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January 20, 1994

94-10

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**Baptist association postpones
meeting, assesses quake damage**

By Mark A. Wyatt

**Baptist Press
1/20/94**

SAN FERNANDO, Calif. (BP)--Messengers from 35 churches and 14 missions in the San Fernando Valley Baptist Association had to postpone their quarterly associational meeting Jan. 18 as recovery efforts continued following a devastating earthquake two days earlier.

"We don't have an executive committee like many associations, so messengers from the churches meet four times a year," explained Charles McClung, director of missions. McClung said the association will try again to hold the meeting Jan. 27.

In the meantime, McClung said damage assessments at churches in the association are incomplete.

"I haven't heard of any church that has been so damaged that they can't worship," McClung said. However, damaged roads and freeways plus an overtaxed telephone system have made gathering information difficult, he said.

McClung said "all the lights came down" in the worship center at First Baptist Church in Grenada Hills. But he said the congregation reportedly will worship in another building at the church.

Several church buildings in the association reportedly sustained cracked walls and floors, McClung said. A cracking floor apparently ripped apart a carpet in the auditorium of Mandarin Baptist Church in Northridge near the California State University campus where a number of students died during the Jan. 16 tremor.

Initial estimates placed damage at the Shepherd of the Hills Baptist Church in Porter Ranch at between \$500,000 to \$1 million. Still, the church is being used to shelter earthquake victims and as a feeding station and command post by Southern Baptist and Red Cross relief workers.

Other churches in Hollywood, Sylmar, North Hollywood, Santa Clarita and Canyon Country also sustained damage, but McClung said no repair estimates are available.

"Until they get an inspector out there they won't really know how bad the damage is," McClung said.

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For McClung, just getting to the association office has been a challenge. He recently moved to Palmdale where he has been called as a staff minister at Harvest Community church effective Feb. 1. Palmdale, Lancaster and other desert communities were cut off from Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley by one of several major freeway collapses caused by the earthquake.

California Transportation Department officials say it will be at least a week before some of the damaged freeways are reopened, and a year or longer before repairs are completed.

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EDITORS' NOTE: The third-from-the-last paragraph updates this story as sent via CompuServe E-mail Jan. 19.

Despite quake, pastor's wife
sees 'protective hand of God'

By Mark A. Wyatt

Baptist Press
1/20/94

SYLMAR, Calif. (BP)--Like most people, Sharon Grubb is saddened by the scores of deaths and the billions of dollars in damage caused by the Jan. 16 Southern California earthquake. But despite the terrible losses, she has no doubt the "protective hand of God" was at work amid the destruction.

The quake "just brought out the awesomeness and the greatness and the majesty of God," Grubb said in a telephone interview. Speaking from the parsonage of First Baptist Church in Sylmar where her husband, Ray, is pastor, she added: "When you're in an earthquake or some natural catastrophe, that's just a fraction of God's great power. It's nothing compared to God and his magnificence."

Two days after the devastating trembler, Southern California residents continued picking up the pieces of lives the earthquake had so abruptly rearranged. Sharon Grubb helped her husband check on neighbors and church members, some of whom lived in mobile home parks ravaged by fire after the quake.

She even provided first aid to a woman bitten by a nervous pet dog. Grubb interrupted her description of events to announce the latest aftershock. "Here's another one, real mild," she said. "The minor tremors don't bother me. But if we had another major one I'd be out the door in nothing flat!"

Although hundreds of aftershocks continued shaking the San Fernando Valley, signs of normal life were beginning to return. The Grubbs' electricity finally was restored Jan. 19.

"We were without electrical power for 48 hours. We had water Monday, but not Tuesday," Grubb said. The tap water was back on Wednesday, but residents were being warned to boil the water or treat it with chlorine.

Grubb said her family will continue using bottled water. "We've had no gas since the earthquake, so it's kind of hard to boil anything." Besides, she said, the tap water is "a shade darker than anything I'd want to drink."

Grubb, who described herself as "pretty blind" without her eyeglasses, laughed as she remembered praying during the 6.6-magnitude Richter Scale quake.

"The two things I was praying for during the earthquake were first for protection and second for my glasses." Grubb managed to locate a flashlight and found her unbroken glasses. No one in the house was injured.

"I really had some stress and anxiety Monday, but Monday night I kept my finger on the flashlight button and I was able to sleep," she chuckled.

Since the quake, Grubb said she has continued praying and singing "old, soothing hymns," including "Abide With Me." She said it comforts her, as do the prayers of others.

"After the adrenaline surge, I got really, really tired and stressed," Grubb said. "But after I was able to get a good night's sleep, I just felt the prayers helped.

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"I'm sure a lot of people are stressed out, and without God they have nothing to hold on to, they have no hope," Grubb continued. She asked Baptists to "pray and intercede for those who don't know Christ, that they will begin to ask questions to make them more aware of God."

Meanwhile, Grubb said plans started before the earthquake are continuing for a San Fernando Valley crusade featuring international evangelist Luis Palau in a few months. She believes the quake can strengthen that event.

"I'm just hoping that God will use this to have many opportunities to witness and to share how he was gracious in allowing such a minor loss of life. It could have been really, really bad."

At least 46 people died in the earthquake, a surprisingly low death toll given the intensity of the quake in the densely populated San Fernando Valley and the severity of damage which some estimate may reach \$30 billion.

Both the Sylmar church building and parsonage escaped serious damage, Grubb said. "We have friends whose houses sustained major hits. We lost dishes, things. But things can be replaced.

"Our family, grandkids, they're alive and well," Grubb said. "You can just be grateful for life and for protection. Who knows why some families sustained more loss than others? But I saw the hand of God in protecting so many people and things."

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Home missionary becomes
familiar with disaster

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
1/20/94

ATLANTA (BP)--From hurricanes to fires to earthquakes, home missionary Franklin Beam is too familiar with disaster.

He was a church starter strategist in Miami during Hurricane Andrew in 1992. He moved to California last year, just as fires ravaged Laguna Beach, Calif. One of his first tasks in California was helping fire victims sort through the charred remains of their homes.

Beam's wife and children left Florida in December to join him in California, and they settled into their new home on New Year's Eve. Two weeks later, Southern California was rocked by an earthquake.

Beam, now a church starter strategist for Orange County Southern Baptist Association, lives far enough away from the earthquake's epicenter that his family felt relatively minor jolts. But it was enough to move Beam into disaster relief mode.

Beam's first step was recruiting volunteers, including June Tate, a member of First Southern Baptist Church in Fountain Valley and a Home Mission Board director.

Tate and her husband Burney filled the water tanks on their recreational vehicle and drove to Shepherd of the Hills Church, a disaster relief site coordinated by Brotherhood Commission volunteers.

As the Tates worked in the disaster relief kitchen, they fed firemen who were on standby, youth from a juvenile hall and local residents.

"We're still getting a lot of heavy aftershocks," Tate said three days after the earthquake. "You have to hold on to the hot pots as you're cooking so the food doesn't fall off the stove. You can feel the ground move under your feet."

One woman told Tate she couldn't cook at home because all of her clean dishes were broken. Dishes in the dishwasher were not broken, but they were dirty and she had no water to clean them.

After Hurricane Andrew, Beam said disaster relief work "opened up doors for us that we never expected to open." Now he said he's anxious to see how God uses the earthquake to open more doors in California.

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People available to serve immediately as volunteers can contact their state Brotherhood department. Volunteers interested in future rebuilding and cleanup can call the Home Mission Board at 1-800-4SBC-AID.

To assist earthquake relief efforts, the Home Mission Board contributed \$15,000 in hunger relief money and \$15,000 in disaster relief funds to the California Southern Baptist Convention.

Hunger relief funds are from designated gifts, not Cooperative Program or Annie Armstrong gifts. It is spent only on food. To donate to the hunger relief fund, send checks, earmarked for hunger relief, to the Home Mission Board, 1350 Spring Street, NW, Atlanta, GA 30367-5601.

Disaster relief is part of the Home Mission Board's general budget, and it is spent for items such as bedding and prescription medicines. Designated contributions can be made to disaster relief at the above address.

Contributions to disaster relief can also be sent to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, TN 38104.

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EDITORS' NOTE: In (BP) story titled "Baptists aid victims of Southern California quake," dated 1/19/94, please substitute the following updated paragraphs for paragraphs 3 and 4 in the original story:

Two California Baptist feeding units and one cleanup unit were activated Monday after the earthquake struck. A short time later, 12-man disaster relief crews from Texas and Oklahoma Baptists were mobilized and en route.

Meanwhile, the Baptist Brotherhood Commission also placed Missouri, Arkansas and Louisiana disaster relief workers on alert for possible deployment.

Also:

-- In the 2nd paragraph, update the death toll to "more than 40."

-- After the 6th paragraph, this paragraph could be added:

The Florida Baptist Convention, hit hard by 1992's Hurricane Andrew, also has allocated \$25,000 for disaster relief needs in California.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

CLC issues moral framework
for health care proposals

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
1/20/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--Describing Christians as "morally obligated" to address health care reform, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has issued documents outlining an ethical and theological framework by which to judge all such reform proposals.

The documents, "Health Care Reform: A Moral Preamble" and "Health Care Reform: A Statement of Concerns," were formulated and issued by the CLC after a Jan. 18 consultation in Washington sponsored by the agency. The private consultation featured medical ethicists, health care workers and Southern Baptist agency representatives.

The CLC documents also specifically criticize aspects of President Clinton's proposal which the CLC says endanger the sanctity of human life, religious liberty, the physician-patient relationship, family relationships and the ministry of Southern Baptist churches and agencies.

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"We feel a special responsibility to address health care reform because President Clinton is a member of a Southern Baptist congregation," CLC Executive Director Richard Land said at a Jan. 19 news conference, "and many Southern Baptists are deeply opposed to numerous elements of the president's proposed agenda on health care reforms."

The documents will be used as an "interpretative and evaluative grid through which all proposed health care reform legislation will be analyzed and critiqued," Land said. The CLC is not supporting one proposal over another, he said.

The CLC, which plans to distribute the documents to all SBC pastors, hopes Southern Baptists will use the statements to impact their senators and representatives, thereby moving health care reform in a direction satisfactory to the commission, Land said.

"We would love to have four or five plans that emerge as sort of hybrid proposals that all (meet) our criteria with equal satisfaction," he said.

While the "Moral Preamble" provides a theological and philosophical framework for addressing health care, the "Statement of Concerns" specifies six fundamental concerns it has about the president's plan and those proposed by others.

The CLC previously had announced its opposition to the president's proposal as long as it included abortion coverage.

The commission also expressed concern about health care at the end of life. It will "contest any plan which opens the door to or actively promotes euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide as a method of reducing medical expenditures near the end of life," the statement says.

On religious liberty, the document says, "It is embarrassing that a president who claims the Baptist heritage of religious freedom would consider so violating the consciences of millions of pro-life Americans by forcing them to pay for abortion with their taxes."

It also calls Clinton's proposal of a "conscience clause" allowing some health plans not to cover abortion "merely smoke and mirrors," because the president also has acknowledged taxes and employer contributions, apparently even from those morally opposed, would underwrite abortions indirectly.

The other four concerns expressed in the "Statement" were:

-- Allocation of limited resources. "Health care rationing based on factors other than medical need and patient willingness are ethically suspect. We will oppose any form of restricted access based on age, quality of life or disability."

-- Effect on Southern Baptist churches and agencies. "The consultation made clear that every Southern Baptist, every Southern Baptist church and every Southern Baptist organization will be impacted significantly by any of the health care reform proposals currently under consideration. We are concerned that Southern Baptists, along with most Americans, will be worse off under the Clinton blueprint."

-- Violation of family relationships. "We will resist any plan which will fund abortion counseling, contraceptive distribution to minors, medical care without parental consent and school-based clinics which facilitate these activities."

-- Revamping of traditional physician-patient relationship. "The insinuation of health care alliances into the relationship threatens the quality of care and erodes the level of trust between the physician and patient. A physician's best efforts to preserve human life must never be impeded by harmful government intrusion."

In the "Preamble," the CLC said Southern Baptists and other Christians, because of the calling of Christ and their ministry to the people of the world, should be involved in the debate over health care reform.

"We believe there is a need for revision in the health care delivery system," the "Preamble" says. "We must work harder in both the public and private sector to help provide affordable care for all those in need."

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The key elements in successful reform include "reducing unnecessary medical care and costs (with attendant tort reform), liberalizing access to health insurance and providing medical assistance to those truly in need," while not mandating a government-run system, the document says.

In addition to affirming the sanctity of human life and the covenant relationship between a doctor and a patient, the "Preamble" also supports the promotion of good health habits and the discouragement of tobacco, alcohol and other drug use.

"We encourage moral responsibility by promoting premarital sexual abstinence, marital fidelity and advocacy of the traditional family," the document says. "At the same time, we recognize a moral obligation to provide compassionate care for all who suffer."

At the press conference, the CLC expressed support for increased taxes on alcohol and tobacco.

"Southern Baptists have historically supported increased excise taxes on alcohol and tobacco as a means of discouraging their use," said James A. Smith, th CLC director of government relations. "Whether that should be (considered) as a means of paying for health care reform is another question in our minds."

Representatives of the president's health care proposal, including Hillary Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, were invited to the consultation but declined.

The only person sponsoring a health care reform bill to participate in the consultation was Sen. Don Nickles, R.-Okla. He spoke for about 30 minutes about his legislation, "The Consumer Choice Health Security Act."

Other sponsors of legislation who were invited but did not attend were Rep. Dick Armey, R.-Texas; Rep. Jim Cooper, D.-Tenn., and Sen. Phil Gramm, R.-Texas.

In addition to the CLC staff, other Southern Baptists participating in the 20-person consultation included Don Buckley, a family physician in Pensacola, Fla.; Mark Coppenger, SBC Executive Committee vice president for convention r lations; Thomas Elkins, head of the obstetrics and gynecology department at LSU Medical Center; Vi Galyean, a licensed practical nurse and crisis pregnancy center director; Daniel Heimbach, assistant professor of ethics at Southern Seminary, and James Herod, senior vice president with the SBC Annuity Board.

Although they and the other participants were used as resources, the documents should be attributed only to the CLC, Land said.

The consultation was off the record to the media.

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EDITORS' NOTE: This updates and corrects a story with the same title sent via CompuServe E-mail Jan. 19. Please substitute it for that story.

Mississippi Baptist teen dies
in truck accident in Honduras

By Mary E. Speidel

Baptist Press
1/20/94

TELA, Honduras (BP)--Southern Baptist volunteer Bradley Boatner, 17, of Brandon, Miss., died instantly Jan. 18 in a truck accident on an unpaved mountain road near Tela, Honduras.

Boatner, the only child of Gary and Paula Boatner of Brandon, was a member of Park Place Baptist Church in Brandon. It was his second trip to Honduras as a mission volunteer.

The crash also critically injured four other Mississippi Baptist volunteers: David Sneed, a dentist from Eupora, Miss.; Anthony Presley, a dentist from Florence, Miss.; Danny Clifton, an optometrist from Louisville, Miss.; and Doug Phillips, pastor of Blackwater Baptist Church in Daleville, Miss.

After initial treatment in a Tela hospital, they were evacuated by h licopter early Jan. 19 to a hospital in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, said Southern Baptist missionary Glenna Stamps in a telephone interview.

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A total of 17 volunteers, mostly medical professionals, suffered injuries ranging from minor to severe in the accident, said Peggy Moore, of Byram, Miss. Her husband, Delton, a pharmacist, shared a room with Boatner on the trip. Those with minor injuries were treated and released.

Nine Hondurans, including a mother and her infant, also were injured but none required hospitalization, said Stamps' husband, Stanley.

Most of the volunteers were riding in the back of an open cattle truck when the driver swerved toward the road's edge to avoid hitting an oncoming car, Mrs. Stamps said. Heavy rains had softened the road and its shoulder gave way, causing the truck to crash down an embankment.

Volunteers in the accident said the truck overturned several times. Boatner apparently was crushed under the truck. Its Honduran driver, who is not affiliated with Baptists, reportedly was not injured and left the scene of the accident, Moore said.

Part of the 35-member volunteer team was traveling in another vehicle not involved in the accident, Mrs. Stamps added. The volunteers, who included several non-Southern Baptists, were from Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and Louisiana.

The office of Mississippi Gov. Kirk Fordice arranged for an Air National Guard plane to travel to Honduras late Jan. 19 to evacuate all the volunteers, said a spokeswoman for the Brotherhood department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Boatner's body was shipped on the plane with the volunteers, who arrived in Jackson, Miss., early Jan. 20. The injured volunteers received additional treatment at hospitals in Jackson.

Five volunteers remain hospitalized in Jackson. They are Sneed and his wife, Ann, and Presley, all in Mississippi Baptist Medical Center; and Clifton and Phillips, both in River Oaks Hospital.

A Mississippi Baptist Brotherhood spokeswoman said the next 48 hours are critical for Clifton, who is in intensive care. He suffered a bruised kidney, heart muscle and abdomen, as well as lung damage and broken ribs that are causing him breathing difficulty.

Presley, who is in critical but stable condition with fluid in a lung, sustained broken ribs, a broken shoulder, a concussion and lacerations. Part of his left ear was cut off. Phillips had surgery in Honduras after suffering a ruptured spleen. Sneed, who sustained a broken jaw and arm, was expected to have surgery Jan. 20. Mrs. Sneed suffered some broken ribs in the accident.

The team had been leading medical clinics and doing evangelistic work at a Honduran Baptist mission congregation in a rural village above Tela. On the night of the accident, the volunteers were late in leaving because they had stayed to attend a baptism and meal at the mission, Stamps said.

On earlier volunteer trips, some of the team members had helped to construct the mission's church building and some other churches in the area.

The Stampses, who live about an hour from Tela, learned of the tragedy at about 10 p.m. Jan. 18 through a Honduran Baptist pastor in Tela. The missionaries immediately drove to a Tela hospital to minister to the volunteers, who had been conducting medical clinics in cooperation with that hospital.

On this trip the team was not working through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, but earlier had worked with the Stampses through the mission board.

At the hospital one volunteer told Mrs. Stamps, "I'm praying that this doesn't dampen enthusiasm for (volunteers) to come back another time."

Boatner, one of the youngest members of the team, had committed his life to full-time Christian service about a year ago, said Rhonda Williamson, wife of Park Place's pastor. "He had a heart for the Lord, seeing people come to know the Lord," Williamson said. In serving as a mission volunteer, "he was exactly where the Lord wanted him."

Funeral services for Boatner were scheduled for 11 a.m. Jan. 21 at Park Place Baptist Church. The family requests memorial contributions be sent to the Brad Boatner Scholarship Fund for ministerial students, c/o Park Place Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1497, Brandon, MS 39042.

Houston church reaches,
disciples gang members

By Ken Camp

HOUSTON (BP)--If it seems youth minister Jaime Garcia treats the tough-talking, gun-toting gang members in his north Houston neighborhood like family, he has his reasons.

One is his 20-year-old brother, David, currently serving time for murder. Another is his little brother, Abel, a leader of the Northside Raiders gang.

But an even more compelling reason is Garcia's desire to see all the youth gang members join the 40 or so who already have become his brothers and sisters in Christ, thanks to the ministries of North Side Baptist Church in Houston.

From basketball to banquets to Bible studies, the church focuses on reaching and discipling the troubled youth in its rapidly changing, multi-ethnic neighborhood.

Garcia, the 28-year-old bivocational youth minister at North Side, has deep roots in "the 'hood" and a natural rapport with the youth, most of whom he has known all their lives.

"I denied for a long time that my brothers were involved with the gangs. But when somebody is carrying around a cellular phone, a beeper and lots of money at 17, something is wrong," he said.

Garcia's parents were the first Hispanic members of North Side, and he credits them with bringing him up "in the fear of God."

Although his brothers had the benefit of the same upbringing, Garcia said they gave in to the peer pressure that is so much greater than when he was a teen-ager.

"There was not the pressure to join gangs back then," he said. "There was nothing but one-on-one schoolyard fights then. There weren't any gang fights. There weren't any drive-by shootings."

But there are now. Garcia said about a month ago, his mother's house was sprayed with bullets when members of a rival gang shot at his brother's new truck.

"Nobody was hurt, thank God," he said. "I tell my brother, 'Man, I love you, but you need to get out of this. You may not be ready now, but I want you to know that when you get into trouble, I'm here for you.'"

For pastor Jimmy Moore, a rural Alabama native who came to North Side Baptist Church about 18 months ago from a Florida pastorate, it's "a different world" ministering in a neighborhood where graffiti covers the walls, bars cover the windows, and gunshots and police sirens echo through the night.

"The neighborhood sure has changed in the last 10 years," said James Turpin, a longtime member of North Side Baptist Church. "I've been broken into four times in three years."

Moore insists he came to north Houston with his eyes open, committed to evangelizing and discipling people in that community. But he admits it has been a struggle, learning to love the often-violent young people in the neighborhood.

"To be perfectly honest, when it comes to reaching the community as a whole, we have not been very effective. But among the youth, we're beginning to make some progress," Moore said.

The Houston Police Gang Task Force has told Moore there are at least 15 gangs in the area near North Side Baptist Church. Members of neighborhood gangs such as the Northside Raiders, the Black Latinos and the female ALG (All Lady Gangsters) are part of larger, city-wide parent gangs -- La Familia, a largely Hispanic criminal "family," or The Brotherhood, a predominantly black group.

Although the North Side congregation is roughly 60 percent Hispanic and 40 percent Anglo, the youth group -- which makes up at least one-fourth of the Sunday attendance -- is 90 percent Hispanic.

The breakthrough event in reaching neighborhood youth was a pizza supper last September, held in conjunction with the fall church-wide revival. Distributing tickets at nearby Sam Houston High School for free pizza, the church drew about 110 young people to the church for the event.

While he was at the school lunchroom inviting students to the pizza party, Garcia tried to break up a fight between two girls who were members of opposing gangs.

"That night, things got tense when the rival gang members showed up at the church and started throwing signs (hand signals)," Garcia said. "The girl who had just gotten out of the hospital after the fight and the girl who beat her up were both there."

Garcia and Moore quickly intervened, asking the youth to show respect for the church by not causing any trouble there. Tempers cooled, most of the youth stayed for the revival service, and 38 made commitments to Jesus Christ.

In the hour-and-a-half testimony service that followed, a number of gang members made peace with each other and declared their intention to leave the violent lifestyle.

But Garcia and Moore acknowledge some of the youth have been unable to leave the gangs -- an experience that can be life-threatening.

To join a gang, youth are "cliqued in," an initiation process in which a dozen or so neighborhood gang members beat the novice with their fists.

Being "cliqued out" is worse. Members of all the parent gangs' neighborhood branches make up the gauntlet lines. Up to 100 gangsters stand in double file rows facing each other. They use pipes or clubs to beat the person being cliqued out as he is forced to run between them.

Rather than formally exiting the gangs, Garcia advises the young people just to drop out. But in a subculture that values physical courage above respect for life, many of the young people are unwilling to give up the thing that first drew them into gangs -- respect.

"Guys want to be on the street, doing something to make a name for themselves -- to get respect," Garcia's brother, Abel, said. "What do you have to do to get respect? Whatever it takes."

Carmen is a petite 16-year-old with dimples and an affinity for fighting. At a church lock-in for youth, she made a commitment to leave the All Lady Gangsters but was reluctant to turn away from her friends or give up the prestige that comes with being a gang leader.

"Everybody who wanted to get cliqued in came to me, so I fell back in," she said. "They call me 'Mom,' and they're all my kids."

She says she doesn't start fights but, "When my girls do, I have to be there with them ... I can't let some people hit on my friends."

To draw youth off the streets and into the church, North Side started "Fast Break," a Thursday night youth program in which the church opens its gym for basketball. In the middle of the event, Moore brings a brief, simple Bible study.

During one recent Fast Break devotional, Moore said he explained to the youth -- about 90 percent of whom are involved in gangs -- that the church opened its facilities to them because church members loved them.

"Before you couldn't have heard a cannon, but this time you could have heard a pin drop," he said. "I believe they're beginning to understand I love them."

Several young people at nearby Clark Park, a popular gathering spot for neighborhood gangs, said they wish North Side could open its gym every day.

"This park is no good. This park is what got me in jail three times, but it's where we all grew up. Yeah, I'd rather be at the church," said Santos, a member of the Northside Raiders.

"At the park, all you see is drinking, fighting and somebody asking you for rolling papers," said Steve, another neighborhood teen-ager. "At the church, you see somebody sharing their faith. There might be something there."

In addition to reaching the "hard-core" youth who already are active gang members, North Side is making every effort to rescue the young gangster want-to-bes.

"They see their friends in the gangs, and they just want to hang with them. And to fit it, it may mean having to pick up a beer or a cigarette or even a gun," Garcia said.

To involve these young people in Bible study, on Wednesdays -- while adults at North Side gather for a traditional prayer meeting -- Garcia and the youth meet for "Teen Worship." Typically, about 35 attend the weekly meeting, a half dozen more than regularly attend Sunday school.

Moore and Garcia also are starting a non-traditional discipleship training program for the young people, and they want to begin a support group for troubled youth.

On Jan. 14, the church held a Youth Appreciation Banquet to attract families whose children attend Sam Houston High School and to reclaim some of the youth who had made commitments last September but who had failed to follow through.

Although attendance was less than what Moore had expected, the banquet enabled the church to contact seven families not reached before, including one who attended Sunday worship services two days later.

"I never have put a goal on how many I want to reach," Moore said. "I want to impact one at a time -- just one at a time."

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David Winfrey of the Home Mission Board contributed to this report. (BP) photo available upon request from the Dallas bureau of Baptist Press.

**Magazines inspire
evangelistic tract**

By Sarah Zimmerman

**Baptist Press
1/20/94**

ATLANTA (BP)--Popular topics in secular magazines inspired a new Home Mission Board tract designed for witnessing to women.

Women's magazines focus on self-image, taking care of oneself and women's rights, said Diane Strack, author of the tract. Strack is a homemaker in Dallas and wife of Jay Strack, full-time evangelist and first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"We have to permeate our culture without being absorbed by it or afraid of it," Strack said as she introduced the pamphlet to state evangelism leaders. Titled "A Woman's Search for Self Fulfillment," the item outlines a scriptural basis for self-esteem, equality, unconditional love and freedom to choose.

On self-esteem, the tract refers to Genesis 1:27 which notes women are created in God's image. That Scripture also is used to point out women's equality, since God created both male and female. The tract also notes women are equally in need of forgiveness for their sins.

The tract states God's love is the source of unconditional love, and women are free to choose to accept or reject his love.

Priced at 10 cents each, the tracts are available from the Home Mission Board's customer services, 1-800-634-2462.

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**Record Japanese crowds hear
Billy Graham in Tokyo Dome**

**Baptist Press
1/20/94**

TOKYO (BP)--Evangelist Billy Graham spoke to the largest gathering of Christians in the history of Japan as he concluded a Jan. 13-16 Mission 94 crusade in the Tokyo Dome.

A crowd of 45,000 people filled the dome Jan. 15 with the service broadcast to nearly 60 satellite centers across the country. Graham, a Southern Baptist, spoke to the largest gathering of Christians -- and the most people at one time to hear the gospel -- in Japan, officials said.

Crowds averaged 31,250 during the four-day crusade with an average of 3,025 who came forward at Graham's invitation to make a commitment to Jesus Christ. A 40 percent response from men -- unusual in Japanese culture -- was particularly significant, Graham association officials said.

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Each of the mission meetings was translated into five languages -- Korean, Indonesian, Mandarin, Portuguese and Spanish -- via low-power FM transmission.

"When this great giant awakens to the love of God and the power of God, I believe we will see Japan as the evangelical tool that will carry the gospel to the world," said Mark Edlund, administrator of the Southern Baptist mission, the largest in Japan. "Much as they've done in the economic realm, they can do in the spiritual. The key to it is the awakening of this country to the love of Jesus Christ."

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Baptist peace group praises
Wal-Mart handgun decision

Baptist Press
1/20/94

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--A group which includes members of 12 Baptist conventions has praised the Wal-Mart Corporation for its decision to stop selling handguns in its stores.

The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, founded in 1984 as a network linking Baptists involved in justice and peace issues and based in Memphis, wrote Wal-Mart's president and has urged other Baptists to send letters as well.

"We know that guns do not cause the epidemic of violence now inflicting our nation," BPFNA Executive Director Ken Sehested wrote in his letter to Wal-Mart. "Something deeper is at work. But the easy availability of handguns dramatically increases the potential for destruction.

"There are over 270,000 registered gun dealers in the U.S. We have more gun dealers than we have gas stations. Your company's decision is a step in the right direction to bring this outrageous reality under control," Sehested wrote.

"You have done the right thing. You have put people's lives above potential profit," the letter said.

A letter also was sent to the president of K-Mart Corporation urging his company to follow suit, Sehested said. According to BPFNA, the companies are believed to be the two largest sellers of firearms in the United States.

The BPFNA is not affiliated with any Baptist convention or other agency. As a nonprofit organization its funding comes primarily from membership dues and contributions.

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Golden Gate music program gets
'good standing,' suggestions

Baptist Press
1/20/94

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--The accrediting commission for the National Association of Schools of Music has approved continuation of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary as an "institution in good standing" related to its master of church music degree.

"This continuation is a significant affirmation of our work here at Golden Gate," said Craig Singleton, associate professor of church music and chairman of the seminary's music department. Golden Gate Seminary is one of six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries and the only SBC agency in the western United States.

The accrediting commission commended the seminary for using adjunct faculty to "lighten the overload of full-time faculty and for restructuring options for remedial work for incoming students."

In a letter noting the continuation, the commission requested a progress report on the seminary's strategic planning efforts, with specific attention paid to recruiting more students for the music program; marketing, promotion and denominational outreach; and increased funding for annual operating costs. The progress report is due in May 1995.

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In addition to the accrediting action, the commission recommended that music faculty give "serious attention to their role and potential impact in church music in the San Francisco Bay Area and the surrounding region." The recommendation was made to "assist the development of the music program," the commission noted, but the seminary is under no obligation to respond to the recommendation.

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Former insurance exec named
Baptist college interim head

Baptist Press
1/20/94

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (BP)--Jeff Sanders, a retired insurance company executive, has been named interim president of California Baptist College following the retirement of President Russell Tuck.

Sanders was elected by the college's trustee executive committee as interim chief administrative officer. He will serve until a new president is inaugurated, school officials said.

A resident of northwest Arkansas, Sanders is a former CBC trustee who currently chairs the board of directors for the college's development foundation.

Former Encino, Calif., residents, Sanders and his wife, Maud, also have lived in Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri. He is a former trustee of Missouri Baptist College and moderator of the St. Louis Baptist Association.

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EDITORS' NOTE: A photo is available to accompany the (BP) story titled "Couple's 3-bedroom home open to HIV children, others in need" on Charles and Martha Cart r as foster parents to 286 children, dated 1/11/94. The photo can be ordered for \$9.41 from the photo library of the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch, (804) 649-6285. Refer to the newspaper's initial story, "Couple open hearts to children," which appeared 11/10/93 on page 1 of the newspaper's Henrico Plus section.

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Baptist Press

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