliament has passed limiting religious freedom, presidential advisers said Sept. 6.

The advisers decided Yeltsin legally deserves another crack at the restrictions to suggest changes or declare his outright rejection.

Lawmakers chose not to adopt amendments Yeltsin suggested to a first draft law Aug. 4. Instead, they wrote a new law -- passed two weeks later -- which they say is sensitive to his objections.

Yeltsin's promised delay of the revised law offers renewed hope to evangelicals and foreign missionaries in Russia. They stand to lose the most from the new restrictions, which bolster the strength of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Enactment of the law over Yeltsin's objections could take weeks, moving Russia that much closer to a possible new constitution. The constitution now being drafted is expected to guarantee free practice of religion, change the lawmaking process or even call for new elections.

Yeltsin is expected to take until Sept. 20 -- the full two weeks allotted to him -- before acting on the revised religion law. For now, advisers said, he is embroiled in his latest fight with Parliament: the ouster of a former ally, Vice President Alexander Rutskoi. Rutskoi has become a cornerstone in a blockade against political reforms, including the new constitution.

Rutskoi and First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeiko, a Yeltsin ally, have been dismissed by Yeltsin pending an investigation into corruption charges.

Support for the new religion law in Parliament has been led by an Orthodox priest, Vyacheslav Polosin. Polosin has extended his campaign outside of Moscow's White House, where Parliament meets, and into the mass media, angrily attacking Westerners' efforts to evangelize Russia.

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But his distrust finds company throughout high-level Orthodox ranks and even into the government's executive branch. Unaccustomed to extreme views bred in an arena of free thought, many Russians have fought back against what they view as an invasion of foreigners preaching a wide variety of doctrines.

In recent weeks, however, the Russian Orthodox leader, Patriarch Alexei, has lobbied Parliament less actively to adopt the religious restrictions. Alexei earlier had threatened to throw the weight of his church behind Yeltsin's opposition if the president stood in the way of the new law.

If Parliament votes for restrictions again, Yeltsin will seek to have the law struck down in Constitutional Court, advisers said. Such legal wranglings could delay it even longer.

The president, engaged in a bitter, multifaceted contest against anti-reform lawmakers, rejected a first draft law July 14. He accused lawmakers of ignoring accepted international norms of freedom and cited specific areas of the law he said needed rewriting.

The revised version Parliament passed would give sweeping powers to the Justice Department, police and courts to shut down Russian religious groups and monitor missionaries. It also provides government support to the Russian Orthodox Church.

A spokesman for Yeltsin told lawmakers the president would prefer that religious freedom be addressed in the context of other laws. But Parliament chided Yeltsin for not specifically wording proposed amendments -- which, insiders say, lawmakers would have rejected flatly anyway.

Reformist lawmaker Gleb Yakunin, an evangelical Russian Orthodox priest leading opposition to the restrictions, said he is pleased Yeltsin will fight the new law.

"The law will not come into effect as it stands now," said Yakunin. "The president is not yielding."

Human rights experts agree the future of religious freedom, as well as other personal freedoms, depends primarily on Yeltsin's prevailing in efforts to enact a fairer lawmaking process.

Evangelical leaders in Russia wrote Yeltsin Aug. 30 protesting the revised law. They decried police involvement in religion and accused Parliament of distorting Yeltsin's arguments against the first draft law. Parliament's new draft, they charged, is vague, blatantly violates the Russian constitution and contradicts itself.

Denominations represented in the letter included Baptists, Pentecostals and Seventh-day Adventists.

Westerners, including more than 170 United States congressmen and European leaders, have voiced their concern over the law to Yeltsin. Yakunin plans a late September trip to Washington, where he will campaign for more U.S. support for Russian religious freedom.

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Christian musicians endorse  
'True Love Waits' campaign

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press  
9/8/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Some of today's most well-known contemporary Christian recording artists publicly voiced their support Sept. 7 of a nationwide campaign aimed at encouraging teen-agers and college students to remain sexually pure until marriage.

In a Nashville news conference, the artists endorsed "True Love Waits," a campaign initiated by the Baptist Sunday School Board and now supported by a variety of denominations and religious organizations. As part of the campaign, thousands of young people from across the country already have signed covenants promising to remain abstinent until they marry.

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To encourage those making pledges, several Christian artists have combined their talents on a new 10-song audio cassette specifically focusing on God's original design for sexuality.

Featured on the "True Love Waits" tape are songs like "I Don't Want It" by DC Talk; "Old Enough to Know" by Michael W. Smith; "Love" by Petra; and "I Am Not Ashamed" by the Newsboys. Other artists performing on the tape include: DeGarmo & Key, Geoff Moore and the Distance, Kenny Marks, Lisa Bevill and Code of Ethics. It is being released by Genevox, the music publishing arm of the BSSB, in conjunction with Interl'inc, a Nashville-based agency that links contemporary Christian artists with local churches and Christian ministries.

"Music is the language of today's youth," Interl'inc president Allen Weed said. "The latest studies show that the average teen will listen to four hours of music every day. The majority are listening to mainstream secular music which has a message that is in direct conflict with the biblical view of sexuality.

"The Christian artists on the 'True Love Waits' tape are great role models for kids today," Weed continued. "We believe getting the tape in the hands of teens who make the 'True Love Waits' pledge will serve not only as a positive reminder of their promise, but as an encouragement to keep it."

Genevox director Mark Blankenship agreed.

"Today's youth are hit with so many conflicting messages about sex from the media, no wonder they're confused. If we can play a part in helping them understand God's plan for sexuality from the Bible and encourage them to follow it, then we will have accomplished something important," he said.

Several of the artists participating in the project attended the news conference at the Sunday School Board announcing the upcoming release of the special recording. Many were wearing white ribbons to symbolize their commitment to the campaign's theme of sexual purity outside of marriage.

"I only wish I had had some kind of focus point like this when I was a teenager," Eddie DeGarmo of the recording duo DeGarmo & Key said.

"One thing that excites me is that we are talking about this. (In the past), Christian churches and organizations seemed to deny that Christian young people have the same problems (as their non-Christian peers). Christian teen-agers have sex. Christian teens have AIDS. ... And those scars last forever," he said.

"We have got to understand that the sex game is no game. It's life and death now," Petra lead singer John Schlitt said. The father of four added, "I'm scared for my kids. If we don't get serious about (this issue), then who will?"

Michael Tate of the Christian rap group DC Talk said the mainstream media has ignored abstinence for a long time, "but it is a positive goal. I'm glad we can be a part of this."

Lisa Bevill, the only female recording artist on the tape, encouraged parents to talk with their children and teen-agers about sex. "That's one of the most important things we can do as parents. I can't believe there isn't more talking going on. ... We need to take this to heart," she said.

In his remarks about the campaign, BSSB President James T. Draper Jr. mentioned the recent emphasis on "True Love Waits" at a Baptist camp in Oklahoma. More than 13,000 teens signed "True Love Waits" covenants there during the summer.

"True Love Waits" spokesman Richard Ross also reported the campaign is getting some international exposure as well. He recently received a mailing with 72 signed covenants from teens in Hungary who had heard about the campaign.

In addition, newspapers in London and in Ontario, Canada, have carried reports about "True Love Waits," he said.

The "True Love Waits" recording is scheduled for release Oct. 15 and will be available in both the audio cassette and compact disc formats. It can be ordered directly from the Baptist Sunday School Board's Customer Service Center at 1-800-458-2772. It is expected to be available in Christian book stores in the first quarter of 1994.

**Texas Baptists promoting  
school-year abstinence effort**

By Ken Camp

HOUSTON (BP)--Organizers of the "True Love Waits" campaign in Texas hope many youth ministers will make the sexual purity emphasis a top priority in plans for the coming school year.

"We are asking churches to devote a worship service to the emphasis and encouraging associations to schedule rallies where young people can declare publicly their commitment to sexual purity," said Chris Liebrum, youth consultant in the Sunday school/discipleship division of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

About 20,000 Texas teen-agers are expected to sign covenant cards pledging they will remain sexually pure, and hundreds of those teens are being encouraged to participate in an Oct. 26 rally in Dallas in conjunction with the annual BGCT meeting.

True Love Waits is a national campaign launched by the Baptist Sunday School Board promoting sexual abstinence among teens. By the time the Southern Baptist Convention is held in Orlando next summer, national campaign organizers hope to have received 100,000 signed covenant cards from teens nationwide pledging sexual abstinence.

In June, every Texas Baptist church received a copy of the True Love Waits campaign kit. Each kit included a fact sheet, worship plans for use in families, churches and associations, a sample news release, clip art, a youth Bible study on "true love" and a sample covenant card.

Also included was information about ordering acrylic card holders to display publicly the covenant cards.

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**Communist torture yields  
Christian conversion**

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press  
9/8/93

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (BP)--Faith often leads to torture. But for Ephraim Chewaka, torture led to faith.

In the midst of a savage beating by Ethiopian communist troops, Chewaka tested "the truth of the Bible, where it says revenge belongs to God."

Three times, as new assaults pounded him, he consciously "became keep-quiet" -- and stilled his anger and hatred toward his tormentors.

Each time the pain lessened. Finally he could barely feel the touch of rubber hoses, fists and sticks. He asked himself: "Do we actually believe the right Bible?" and concluded: "If God is telling the truth about loving our enemies, then he must be telling the truth about Jesus Christ and salvation."

Aloud he exclaimed, "Oh Lord, hallelujah, oh Lord they don't know what they are doing," and kissed the hand of one soldier who hit him. "At that exact moment," he says quietly, "I claimed Jesus."

Kissing one soldier's hand made them all angry and they began beating him simultaneously. "But -- when the stick became more and more -- I got joy."

That was in 1978. Today Chewaka, 33, is a key leader in the New Covenant Evangelical Baptist Convention of Ethiopia -- a quiet and gentle man who has dedicated his life to telling the children of Ethiopia about Jesus.

Ironically, Chewaka should not have been arrested when troops of the Derge (the communist government that ruled Ethiopia from 1971-90) rounded up Christian believers in his western Ethiopian hometown of Kaffa.

When a sound truck rolled through the streets blaring, "Anyone under the age of 30 who goes to church tomorrow will be shot," it didn't take him long to decide: "Jesus has never done anything for me worth dying for."

He was 19 years old, had taught Sunday school since he was 7, sang in the choir and was treasurer of a 2,000-member church where his father was pastor. Still, he immediately "canceled to go to church," as he put it. He turned over the congregation's money and his keys.

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He stayed home that Sunday -- but on Monday he was picked up along with 17 other members of the choir who had gone to church. Two days later in the basement of the prison, between screams of pain and hatred, he realized other choir members were singing and smiling as they were beaten. Hours later he joined them in their unusual -- but biblical -- response to persecution.

It wasn't that Chewaka hadn't been exposed to dramatic Christian testimonies or Christian teaching. His father, Chewaka Welaga, was driven from home as a 9-year-old boy for becoming a Christian and rejecting the African traditional religion and snake worship of his village. Eight years later, he sneaked back with a shotgun, killed the holy snake and yelled from the hillside before fleeing: "I have killed your god -- you should have believed in the One True God."

Three years after that Chewaka's father returned to find that his mother and all his brothers and sisters had become Christians. He stayed to organize the church where Chewaka grew up.

The boy's Christianity had been a sham. But from that dramatic moment when he kissed the hand hitting him, Chewaka has consistently lived out the faith he falsely practiced before.

Deliverance did not immediately follow his submission to God, however. His ordeal in the prison continued for several more days. Today opposition to evangelical Christians comes from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church instead of the ousted Communist government.

"But I like persecution," Chewaka insists. "It grows a Christian."

The beatings of the choir members began at 8:30 a.m. on a Wednesday. About 350 soldiers took turns smashing the believers. They continued until 12:30 a.m. Thursday before the commanding officer declared: "Surely their God is with them. They have more power than we do."

During that time a woman being beaten in the chest with a stick lifted her eyes and prayed for the man hitting her; a man with a critical kidney condition collapsed and didn't respond even when the soldiers pressed coals to his bare feet and rubbed pepper in his eyes. Eventually he stood and when he finally was released, his kidneys were fine.

"This is a hospital, not a persecution place," they sang as they walked back to their cells.

But 19 people filed out of the room instead of the 18 who had been arrested. One of the soldiers had accepted Christ during the day, publicly stated that fact and voluntarily went to be locked up. "To this day he serves the Lord in that church and sings in the choir," Chewaka says.

After a few hours' sleep the believers were summoned outside and, in the pouring rain, forced to exercise all Thursday and through the night. Friday morning the prisoners' families came with coffee, tea and food. But Chewaka and the others insisted the commanding officer and their guards -- clad in warm rain coats -- be served first.

"The commander cried and asked how we could do that after all he had done to us," Chewaka remembers. "We explained he had done good to us, not harm. He had meant it for evil, but God had meant it for good."

Two hours later the commander announced he would release them, commenting: "I can't do this anymore -- you just keep getting stronger."

"He was shivering under that big warm coat," Chewaka recounts. "Later he was imprisoned himself -- maybe for letting us go. I don't know if he ever became a believer."

When the great famine of the mid-1980s devastated his country, Chewaka began working with Southern Baptist missionaries in Ethiopia. In feeding centers and clinics throughout the highlands, he quietly shared his testimony of a God who is as good as his word.

During that time he began working in child evangelism and developing what he calls "House-to-House Evangelism." One of his major tenets is that children must earn the right to witness for Christ.

Perhaps remembering his own childhood when he acted the part of a Christian without really believing it himself, he teaches: "There must be a change in your life that other people notice. Because Christ is within you you must be the best son or daughter, the truest friend, the hardest-working student. When God changes the way you live then you earn the right to tell others about him."

He doesn't want the youngsters to someday have to realize, as he did in that prison basement:

"God, I served you for nothing for all these years. Now I see you in this persecution place, and I want to serve you for real."

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(BP) photo (vertical) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet Newsroom.

Christian 'forest' based  
on 'sapling' converts

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press  
9/8/93

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (BP)--Ephraim Chewaka sees people as trees.

Not like the blind man of the New Testament (Mark 8:22-25) whose sight was only partially restored when Jesus first touched him, but as an evangelical Christian seeking to invest his time wisely.

"You can plant 100 small trees in an hour, but if you try to dig up a mature tree you can spend a whole week -- and even then the tree might die," he explained. In his analogy "small trees" are the children of Ethiopia. "Mature trees" are adults steeped in the culture and traditions of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

"But," he continued, "if you take care of those small trees, after five or seven years they become big strong trees that can't be moved. I'd rather spend my time planting hundreds or thousands of small trees and helping them grow strong than trying to move old trees."

He planted his first crop of "believer saplings" in the highlands during Ethiopia's great famine. While working for the Baptist Mission of Ethiopia at a feeding station, he was drawn to the crowds of children with nothing to do.

"We set up classes and taught 25 kids at a time while another 125 played outside," he explained. "Not many people noticed they were inside learning about Jesus in groups of 25."

Back in the capital of Addis Ababa he altered the program he calls "House-to-House Evangelism" to its present form. It operates on three principles:

1) Children will listen to other Ethiopians teach about Jesus, especially siblings and neighbors. Orthodox priests point out that missionaries do such "non-Christian" things as eat pork and fail to observe the fasts and are not to be trusted. Chewaka challenges members of New Covenant Baptist Church to begin "being light in their own homes" by teaching siblings what they learn, then being trained to teach groups of children in their neighborhoods.

2) Ethiopian parents don't hover over their children and seldom know where they are or what they're doing between breakfast and supper.

3) The right to witness does not come the same instant as a becoming a believer. (Ethiopian evangelicals refer to themselves as "believers" since Orthodox church members also are called Christians. The Orthodox refer to all evangelicals as "Pentays," a derisive term taken from Pentecostals.) Rather, a child must live a life so changed by his or her relationship to Christ that parents and friends can see the difference. Then they can reveal the source of that change.

Chewaka insists the secrecy is not dishonest.

"When we tell the children not to tell their parents what they're learning it's to protect them from persecution and insults" until they know how to handle it, he said. "We teach them that if they follow Christ they must be the best son or daughter, the best brother or sister, the truest friend, the hardest working student. They must be kind and honest," he said.

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"Then when parents, friends or teachers ask why they're that way they can tell them -- and they'll be more willing to listen instead of shutting them out like the priest says. And if no one notices any change in them in two or three months, then perhaps their lives really haven't changed."

It works.

At a Sunday afternoon party all the "classes" from the area gather beside a small stream. As the children answer questions from Bible stories, play games and enjoy refreshments, Chewaka points out a boy with a shaved head.

"When his parents found out he was studying with us they cut off all his hair as punishment and forbade him to come," Chewaka said. "He asked me what to do and I told him a Christian obeys his parents and he must forgive them and be the best son he could.

"After a month his parents were so impressed with how he acted that they asked me to their house. They not only let him come back, but he brought four brothers and sisters with him. And the parents asked me to teach them. We now have an adult Bible study in their home."

Later 10-year-old Lydia teaches the other children another Bible story. Chewaka says she's one of the best evangelists he's ever seen. Almost every week another one of her friends becomes a believer with her encouragement.

"Lydia's family members are all committed believers, but it's still amazing to hear someone her age teach like she does," he added. "And she's now a fearless witness because she started in House-to-House Evangelism four years ago when she was very small. Now she's growing strong. It would be very difficult to move her from her faith."

Chewaka sees those "saplings" growing straight and tall and true to the teachings of the Bible.

In the future he sees a forest of firmly rooted, committed evangelical Christians in Ethiopia who have earned the right to speak to everyone they meet about Jesus Christ.

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(BP) photo (vertical) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available on SBCNet Newsroom.

Rankin 'affirms, solidifies'  
FMB partnership with WMU

By Susan Doyle

Baptist Press  
9/8/93

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--In his first visit to Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union since becoming president of the Foreign Mission Board, Jerry Rankin affirmed the 105-year-old partnership between the two organizations.

"Your faithful support means so much to our foreign missions effort," Rankin told the national WMU staff and WMU leaders from the Birmingham area assembled Sept. 3 at the national WMU building to meet him.

"After becoming president of the Foreign Mission Board, one of my top priorities was for us to get together and for us to affirm and solidify our partnership," he said.

Rankin did not bring specific ideas to the WMU staff of ways the partnership could be strengthened, but rather asked for their suggestions and input. Rankin, accompanied by his wife, Bobbie, received an orientation to the work being done by WMU.

Rankin told the WMU staff he strongly believes there is still work for Southern Baptists to do in missions. God isn't obligated to use Southern Baptists in reaching the world for Christ, he said. But he is calling out the personnel and tapping the resources among Southern Baptists to fulfill his purpose, he said.

"We must not be diverted from God's purpose," he said.

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**Warrington to fill  
FMB volunteer post**

By Erich Bridges

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--J. Thomas Warrington begins a new job Sept. 13 at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board after three months of administrative leave to consider options at the board.

He will become associate director for the Spanish South America, Middle America and Canada section in the volunteers in missions department. The post became vacant when veteran volunteer specialist James Cecil retired July 31.

In late June, he was asked to step down from his former job as associate area director in the board's Europe area office. John Floyd, the new area director for Europe, said he was looking for someone with "a different match of gifts" who had lived in the area to fill the Europe associate role. He has since named Roger Briggs, missionary church starter in Brussels, Belgium, to the post.

Warrington, who has 13 years' experience with the board as a missionary and staff member, was asked to consider interviewing for another job at the board.

FMB President Jerry Rankin said he supported Floyd's wish to seek another person as his associate. But Rankin told Warrington July 1 he "had no intention to terminate" him from the board as events made it appear, "merely to transfer him to another position." Rankin apologized to Warrington for miscommunication about the shift. Warrington asked for time to consider his options and was granted administrative leave.

Warrington worked in the Europe office during two years of turmoil over philosophical differences between board trustees and some staff and missionaries who either retired early or resigned in protest. Floyd and Rankin said the request for Warrington to leave the office had nothing to do with the earlier turmoil.

Asked for comment about his return, Warrington said he prayed about his future and asked advice from others for "three solid months." The transition won't be easy, he admitted, but "I've just got to work myself back into it."

"I look forward to that," he said. "My love for missions has never dwindled, and the avenue Southern Baptists have is through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board."

In his new role, Warrington will enlist and train short-term mission volunteers who go to Spanish-speaking South America, Middle America and Canada through FMB volunteer initiatives and state or associational mission partnerships.

Warrington knows the area. He was a missionary to Costa Rica for six years until resignation as a missionary in 1982. He rejoined the board in 1986 as a consultant to help guide missionary candidates through the appointment process. In June 1991 former area director Keith Parker tapped him as associate director for Europe.

Warrington said many people had expressed support and concern for him, including Rankin, after he left the Europe post.

"He has been very sympathetic," Warrington said of the new FMB chief. "He's been out to my home. He and his wife came out and spent time with my wife, Sandy, and myself. He has asked me more than once to please consider this position and said he would hate to see me lost to the organization. And I trust that."

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'Women of Excellence'  
nominations sought

Baptist Press  
9/8/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Nominations are being received for the second annual "Christian Women of Excellence" recognition sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Woman's Missionary Union.

The honorees will be presented during "Panorama: National Christian Women's Enrichment Conference" in Atlanta, March 24-26, 1994.

Women nominated should exemplify biblical values of Christian women and be considered role models for Christian women of the '90s.

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Four women will be chosen from these categories: two laypersons, one minister's wife and one woman in vocational ministry.

Recommendations must be submitted on a form which can be obtained by writing or calling Christian Women of Excellence, 127 Ninth Avenue North, MSN 171, Nashville, TN 37234, (615) 251-2277.

The first recognitions were presented at the first national Christian women's enrichment conference in San Antonio, Texas, earlier this year.

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Churches share space to help  
with flood relief efforts

By Laurie A. Lattimore

Baptist Press  
9/8/93

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--Wyatt Park Baptist Church in St. Joseph, Mo., has 250 young people from Kansas in its chairs every weekday. But they are not there for church. They are attending school. Wyatt Park is one of many Missouri churches that have given over building space to aid survivors of the Flood of '93.

The one school in Elwood, Kan., was wiped out by the bloated Missouri River -- as were most of the homes and businesses in the river town -- leaving its 250 kindergarten through high school students stranded as the first day of school drew closer.

But before the school district had to divide up students among other area schools, Wyatt Park came to the rescue, offering to give up its building five days a week free of charge to accommodate the students. The church's action has drawn national attention and received coverage in both the New York Times and USA Today.

"We said from the beginning that for this to work, we were going to have to communicate, cooperate and be creative," said Jim Stuck, minister of weekday activities at Wyatt Park. "And the greatest thing about it has been the pulling together. I know it is hard to believe, but we have not had any problems. The church and the community have been behind this 110 percent."

The second and third floors of the educational building have been designated for classroom space. Band and choir classes practice in the music rooms, and the gymnasium logically is used for physical education. Art classes and home economics also have designated rooms.

Administrative offices -- for the church and the school -- share the same wing of the second floor. A separate phone line has been installed for the school, and a kitchen has been converted into a nurse's station.

Lunch is served in the fellowship hall. The sanctuary is used for organizational meetings and even pep rallies.

Wyatt Park is committed to housing the students as long as needed -- possibly through the end of the school year in June. Federal Emergency Management Agency and insurance officials anticipated repairing the Elwood school by Christmas break, so students could move back in by the first of the year.

There are some sacrifices by students and teachers -- desks, lockers, rooms decorated for a particular subject or class -- but Wyatt Park's air conditioning and a nautilus center are perks the students don't normally get to enjoy.

And Wyatt Park is benefitting from the temporary school as well. A portable "star lab" for looking at constellations is set up and available to all children in the church's day-care program. The drug-free education program from the school has been made available to Wyatt Park youth and their parents.

"It is just total cooperation," Stuck said. "From what I have observed, the kids are happy, which makes the kids' parents happy, which makes the teachers happy."

Stuck said there has been some lighthearted joking among both administrations about the irony of a public school meeting in a church. But all emphasize the school is doing what it has to do in order to keep its students in one place.

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Stuck said there have been no complaints or even requests to take down signs pinned up on Sunday school bulletin boards. He noted Kansas Gov. Joan Finney remarked about a poster that read, "It is hard to fall off your feet, if you are constantly on your knees."

"The governor asked a Sunday school teacher if she had put that sign up on purpose, and the teacher said it had been up for a while. Then the governor remarked that it was so appropriate," Stuck said. "Most of the comments from teachers and school staff have been that this reminds us of Who is really in charge."

Several other Missouri Baptist churches have given over space to be used in aiding survivors of the summer's flood. Although in all cases the churches had to do some reorganizing and accommodating, members were willing to deal with some minor inconveniencing to help many displaced and devastated by the flood.

Edmundson Road Baptist Church in St. Louis virtually has turned its facility into the Red Cross feeding site headquarters, where Emergency Response Vehicles deliver meals all over the St. Louis area. The site has been open since the last part of June and anticipates providing meals until the end of September and possibly into October.

The church's kitchen, gymnasium and two Sunday school department classrooms have been turned into disaster relief rooms for cooking, storage, meetings, vaccinations and other needs related to flood relief. Half of the parking lot is marked off for the ERVs and 18-wheeler trucks with food and supplies.

Rich Miller, minister of education at Edmundson Road, said the church posts a sign that it is a Red Cross Disaster Relief site and members have made a conscious decision to support that ministry in times of disaster, despite inconveniences to normal church activities.

"It gives us tremendous visibility," Miller said, adding they have had television and radio coverage, visits from state leaders and cooperated with many volunteers from other local denominations. "Red Cross volunteers from all over the country have been working here, and several join us for worship on Sunday morning."

First Baptist Church in Jefferson City, Mo., loaned its activities building to Red Cross for a shelter to house families and individuals who lost homes in the flood. Red Cross volunteers used the church's kitchen to make three meals each day for shelter inhabitants.

Pastor Gary Parker said the church did a lot of rescheduling and reorganizing for a month to work around the shelter, but members were responsive to needs.

"It gave us a real sense of how to help and a centralized way to meet human needs," Parker said. Church members donated food, clothing, cleaning supplies and even toothpaste to people in the shelter. "Any time a church meets a need like this, it is an opportunity for others to come into contact with people who care in the name of our Lord."

First Calvary Baptist Church in Kansas City only had its doors opened for seven days, but they were seven important days for Red Cross feeding operations. Red Cross and church member volunteers moved in for a week to make lunch and dinner for people cleaning up the mess after the flood. More than 2,000 meals were served in that week, and the use of the kitchen posed no problem for other church activities.

"We just worked around it and we all got along great," said Jeffrey Brundage, the church's director of education and singles' ministries.

The cooking tents, trucks and trailers of the Tennessee Baptist disaster relief unit occupied half of the largest of three parking lots at First Baptist Church in Cape Girardeau for more than a month. The church's activities building was home to volunteer crews there to cook meals for flood victims, and two Sunday school rooms were made available to volunteers.

Richard McClure, the church's minister of education, noted, "It's given our people a chance to be involved directly in a mission opportunity."

**Patterson says churches, world  
'standing in the need of prayer' By Debbie Moore**

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Speaking about "one of the shortest but most meaningful prayers ever offered," Paige Patterson delivered the 76th annual convocation address at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Referring to Peter's prayer in Matthew 14, "Lord, save me," Patterson said, "If our churches are to be revitalized, if our own personal ministries are ever to attain the standards that God has for them, we must learn how to walk with God in prayer."

President of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., since July 1992, Patterson previously was president of Criswell College in Dallas from 1975-92 and an associate pastor at Dallas' First Baptist Church. His wife, Dorothy, is the sister of NOBTS professor Chuck Kelley, director of the seminary's Center for Evangelism and Church Growth. The Pattersons are both graduates of New Orleans Seminary, he in 1968 with a master of theology degree and in 1973 with a doctor of theology degree, and she in 1968 with a master of theology degree.

In his message on the apostle's prayer, Patterson offered three facts concerning the significance of prayer.

First, "prayer is a rendezvous with our benefactor," he said. "A failure to pray is a confession that we do not enjoy God as we ought to. A failure to pray is to say, 'It does not thrill our hearts when we are in your presence.' ... If I really love the presence of the Lord, I will have frequent rendezvous with my benefactor; I will seek his face often. A failure to pray is an indication of serious sin in our lives." Secondly, "prayer is a requisition of God's resources," Patterson said. "A failure to pray is the ultimate expression of human arrogance and self-sufficiency. ... On the other hand, prayer is also the divinely ordained conduit through which the blessings of God abundantly flow into your life."

Thirdly, "prayer is recognition of our own predicament," he said. Quoting from an old spiritual hymn, Patterson said, "'It's me, it's me, oh Lord, standing in the need of prayer.' That is not good grammar, but it is excellent theology ... Prayer is that activity that lays hold on God and recognizes before him our own inadequacy."

Patterson told students the story of the conversion of B.H. Carroll, a founding father and first president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in the early 1900s. By his own admission "an infidel," Carroll's conversion came about by "a mother who believed that God must step in, a mother who had learned how to wait upon the Lord and to find his presence. God heard her prayer and did that which no man can do.

"The healing of our land, the healing of our world, the healing of our convention, the healing of our churches, and our own healing is dependent upon the intervention of God, which comes only as a result of prayer," Patterson said.

New Orleans Seminary's 76th annual convocation service, traditionally held on the first Thursday in September, began with nine new faculty members signing both the seminary's Articles of Religious Belief and the Southern Baptist Convention's Baptist Faith and Message statement.

The seminary's 10 articles were written by the school's first president, Byron Hoover DeMent, and others in 1918, and currently have been signed by 195 men and women approved by seminary trustees to serve on the NOBTS faculty.

New Orleans Seminary was the first of the six Southern Baptist seminaries also to have faculty sign their names to the 17-point Baptist Faith and Message. NOBTS trustees voted on March 7, 1979, before it was an issue within the convention, to have new faculty members subscribe to both documents. The Baptist Faith and Message originally was adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925, then clarified in 1963.

Landrum P. Leavell II, NOBTS president, pledged his loyalty to faculty members and assured them that within the parameters of both the Articles of Religious Belief and the Baptist Faith and Message they could express their convictions and teach their classes with full support from the administration.

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(BP) photo available upon request from New Orleans Seminary's office of public relations.

O.S. Hawkins, Jack Graham  
boosted by late Texas pastor

By Toby Druin

Baptist Press  
9/8/93

DALLAS (BP)--When O.S. Hawkins told the congregation of First Baptist Church in Dallas Aug. 29 he would accept their call as pastor, Fred Swank must have been smiling. One of his "boys" had made it to what many see as the pinnacle of pastoral leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Fred Swank became like a real father to me in many ways spiritually," said Hawkins, reflecting on the influence the longtime pastor of Sagamore Hill Baptist Church in nearby Fort Worth had on him in his youth. Swank led the church 42 years, during which it grew from 200 to more than 5,000 members. He retired in 1976 and died in 1982.

Hawkins was born in Fort Worth and grew up on the city's east side, the son of Otis and Lucille Cozby Hawkins. His mother died in 1981. His father, 86, lives in Fort Lauderdale, where the younger Hawkins has been pastor the last 15 years.

Hawkins was in high school when a friend, Johnny Keeton, witnessed to him following a basketball game. "He began sharing with me how Christ had come into his life and what a difference it had made," said Hawkins. "I thought the guy was crazy but I couldn't get away from what he said."

A couple of days later Keeton shared some verses with him out of Romans and on Sunday, Jan. 3, 1965, Hawkins went with him to Sagamore Hill Baptist Church. "For the first time in my life I really heard the gospel and I was converted to Christ that morning," he said. "I have never been the same."

A friendship developed with Swank, he said, and many times he and a friend, Jack Graham, now pastor at Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas, would drop by the Swanks' home late at night, wake up the pastor and "drive the loop," talking and praying about what they should do for the Lord.

Swank always had time for them, Hawkins said. Not surprisingly, he and Graham and some 125 others followed Swank into the ministry.

"Fred Swank called out the called," Hawkins said. "He gave himself to us.

"He showed us that the ministry is fun and exciting," said Hawkins.

He and Graham have talked about Swank and how the atmosphere at Sagamore Hill Baptist Church helped them.

"There was such a spirit in those days of expectancy there and such a spirit of love and unity that permeated the fellowship that it was easy for people to come to know Christ, and it was easy for people to sense a call.

"We saw a church that was filled with love and unity and a common purpose," he said, "and a church with a spirit of conquest that had a vision, a perception of what God wanted them to be.

"I don't believe people give themselves to needs; I believe they give themselves to visions. Fred Swank had a unique ability to get his people to see beyond the four walls of the church out where people were really in need."

The first time he was ever at First Baptist Church in Dallas, Hawkins said, was an evening when he was 18 or 19 and a student at Texas Christian University. He drove Swank to Dallas to speak to a men's Bible class at the church.

That also was the first time Hawkins ever met W.A. Criswell, a contemporary of Swank's and longtime senior pastor of the Dallas church.

Criswell sent Hawkins a handwritten note following the meeting, which he still has. The note said, "You have a great future. Make a good ready for it."

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