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Media Advisory:

NBC's Today to feature  
True Love Waits

Baptist Press  
9/28/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Richard Ross, youth ministry consultant at the Baptist Sunday School Board, will be appearing live on NBC's Today show Wednesday, Sept. 29, to discuss True Love Waits, the BSSB's nationwide campaign designed to encourage teenagers and college students to remain sexually abstinent until marriage.

Two young people who have made the True Love Waits pledge, both former members of Ross' youth group at Tulip Grove Baptist Church in Nashville, also will be appearing on the show. Paul Ballenger and Susan Fitzgerald, both students at the University of Tennessee, will be interviewed live from Knoxville, courtesy of the local NBC-affiliate.

A new wave of media interest in True Love Waits hit following the second Associated Press story on the campaign released last Thursday. Personnel in the BSSB's communications department have handled media requests from USA Today and newspapers, radio and television stations in New York, Philadelphia, Dallas, Chicago, San Diego, Birmingham, Ala., Vancouver (British Columbia), and several other cities across the country.

Chip Alford, design editor of Facts and Trends, will be making the trip to New York with Ross and will release a story to Baptist Press later this week.

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Fagan announces retirement  
from Stewardship Commission

Baptist Press  
9/28/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--A.R. Fagan, president-treasurer of the Stewardship Commission for 20 years, will retire effective Sept. 30, 1994.

Fagan is a native of Richton, Miss., but said he considers Florida his home. In Florida he was pastor of churches in Boca Grande, Sebring, Orlando and Bradenton. He served Florida Baptists as chairman of the state board of missions and as president of the state convention.

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As president of the Stewardship Commission he led the task force that named the denomination's "Bold Mission Thrust" emphasis and "Planned Growth in Giving." He is author of the book What the Bible Says about Stewardship, as well as numerous Baptist Program articles.

He has been used as a speaker, having preached in all 50 states and in more than 15 countries.

Fagan attended Stetson University and the University of Florida and graduated from Howard College (now Samford University). He received the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

His plans are to continue to make his home with his wife, Florrie, in Springfield, Tenn. Their four children and eight grandchildren all live in the Nashville area.

In making the announcement, Roy Moody, chairman of the Stewardship Commission, praised Fagan's leadership.

Moody asked anyone wishing to suggest a nominee for Fagan's successor should send his recommendation to him at 5410 W. Seventh Street, Topeka, KS 66606.

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Little girl's dollar for hungry  
buys a fortune in encouragement

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press  
9/28/93

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--A dollar won't buy much these days.

But the single dollar bill 7-year-old Caroline Nelson of Austin, Texas, recently mailed to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board bought a little bit of food for a starving Somali child.

It also purchased a huge supply of encouragement for Southern Baptist aid workers in that tense and troubled country.

Caroline tucked the bill inside a note written in magic marker asking that her gift be used "to help the poor people of the world." It was applied to the mission board's MANNA project and assigned to the feeding program in Somalia.

When word of the contribution reached the small group of Southern Baptists working in Somalia, the dollar produced million-dollar smiles.

"We go months without hearing the words 'please' or 'thank you,'" one said. "And we're always aware we could be the next target of attacks on Americans. It gets hard some days to remember why we're here."

But Caroline knows, and they appreciate her reminding them.

Contacted by telephone at her home in Austin, the second-grader had a simple explanation for why she sent the dollar: "Because I wanted to."

Questioned further, she told about learning of the many hungry people in the world during Vacation Bible School at Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin, where she attends with her parents. She also studies missions weekly in the church's Girls in Action program.

"She did this whole deal on her own," reported her father, Austin attorney Jim Nelson. "She brought me change one day and wanted a dollar bill. I asked what for and she said, 'I've gotta mail it to somebody.' I said, 'Who are you mailing money to?'" Caroline displayed her note, all ready to go.

Caroline's allowance is 75 cents a week, according to her Dad. He must not have heard about her last raise from Mom. "Now I get \$1.50," Caroline informed Baptist Press.

Either way, the dollar cost her something. A lot of Christians could learn from Caroline.

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

Seminary professor prepares  
First Baptist, Dallas for pastor By Susan Simko

DALLAS (BP)--Interim pastorates are nothing new for members of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's faculty, but for Roy Fish, his most recent assignment has been unlike any other the evangelism professor has experienced, and members of First Baptist Church, Dallas, have made it that way.

On the Sunday church members were introduced to their new pastor, O.S. Hawkins, they greeted him with a standing ovation and sang "Great is Thy Faithfulness." Fish strode down the aisle to take the stage. As soon as they saw him, all 3,000 people bounced to their feet again with deafening applause.

"It was not just the emotion of the moment," Minister of Music Fred McNab said. "We love Roy Fish."

Fish accepted the interim pastorate in March after the stormy resignation last fall of Joel Gregory. When Fish took the pulpit, he knew he was stepping to the helm of a bruised church, he said.

"I think feelings were fairly deep. There were people who had been hurt," Fish said. "I just got the impression that here's a church that needs somebody to love them. Somebody just to at least convey the impression 'I love you.' I wanted to do that."

Fish filled his sermons with tidings of forgiveness and healing. He preached messages "to help people deal with the pain of broken hearts," he said.

While Fish proclaimed love from the stage, the staff put it into action and held the church together day by day, Fish said.

"These are men who were keeping that thing really, really going," he said. "I was sort of a cheerleader, they were the team on the field."

The team won. On Aug. 29, the church voted to call Hawkins, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., as their new pastor. Fish's last Sunday in the pulpit was Sept. 26. It was a bitter-sweet day, David Wicker, deacon vice-chairman, said.

"It's almost like losing a pastor now that his interim is over," Wicker said. "We've grown so close to him it's going to be hard to let him go."

Deacon Jim Bolton, former Southwestern chairman of trustees, agreed.

"Dr. Fish, with his sweet spirit, has come in and loved the congregation," he said. "In his message times and in his actions, he has blessed all the people."

Fish, who has taught at Southwestern since 1965, said he felt that thankfulness from all the members.

"They have expressed how much they appreciated our ministry. I've never been in a church as affirming as First Baptist," he said. "I've received far more cards and letters from people in this church as an interim pastor than any other church in which I've ever served, and that means a lot to me."

Fish said this latest interim experience gave him a taste of biblical times as well.

"There were times I felt like Daniel in the lion's den. Other times I felt like Moses in Pharaoh's court," he said. "But generally, the 21st chapter of Acts where the apostle Paul is encouraged on his way and so affirmed by people -- I identify with that more than anything else."

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

Ministry a matter of conviction  
for SWBTS students, alumni

By Bob Murdaugh

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Wayne Bishop knew it was only a matter of time until a "mega-church" offered him a comfortable staff position.

A year and a half into his studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Bishop was waiting for the right offer when Tim Shields, a fellow student, asked classmates to help with a new ministry in Fort Worth.

Since no mega-church had stepped forward with a better offer, Bishop decided to help. When Shields graduated from Southwestern and moved to a church in Oklahoma, Bishop took his friend's place as the only paid staff member at Families in Crisis.

Founded in 1991, Families in Crisis was the idea of Southwestern graduate Bobby Cox, director of church and community ministries for the Tarrant Baptist Association, and Jim Norwood, a local businessman who has served time for alcohol and drug abuse.

The ministry's mission is to provide food, housing, economic assistance and a welcoming place of worship for ex-convicts and their families. It also helps find jobs for ex-convicts and family members, ministers to "outmates" -- spouses and children of people in prison -- and offers counseling and support for people recovering from substance addictions.

"Working with drug addicts and ex-offenders was the furthest thing from my mind," Bishop said. "But I went to Families in Crisis I fell in love with the people. These people can offer nothing in return for whatever help I can give. My gratification comes from knowing I'm doing it for the Lord, and that tripped my trigger."

Inside Fort Worth's College Avenue Baptist Church, ex-convicts and their families sang hymns and prayed. It was Monday night, and 150 to 200 people gathered for worship and fellowship. Outside, youngsters played volleyball and their happy shouts echoed through homes surrounding the church.

One Families in Crises participant, Ted, said his search for meaning took him through six prison terms before he found help at the ministry.

"I got on my knees, admitted to God in prayer that I can't handle my life on my own, and turned all of my troubles over to him," Ted said. He met and married Wanda Helsley at the ministry, where she is a volunteer music leader.

"I thought people at Families in Crisis were strange when they came up to me and started hugging me," Ted said. "Now I know I can share the pain felt by people living on the streets of Fort Worth without continuing to be one of them."

Families in Crisis volunteers give ex-convicts and their families more than open arms and listening ears.

Counseling teens who have been sexually abused and are sexual abusers, securing financial aid for ex-convicts without housing and employment, and buying groceries for elderly people whose food stamps have been stolen are typical duties handled daily by the ministry's volunteers daily, according to Norwood, who serves as pastor and director.

"These people want to know what God can do for them, and I try to spin that off by encouraging them to ask, 'What can I do for God?'" Norwood said. "My sermons at Families in Crisis services encourage the people to walk by faith, not by sight. I know this ministry has been effective because I'm seeing and hearing its people share their testimonies with their children and other folks."

Last year, Families in Crisis reported 16 professions of faith and 12 baptisms. Norwood and Bishop expect attendance at the ministry's worship services and children's activities to grow to more than 200 people by 1994.

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"All it takes sometimes for these people to get discouraged and return to the streets is for them to run out of gas when they're alone and not have money or anybody to help," Norwood said. "When I've been wrapped up in working with Families In Crisis, I sometimes feel I've been taken advantage of, and God says to me, 'Hey, don't worry about it. I'll take care of everything since I have all the resources.'"

Initial funding for Families In Crisis came from the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Southwestern students and alumni volunteer at Families in Crisis and several students have donated clothing. Southwestern professors also have been involved in the selection of Bible study materials for Monday night activities.

Some of Families in Crisis' volunteer manpower, food for Monday night meals, and financial help for the ministry's other activities have come from Tate Springs Baptist Church in Arlington, where Norwood and Bishop are members.

Southwestern student Tammy Foran has led recreational activities for children on Monday nights at Families In Crisis since February with assistance from fellow Southwestern students Todd Harrington, Jason Bradley, and Victor Clack.

Seminary students Lara Crutsinger and Pam Fondren have worked with some children's activities in the daytime there. Todd Leatherwood has helped with the ministry's music and youth group. Sue Charon has provided counseling services, and Jamie Vega has worked with transportation and outreach in Fort Worth's Hispanic communities.

"You have to be in tune with God and strong in your Christian walk to emotionally, and sometimes physically, endure the stress of this ministry, and you quickly learn to be more thankful for what you have," Foran said. "It's neat to see the children come to me for hugs, because all of the abuse and other hardships they and their families have endured make it difficult for them to open up."

Derrel Watkins, professor of social work, became associated with Families in Crisis while he was interim pastor at College Avenue.

Families in Crisis puts Southwestern students and alumni "face to face and shoulder to shoulder with an alternative ministry form," Watkins said.

"This ministry doesn't look like your standard church. Families in Crisis is more flexible than the standard church is to meet individual needs, mainly in the area of fellowship for released offenders and their families," Watkins said.

At Families in Crisis services, the atmosphere is relaxed and participants often dress in blue jeans and T-shirts. Visitors frequently include prostitutes, drug addicts, homeless families, and "people who aren't in these groups, but who feel rejected by the mainstream of society," Watkins said.

"As College Avenue people observed soon after our church first opened our facilities up to Families in Crisis about a year ago, the people served by this ministry are people just like us in many ways," Watkins said. "They've had their struggles like everybody else and are learning to cope in non-destructive ways."

Southwestern student Ken Atkinson, College Avenue's new pastor, said several ex-convicts and their relatives who attend Families in Crisis worship services on Monday nights have become active in the church's Sunday and Wednesday night activities.

"Our interest is not in increasing church membership numbers but in ministering to these people. Our goal is to see them grow in their Christian faith so much that they're comfortable worshipping God in any Bible-believing church, regardless of who they share company with," Atkinson said.

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

**Baptist professor says Russian crisis is continuing process**

BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP)--Russian President Boris Yeltsin stunned the country recently when he announced his order to dissolve the Parliament which had blocked his attempts to political and economic reforms.

According to Jacquelin Matejka, assistant professor of political science at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., in an editorial analysis on the current crisis in Russia, this event is a continuation of the process begun in 1989-90. "It had its beginning with Mikhail Gorbachev's attempt to revitalize the dying Russian economy and some (controlled) freedom of speech."

"One of the devices Gorbachev used in his restructuring was a new and highly complicated constitution which would appear more democratic. It allowed for competitive elections, but included devices which kept control in the hands of the Communist party," said Matejka.

"Gorbachev miscalculated, lost control of the process, and in turn lost his political power. The world watched via satellite the drama of tanks in the streets outside the Kremlin, and Boris Yeltsin's courageous stand against the first attempt to restore the Communist party to power."

Matejka said she felt Yeltsin probably saved Moscow from an event which would have resembled China's Tiananmen Square disaster. He became the hero of the hour and, as the U.S.S.R. broke apart, the leader of a Russia which was without either its satellites or its former "republics."

According to Matejka, Yeltsin's supporters are largely the intellectuals and the democratic reformers. Russia's communist Parliament elected in 1990, has the support of some of Russia's main factions -- bureaucracy, military generals, and many industrialists.

"Russia's major industry and a major source of exports for many years has been military equipment. The Russian military-industrial complex is furious over the loss of Russia's satellite nations, and bitterly opposes what it perceives to be the retreat from power which was first begun by Gorbachev and has accelerated under Yeltsin," explained Matejka.

Matejka compared the struggle between Russia's executive and legislative powers to Great Britain's similar struggle in the 17th century which resulted in the beheading of King Charles I.

"Yeltsin vs. Parliament might also compare to the U.S. Congress vs. the President, when the President is of one party and the majority of Congress is of the other party. The struggle is compounded, however, when the contending branches cannot agree as to what the very form of the political system should be.

"The present Russian Parliament was elected under the Gorbachev constitution. Neither the constitution nor the Parliament could be considered legitimate under present circumstances. The members of Parliament prefer the present constitution because they are free to obstruct every move Yeltsin makes," said Matejka. "Yeltsin's newly proposed constitution is likely to give him more power than he has now. Yeltsin, therefore, tries to dissolve Parliament, and the Parliament tries to bring down Yeltsin."

"Who will win?" is the question Matejka asked. "Almost surely, the one whom the military backs. If the military divides, Russia could disintegrate into civil war. It has already done so in some outlying regions."

The opinion of many Russia experts is the Russian reforms have come too far to be canceled; democracy in Russia will survive, but Yeltsin may not.

Matejka said we expect too much if we believe Russia will convert to either democracy or capitalism in the immediate future. If the reforms succeed at all, it will be a long, painful process. Perhaps any outside observer would conclude, however, that Russia could not be worse off than before its 1989 revolution.

Matejka earned her Ph.D. in 1983 from the University of Texas-Austin, an M.A. in 1979 and a B.A. in 1978 from the University of Colorado. She has taught political science at SBU since 1984.