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NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

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Murdered BSU leader leaves
legacy of genuine faith

By Connie Davis

Baptist Press
2/3/94

CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The slaying of four workers at a Taco Bell restaurant in Clarksville, Tenn., has brought grief to the entire community, including the Baptist Student Union at Austin Peay State University.

Kevin Campbell, an officer of the BSU, was one of the four killed Jan. 30.

Campbell and the other three employees -- all in their 20s -- were completing work at the restaurant when they were killed during a robbery in the early hours of Sunday.

Campbell -- a student, employee and a new father -- was preparing to co-lead a Bible study at the center, said Jim Alexander, BSU director at Austin Peay.

He and his wife, Lori, had a baby three weeks earlier. The subject of the Bible study -- the minor prophets of the Old Testament -- was a special interest of Campbell's, Alexander said.

Just three years ago, when Campbell became a student at Austin Peay and began visiting the BSU, he had not made an initial commitment to God, Alexander recounted. Campbell not only made that decision but was a junior studying philosophy to prepare for study at a Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

All regular programs of the BSU center are suspended for at least a week as students grieve, Alexander said.

Students are gathering in small groups at the BSU center remembering Campbell's involvement as a BSU officer and work on a mission trip to Baltimore, sponsored by the center.

The grief counseling will be ongoing, Alexander said. Some students are fearful because of the senseless violence of the act. "We're always searching for meaning and there's no meaning in this act," he said.

Others are dealing with the absurdity of the killings. That's where Campbell's life is an encouragement, Alexander said.

Campbell probed the meanings of his faith and lived it, Alexander said. "He gently, confidently and genuinely shared his faith."

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In his eulogy at First Baptist Church in Clarksville, where Campbell was a member, Alexander read the following excerpt from Campbell's journal -- "I suddenly realize that I have no clue as to how my life will turn out. ... I must allow the Lord to lead me where he will."

"We're going to miss him, but we're better because he's come our way," Alexander said.

The tragedy has impacted Middle Tennessee. A fund set up by a Nashville radio station for the 11 children of the victims received \$24,000 in two days. Taco Bell has donated \$5,000 for each child. People are still placing flowers at the restaurant site, Alexander said.

But it's important for those affected to talk about the tragedy, he said, adding those moved to tears should cry.

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Agreed: Values must be taught;
sticky question is how to do it

By Ray Waddle

Baptist Press
2/3/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Teaching values, with or without religion, is the only way public schools can win back public support in a time of "massive disenchantment," panelists on a First Amendment roundtable said.

And the First Amendment Center in Nashville, which assembled the Feb. 1 panel of 22 academics, lawyers and journalists, is mobilizing to do something about it.

"Our quest is to try to take the great resources of the Vanderbilt Divinity School, the law school and Peabody Teachers College and then craft some sort of model that would help students learn about values and about religion," said John Seigenthaler, chairman of the First Amendment Center.

The First Amendment Center envisions a curriculum that teachers nationally could use to teach values without sliding into a constitutional problem of endorsing explicit religions, said Seigenthaler, who is also chairman emeritus of The Tennessean daily newspaper in Nashville.

The failure of classrooms to instill a sense of conscience and public virtue helps explain an epidemic in teen-age violence and a collapse of public confidence in schools, many of the panelists said.

Most panelists seemed to agree the time has come for schools to overcome nervousness and confusion about teaching values, but there was no unanimity about exactly how to do it.

"How do we live together with all our religious differences, and how do we make good citizens of our kids? -- those are things schools need to teach," said Oliver Thomas, a Baptist layman and First Amendment legal expert who lives in Maryville, Tenn.

The First Amendment forbids public schools from giving the appearance of endorsing any particular religious faith.

But in recent years, a "culture war" has erupted between Americans who believe God must be "put back" into schools and Americans who think public life must be purged of sectarian religious references to make room for diversity and tolerance.

There is also widespread public confusion about what place religion has in schools: Most panelists agreed that schools are certainly free to teach about religion but not "preach" any religion.

Panelists were divided, however, over the practical place of religion in teaching values.

Some suggested that values must be taught without reference to the religions that underpin them because too many teachers are ill-equipped and can't be trusted to do the job right without giving in to the temptation to proselytize students.

But Joseph Hough, dean of the Vanderbilt Divinity School, said: "The only thing students are learning about values is they are not accountable to anyone but themselves. This is where religion can be brought in, in the teaching of civic virtues. All religions teach accountability -- either to God or to one another."

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Metro Nashville Schools director Richard Benjamin and others warned that even a strong values curriculum won't be enough to reform schools. The very "culture" of the classroom -- the climate in which learning takes place -- needs to be overhauled.

"We're trying to shift to a spirit of inquiry where learning is an adventure, a journey, for students, teachers and parents," Benjamin said.

Momentarily laying aside the problem of how to teach values, some panelists urged schools to be more aggressive about teaching about religions. It's a matter of giving students a broad, liberal education -- and a matter of public credibility, they said.

"The First Amendment says schools must be neutral about religion, but schools generally don't take religion seriously -- they haven't been neutral," said Warren Nord, a North Carolina educator and author.

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Lower cost, self-helps upgrade
this year's Home Mission Study

Baptist Press
2/3/94

ATLANTA (BP)--The cost of the 1994 adult Home Mission Study has been reduced 50 percent while the content has been upgraded in an effort to involve more adults in the study.

The one-time pricing structure is part of an experimental tabloid format which resulted in lower production costs, according to Joe Westbury, editor of the materials at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. The adult study book costs \$1.25, down from last year's \$2.50. The study's theme is homelessness and redemptive ministry.

Westbury emphasized that in addition to traditional stories on home missionaries and church-based ministries, the 1994 adult study includes practical tips for involving church members in ministry.

"The study includes 15 tips for ministering to the homeless, a homeless shelter covenant, a seven-day menu that could be used in a church-based ministry and other suggestions for ministry. The articles have been highlighted as mission action stories to encourage Baptist Men and Baptist Women to use them in ministry projects," Westbury said.

Additional cost savings for churches will result from a reduction in the number of products published for this year's study, Westbury said.

"We did not produce individual student books for youth or children this year. The youth book and teaching guide will be included in one product. The children's material will feature teacher resource kits for grades one through three and grades four through six with reproducible handouts in the kit for the children," Westbury explained.

A video also is available for each age group study.

Churches can purchase the 1994 Home Mission Study at Baptist Book Stores or by calling Home Mission Board Customer Services at 1-800-634-2462.

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(BP) graphic containing homeless statistics will be mailed 2/4/94 to state Baptist newspapers by the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press.

BWA calls for priority
on world's unevangelized

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press
2/3/94

LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)--With more than 1.3 billion people yet to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Baptist World Alliance will encourage Baptists around the world to make reaching "unevangelized people" a priority.

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This is part of a BWA "blueprint for action" for unevangelized people which received the support of Baptist and other mission leaders from 30 countries who met in Larnaca, Cyprus, Jan. 20-24, for a "Baptist International Conference on Unevangelized People."

Ninety one percent of Christian missionaries and 94 percent of missionary budgets are directed to the most evangelized 33 percent of the world.

Because of this, the BWA will encourage Baptist mission societies to look at their missionary personnel and budgets and recruit new people to reach the unevangelized.

Sponsored by the BWA, the conference brought together Baptists and other mission leaders from Africa, North America, Europe and the Middle East to focus on why much of central and northern Africa, Asia, the Middle East and other regions has not yet heard the gospel.

"I have felt a deep burden for unreached people since serving as a missionary in Papua, New Guinea," said Tony Cupit, BWA director of evangelism, who led the conference targeting the unevangelized regions, often called "World A."

"If we fail to reach out to the non-Christian world with the message of God's love, who will?"

While there was no argument about the responsibility of Baptists and other Christians to reach out, several reasons were given why the Christian church has not placed most of its resources at "this resistant belt" to its faith.

Language, poverty, illiteracy, non-Christian religions, undemocratic governments, lack of human rights and religious freedom, lack of understanding and stereotypes have put up almost impenetrable walls to the gospel.

"If they are poor and illiterate, they have the least chance of hearing the gospel," said Jim Slack of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Slack, working with English researcher David Barrett, has used the computer and world demographics to demonstrate the need for a focus on the unevangelized.

"There is a great gulf of misunderstanding of people, areas and religions of the Middle East," said Bill O'Brien, director of the Global Mission Resource Center at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. "Many Westerners think all Arabs and Muslims are terrorists and there is a woeful ignorance in the Christian community about the complexities of the Middle East."

"The fear of Islamic fundamentalism," said one Christian worker in the Middle East, "is crippling Christian outreach."

Baptist disunity also was given as a reason. "Our fighting gives us little time for the rest of the world," said Denton Lotz, BWA General Secretary.

"Without a doubt, 'World A' presents a challenge to Christians," said Cupit, "but if we neglect those areas ... and work only among potentially productive areas, we must ask ourselves, 'Is this the way of the cross?'"

"If I ask you to go to a map and point out the least evangelized, you would know," said Jimmy Maroney of the FMB. "We've known it but as Christians have been disobedient."

Maroney pointed out many areas of World A have had a Christian history and "a small Christian body, capable of explosive, spontaneous, activity without outside interference."

"There is a depth of spiritual maturity, a commitment and sacrifice by believers in these areas that the West could learn from," Maroney said.

"We as Christians must be wise and use creative means of getting the gospel to people when political and religious barriers are created," he said. "God has not released us from our responsibility."

"Do we really believe God cares as much for Muslims, animists, Buddhists, all nations?" asked Knud Wumpelmann, BWA president.

"It is so easy for us to find good excuses for not doing what God wants us to do and go where God wants us to go," he said. "God calls us to go to the poorest and most difficult places at once."

A solemn warning came from Lotz who said the call to go to World A was a call to the cross and to die.

Using the example of Mehdi Dibaj, an Iranian Christian who was sent to and ready to die for his faith, but who has since been released, Lotz said, "Let the comfortable Christian West beware of cliches and cheap vangelism which does not preach the cross, bear the cross or endure the cross."

"We must be aware of the invitation we are giving," Lotz said. On Jan. 31, after the conference, news broke of the murder of one of Dibaj's Christian co-workers in Iran, Haik Hovsepian-Mehr.

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**Baptists discuss key elements
of outreach to the unevangelized** By Wendy Ryan

**Baptist Press
2/3/94**

LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)--Much remains to be done to reach the world's 1.3 billion unevangelized people -- but pockets of believers, prayer, media outreach, compassion ministries and signs and wonders are having an impact on "World A" or the "resistant belt."

This message was shared by various speakers from Africa, Europe and the Middle East during the "Baptist International Conference on Unevangelized People" sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance, Jan. 20-24 in Larnaca, Cyprus.

"Christ is not without a presence in the Middle East," said one speaker, using his homeland of Israel as an example.

"There are many believers," he said, "but many stay underground, within their own communities and do not attend a Baptist church. Many prefer to stay in their Jewishness and be called Jewish believers."

"Numbers do not tell the whole story," he said. "There are many more believers than you think."

Another believer from Israel said the influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe has given more visibility to the Christian church. "The hearts of the immigrants are open to God's Word," he said.

Baptists in the Cameroon have targeted more than 250 people or language groups to hear the gospel, reported Emmanuel Cheng of the Cameroon. But the cost of converting to the Christian faith is high for many, especially in areas of militant Islamic fundamentalism, he said.

"Many in these groups are Muslim ... and they face pressure, intimidation and death threats if they are converted," Cheng said.

"I struggled for eight years with my parents before I was baptized," said one Middle Eastern believer.

Charles Mwakitwile of Tanzania spoke of being imprisoned four hours in Zanzibar and charged with blasphemy for preaching the gospel. "I gave my testimony and preached for four days while I stayed in the police station before they sent me back.

"I have a great desire to go back to Zanzibar and evangelize," he added. Reaching "ethno-linguistic" or "people groups" is a key strategy mission groups are using to focus on people who speak the same language and share the same culture, wherever they might be.

Keith Parks, former president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and now missions coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, addressing the shift in focus "from nations to people groups," noted there are more than 5,000 such groups unreached by the gospel.

People groups in Africa, such as the Fulani in Nigeria, are being reached by African Baptists and others. The Romani gypsy people are another example. There are Romanis all across Europe, not just in one country.

One speaker, voicing enthusiasm for an outreach to more than 1 million Halebi Gypsies in Egypt and to the Bedouins, said, "We are asking them to take a look at Jesus for the second time."

Another speaker from the Middle East used a basketball term to describe how his group works with people groups.

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"We give this group the full-court press," he said, "using all avenues, radio, Bible correspondence courses, medicine, whatever, to be ready for 'the kairos moment' when God will break through."

Satellite broadcasting and media ministries also are proving there is no place truly outside the reach of the gospel.

"The rapid nature of change, the rapid growth and distribution of information and globalization versus ethnic identity are all affecting mission strategy," Parks said. "We must adapt our approaches to changing trends in society."

Because information is key to sharing the gospel, Parks voiced concern about those who are illiterate or have no access to information.

"The division of the 'haves' and 'have nots' may be the difference between those with and those without access to information," Parks said. "How do we reach the illiterate who are cut off from information?"

"The arbitrary and unnatural definition of nations has broken down with the fall of communism," Parks said. "Now everybody is involved in every nation."

Repeatedly, there were reports of the impact of the "Jesus" film produced by Campus Crusade for Christ. It is significant that most of the groups at the conference use the film, a sign of the collaboration needed if World A is to be reached with the gospel.

"The great historic churches as well as para-church organizations will have to participate to reach the unevangelized," said Tony Cupit, BWA director of evangelism.

"The last frontier in mission is the frontier of collaboration," said Bill O'Brien of the Global Mission Resource Center at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

A common thread of all who spoke was the way God used miraculous events to bring people to Jesus Christ in World A, with many of the stories coming from Africa.

"God will do the miraculous when he needs to work," said Samuel Fadeji, general secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

"Ninety percent of people who come to Christ in my area come because of miracles," said one speaker. "One man asked for a sign from God, to send rain in the driest season. God did and that man followed Jesus."

Generally five strategies were discussed for evangelizing the unevangelized: prayer; more effective partnerships; Western mission agencies working in closer ties to the local church; important new media opportunities; and a focus on children and young people.

While mission groups are encouraged to send personnel, many reports indicate that in many places "indigenous missionaries" who go to their own people are most cost effective and have greater impact.

Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary, said Baptists need to develop a unity to effectively evangelize World A. "Our doctrine of local autonomy is too much at times," he said. "How can we evangelize the world when we don't even talk to one another?" he asked.

"We lack power because of a lack of unity, prayer and the movement of the Spirit among us."

"Love people as they are" also was heard many times during the conference, and Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid, appealed for "an evangelism in the context of compassion ministries" for the unevangelized World A.

Montacute quoted John Stott of England who said of Jesus, "there was in his ministry an indissoluble bond between evangelism and compassionate service."

Saying "the two should not be separated," Montacute gave examples from Salvation Army founder William Booth, Charles Spurgeon and other great Christian leaders.

Montacute quoted Abraham Kuyper, former president of the Netherlands in 1880: "There is not one inch in the entire area of human life about which Christ who is sovereign of all does not cry out, 'Mine.'"

**Women must evangelize women
in World A, BWA speakers say**

By Wendy Ryan

LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)--Women have a key role as evangelists and catalysts for revival in the unevangelized world, and mission boards need to appoint more women to work there, according to several speakers during the Baptist International Conference on Unevangelized People, Jan. 20-24, in Larnaca, Cyprus.

The women, who had earlier held a conference on the unevangelized world, specific to women, their needs and strategies for reaching them, also called on mission-sending bodies to develop strategies that include health issues.

"Only with our faith and the Lord, women have a chance," said Catherine Allen, director of the women's department of the Baptist World Alliance, the conference sponsor.

Women are among the poorest and worst-treated in those parts of the world that have not yet heard the gospel, Allen said.

"If Nigeria is to be won for Christ, women are going to do it, because we can enter homes where men cannot," said Aduke Akinola, who leads women's work in the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

Fifty percent of Nigeria is Muslim and, like many Muslim-dominated countries, men cannot approach women to talk to them.

"This gives us women an opportunity to reach our own," said another leader who also reported that "the majority of secret believers in the unevangelized world, especially in the Middle East, are women."

Since many women are illiterate, education also is a way to reach them.

Akinola said Nigerian Baptist women focus on literacy classes to share the gospel.

"We also challenge women to go out into the bush and start churches," Akinola said.

Developing loving, caring relationships also was emphasized as a key to reaching women. "No confrontation or argument will win a person," said one woman missionary. "Prayer and testimonies of how God answers prayer work much better."

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**Mongolian Baptists are first
to gain legal recognition**

By Erich Bridges

**Baptist Press
2/3/94**

ULAN BATOR, Mongolia (BP)--The young Baptist church in Ulan Bator received legal recognition from the Mongolian government Feb. 1 -- the first such action in Mongolia's modern history.

The government reportedly denied legal registration applications from as many as 10 other church bodies before granting the Baptist request. Christian groups of any kind have existed for only a few years in the formerly hard-line communist nation bordering China and Russia.

"This is a day of rejoicing!" declared Southern Baptist worker Gary Harthcock in a written message from Ulan Bator, the Mongolian capital.

"Just as God parted the waters for the Israelites, he has parted the waters for us," he said. "He has opened wide the door that was closed for so long. I firmly believe that this act of God is his affirmation that our little group is here at the right time and at the right place."

The church will be formally constituted Feb. 24 in a public service expected to be broadcast on national television.

Meanwhile, government officials already have asked the church to get involved in helping it fight drug and alcohol abuse, a Mongolian social ill.

The church began as a small Bible study in the living room of Harthcock, 74, and his wife, Evelyn. The Southern Baptist couple from Winter Park, Fla., went to the isolated Asian nation in 1992 to teach English.

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The Harthcocks developed numerous friendships with Mongols, and their Bible study took off.

"It just keeps growing and growing," said a Hong Kong-based Southern Baptist representative who r lates to Harthcock. "They have well over 70 (worshippers) on Sundays now."

Recently the church has been meeting in a sports center, which it now has outgrown. The congregation probably will move -- by government invitation -- to rented facilities in the Mongolian Cultural Center, next to the government Parliament building on Ulan Bator's main Sukhbaatar Square.

The Southern Baptist Convention joined the Mongolian believers as a "sponsoring agency" in the registration process. But Harthcock emphasized the church is Mongolian, not foreign.

"This will be an indigenous church from the very beginning, because only Mongolians can request registration," he said. "Some members of our cell group made the formal request and appeared before (government officials) to give testimony of their faith in God and their desire to form a Baptist church. Now that the registration has been approved, anyone who believes and is baptized can become a member."

The government also required that some Mongolian applicants sign their names and give their home addresses, identification numbers and places of employment. Harthcock expected 15 or 20 Christians to sign the document.

Instead, more than 40 asked to sign and also volunteered to submit their Christian testimonies in writing. Finally they had to be limited to four lines each because of limited space on the document.

The official recognition is remarkable not only because of Mongolia's recent communist past and long Buddhist tradition, but also because of a recently passed law limiting religious freedom. The Mongolian Constitutional Court overturned parts of the law that would have severely restricted Christian activities but retained several provisions.

The court decision returned the law to the Mongolian Parliament, which passed it, for review and affirmation or rejection.

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Whitsitt's contributions move
beyond controversy, historian says By Pat Cole

Baptist Press
2/3/94

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Although William Whitsitt's notoriety in Baptist history is most often linked with a controversy over Baptist origins, he made significant contributions as a scholar, academic leader and minister, according to Baptist historian W. Morgan Patterson.

In a Feb. 1 founders' day address opening spring semester classes at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., Patterson said Whitsitt was the "most versatile scholar" to teach at Southern during the school's first 50 years.

"A preoccupation with the controversy should not be allowed to obscure the fact that (Whitsitt) was a major figure in the life of this institution ...," said Patterson, who retired in 1991 as president of Georgetown (Ky.) College.

"Because of his teaching ability, his scholarly mind, his attainments, his capacity for work, his probing mind, his administrative experience and his commitment to the preparation of ministers of the churches, he was an exceedingly valuable asset to the school."

Whitsitt joined the Southern Seminary faculty in 1872 and was named president in 1895. He was pressured to resign the presidency in 1899 amid a controversy created when he challenged a popularly held belief that Baptists could trace their beginnings through an unbroken chain of succession to the apostolic era. Instead, Whitsitt, basing his position on historical research he did in England, argued Baptists sprung from English Separatists in the 17th century.

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The subject Whitsitt pursued was of great importance for historians and others interested in historical accuracy, said Patterson, a former church history professor at Southern and a former dean and current visiting professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

"Its significance has not been diminished in the subsequent 100 years, as all trained Baptist historians have embraced and taught essentially the conclusions of Whitsitt in this area," Patterson noted. "Thus, the contribution of Dr. Whitsitt to historical scholarship in our denomination has not been small, and he deserves major credit for upholding the value of historical research and documentary evidence in drawing conclusions about the events of history as we seek our denominational roots and identity."

Nevertheless, Patterson observed church history was not Whitsitt's only scholarly interest: "A careful study of the man and his voluminous notes, papers and journals, reveals a solid classical education, unusual linguistic ability, an obvious versatility of accomplishment and a broad interest in current affairs, biblical and theological studies, world religions and the pursuit of many other subjects in addition to church history and Baptist history."

During Whitsitt's brief presidency, the seminary recorded several accomplishments including enrollment growth, a major building project, library additions and faculty salary increases, Patterson said. After leaving the seminary presidency, Whitsitt taught philosophy at the University of Richmond until 1909. He died two years later at the age of 69.

"(Whitsitt) provides a good model for ministers with varying responsibilities as he demonstrated strong convictions, a determination to follow the light given him, a vital faith which nonetheless analyzes and reflects and an evenhandedness and lack of bitterness amid intense conflict," Patterson emphasized. "That's a pretty good combination of qualities for all of us to have and to cultivate."

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BSSB changes approach, affirms
commitment to special education By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
2/3/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Baptist Sunday School Board is changing its approach to resourcing special education ministries in Southern Baptist churches, but the agency is not diminishing its commitment to the work, Louis Hanks, director of the youth-adult department in the board's Bible teaching-reaching division, said.

Recent structural changes in the board's organization moved special education work from a self-contained unit to age group and general leadership departments in the Bible teaching-reaching division. Special education consultant Gene Nabi also announced his retirement, effective Jan. 1, though he will continue to serve as a contract worker through the end of the year.

Hanks said the restructuring was in response to recommendations made by a special task force which examined ways to improve BSSB literature, programs and field service. The relocation of special education ministry is designed "to provide distinctive resources and consultative services and to encourage all age groups and general officers to understand and undergird the needs of people with handicaps and disabilities," he said, adding, "Our intention is to lift up rather than diminish our commitment to special education work."

As part of the new approach, Hanks said special education responsibilities have been assigned to editors and consultants in the preschool-children's, youth-adult and general leadership departments who will form a team to make suggestions and plans for resources and emphases. In addition, more personnel in the Bible teaching-reaching division will be trained to help support special education work in state conventions, associations and local churches.

The new organizational structure better reflects the approach most SBC churches use in meeting special education needs, Hanks said.

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"About 80 percent of preschoolers, children and youth with special needs are enrolled (or 'mainstreamed') in classes with age group peers," Hanks explained. "Adults usually are organized in separate departments."

"In the past, our emphasis has been on adults with special needs. Now we will focus on helping all age groups and general officers better minister to all persons with special needs," he said.

Special education leadership training support for preschool, children and youth age groups, as well as general leadership support, will be provided in the future through dated curriculum resources, Hanks said. In addition, dated, age-group curriculum resources will provide suggestions for workers to adapt the teaching suggestions for use in separate or regular classes. These resources will replace "Special Education Leadership" magazine which will be discontinued after the July-September 1994 issue.

Hanks said the board also will provide leadership training opportunities for special education workers in cooperation with state conventions and associations at state-wide conferences; Glorieta, Ridgecrest conference centers; Church Program Training Center (CPTC) events; and national Vacation Bible School Institutes. A special day camp for the mentally retarded also will be offered one week during the summer during Sunday School Leadership conferences at Glorieta and Ridgecrest.

Hanks said newly designed special education curriculum materials for adults will be released in January 1995. Separate member and teacher resources will be provided.

Lesson content will be based on the Convention Uniform Series in 1994-95 and "Bible Learners" (Life and Work Series for children in grades 3 and 4) in 1995-96.

"This change will enable the content to contain more understandable concepts, but will be designed on an adult age-appropriate level," he said.

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**Texans in midst of debate
of school prayer resolutions**

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
2/3/94

DALLAS (BP)--School prayer resolutions approved by more than half of the counties in Texas show that some politicians are willing to trade religious liberty for social and religious control, a Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission official has charged.

Weston Ware, Texas CLC citizenship associate, said the resolutions in effect propose that children in public schools be exposed to the prayers of whatever religious majority may control that school's board.

Resolutions urging that prayer be reinstated in public schools have been approved by commissioners courts in 134 Texas counties, city councils in more than 50 municipalities and the boards of several school districts.

Scott Arney, Denton County commissioner, introduced the first such resolution last June 22 and has spearheaded the effort to get other counties and local governing bodies to endorse the measure.

The resolution approved by the Denton County Commissioners Court stated in part that the United States "was founded on the freedom of religion and was not founded on the freedom from religion."

Reinstating public school prayers would move the nation back to its religious-based moral foundations, according to the resolution.

"There's been a deterioration of our school systems," Arney said, adding there is "no value system, no morality, no direction, no place for faith in the schools."

While there are genuine problems in public education, the absence of classroom prayers is not their cause and the inclusion of such prayers would not be their solution, Ware countered.

"It is unfortunate that the issue has become politicized to the degree that many people feel that some form of politically determined religious guidance, perhaps including prayer, would save our schools," he said.

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Arney maintained that the goal of the resolution is to end "bigotry and intolerance" toward Christians who are told to "leave their faith at the door" when they enter public schools.

But the religious free speech rights of students already are protected under the Equal Access Act of 1984, according to Ware.

Under the act -- upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1990 -- if a public secondary school allows student-initiated groups to meet on campus during non-instructional time, the school cannot discriminate on the basis of the religious, political or philosophical content of the speech at such meetings.

The act allows secondary school students to join together voluntarily for prayer, Bible study, devotions and religious instruction.

Although the various resolutions approved in Texas do not address specific legislation, Arney said his goal is to convince federal lawmakers to approve a constitutional amendment on school prayer, particularly HJR 173, introduced last March in the 103rd Congress.

Arney said the school prayer resolution has received "grassroots support" and is gaining momentum.

"We are planning to begin to be more aggressive to get the remaining counties lined up," he said.

Both the Christian Coalition -- a conservative organization founded by televangelist Pat Robertson -- and the Rutherford Institute -- a legal network favoring a blurring of the line between church and state -- are being contacted to discover ways to "keep the momentum going," he said.

But at this point, Dick Wienhold of Bedford, state chairman of the Christian Coalition, said his office is directing all calls regarding the prayer resolution to Arney.

"We reported on the movement in a newsletter late last year, but that has been our only involvement," Wienhold said.

Regardless of who endorses the resolution, Baptists should be true to their history and heritage, rejecting any wedding of church and state, Ware said.

"Politicians love a bandwagon, and sometimes the less thought people give to an issue, the more willing they are to jump on board," Ware said. "Campaigns such as this are fueled by politics."

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Seminary draws plans to proceed on campus center," dated 2/1/94, substitute the following sentence for the last sentence of the fourth paragraph:

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Chiles of Eustis, Fla., recently designated \$1 million of a \$2 million gift toward the building, putting the seminary over the halfway point in fund-raising efforts.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

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