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NASHVILLE -- Youth ministry a 'career calling' for 'True Love Waits' organizer; photo.

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VIRGINIA -- India's earthquake centered in Deccani Muslim's homeland.

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ATLANTA -- Mission board breaks ground for new office building.

Youth ministry a 'career calling'
for 'True Love Waits' organizer

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
10/8/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--"You have no idea how stupid we feel being the only virgins in junior high."

Richard Ross still remembers those words voiced earlier this year by two junior high girls in his youth group at Tulip Grove Baptist Church in Nashville.

"Statistically, I knew the girls were in error," Ross, youth ministry consultant at the Baptist Sunday School Board, said. "At their ages, virgins would certainly be in the majority. But it concerned me that our society has shifted so much that teen-agers living God's way feel they are living in a tiny minority. They feel they are the strange ones. And for them, perception is reality."

Ross became convinced teen-agers needed a way to discover just how many of their peers were refraining from sexual activity. He soon developed an idea for having youth from across America sign covenant cards promising to remain sexually pure until marriage, collecting them and then displaying them at the Southern Baptist Convention meeting as a witness of the willingness of young people to choose abstinence as a lifestyle.

"True Love Waits" was born.

Since the launch of the nationwide campaign last April, tens of thousands of youth and college students from across America and some foreign countries have signed abstinence pledges. Several other denominations and religious groups have endorsed "True Love Waits" and religious and secular media have provided extensive coverage of the campaign.

Ross himself has been interviewed by a variety of national media, such as NBC's "Today" show, Christian Broadcasting Network's "The 700 Club," CNN Radio Network, The New York Times and USA Today. While he is excited about the positive coverage of the campaign, he is a little uncomfortable about all the attention he is receiving as one of its coordinators.

"This campaign is really a team effort," Ross stressed, referring to the work of the BSSB "True Love Waits" committee, chaired by Jimmy Hester of the BSSB discipleship and family development division. "The 'True Love Waits' committee took my initial idea, thought through all of the implications and logistics and developed the specifics of the campaign. And even beyond the 'True Love Waits' team, scores of Sunday School Board employees have made a contribution in a variety of ways. It is truly a corporate effort."

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Still, Ross is a key player. But he knows something bigger than himself is responsible for the campaign's success.

"Never in all of my years of ministry have I had such a profound sense of working on something so obviously orchestrated by God himself," he explained. "Literally, hour by hour at my desk it is clear that we are uncovering the details of a plan God created from the beginning."

Forty-three-year-old Ross is no stranger to youth-related emphases. He has worked as the board's youth ministry consultant for more than nine years. And with the exception of a short period of less than a year when he first began work at the board, he has served as a youth minister on a local church staff since he was 19.

Ross grew up in a Christian home. His father, Bryan, served as pastor of several Southern Baptist churches in west Texas and retired as director of missions for the Big Spring-San Angelo (Texas) Baptist Area.

The younger Ross accepted Christ at age 7 and felt called to vocational Christian ministry as a junior high school student. But it wasn't until his days as a student at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, that he decided youth work would be his lifelong ministry.

He earned a bachelor's degree from Hardin-Simmons before going on to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he earned both the masters and doctorate degrees in religious education and served as an adjunct professor of youth education.

He served as minister of youth at Pioneer Drive Baptist Church in Abilene during his college years and at Royal Haven Baptist Church in Dallas during his seminary days and before joining the Sunday School Board staff in 1984. In addition to his consulting duties at the board, he also works as minister of youth at Tulip Grove Baptist.

During his tenure at the board, Ross has been instrumental in keeping youth ministry-related issues on the denominational front-burner. He started "Youth Ministry Update," a monthly newsletter giving youth ministers current information on 20 vital issues, such as counseling, evangelism, legal questions, youth culture and sexual behavior. He has organized nationwide youth ministry conferences and written numerous books, including "31 Truths to Shape Your Youth Ministry," "Summer Youth Ministry Ideas," "Ministry with Youth and Their Parents," "Ministry with Youth in Crisis" and "The Work of the Minister of Youth."

He also compiled "The 24-Hour Counselor," a popular series of audiocassettes that address a variety of issues of interest to teen-agers such as dating, depression, sexual abuse, guilt, AIDS, peer pressure, failing at school and loneliness.

Ross said he came to the Sunday School Board with "a deep desire to see Southern Baptist youth ministry turn in the direction of a ministry with the parents and families of youth." He promotes a philosophy of ministry that encourages youth ministers to give a third of their time to working with teens, a third working with parents of youth and a third working with the youth leadership team (Sunday school teachers and other volunteers).

He also urges youth ministers to consider their calling a lifelong vocation, believing "the maturity and the professional skills absolutely essential in contemporary youth ministry can only be developed over a period of years. When youth ministry is only viewed as a stepping stone to 'real' ministry, we lose folks before they reach their full potential in ministry.

"Teen-agers don't want so much an adult who dresses like them or talks like them," Ross said. "They want to be cared for unconditionally. Adults can do that during any decade of life. I can hardly wait trying to be a youth minister in my 50s."

Southern, Indian Baptists
begin quake relief effort

By Donald D. Martin

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern and Indian Baptists have linked efforts to deliver relief assistance to victims of India's Sept. 30 earthquake, which may have killed more than 20,000 people.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has earmarked \$100,000 in relief funds for the effort, to be combined with funds from Indian Baptists.

Southern Baptist representatives with expertise in relief work and Indian culture plan to join Indian Baptists from the city of Hyderabad to survey the devastated areas. They'll look for sites where they can supply long-term assistance and determine the exact amount of money needed.

"There's tremendous international interest in the situation right now, but that's likely to fade within a few weeks," explained Clyde Meador, FMB area director for southern Asia and the Pacific. "That's when we feel we can come in with a plan to offer significant help to the people."

The earthquake centered around the town of Khillari, about 250 miles southeast of Bombay and 130 miles northwest of Hyderabad. A series of quakes in the Indian state of Maharashtra toppled mud and brick homes, burying thousands of people and leaving more than 150,000 homeless.

The quakes occurred on the Deccan Plateau, known for its fertile lands. It also is home to 11 million Deccani Muslims, one of India's major Muslim people groups. They account for about 25 percent of the region's population.

Baptist aid, which will include assistance to the Deccani, most likely will focus on housing, not hunger relief, Meador said.

"The information we have is that the immediate needs are largely met," he explained. "There's probably not a long-term, significant food problem because an earthquake doesn't always destroy food sources like, for example, a flood. The main thing destroyed in this earthquake, besides the lives of so many people, was housing."

If the survey team does decide to supply housing, Baptists will use local technology in the rebuilding effort. Initial planning calls for housing aid to go primarily to people who can't afford to rebuild on their own.

"Southern Baptist specialists will help Indian Baptists look at what's possible from a technological point of view as well as from a Christian witness point of view," said a survey team member. "We'll explain some of the things we've done in other places where we have offered this type of help."

The Foreign Mission Board already has helped send medical supplies to India. It sent about \$14,000 to the Medical Assistance Program (MAP) in Brunswick, Ga., to cover handling costs of medical supplies that arrived in India Oct. 7. The MAP shipment, worth \$458,000, is on its way to the Immanuel Hospital Association, a group of hospitals working in the earthquake area.

One of the key Indian churches in the relief partnership is the 1,500-member Hyderabad Baptist Church, led by pastor G. Samuel. It already has sent a representative to the earthquake area to see what it can do quickly.

The church's members include a number of government officials and civil workers who are inquiring within their agencies about what role Baptists can play in relief work.

"These people are very active in their community and their country," one Southern Baptist representative said. "They go by the belief: To those that much is given, much is required."

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

**India's earthquake centered
in Deccani Muslims' homeland**

By Donald D. Martin

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--As Hindus burned their dead in funeral fires throughout Maharashtra state following India's deadliest earthquake since independence, a smaller group of mourners buried their own dead -- the Deccani Muslims.

The series of major quakes that devastated parts of central-west India shook the Deccan Plateau, which lends its name to the Deccani, a people group that makes up 20 to 25 percent of the area's population.

Among the 11 million Deccani, Christian researchers estimate, are only about 100 Christians.

The Deccani now are a minority group in the region, but they once ruled the vast, fertile plateau. As late as 1948 they controlled the region through a Muslim dynasty that extended back to the 14th century. The dynasty's capital was the city of Hyderabad -- where today Hyderabad Baptist Church plans to aid the quake-devastated region with Southern Baptist assistance.

When India gained its independence from the British in 1947, some Deccani believed the region should become an independent state, like Pakistan to the north. But when they called for independence in 1948, India's new government sent troops into the region and forced their ruler to abdicate.

The political crisis forced many in the Deccani ruling class to emigrate to Pakistan. Those who stayed had to live as a minority under a Hindu majority government. Many Deccani plunged into destitution because so many members of their commercial class had left the region. They even lost the official status of their language, Dakhini.

Visitors to Hyderabad's walled or old city, where more than half of the city's Muslim population resides, can still see remnants of the Deccani's past glory in decaying palaces. Expansive palaces, once home to many of the Muslim noble families, stand deserted and boarded up, revealing the devastation of the sudden shift in political power.

Now, many of the Deccani have seen their world crumble once again.

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Elementary school partnership

gives church opportunity to care By Barbara Denman

Baptist Press

8/10/93

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--While many Christians decry their lack of access to public schools, one Orlando pastor has discovered how his congregation and the local school can become partners to improve their community.

When Ron Bradley, pastor of Killarney Baptist Church in Winter Park, heard of the Orange County school districts' "Partner in Education" program matching businesses with public schools, he offered to participate in the program with that community's elementary school.

The principal of Killarney Elementary School was open to Bradley's suggestions and the offer of the church's facilities for school-sponsored functions. The church, which is only a few blocks from the school, includes a family life center with large gymnasium and an auditorium that seats 750, making it ideal for parties, PTA meetings and school concerts.

And because the church already had an after-school program for latch-key kids and day care in place, the congregation had earned a reputation as the church that cared about children.

"We knew we had strength in ministry. We wanted to broaden that strength to our own community," Bradley said. "For too long churches have been adversaries with schools. We want to be team members, colleagues with the school."

Bradley added their motivation for the partnership was not to gain new members, "but if the Lord gives them, that's OK. We wanted to build community and get outside the walls of the church."

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The church views its after-school and day-care programs as ministries to the community as well. Religious education is a part of the "Clubhouse" program that picks up children from three local elementary schools. For many of the children, this is their only religious instruction and they often refer to Killarney as "my church."

Since the Killarney school and church became partners, Bradley has worked to create opportunities to bring students and parents into the church. These functions have included a parents' night out for the kindergartners and their siblings, a Math Superstar skating party, a crossing guard party and concerts.

The church also hosted a PTA meeting with 700 people in attendance. After gaining permission, Bradley distributed fliers for an associational family life conference that drew several families outside the church.

In all of these functions, Bradley dresses in jeans to welcome the visitors to his church, practicing relational rather than confrontational evangelism. The adults often remark that it has been awhile since they were in a church building.

"All churches look like a castle or fortress until they have been inside. Now these people see that the church cares for them and opened its doors for them."

During the parents' night out, one couple told Bradley it had been years since they had gone out together. When they asked, "Why are you doing this?" Bradley replied, "To help you and your family."

"We've got to let non-church people see that we are here for them. We want to meet their needs, so that when the Lord speaks to them, they can say, 'I know that church.'"

For the church's efforts, the Killarney principal, for the second year in a row, nominated their relationship for a county-wide recognition award for its uniqueness.

Bradley tells of a couple who attended the church after their children's choir sang during a PTA meeting. When Bradley visited the family afterwards, the parents made professions of faith. They had read the plan of salvation in their Sunday school quarterly.

The woman was Charlene Smith, who was the PTA's president-elect. "God was putting her in place automatically so that we can continue in this role," Bradley said.

In her new role, Smith learned the national PTA manual outlines the role of the "spiritual life education committee."

It wasn't long before Bradley had earned the job as committee chairperson. Now during each PTA meeting, Bradley has opportunity to present a three-minute devotional that shares moral and ethical values and offers non-sectarian inspiration. "Now they know me as a pastor and if they need me, they can call on me."

Bradley is very conscious that he walks a tenuous line. "I'm legitimate, not violating any constitutional guarantees, but I have to be wise with the privilege.

"If we can't pray, let's find another way to be witnesses. And in a way, I think this is more effective," he said. "Why fight? Educators are as concerned as we are about the breakdown of the family. This is the perfect marriage, but it takes wisdom."

Bradley admits the relationship could be ruined. "If I stood up and said how to get saved, it would slam the door." Instead of an evangelistic appeal in word, Bradley said he asks the Holy Spirit to intercede. "I have that much confidence in the Holy Spirit."

Texas court denies former prof
in appeal of 1985 termination By Herb Hollinger

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--A Texas court of appeals has denied the appeal of a former Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor who lost a wrongful termination suit in a trial court.

T. Farrar Patterson, former tenured associate professor at the seminary, was fired in the fall of 1985 by Southwestern's trustees. Patterson sued the seminary and President Russell H. Dilday Jr. for "wrongful termination of his employment contract."

The trial court delivered a summary judgement in favor of both the seminary and Dilday but Patterson appealed the court's ruling for the seminary.

The trial court said its findings were based on the 1st and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and Article 1, Section 6, of the Texas constitution. Basically, the trial court said decisions of religious organizations regarding ecclesiastical (church) matters must be accepted by the courts.

Patterson's appeal contended the trial court erred because "genuine issues of fact exist as to: whether a seminary is a 'church;' whether the dispute concerns ecclesiastical matters; and whether Patterson's procedural and substantive rights under the seminary bylaws have been violated." But the appeals court, in overturning his appeal, said the case essentially involved a religious dispute, "the resolution of which is for ecclesiastical tribunals"

Patterson was on the seminary staff from Jan. 1, 1969, until Oct. 21, 1985. Formal charges were brought against him in March 1985 that included: 1) his lifestyle and behavior were inconsistent with the example expected of faculty members, 2) he presented a poor example of churchmanship, 3) the quality of his work was poor, 4) he had engaged in insubordination and had intruded into administrative affairs, 5) he had intentionally distorted the truth in reporting seminary matters and 6) he did not adequately respond to significant warnings and attempts by the seminary to work with him to resolve his problems.

Even though a trustee committee recommended his firing at that time, the trustee body declined and decided to consider the matter further. In the fall, a progress report was given the trustees who then voted to dismiss him.

The trial court ruled the suit against Dilday was based on his "status," charging him as individually liable for Patterson's claim his contract was breached. The trial court entered a summary judgement for Dilday because it "lacked subject matter jurisdiction."

The appeals court, in its July 14 opinion, said a key inquiry in its debate was whether a religious organization is making an ecclesiastical decision. In its findings it cited, among others, the 1987 U.S. circuit court's decision in favor of the Southern Baptist Convention in a suit filed by Robert S. Crowder. Crowder had maintained decisions made by the moderator at an earlier Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting were unlawful.

Also, the court said Patterson's claim there was a "genuine question of fact whether the dispute requires judicial resolution" of the seminary's decisions was erroneous because "uncontroverted evidence shows the seminary is owned by the SBC for the purpose of training ministers to serve the Baptist faith."

The court said there was ample evidence the seminary makes employment decisions regarding faculty members "largely upon religious criteria." Also, the court said the seminary teaches no course that has a "strictly secular purpose and Patterson was a professor of preaching and communication."

Citing the Crowder case, the court also affirmed the seminary's dismissal guidelines, with the board of trustees as the "adjudicating tribunal," because the "Constitution requires that civil courts accept their decisions as binding upon them."

The court noted Southern Baptists have a congregational form of church government, as opposed to a hierarchical system, and officers of the SBC institution "are v sted (with) the authority to make such a determination."

**BJC promotes Brent Walker
to general counsel post**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs board unanimously elected J. Brent Walker, BJC associate general counsel, as general counsel during its annual meeting Oct. 4 at First Baptist Church in Washington.

Walker, who joined the BJC staff in 1989, will succeed Oliver S. "Buzz" Thomas, 38, who resigned after eight years with the BJC to return to his native Tennessee. Walker, 43, officially will begin his new duties Nov. 1.

James M. Dunn, BJC executive director, also appointed Walker as associate director of the agency.

Walker came to the BJC staff after earning the master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Prior to seminary, Walker was a partner in the Tampa, Fla.-based law firm of Carlton, Fields, Ward, Emmanuel, Smith & Cutler, P.A. A graduate of Stetson University College of Law, Walker also holds a master's degree in public administration from the University of Florida.

In other action, the board unanimously adopted resolutions addressing a bill to restrict churches' ability to speak on public policy issues, aid to parochial schools and religious liberty for Native Americans.

The BJC called on Congress to exempt churches and religious organizations from the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1993, a measure to require those engaging in lobbying activities -- including churches -- to register with the government. The bill has been approved by the U.S. Senate and awaits House action.

"When churches and religious organizations speak out on public policy issues and communicate those sentiments to government, including activities defined as 'lobbying,' they engage in an integral part of their prophetic and pastoral ministries," the resolution states. The religious liberty agency also restated its long-standing opposition to public financing of religious schools. The need to restate the position, according to Walker, arose from efforts in California and elsewhere to finance religiously based education with tax dollars.

The third BJC resolution expressed support for a legislative effort to protect the religious practice of Native Americans, whose traditions, as well as their sacred sites, predate the founding of the republic. Many of their traditions, including the sacramental use of peyote, have been outlawed and their sacred sites have been disrupted by the U.S. government.

In other business, the BJC:

-- elected new officers. Sarah Frances Anders, senior professor of sociology at Louisiana College, Pineville, La., was elected chairwoman. Other officers are Dan Weiss, general secretary of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., first vice chairman; Charles Weber, professor of history at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill., second vice chairman; and Dwight Jessup, vice president for academic affairs and dean of Taylor University, Upland, Ind., secretary.

-- approved a \$790,000 budget. The 1994 budget represents an increase of \$15,000 from 1993.

-- approved a bylaw change that allows BJC membership for state and regional bodies. Membership previously has been restricted to national bodies.

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This article was adapted from news releases by BJC newswriter Pam Parry.

EDITORS' NOTE: This story is for papers with a Friday/Monday deadline that may want to use a story on the ground breaking the week of Oct. 11. A story from the ground breaking will be filed with Baptist Press Oct. 12.

**Mission board breaks ground
for new office building**

ATLANTA (BP)--A wooded lot was the site of Oct. 11 ground-breaking ceremonies signaling the next step toward new Home Mission Board offices.

The building, to be on 34 acres in the north Atlanta suburb of Alpharetta, is scheduled to be completed in 1995 to coincide with the agency's 150th anniversary and the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Atlanta.

The new property was purchased for \$1.3 million, and a \$13.5 million building contract was awarded in September.

Three years ago the agency sold its midtown Atlanta property for \$14.5 million. That money plus its investment income will be used for the new building, said Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president. No Cooperative Program or Annie Armstrong Easter Offering money will be used for the building, he added.

The new five-story structure will house the Atlanta operations under one roof rather than five buildings, Lewis noted. It will eliminate the need for off-site warehouses and provide more conference space.

Moving to a facility that is more energy-efficient and requires less maintenance will free more income for missions needs, Lewis said. Estimates indicate the board will save \$315,000 per year on decreased property taxes, maintenance costs, security needs, communications and insurance.

A long-range planning committee appointed in 1986 determined that upgrading the board's current facilities was not financially feasible. It would require \$2 million just to meet city fire codes on sprinkler systems, the committee found.

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