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Pastors' network to promote  
foreign missions offering

By Mary Jane Welch

Baptist Press  
9/15/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Three pastors from different parts of the country -- and different points of view across the Southern Baptist spectrum -- are recruiting fellow pastors to support giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

John Bisagno of First Baptist Church in Houston, Frank Pollard of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss., and Dan Yeary of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church are recruiting about 100 pastors for a network to support the upcoming offering. It will provide up to 45 percent of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's projected \$185 million budget for 1994.

The trio mailed a letter in late August asking fellow pastors to highlight the offering in creative ways in their own churches -- and to write letters encouraging 30 other pastors of their choice to do the same. The Foreign Mission Board provided stationary and postage for the effort.

All three are considered theological conservatives. But Bisagno has supported the SBC conservative movement while Yeary has participated in some activities of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an organization of moderates who disagree with current convention leadership. Pollard is often described as "nonaligned."

All three enthusiastically accepted the responsibility as tri-chairmen of the pastors' network, said Don Sewell, FMB director of special projects. Sewell heads up staff support for the effort.

Sixty-eight pastors already have agreed to be part of the network.

The letter encourages the support of pastors because they're the key to a strong missions offering in a church, said Sewell. Others such as Woman's Missionary Union members may provide vital leadership and do the legwork, he said, but they find it hard to succeed without the pastor's backing.

"Well over 1,000 pastors will get a letter in essence asking them to pull out all the stops for promotion of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in their churches," said Sewell.

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Those who do may see the benefits in their own churches, he added. "Pastors in a recent meeting with Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin in Atlanta affirmed the idea that the stronger the church is in missions commitment, the stronger it will be at home," he said.

Contributions to the mission offering have declined in two of the last three years. Receipts through the Cooperative Program, the Southern Baptist Convention's financial mainstay, have fallen the past two years and are down again so far this year.

Increasing costs and leveling revenue led in May to a downsizing of Foreign Mission Board programs at the home office and a cut of 37 jobs. Because the board uses all Lottie Moon receipts in its overseas budget, the 1992 shortfall required that funds be shifted from the home office, which led to the staff reduction, said Carl Johnson, vice president for finance. The shortfall also caused reductions in capital spending overseas.

Foreign Mission Board trustees earmarked an extra \$200,000 to promote the 1993 offering, bringing the total promotion budget to about \$500,000. Extra funds will be used primarily to supplement general promotion with more targeted efforts.

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RTVC trustees take stand against  
porn, violence on television By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press  
9/15/93

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention's Radio and Television Commission Sept. 13-14 approved an \$8.9 million 1993-94 budget, welcomed the agency's first woman vice president and passed a resolution "pledging to the American family efforts to protect children from abuse because of violent and sexually suggestive material presented on television."

"Within the next three months, with your help," RTVC President Jack Johnson told trustees, "we plan to initiate an institutional advancement strategy that will chart our course for the future ... a future geared to combating the pornography and violence responsible for shattered lives, ruined marriages, child abuse and criminal activity.

"We must be creative and resourceful ... smarter than our adversary. We must understand that our real enemy is not television or radio or magazines. Ours is a spiritual adversary ... Satan himself. He has used the media to capture the minds and souls of entire generations of youngsters. We must stand against him."

Deborah Key, who has been with the RTVC since 1984, was named vice president of network operations. For the past four months she has been general manager of ACTS, the agency's faith and family cable television service, and FamilyNet, its broadcast television program service.

Key graduated from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, in 1980 with a degree in theater and from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1983 with a master's degree in communications. She taught speech and religious drama classes in Southwestern's communications department before becoming a full-time employee of the commission.

Although the new \$8,969,000 budget is less than the 1992-93 budget of \$9,247,000, it appropriates more funding for program development and acquisition. Executive Vice President Richard T. McCartney said downsizing staff, restructuring and better overall allocation of resources had resulted in more productivity at less cost.

"We have a stewardship of purpose and commitment to spend the monies provided to us wisely," he said. "The Great Commission is the underlying theme of all that we do."

Johnson told trustees the RTVC is going to war to save America's children from damaging and often-subliminal messages of Satan carried by various media.

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The resolution read in part: "Whereas the average teenager before the age of 17 sees 40,000 hours of television that include 400,000 sexual scenes, 200,000 acts of violence and 33,000 murders; and whereas one recent poll showed that 92 percent of Christian teenagers have viewed hardcore pornography by the time they are 17 years old, and that 72 percent of all teens say they feel the urge to imitate what they have seen in violent and sexually explicit films, and more devastating, 31 percent of these minors say they have copied what they saw; and whereas the Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention is deeply concerned and qualified to address this crucial issue; be it therefore resolved that on this day, September 14, 1993, the trustees of the Radio and Television Commission publicly pledge the full resources of the Radio and Television Commission to correct this egregious condition."

"It flabbergasts me," Johnson said, "when I'm told that the average teenager sees 40,000 hours of television before the age of 17. This means our children are watching an average of 2,300 hours of television a year. They see 11,000 acts of violence, 1,900 murders and 23,000 sexual situations each year of their lives."

Johnson said he does not believe experts who say the sexual deluge doesn't have an effect on his children and grandchildren.

"That's like saying what they eat doesn't affect their physical well-being," he said. "That's hogwash. By nature children are mimics. They will act out what they see and hear."

It is not enough to trash the TV set or to write letters of protest to the sponsors of the offensive programs, Johnson said.

"We must first familiarize parents and young people with the unpalatable fruit that comes from fertilizing the family tree with filth and violence," he said. "We must educate parents in the use of the off switch and channel selector as weapons for the protection of family values. We must offer the American family an option to the programs of filth and violence being foisted on our families."

The battle, Johnson said, will be a long and expensive one, that developing high quality Christian programs for the family based on biblical values will be costly and time consuming.

"I have asked myself, if not us, who?" Johnson said. "If not now, when? We can't wait for someone else to do what we are uniquely qualified to do. Surely, we have been called to the kingdom for such a time as this."

"The theme of the commission this year is 'Proclaiming Him.' We fully intend to do just that. We will proclaim him and his teachings in the face of Satan and those sympathetic with his evil purpose."

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Illinois Baptists elect  
Gene Wilson to top post

Baptist Press  
9/15/93

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)--The Illinois Baptist State Association board of directors elected Gene Wilson of Riverside, Calif., as the next IBSA executive director during the board's regular meeting Sept. 14 in Springfield, Ill.

Wilson, 49, is director of missions for Calvary-Arrowhead Baptist Association in the Los Angeles area. He will succeed Maurice Swinford in the Illinois post.

Swinford will lead IBSA until his retirement at the end of October.

Wilson will become executive director-elect as of Oct. 15, then take over full responsibilities Nov. 1.

A native of Arlington, Texas, Wilson was elected 59-2 by the board of directors.

He holds master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He has been an adjunct professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Brea, Calif., and an instructor at California Baptist College in Riverside.

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Wilson and his wife, Virginia, have four grown adopted children: Sandy, Eddie, Vicki and Ty.

IBSA had about 927 churches with 159,715 resident members in 1992, according to information compiled from Uniform Church Letters.

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Texas board OK's \$63.5 million  
basic missions budget for 1994

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
9/15/93

DALLAS (BP)--The executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas recommended a \$63.5 million basic budget for 1994 and approved the formation of a task force on minister/church relationships at its Sept. 14 meeting in Dallas.

The 193-member BGCT executive board, which conducts business of the BGCT and its institutions between annual convention sessions, recommended a two-phase \$5.3 million challenge budget above basic budget requirements for a total giving goal of \$68.8 million.

After fielding questions about funding for Baylor University and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, and after referring to the convention's administrative committee a proposed amendment that would increase allocations to state missions and decrease funds to Christian education, the budget proposal passed unanimously.

The proposed Cooperative Program budget will be considered for approval by messengers to the annual BGCT meeting Oct. 25-26 in Dallas.

The Cooperative Program is the financial channel of cooperation between state Baptist conventions such as the BGCT and the nationwide Southern Baptist Convention.

Funds would be distributed according to a formula that sends 36.65 percent of undesignated Cooperative Program receipts to the Southern Baptist Convention for worldwide causes including funding for about 8,800 missionaries in more than 125 foreign countries and throughout the United States.

The 63.35 percent remaining in Texas provides support for state missions causes and for institutions including eight universities, one academy, seven hospital systems and children's homes and homes for the aging in multiple locations.

Both the distribution formula and basic \$63.5 million budget have remained unchanged since 1989.

The board voted to refer to the BGCT administrative committee a proposed amendment to the budget by J.K. Minton of Houston adding 1 percent of the total Texas causes portion of the budget to the State Missions Commission's allocation and subtracting 1 percent of the total Texas causes from the BGCT Christian education coordinating board's program budget.

In a printed rationale distributed to board members, Minton explained, "The proposed percentage allocation of the budget indicates that the number one priority of the Baptist General Convention of Texas is graduate education. However, the budget should begin to more accurately reflect the purpose of the BGCT and the priorities of Mission Texas."

Minton's amendment would have increased the state missions allocation from \$8,044,485 (12.67 percent of the total budget) to \$8,446,783 (13.3 percent) and decreased the Christian education allocation from \$15,473,932 (24.37 percent) to \$15,071,634 (23.73 percent).

Questions were raised about the \$4,051,000 BGCT allocation for Baylor University and about Texas Baptist influence on policies of the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs which receives \$63,000 from the BGCT. However, no motions were made regarding those budget items.

In other business, the BGCT executive board approved the report and recommendations of a committee on minister/church relationships, including the formation of a special task force to work for the next three years to implement the committee's proposals.

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After surveying some 1,200 Baptist ministers and ministers' wives and personally interviewing many other people in related fields, the committee discovered an "erosion of trust and a lack of communication" between ministers and their churches.

"We have discovered an epidemic of forced terminations of ministers and widespread discouragement and disillusionment among ministers of all size churches, even those who are in no apparent danger of termination," the committee reported.

The committee recommended the new task force work with the BGCT to develop educational resources to help prevent church conflict, develop reconciliation resources on which churches and ministers can call when conflicts arise and make available "post trauma" care to churches and ministers.

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EDITORS' NOTE: Baptist Press has asked several Southern Baptist scholars to comment on 1) whether the Bible speaks in any way concerning the peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians and 2) whether this agreement in any way reflects a view of the end times. (BP) will print various responses as they are received.

#### COMMENTARY

On the peace agreement  
and the end times ...

By Timothy George

Baptist Press  
9/15/93

While the historic peace accord between Israel and the Palestinians is not the fulfillment of any specific biblical prophecy related to the end times, it should alert Christians to the urgency of the hour in which we live in at least three ways.

First, we are told in Scripture to seek peace with all peoples if possible and to pray specifically for the peace of Jerusalem. Jesus wept over Jerusalem in his day. Christians should pray that this agreement will bring at least a temporary relief from the horrible violence and injustice perpetrated by both sides in the Middle East.

Second, from the standpoint of the premillennial understanding of the Second Coming, we know that God is still working uniquely with his ancient people, the Jews. Jesus said that this race or kind of people (Greek, *genos*: Matthew 24:24) would not pass away until all the foretold had come to pass. The survival of the Jews as a distinct people is the most amazing fact of world history. They have withstood all attempts to wipe them off the face of the earth -- from the plot of Haman to the schemes of Hitler and Hussein. One day Jesus will be recognized by the Jews as Messiah and will reign over the entire earth for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-4). Only then shall true and universal peace be known among the warring children of Adam.

Thirdly, from the perspective of biblical prophecy, it is clear that the present treaty, however much we pray for its success, is not the beginning of that millennial peace. The treaty deals with Gaza and the West Bank but not with Jerusalem where Orthodox Jews want to rebuild the temple in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. Doubtless that will be a powder keg for future conflict. What the Bible calls "the time of Jacob's trouble," along with the manifestation of the Antichrist, are yet to come before that glorious triumph of Jesus Christ over all his enemies.

In the meantime, Christians should devote themselves, in prayer and witness, to the evangelization of Jews and Arabs alike. We must pray not only for the cessation of violence but also for the spread of religious liberty in the Middle East, to the end that the gospel of Jesus Christ, which alone can bring true peace, may be proclaimed unhindered in that fragile region of the world.

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George is dean of the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., and a former faculty member at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

**Southern Seminary to publish  
Journal of Family Ministry**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Gheens Center for Christian Family Ministry has assumed the lead role in the sponsorship of the Journal of Family Ministry.

The journal, which was founded in 1987, has been jointly published by Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, the Texas Baptist Association of Family Ministers and the Southern Baptist Association of Family Ministers.

Southern Seminary was invited to join the publication effort after Hardin-Simmons University decided to withdraw from the venture, said Diana R. Garland, director of the Gheens Center and dean of the Louisville, Ky., seminary's Carver School of Church Social Work. All subscriptions and editorial work on the journal will now be channeled through the Gheens Center.

"We want this to be a way of developing models of family ministry, providing professionals with a journal that speaks to their needs and also provides the theoretical and research backgrounds," Garland said. The journal, she added, is the nation's only periodical devoted exclusively to family ministry.

Leigh E. Conner, associate professor of psychology of religion at Southern, will edit the journal. The first issue produced by the Gheens Center will be available in October. A subscription for the twice-yearly publication is \$10 per year. For subscription information, contact the Gheens Center at Southern Seminary at 1-800-626-5525. In Kentucky, call (502) 897-4605.

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EDITORS' NOTE: The following two stories may be used in tandem with (BP) story titled "Southwestern students score points for sports evangelism," dated 9/1/93.

Baptist sports teams  
flip over Indian Ocean

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press  
9/15/93

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--Twenty-eight American athletes, trainers and coaches waited in one corner of the airport. Roughly the same number of Italian tourists waited in the other.

An airline clerk with a single Kenya shilling coin stood in the middle -- if not literally, certainly emotionally.

The flight was overbooked. Both the Italians and the Americans needed the 10 remaining available seats. So Air Madagascar resolved it the fair way: a winner-take-all coin toss.

The Americans won.

The resulting celebration included "high fives" and shouts of "Praise the Lord!" in equal parts. The sports evangelism tour of Indian Ocean island countries -- a joint effort of the International Sports Federation and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board -- rolled on.

Actually, the coin toss wasn't really fair. The American group cheated. They'd been praying about the ticket situation for almost a week since learning 10 of their reservations for that leg of the trip had been mysteriously wiped off the computer three different times. Serious praying -- praying that even delayed meals for half an hour at times. A 30-minute fast is serious when you're an athlete playing in international competition.

"God just wanted all of them to get to Madagascar," explained Fred Sorrells, Southern Baptist missionary to that country and the linchpin in the project. "If 10 kids had had to stay in Kenya until the next flight four days later, it would have killed either our men's basketball or our women's basketball and volleyball games.

"But this whole thing has been one miracle after another, so we shouldn't have been surprised that if it came to a coin toss, we'd win."

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The Southern Baptist group spent a major portion of the summer in the island countries of the Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros at the invitation of the governments in the area. Their competitions against the national teams were to help prepare their hosts for the fourth Indian Ocean Island Games in August. They also came to encourage the tiny evangelical Christian communities in all three places with a visible Christian witness.

It would be difficult to find three countries with more distinct religious environments. The Seychelles, longtime favorite of the world's jet-setters, is overwhelmingly secular and affluent. Only a handful of Protestant churches meet there.

Madagascar, the third-largest island in the world, is home to 12 million people, most of them poor. While Christian churches are well established, including the Baptists, the nation still overwhelmingly leans toward African Traditional Religion (what was once called animism).

If Christians are scarce in the Seychelles and Madagascar, they're practically invisible in the Comoros. That's understandable, since the country is officially the Islamic Republic of the Comoros. An estimated 99 percent of the 600,000 residents are Muslim. One Protestant church and one Catholic church worship on the major island of Grande Comoros. Each has approximately 25 members -- none of whom are Comoran.

Yet not only did the three governments invite the American Christians to come and visit, the Seychelles and Comoros even footed the hotel bill and provided meals.

The women's squad did double duty in basketball and volleyball and was pretty evenly split between current college students and players who had graduated in the past five years.

The men's basketball team was basically the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary team from Fort Worth, Texas, with one addition, for the Seychelles and Madagascar. Since the Southwestern students had to return home after the first two legs of the tour, a substitute men's team filled in in Comoros. The lone non-seminary student on the men's team, one trainer and the coach and assistant coach of the women's basketball team were joined by a missionary, three short-term volunteers working with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and even the 16-year-old son of a missionary couple.

Running parallel to the athletic tour, the Foreign Mission Board provided the three countries with athletic trainers, coaches and orthopedic surgeons anywhere from one week to two years to assist their athletic programs.

Everywhere the Americans played they drew large crowds. Everywhere they went they drew comments and questions.

"You aren't like most American groups we get here," a hotel employee said. "Why are you different?" Translated, that probably meant: "Why do you pray before you eat? Why do small groups of you sit on the beach and read the Bible? And why aren't you spending time at the bar trying to pick up local girls?"

Even the athletes' wardrobe played a part in what they were about. Most of them sported T-shirts with Christian slogans.

The opportunity to make friends didn't come easily to the Southern Baptists, though. The group had to raise more than \$60,000 to finance the trip, in addition to taking a large hunk of the summer off from jobs. The trip from the United States to the Seychelles, the first stop, lasted 48 hours. In Madagascar more than half of them became sick, and in Comoros the girls had to wear long skirts when they weren't playing as a sign of respect for Muslim modesty -- not a fun thing in the tropical heat.

But most of them would like to do it again.

They experienced plenty of athletic success, although things started off rough in the Seychelles. Still staggering from jet lag and unused to the tropical heat and humidity, all three squads lost their opening matches.

That night, men's basketball coach Mike Barrera reminded the highly competitive bunch: "It's important to win, but that's not our priority. We're here to say, 'We'll play your game the way you want to play it (referring to the highly physical style of basketball in the area) -- and love you like you've never been loved' ... . If that means we win by 20 or lose by 4, I hope we're adult enough to accept it."

The men wound up 2-2 in the Seychelles and 1-1 in Madagascar (the Comoro substitutes were 0-2) while the women posted a record of 7-2 in basketball and 2-4 in volleyball.

Competition against the Americans must have helped the host teams get ready for the Indian Ocean Island Games. Madagascar later took gold medals in men's and women's basketball and women's volleyball, while the Seychelles grabbed both basketball silvers and the bronze in women's volleyball.

The tour also "encouraged the Christians in the three countries who often feel so isolated and overwhelmed by their culture," Sorrells said. There also were numerous opportunities for the coaches and athletes to share personal testimonies with people they met through the competitions.

"One thing that has really struck me on this trip is that when we step off the airplane, we have been doubling or tripling or quadrupling the number of Christians in that country," said Cheryl Wolfinger, who played on the women's teams. "And at times when I've been praying, the thought has come to me that at that particular moment I might be the only person in the whole country praying to God!"

Perhaps the best summation of the whole trip was provided by the Comoran newspaper that headlined its front-page story about the visitors: "Friendship first, competition second."

Except, of course, when it was time to pray for a coin toss.

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(BP) photos (three vertical) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines available on SBCNet Newsroom.

Hall of Fame coach Vining shows  
he's still got it on mission tour By Craig Bird

Baptist Press  
9/15/93

MORONI, Comoros (BP)--Bill Vining should have known basketball on this island was going to be a bit different when it took two days to find a needle to inflate the balls.

Or when potential practice facilities were described as "with" or "without" rims.

But many -- make that most -- things were different this time compared to other international trips the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Famer has made to promote basketball.

First, he didn't find out he'd be coaching competitive games until a couple of hours before landing in Comoros, a tiny Indian Ocean island nation between Madagascar and east Africa.

Second, he was paying his own way for the summer excursion.

Third, the players he coached against the Comoran national squad didn't quite match up to the caliber of his former international teams, which have included legends like Larry Bird and Magic Johnson. In fact, only one had played college ball. Two didn't even play in high school. One was just 16 years old, while two were closer to retirement than high school graduation.

Fourth, he retired from coaching three years ago.

But you must be pretty inventive when you figure out a way to win 555 games over 34 seasons at a small private school (Ouachita Baptist University) tucked away in Arkadelphia, Ark.

"Well," Vining drawled as he surveyed the situation, "there was one other time I had to coach a team of players I'd never seen before on short notice. Of course, they were the U.S. Army All-Stars."

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He decided when he was in the Army in Korea that his calling was to work with young men in athletics. "And I've had many opportunities through sports to talk to people about my faith," he said.

Those opportunities included coaching trips to South America (twice), West Africa, Mexico, France, Greece, Italy, Belgium and Russia; contact with America's finest amateur players while helping select the Olympic teams in 1968, 1972 and 1976; his own Ouachita teams; and even the thousands of youngsters who have attended his summer basketball camps.

Vining signed up to go to the Islamic Republic of the Comoros to hold clinics and help national coaches get ready for the fourth Indian Ocean Island Games. It was part of a joint effort by the International Sports Federation and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Project planners agreed to provide coaches, medical personnel and competition for the national men's and women's basketball teams and the women's volleyball teams in Comoros, Madagascar and the Seychelles.

"I thought I was going to watch the national teams practice and play and then make suggestions to the coaches," he said. "But when we got on the plane in Tanzania to fly to the Comoros there were four American guys on the plane from Kenya who said we were playing the national team!"

Comoros officials, meanwhile, were expecting university-level competition.

Unknown to Vining, the American men's team (actually the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary team, plus one) had been unable to extend their trip beyond competition in the Seychelles and Madagascar.

The makeshift team that finally took the floor in Comoros, wearing purple-and-gold Ouachita Tigers uniforms, wound up including a Texas Baptist Student Union director, a missionary and three short-term mission volunteers.

Rarely, if ever, has a Vining-coached team been treated so rudely. The first two games ended in 30-point losses. "You know," said one local observer, "Comoros may be a backwater, but we do have more than midgets and cripples on our basketball team!"

Vining didn't mind. Not that he didn't do everything he could to win, but he set the tone during the first team meeting.

"When I coached an AAU all-star team in South America for a goodwill tour in 1965 we went 15-0," he told the players. "But after one game the American ambassador took us aside and said, 'I saw the basketball; when are we going to see the goodwill?' You guys need to remember that we're the only Christians some of these people ever have seen. Play hard but remember why we're here."

They must have listened. During the third game the two squads were mixed so Americans and Comorans, Christians and Muslims could play together.

Afterwards it took 20 minutes for all the players to get through having their pictures made with each other.

The local paper's front-page headline declared: "Friendship First, Competition Second."

Even getting pounded on the scoreboard, Bill Vining won.

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

Seminary student/dentist  
sinks teeth into ministry

By Scott Collins

Baptist Press  
9/15/93

HOUSTON (BP)--Some days it's difficult to know if Augustine "Gus" Kim is a dentist who attends Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary or a seminary student who happens to be a dentist.

Whichever he is on any given day, one thing is certain -- he is always a minister. The same can be said for Kim's wife, Angela.

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Whether it's witnessing to patients at his Family Dentistry practice in Houston or through the Westbury Korean Baptist Church, the Kims are living out a commitment to share their faith.

An important part of that commitment is receiving preparation for their ministry at Southwestern's Houston off-campus center.

"Without the Houston program, there is no way we could attend the seminary and receive the benefits we have received," Kim said. "It's a blessing for us who cannot go to Fort Worth without giving up jobs and families."

With two children, the dental practice, church work and Angela's involvement with the Texas Korean Woman's Missionary Union Fellowship, squeezing in seminary classes has been a challenge for the couple.

Working together as study partners, they have encouraged each other in their master of divinity programs. "We help each other," Kim said.

That help extends from the classroom to their work in the Korean church, where Kim is minister of education. Working primarily in Sunday school and discipleship training, he has helped the church reach a weekly attendance of 60 to 70.

But his Christian work doesn't stop at the church. "He does personal evangelism, personal witnessing to the patients," his wife said.

Kim, fluent in both English and Korean, also witnesses to Hispanic patients, using an assistant who speaks Spanish.

A bookshelf in the dental office break room is filled from top to bottom with Bibles in all three languages as well as several gospel tracts.

"Many times he is excited about their (patients') accepting the gospel," Mrs. Kim said.

"Being a dentist, I am a person of authority in this office," Kim said. "Many times the patient has to wait until I come to the room or until the anesthesia starts to take its effect, so that's a good time for me to leave a tract or a booklet for them to read."

Because many of the dental procedures are expensive, Kim often discusses payment plans with patients.

"In talking about money, they share their own life story. Sometimes they need a treatment but they cannot afford it. From the story of their lives I can see their problems, their hurts and their needs. That also gives me an opportunity to share the gospel.

"Being a dentist with my own office is a blessing. People come for physical treatment, but also they are ready to receive any healing they can receive, and spiritual assistance from the gospel point of view is one of them."

Mrs. Kim said some of the couple's friends ask how they can combine their ministry with the dental business. Friends ask if witnessing for Christ hurts the practice. "We've never felt that way and we don't see any evidence that it hurts the practice," she said.

The couple's son once jokingly told friends his father holds patients in the examining chair with a needle in one hand and asks if the patient wants to accept Christ.

While Kim combines the dental practice with his ministry, Mrs. Kim is active with the Texas Woman's Missionary Union. She is in her fourth year as president of the Korean Fellowship.

Under her leadership, the attendance at the Korean WMU conferences is on the rise, according to officials with the Texas WMU. She also is editor of the Korean edition of "Resource," a WMU publication devoted to missions training.

A desire to improve their ministries led the Kims to Southwestern's Houston center.

"Being a Sunday school teacher, I had a desire to be better at what I did. Since Southwestern had an extension at Houston, I decided to improve myself, to be a better teacher," Kim said.

"After I went on semester, I saw the value and the need and the benefit of going to school."

All four members of the Kim family are studying. The couple has a son at Texas A&M University and a daughter who started classes at Harvard University this fall.

For mom and dad, Southwestern has provided a solid theological base for their ministries while opening new doors. "In terms of ministry, Southwestern has expanded my horizons," Kim said.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southwestern Seminary.

Personal growth  
is no easy task

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press  
9/15/93

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--People who aspire to grow must make some changes in their lives -- "and that's not an easy thing to do," a speaker at a recent single adult conference said.

"It takes effort -- a really conscious effort -- to grow and have true maturity," Len Sehested told a roomful of some 250 single adults who attended her conference, "Learning to Face Changes and Challenges," during the recent Single Adult Labor Day Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

"Change takes energy," said Sehested, a widow whose audiences vary from university students to "seasoned adults." "Simon-Peter was a hot-headed, profane, braggart who was always blowing his top, and through the grace of God, he was able to change and become a Christian leader."

Sehested, a member of University Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, said, "If you want to grow, you had better start rearranging your values and you had better start acting like a Christian.

"Sometimes you get so wrapped up in this parcel of yourself that you can't see anyone else, and that's why you don't grow. Sometimes, we just don't want to grow because it's too much work," she added.

People have several "growth choices," Sehested noted, saying growing is a response to positive and negative choices.

Sehested said real growth comes from interacting with and learning from other people. And the only way to learn from others, she said, is to listen to what they have to say.

"Choosing to listen and to love rather than talk and hate is a positive growth choice," she said. "Sometimes we are such good haters and poor lovers" when it comes to accepting people who are "different than we are."

"How do you act toward people who look different, who are handicapped, who are another color, who have AIDS or who are homosexual?" Sehested asked.

Choosing to be open is a growth choice, she said. "Choosing to be open keeps us flexible and helps us be adaptable.

"Choosing to voice your feelings and your opinions appropriately are healthy avenues to growth," Sehested said. "Even Jesus voiced his feelings when he became angry by injustices in the world."

Meanwhile, Jim Towns, a professor at Stephen F. Austin University in Nacagdoches, Texas, and a frequent leader at single adult conferences, said the foundations for Christian growth include confession, repentance, change and Scripture.

Towns said a Christian must recognize and confess sinfulness to God before he or she can grow in "wisdom, understanding and stature."

One tactic Towns gave for Christians who want to honestly confess their wrongdoing before God is "to go into private time with God and say: 'If I were dead today looking at you eyeball to eyeball, these are the things we would need to talk about.'"

"If you confess, repent, change and pray the Scriptures into your life, then you had better get ready for some wonderful things to happen," he said.

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Some 6,500 single adults attended five Labor Day conferences sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family adult department. Besides Ridgecrest, the events were held at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center; in Palm Springs, Calif.; St. Louis; and Tampa Bay, Fla.

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

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Alaska Baptists up CP despite current shortfall," dated 9/14/93, please correct the state's 1994 Cooperative Program budget total in the third paragraph to \$613,358, not \$164,358.

Thanks,  
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