

**(BP)**

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
ARCHIVES  
SBC  
**BAPTIST PRESS**  
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

**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

February 9, 1994

94-23

HONG KONG -- China bans unregistered churches, religious work by foreigners.  
TEXAS -- Movie's struggle between good, evil confronts Christians, experts say; photo.  
TENNESSEE -- 27-year wait for 'Christy' to end on CBS in March.  
TENNESSEE -- Film maker chooses rural Tenn. church.  
KENTUCKY -- Former POW, wounded vet urge more healing of Vietnam scars.  
KENTUCKY -- Discipleship, she says, can be key to healing.  
GEORGIA -- Georgia county reading through Bible in '94.  
ILLINOIS -- A new start: Illinois town, church move to higher ground.  
ATLANTA -- HMB executive committee affirms Lewis, staff and Masonic report.  
ATLANTA -- Interfaith witness director elected; photo.  
NASHVILLE -- BSSB ministry, financial reports demonstrate improving performance.  
NASHVILLE -- BSSB trustees elect chief financial officer.  
NASHVILLE -- Challenge to Southern Baptists to be focus on Draper book.  
NASHVILLE -- BSSB trustee leads robber to become a Christian.

China bans unregistered churches,  
religious work by foreigners By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press  
2/9/94

HONG KONG (BP)--Just as the Clinton administration has begun praising China for improving its record on human rights, the Chinese government has cracked down anew on unauthorized religious activities.

Two government decrees -- signed Jan. 31 by Chinese Premier Li Peng and announced Feb. 5 -- ban churches not registered with officially recognized religious bodies and forbid "proselytizing" by foreigners.

The first forbids the existence of "house churches" and other congregations not belonging to the government-sanctioned Three-Self Patriotic Association, which represents Protestants, or the Catholic Patriotic Association.

Such churches have sprouted by the thousands in recent years, despite continuing persecution in some areas.

The law also limits activities inside approved churches, including sermons or programs that might "destroy national unity, ethnic unity and social stability, damage public health or undermine the national education system."

A second decree warns that foreigners "must not establish religious organizations, organs for managing religious affairs or centers or schools for religious activity. (They) must not recruit religious followers, appoint religious teachers or conduct any other proselytizing activities among the Chinese people."

Foreigners can preach in China only with government approval. They can bring in religious materials only for "their personal use," the decree continues, and only if such materials don't "threaten China's social and public interest."

Many Southern Baptists live and work in China. Most of them, however, teach English in universities or provide other professional skills and social services.

--more--

Neither law breaks new ground. Various government and Communist Party organs have long tried to suppress the burgeoning "house church" movement and have insisted that officially sanctioned churches reject foreign influence.

The new laws are "just one aspect of a continuing, multi-year process," said a well-informed observer in Hong Kong, speaking on condition of anonymity. "They codify and publicize things that have been under way for awhile and probably are going to continue."

Repression campaigns against religion come and go and vary widely from place to place. But reports of church closings, arrests and beatings of believers -- even deaths -- have increased in the past year.

"There's been a whole series of crackdowns on house churches over the last six or eight months," said the observer. "What we've got here is just a public statement to the West and everybody else that says, 'Yes, this is what we're doing.'"

The question is: Why now?

The Clinton administration has just begun expressing qualified approval of Chinese actions to improve human rights. That comes after repeated U.S. threats to eliminate China's "Most Favored Nation" (MFN) trade status -- crucial to China's continued economic growth -- when it comes up for renewal in June. A host of U.S. congressmen and senators have made the same threat. Some of them have visited China, asking that Christian prisoners be released and religious freedom respected.

Despite the warnings, "the Chinese leadership has decided MFN is a done deal," said the Hong Kong observer -- an opinion shared by several religious human rights groups. "Sure, they released three dissidents last week. They'll do token things, but basically they can do whatever they want to the general population."

The government remains suspicious of foreign involvement in religion, concerned about strange practices in some cult groups, and alarmed about the ongoing expansion of the ranks of religious believers.

Christianity continues to grow in the countryside, in cities, among intellectuals and students, even among party members -- the hearts and minds of communist rule. Meanwhile, Islam and Buddhism are rebounding in western China, where restive indigenous peoples demand more independence.

"Among Tibetans, among Muslims, among Mongols ... the central government doesn't want anything that will lead to expressions of nationalism," the observer explained.

Regarding restrictions on foreigners, he predicted the government may target one or more "foreign experts" this year for violation of the religious restrictions and high-profile expulsion.

"They might be teachers, they might be students, they might be businessmen," he said. "A scapegoat may be chosen for the publicity value of the expulsion, for the warning it sends to the foreign community."

Possible punishments for violating the new laws were not spelled out in the decree announcements. Public response to the laws from Chinese Christian leaders has not yet been reported.

--30--

Movie's struggle between good, evil  
confronts Christians, experts say

Baptist Press  
2/9/94

By Scott Collins

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--It was 1946 and Pete Comer, a Southern Baptist layman from Madison, N.C., was in Germany to photograph war crimes proceedings for the U.S. government.

The 19-year-old photographer stayed at Dachau, a German concentration camp where more than 238,000 Jews were slaughtered during World War II. And while Comer was in Germany only three months, what he saw at the camp continues to haunt him 48 years later.

--more--

"The furnaces and trees where Jews were burned and hung to die while their families were forced by the Nazis to watch, along with the slaughter houses with blood-stained walls, were still standing and open for public viewing," Comer said.

While Comer's experience gave him a firsthand look at the carnage of the Holocaust, millions of Americans in 1994 are getting a similar view through the movie "Schindler's List," which received 12 Academy Award nominations Feb. 9, including nominations for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor.

The film, directed by Steven Spielberg, is based on a 1982 book by Thomas Keneally and recounts the story of Oskar Schindler, a German businessman during World War II.

Schindler ventures to Krakow, Poland, in an effort to make as much money as possible. By convincing the city's wealthy Jewish leaders to invest in a bankrupt enamelware factory, Schindler realizes his dream.

In return for their investment, the Jews are given status as essential workers, saving them from the horrors of the concentration camp.

As the movie progresses, Schindler begins to see the Jews as human beings and develops compassion for their plight. He devises a scheme to rescue more Jews from the camp by putting them to work in his factory. In the end, Schindler's Jews, as they are called, number 1,100. According to the movie, more than 6,000 descendants of Schindler's Jews are alive today.

And while the character of Schindler is the center of Spielberg's movie, Holocaust experts and Baptist scholars alike agree the central theme of the story is good vs. evil.

Darrel Baergen, director of the Center for Christian Communication Studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, said the film should be seen by all Christians because of "its effective depiction of how evil will manifest itself in more evil."

"If there is hate or prejudice in us, we in turn represent the evil depicted in the film," said Baergen, who has allowed his students at Southwestern to view the film as part of a class assignment. "'Schindler's List' reminds us in our day and time of what evil can do to human beings -- it can create suffering, it can create division within families and it can create death."

Baergen said the movie "shows the enormous onslaught of evil that prevailed in Germany during the Holocaust and how the guilt of the Holocaust is spread beyond Hitler and his army."

Those frank images of evil and the indiscriminate choice the Nazis made between life and death led to the movie's R rating, according to Baergen. The movie also contains nudity and sex.

But Baergen said Christians must view "Schindler's List" with a sense of taste and discrimination about the movie's value.

"If we choose not to see 'Schindler's List,' we ignore an opportunity to use the movie's content to communicate with unsaved people who do see it," Baergen said. "For Christians to ignore the power and potential of film is a misunderstanding. The majority of the people to whom we minister in church and with whom we share our faith outside church go to the movies, read books and magazines and watch television. We need to draw upon what they're seeing and hearing."

William R. Estep, distinguished professor of church history, emeritus, at Southwestern agreed.

"Most of our people today (Baptists) are getting their knowledge through video and television," Estep said. "If we do not utilize video and television, they don't get it because there aren't many books that they read. I think most Baptists are abysmally ignorant of the Holocaust and what happened."

Estep said Baptists historically have argued for Jewish rights in England and the United States.

"Baptists argued that they (Jews) ought to have the right to build a synagogue in this country. So they built their first synagogue in Charleston, S.C., a colony with a lot of dissenters, particularly Baptists," Estep said.

"Baptists have always been champions of Jewish rights and the freedom for Jews because of our commitment to religious freedom, where God is not a God of force and coercion," Estep said. "He wants no unwilling conscience. God is a God of the invitation, that in Christ we have the invitation to faith into new life, but we have to accept it.

"These are principles that drive Baptists to remember the Holocaust and to take a stand for freedom for everyone to worship, and to be champions of the minorities that are so discriminated against in our country."

Frieda Soble, director of the Dallas Center for Holocaust Studies, agreed with Estep's assessment of American society.

"America is a multi-cultural society founded on freedom. It's a place where oppressed minorities can live together and strive for happiness. Obviously we haven't reached that goal, and we need to learn from what happened in Europe to help us reach it."

Soble said "Schindler's List" has succeeded in generating renewed interest in the Holocaust.

She said the movie has brought more walk-in visitors, and groups from across north Texas are scheduling tours of the center.

"We are dedicated to reducing prejudice by teaching about the Holocaust, by preserving the experiences of those who survived and by honoring the memory of those who perished," Soble said.

Soble said "Schindler's List" is different from other Holocaust movies because "it made sure to remind the audience of the continuing atrocities that were being perpetrated against most of the Jews even while Mr. Schindler managed to miraculously divert a few hundred of them from their tragic fate.

"In 'Schindler's List,' the victims also turn out to be the winners in the end, as they are seen migrating to Israel," Soble said. "But the screenplay constantly reminds the viewers that these people were very few, while those who didn't make it were very many."

Estep said the movie's lesson for Baptists and all Christians is the value of human life. He said until that lesson is learned, other holocausts will continue, such as ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. And it could happen in the United States, too, he added.

"Unless we teach our people the value of human life, the gift of God, we are in for a rude awakening."

--30--

Bob Murdaugh, Susan Simko and Brian Smith contributed to this story. (BP) photo from the movie available from the central office of Baptist Press in Nashville. An earlier (BP) story, "Holocaust denial 'inexcusable,' 'just plain mean,' Baptists say," by Ken Camp, releases 5/12/93, has been placed in SBCNet News Room under HOLOC.BP for interested editors.

27-year wait for 'Christy'  
to end on CBS in March

By Julia Duin

Baptist Press  
2/9/94

TOWNSEND, Tenn. (BP)--People who were close to the late Catherine Marshall know it was her dream to see her classic novel "Christy" come alive on the screen. But it took a persevering Christian film producer to bring her dream to pass more than 10 years after Marshall's death.

Finally, after a 27-year wait, "Christy" has made it to the movies.

In March, millions of Americans will tune in to watch CBS-TV's adaptation of Marshall's 1967 best seller about a young woman's struggles to teach mountain children in Appalachia.

A two-hour premier is to be followed by six one-hour segments.

--more--

No one can explain exactly why it has taken so long for a movie of "Christy" to be made. An overwhelmingly popular book, it has sold 8 million copies to date. Marshall sold the movie rights to MGM in 1968 but the novel sat untouched in a Hollywood vault for years.

Ken Wales, producer of the CBS movie, said industry insiders are watching to see how successful "Christy" will be.

"It's a test case," he said. "There isn't another viable best-selling book property that's better than 'Christy.' If 'Christy' succeeds, that will send a tremendous signal."

Wales did not have TV in mind when he bought the rights to "Christy" in 1986. He wanted investors to help him finance the filming of a full-length feature film, but all arrangements fell through. CBS began pursuing him in 1991, no doubt helped by the fact that the wife of CBS president Jeff Saganasky is named Christy -- and is a fan of the book.

Wales spent the fall filming just a quarter mile from Bethel Baptist Church in Townsend, Tenn., a tiny town on the western slopes of the Great Smoky Mountains. Kellie Martin plays Christy Huddleston, the main character of the book, whose life was patterned after Marshall's mother, Leonora Whitaker Wood. Martin, 18, starred in the popular ABC series "Life Goes On."

Other "Christy" stars include Tyne Daly, Emmy-winning actress of the TV series "Cagney and Lacey" who plays Alice Henderson, the Quaker woman whose quiet spirituality shapes Christy's emerging faith; and Tess Harper, featured in "Tender Mercies" and "Crimes of the Heart," who plays mountain woman Fairlight Spencer, whose dramatic death nearly breaks Christy's heart.

Wales, the son of a Presbyterian pastor, was working at MGM when the film studio bought the rights to Marshall's book. When the company was sold in 1969, all films in preproduction were canceled, and the "Christy" project went on the shelf for 17 years.

"Christy" caught Wales' attention because his father had met Marshall's husband, Peter Marshall Sr., at Yale University. Wales also was impressed after seeing "A Man Called Peter" -- the 1955 film based on Marshall's book about her husband's experiences as chaplain of the U.S. Senate.

One day in 1976, after Wales learned Catherine Marshall would be speaking in Pasadena, Calif., he bought a copy of "Christy" and read it in two days. He made some inquiries through industry contacts and learned MGM was not giving up the rights, even to the author.

Wales then called Marshall and told her how interested he was in making the book into a movie.

"Ken, I want you to know something," Marshall said. "I've been so despondent over this."

She described how she had spent an hour on her knees that morning praying about the movie. Wales said a chill went up his spine. From that day on, he tried to wheedle the movie out of MGM's hands.

In the meantime, he produced other films, including "The Prodigal" for World Wide Pictures, the film ministry affiliated with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

By 1983, the year Marshall died of respiratory failure at age 68, she was resigned to the fact that she would not live to see the film completed.

"Ken, you've tried valiantly," she told the unhappy producer. Nevertheless, Wales pledged to her he would complete the project someday.

In 1986 the window of opportunity opened. One Sunday, by some coincidence, Wales attended the same church in Pacific Palisades, Calif., as an MGM executive. When he inquired after the service as to the fate of the film, the executive informed him media mogul Ted Turner was planning to buy MGM. For a brief time, he explained, MGM officials would be willing to unload some of their old properties.

But could Wales come up with the money and a script? He immediately mortgaged his home to come up with the necessary finances. But finding a company with the money to actually film "Christy" took another six years.

Finally, Wales signed an agreement with CBS in January 1993 for a pilot film and began filming in September.

The film version of "Christy" follows the real-life story of Marshall's mother, who was a schoolteacher in the Great Smoky Mountains in 1912. There she met and married Presbyterian pastor John Wood. Catherine was born two years later.

Leonora Whitaker Wood died in 1989 at the age of 97, also without seeing the fictionalized account of her life come to fruition.

The novel tells of the 11 months before Christy's marriage, when she begins teaching in the fictitious town of Cutter's Gap. There she meets several colorful characters who transform her life and provide many dramatic life-and-death scenes. Christy's bout with typhoid fever and her glimpse of heaven in the closing pages of the book provide the climax of the narrative.

Although it took Marshall nine years to write the novel, it rocketed to second place on The New York Times best-seller list and became a Reader's Digest Book Club selection soon after it was published.

The success of "Christy" was heady stuff for Marshall, who during the 1940s was married to Peter Marshall. When Peter died in 1949 of a tragic heart attack, 34-year-old Catherine was left to care for their 9-year-old son, Peter Jr.

Instead of crumbling under a weight of anxiety, she immediately began writing the first of her 22 books.

Her book, "A Man Called Peter," was later adapted for the silver screen. At the time, it was one of the top-grossing films for 20th Century-Fox.

For the next 34 years, Marshall would help shape two generations of Americans with her engaging descriptions of Christian faith. Her books -- like "To Live Again," "Beyond Ourselves" and "Something More" -- led to conversions among thousands of readers who appreciated her low-key way of explaining how to walk with Christ.

--30--

Adapted by permission from Charisma magazine's February 1994 issue. Formerly with the Houston Chronicle, Duin now writes out of Ambridge, Pa. (BP) photo can be ordered from the central office of Baptist Press in Nashville.

Film maker chooses  
rural Tenn. church

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
2/9/94

TOWNSEND, Tenn. (BP)--Curt Franklin had been Bethel Baptist Church's pastor less than a year in the Smoky Mountain community of Townsend, Tenn., when a Hollywood film maker showed up for church.

Veteran producer Ken Wales had selected a hollow less than a quarter-mile from Bethel as the site where 100 to 200 crew members, depending on the day, would shoot the upcoming movie and six hour-long episodes of "Christy" for CBS.

Wales, a Presbyterian layman, and his wife, Susan, visited several churches in the community last fall and chose to join Bethel's 100 to 150 Sunday worshipers while filming the movie based on the late Catherine Marshall's best-seller "Christy."

Franklin said Wales told him whenever he's on-site for a film he likes to attend a local church.

"He's so meek and humble," Franklin said of Wales. "He's quiet but very strong in his faith, a real student of the Scriptures." And he's "very much trying to change the movie industry to a more spiritual stance on some issues," the pastor said.

Franklin said Wales at times asked for counsel with hymns to be sung during the movie's church scenes and chalkboard Bible verses for the schoolhouse scenes.

"We had a close friendship. Still do," Franklin said.

The actress who plays Christy, Kellie Martin, also attended Bethel.

--more--

Martin, who had a role on the ABC series "Life Goes On," was described by Franklin as "a down-to-earth person, a very sweet-spirited girl, very warm. She really made everybody comfortable, no matter who you are."

The film crew was well-received in the community, Franklin said, and a number of residents got parts in the film after attending a local tryout.

Franklin's son, Curtis, 12, played Festus Allen, one of the schoolchildren taught by Christy. He will appear in the movie and all six subsequent episodes.

And Franklin, his wife Sherry and daughter Noel, 10, were stand-ins.

A mission house, church and several other structures built for the film remain standing in Townsend. Whether CBS will order more episodes of the family oriented series "depends on the ratings," Franklin said.

--30--

Former POW, wounded vet urge  
more healing of Vietnam scars

By Ken Walker

Baptist Press  
2/9/94

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Ben Purcell and Clebe McClary lost precious possessions in Vietnam. One, nearly six years of freedom. The other, an arm, one eye and more than two years of his life in a hospital ward.

Yet both battle-scarred veterans support President Clinton's recent lifting of the trade embargo on Vietnam, agreeing it is time to move on and put the past behind.

Both have already taken personal steps in that direction.

Purcell, a retired Army colonel who recently began a new career in Georgia's House of Representatives, and five other ex-POWs traveled to Vietnam last March to film a documentary, "Vietnam Revisited: The Final Healing." Backed by an independent producer, the film is currently looking for a broadcast home.

Meanwhile, former Marine Lt. McClary, injured seriously in 1968, already had roamed 300 miles of Cambodia and Vietnam in 1990. He was looking for American MIAs.

Both came home with fond memories of friendly greetings from former enemies. Their wives, also deeply touched by the war, share in their attitude of forgiveness.

"Twenty years is long enough to hold a grudge," said Purcell, who wrote a book, "Love and Duty," with his wife, Ann. Condensed by Reader's Digest last year, the excerpt was translated into 16 other languages. "I don't think (the embargo) was very useful and it caused a lot of suffering."

"They need a chance to get on with their lives," echoed his wife. "How are we going to show them the love of Christ if we're going to shut them out? We can show them that God loves them and perhaps be a great witness to them."

McClary called the move long overdue: "If we're going to find out anything about POWs and MIAs, we have to talk to people and get along with them. If we trade with them, we're going to be able to have some kind of ministry."

Both McClarys are authors. Clebe released "Living Proof" in 1978. His wife, Deanna, coauthored (with Jerry Jenkins) "Commitment to Love" five years ago. The latter generated an avalanche of mail from soldiers and their families.

"I feel it's time to stop fighting and build some bridges," Mrs. McClary said. "There's still a lot of anger and guilt on the part of many veterans. Change doesn't come over overnight. But as long as people are living in the past, there won't be any healing."

Mending the tattered relationship between the United States and Vietnam poses enormous challenges, they said. Closer to home, the four agreed many veterans' wounds remain. As Christians, they see faith in Christ as an integral element of the recovery.

A deacon at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Clarksville, Ga., Purcell said prayer and recognizing those vets who served will help. He recalled a church in Thompson, Ga., using Baptist Men's Day in January to recognize all military vets

--more--

He said appreciation helps offset some of the indignities servicemen and women suffered during the Vietnam War. A friend once told Purcell of being spat upon and called a "baby killer" while he lay injured on a stretcher. "All he was doing was doing what his country asked him to, in the spirit of patriotism," Purcell said. "I don't think anyone went over there with hate and the intent to kill as many people as they could."

"The scars will always be there," added McClary. A member of Pawleys Island (S.C.) Baptist Church, he spends most of the year traveling to approximately 200 speaking engagements.

"However, scars, if you look at them, will let you know you're healed. I think churches can reach out to people. There's a lot they can do -- witnessing, counseling, helping with family life, broken marriages and abuse."

Deanna McClary voiced concern over negative publicity and movies that dredge up hatred and increase the despair lingering from the war.

Retcounting a battle incident more than 25 years ago, she told of black Marine Ralph Johnson throwing himself over a grenade to save the life of her husband, who is white. Yet in that era, the news media played up racial conflict and ignored the members of opposite races who died for each other, she said.

"I don't think we'll ever have complete healing when we have the news media and Hollywood portraying things the way they do," she said. She cited Oliver Stone's "Between Heaven and Earth" as a film that inflames hatred instead of building understanding.

"I know healing has happened in many places. But the majority are not being heard and that's tragic," Mrs. McClary said.

"Healing can happen, but you can't allow a minority that is negative, anti-American, anti-Christian and anti-everything except their own pocketbooks to be the only ones who are heard.

"It's time we become self-less and Christ-centered. We need to try to find out what God is doing and where he wants us to go. If he has opened this door in Vietnam and people feel his leading (to go there), then go where he's leading," Mrs. McClary said.

Ironically, while the pair of veterans believe in forgiveness toward Vietnam, they express some negative feelings for the president who ended the embargo.

"I did feel bad that he was the one who got credit for ending it," Purcell said. "Of all people, one who protested the war from the beginning. I feel he did a disservice to his country.

"At first, I felt like he was swept up in the signs of the times. But then I reflected on it more seriously. I think anyone who aspires to national leadership, if given a chance, should serve their country.

"I think we just have to pray for him," McClary said. "Personally, I think you're supposed to serve your country. People who don't are missing out. When you serve your country, you love it a whole lot more. We're cheating our young people by taking that away from them."

--30--

Walker is a free-lance writer in Louisville.

Discipleship, she says,  
can be key to healing

By Ken Walker

Baptist Press  
2/9/94

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--While her husband -- the wounded war veteran turned evangelist -- is the featured speaker on their travels, Deanna McClary is equally outspoken about her experiences stemming from the Vietnam War.

And one of the topics that stirs her the most is the primary method she believes will heal millions suffering from the war -- personal discipleship.

"I see so many people isolated in cells of their own doing," she said. "They're choosing to take marijuana or drugs. That's where Christians can come in with God's Word, truth and discipleship.

--more--

"It's not an easy process. There's not a utopian answer or a magic wand that can be waved over anyone. It's a one-on-one process, when one man can take another man and say, 'There's hope and healing. Let's start today.'"

Unfortunately, she said, few people in the church want to make the disciplined effort it takes to reach out to others. Many of them don't know how, she remarked, recommending a pair of books that can help.

One is "Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God" by Henry Blackaby and Claude King.

The other is an older volume by Leroy Eims, "The Lost Art of Discipleship," which she said churches should dust off and put back on their library shelves. Christians who want to know how to disciple others can get equipped by reading it, she added.

"People need to care, not for the multitudes, but one on one," McClary said. "Don't do it from a human or philosophical perspective, but from a godly, biblical perspective."

--30--

Georgia county reading  
through Bible in '94

By James Dotson

Baptist Press  
2/9/94

ELBERTON, Ga. (BP)--Betty Williford has recognized a fundamental truth of literacy training: The main reason adults want to learn to read is so they can read the Bible. So in an effort to bolster literacy awareness as well as to improve the spiritual and moral climate of society in general, she has been the motivating force behind a campaign to get all citizens of Georgia's Elbert County to read the Bible through during 1994.

Sponsored by the Elbert County Council for Effective Literacy, the "Read the Bible Through in 1994 Campaign" worked through churches and other organizations to distribute a Bible-reading schedule for 1994. Thus far, nearly 5,000 of the schedules have been distributed.

Milton Parker, director of missions for Hebron Baptist Association, is chairman of the council's Religious Organizations Committee and was responsible for getting word out to the county's 96 churches about the program.

All responded in some way -- as well as some others. "The Latter-day Saints even sent a card back saying they would accept some of the ... program," Parker said.

The reading schedule also will be published weekly in the local newspaper and aired on radio station WWRK.

Williford, a member of First Baptist Church in Elberton, said the idea came from her work as coordinator of the Hometown Education Renewal Opportunity program in Elberton, a project of the literacy council.

"One of the main impediments in enrolling students in the program is the lack of values -- respect for people, respect for themselves -- and misplaced priorities," she said. "So we realized that people need to return to the basic values taught in the Bible."

Williford said another factor came from a statement by a former U.S. secretary of education that "we could revolutionize our American educational system if every school-age child would read for at least 15 minutes every day."

"Because there is common acceptance of the Holy Bible as a moral guide to personal and institutional life, reading it for 15 minutes each day would help family relationships, improve school discipline and refocus our society back to a core of fundamental values," she said in the Bible-reading schedule distributed to Elbert County residents. The schedule was taken from Southern Baptist materials.

Interest in the Bible also is well-documented in literacy training, she said. Even the secular program she coordinates has found about 75 percent of the people want to read so they can read the Bible.

--more--

"With any literacy program, you teach the person what they want to read -- and they want to read the Bible," she said. "It's recognized by even unbelieving authorities that the vast majority of people who want to learn to read want to read the Bible."

Mayors of both Elberton and Bowman and the Elbert County Commission chairman made 1994 "Read The Bible Through Year" in a joint proclamation, and Williford hopes the idea will spread. Because of its secular as well as spiritual benefits, she said she is working through U.S. Rep. Don Johnson to have 1995 declared as "Read Through The Bible Year" nationally.

"We might even ask the president to sign a proclamation also," she said.

--30--

A new start: Illinois town,  
church move to higher ground

By Ferrell Foster

Baptist Press  
2/9/94

VALMEYER, Ill. (BP)--The scene is odd. It's early afternoon on a weekday, but no children can be seen at the school. The snow on the ground is bright, clean, undisturbed by footprints.

"You see no one and you hear no one," commented Wayne King, pastor of First Baptist Church here.

The town of Valmeyer was a victim of last summer's Mississippi River flood. About 30 miles south of St. Louis, the village is being abandoned by most residents as the federal government helps move them to higher ground.

On the east end of the old town there is some activity where the flood didn't reach. But most of the village bears the scars of flooding: plywood over windows, mud stains high on the walls, unearthed playground equipment, debris on power lines, chain-link fences laid over, and a shredded United States flag still hanging from a vacant house.

But one mile away and 400 feet higher, the scene is completely different. A modular building sits alone in a field, construction crews are working nearby and a sign says, "Valmeyer, Ill. A New Beginning." As of late January, 136 families had put down money to buy lots in the new town, King said.

The town is getting a new start and so is the only Southern Baptist church there.

For six months following the flood, nearby First Baptist Church of Waterloo shared its facilities with the congregation of First Baptist of Valmeyer. Each Sunday afternoon, about 20 people from the Valmeyer church met in Waterloo for Sunday school and worship.

But on Jan. 23, the Valmeyer group relocated to the Monroe County Fairgrounds, where they met in a modular building used by Valmeyer public schools. Sixteen people attended.

King, the pastor, likened circumstances to a "church-planting situation." And he spoke of the importance of reaching more people. "If we don't start having outreach, we're going to keep losing," he said.

He is not discouraged, stating, "There's hope." And part of that hope centers around the new town site.

The church is seeking to buy "Parcel No. 3" in the new town. It has five to six acres, which includes about three acres of "usable" land, King said.

If the church is able to buy the parcel, the building would be on a hill, "visible from two different directions."

Two churches in Mississippi, one in Texas and one in Virginia already have expressed interest in coming to Valmeyer this summer to help construct a new building.

Rebuilding is on the horizon for the church and the town, but the past few months have been traumatic ones for the people of Valmeyer.

"People will say a house can be replaced, and it can very well be," King said. "But when you start saying grandma and grandpa's house and our house and our aunt and uncle's home and all this -- everything's gone and so people have lost a lot."

--more--

How has the trauma affected people's spiritual life?

"Well, the ones that I'm associated with, the ones that have been coming faithfully to our services, it seems as though they were having some difficulty in the beginning, even talking about it," the pastor said.

"And now they're able to communicate and talk about it," he continued. And they're now able to laugh again.

King said he thought revival would break out because of the devastation, but it hasn't yet. "It's times like this that people cannot depend upon themselves," he said. "They have to depend upon a greater source."

The pastor has had to learn that lesson, as well. A few weeks ago, while King was at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., for his granddaughter's baptism, he "began to feel some of the feelings" he was having "down deep."

"I was trying to get (the people in the Valmeyer congregation) to come to the altar, to pray it through and open up to the Lord, and here it was me," King confessed.

"It comes back to whose church it is. Sometimes we don't think it is God's. It's ours. Sometimes we're doing something, we're claiming it's God's, but really we're taking a lot of the credit ourselves."

Then when attendance at church meetings falls, "the next thing you know you start thinking, 'I'm by myself. I'm all alone.'"

But the Valmeyer church has learned it's not alone. "Even though people don't know where we are or who we are, they are praying for us. That kind of broadens your thinking, ... (to) find out there are people in other communities who are on fire for the Lord, who are in business for the Lord."

--30--

HMB executive committee affirms

Lewis, staff and Masonic report

By Martin King

Baptist Press

2/9/94

ATLANTA (BP)--Rejecting calls to review its handling of a report on Freemasonry, the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board approved a resolution affirming actions of its president, staff and board members relating to the controversial issue.

The resolution declares in part that the executive committee "deplores any statements attacking the Christian integrity and motives of the HMB directors and staff ... and affirms the actions and statements of its president, Dr. Larry Lewis and the Home Mission Board's trustees and staff."

"This issue is not going to go away," declared Walter Carpenter, board member from Texas, who wrote and introduced the measure. "It's time to respond to these attacks on our president, our staff and our own characters."

The Home Mission Board was directed to conduct a study of Freemasonry during the 1992 Southern Baptist Convention. A lengthy paper and a brief report from the board have received wide acceptance across the SBC except from persons critical of the fraternal organization.

Board leadership has resisted calls to revisit the Masonry issue. Last month an HMB board member, Walter Collett of Maryland, sent fellow board members a three-page letter asking that the study be withdrawn from circulation and that several issues be clarified.

Collett, although not present when the resolution was considered, told Baptist Press, "I don't have any problems with the resolution. I never intended to attack the motives and integrity of the president, staff or board members."

Collett met with the board's administrative committee the evening prior to the executive committee meeting for what he termed a "wonderful time of sharing. We were able to communicate clearly about our numerous areas of agreement as well as the few areas of blessed disagreements," Collett told Baptist Press.

--more--

Greg Martin, board member from Mississippi, cast the lone dissenting vote against the resolution saying he opposed it because he had not had sufficient time to review it.

"I really believe, though, that passing this resolution defeats its very purpose. It just focuses more attention on the whole matter," Martin said.

Board chairman Brad Allen, concluded the Feb. 8 meeting declaring, "I'm tired of spending hours and hours discussing Freemasonry. We need to close this thing and get on with what we're here for."

Collett said it is not his responsibility to pursue the matter further with the board and has no plans to do so. "I'm done with the issue," he said.

The 20-member committee did deal with a number of additional matters, including appointment of 24 new home missionaries and 53 Southern Baptist chaplains and filling of three vacant staff positions.

Included in staff approvals during the meeting was Philip Roberts, elected as director of the interfaith witness department. Roberts is presently a missions professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. He will assume his new responsibilities June 1.

Roberts fills the vacancy left by previous director Gary Leazer who resigned last year in the wake of the Masonry controversy.

Two current HMB staff members were elected to new positions. Herbert Brisbane, presently associate director of black church extension, will serve as director of the office of black evangelism. Brisbane, a native of Texas, will lead development of black evangelism strategies and materials.

Another Texan, Jerry Pipes, was elected associate director of personal evangelism working primarily with youth and college students. He has served as a national missionary for the evangelism section for the past year.

--30--

Interfaith witness  
director elected

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
2/9/94

ATLANTA (BP)--Phil Roberts was elected director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department by the agency's executive committee Feb. 8.

Roberts, professor of missions evangelism and church growth at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., will assume the post June 1.

"I've known Phil more than 30 years and I think the world of him," said Larry Lewis, HMB president. "He's a brilliant scholar and a strong communicator."

Interfaith witness is "one of the most crucial opportunities in Southern Baptist life," Roberts said after his election. "Most of our evangelism has been in the choir -- to people with the same world view and values we have. My concern is that we move beyond the choir.

"My challenge to Southern Baptists is to be proactive in evangelism of members of cults and world religions," he said. "In America we have a tremendous opportunity to impact the world."

"Many have prayed with us that God would surface a key person to lead in the tremendous opportunity and responsibility of evangelism through interfaith witness," said Darrell Robinson, HMB vice president for evangelism. "I believe God has answered our prayers."

Gary Leazer, former department director, resigned last year in the wake of controversy over a report on Freemasonry.

Masons, like any group, open themselves to scrutiny when they make theological statements, Roberts said. But there are "many other movements" for Southern Baptists to consider, he said, naming New Age, Black Islam, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses as examples.

Roberts is the son of the late Ray Roberts, first executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio. The elder Roberts served on the Southern Baptist Convention peace committee and as SBC vice president in 1986.

--more--

Born in Danville, Ky., Roberts earned his doctorate from Free University of Amsterdam in Amsterdam, Netherlands. He also holds a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and a bachelor's degree from Georgetown College in Georgetown, Ky. He has served as a graduate researcher at Oxford University in England.

Roberts has been pastor of churches in Brussels, Belgium; Bicester, England; and Wiesbaden, Germany. He was a professor at Southern Seminary from 1982-85.

He and his wife, Anya, have two children, Naomi, 12, and Mark, 7.

--30--

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers from Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press.

BSSB ministry, financial reports  
demonstrate improving performance By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
2/9/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Reports on ministry and financial performance by the Baptist Sunday School Board signal positive results in efforts to operate more efficiently and to reverse downward trends in product sales, according to the agency's president, James T. Draper Jr.

During the Feb. 7-8 semiannual trustees meeting in Nashville, Draper said a long history of financial success is permitting today's leadership to address changes necessary to help the church programs and publications agency meet the changing needs of individuals and churches.

Draper told trustees the board "is a financially strong institution with a long history of operational successes. Those successes have enabled the creation of reserve funds that give us flexibility we need as we acknowledge and address some operational problems. One source of my optimism is the fact that we are addressing our problems and already are beginning to see some positive results."

He cited the board's vision statement, which includes the goal to provide "relevant, high-quality, high-value Christian products and services" as strategic to the agency's efforts.

The election of Ted Warren as chief financial officer and vice president of the business services group represents another step forward in addressing financial concerns, Draper said.

He also cited implementation of a 1993 operational study of the board's business and finance and corporate services groups which has reduced corporate overhead expenses and is expected to realize a 1993-94 net savings of more than \$2 million.

"A similar study of the church growth group has been completed and its recommendations are being addressed," Draper said. "The trade and retail markets group will be reviewed after they have had more time to work in their new structure which already has undergone massive changes."

The 1992-93 financial report, he said, shows real sales growth of 0.2 percent, while "holding the line on expenses in many areas." Total revenue of \$208 million was below budget by 2 percent but above last year by 2.8 percent. Funds provided from operations, the amount of money available to invest in ministries, was 0.2 percent compared to a budget goal of 0.5 percent.

The year-end results "were not a surprise," he said, reminding trustees a year ago he had estimated three to five years to achieve financial and product goals.

For the first quarter of 1993-94, Jerry Rhyne, director of the business and finance department, said revenue was 8.1 percent above the same period for the previous year, but 5.4 percent below budget.

Sales for the first quarter, which began Oct. 1, 1993, represented real growth -- an increase in sales excluding price increases -- of 5.1 percent. Areas of the board which experienced real growth are discipleship and family development, 12 percent; Genevox Music Group, 47 percent; ethnic and language, 4 percent; Broadman & Holman Publishers, 11 percent; Baptist Book Store and Lifeway Christian Stores, 5.7 percent; and direct marketing, 93.1 percent.

--more--

Declines in real growth were registered by church music leadership, 3.1 percent; Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, 9.9 percent; Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, 12.4 percent; and the Bible teaching-reaching division, 5.1 percent.

Rhyme cited a trend toward slowing the decline in unit sales and anticipated improvements in Bible teaching materials to be released in October as a basis to expect improved figures in the near future. While Sunday school dated literature sales registered a decline of 4 percent for January-March 1994, he said it represents a slowing of the decline, which was 4.5 percent the October-December 1993 quarter and above 5 percent for the previous four quarters.

Operational cash flow continues to be a problem, Draper reported. "This is caused primarily by our need to invest sizable amounts of money to do catch-up work in areas such as bookstore facilities and business systems. We elected to take major steps in a short period of time rather than spreading the costs over several years. We believe this will bring positive results sooner."

In ongoing efforts to refine the agency's product mix, trustees approved:

- publishing an undated "Experiencing God" magazine in June 1994 and beginning monthly editions in January 1995 if response warrants;

- releasing, modifying or deleting several youth and adult Life and Work Series Sunday school periodicals in 1994-95, pending prototype testing and final costing;

- redesign of several children's Life and Work Series products;

- release of a new quarterly resource kit, "Sunday School Youth: Multicultural Kit," for use by workers with youth in predominantly black, Hispanic or Asian churches that use the Convention Uniform Series, beginning in July 1994;

- deletion of "The Adult Bible Teacher - Vietnamese" in July 1994, "The Sunday School Adult - American Indian" in October 1994, "The Bible Study for Internationals" in October 1994 and "Special Education Leadership" in October 1994.

Trustees delayed action until September on an administration proposal to delete "Growing Churches" magazine, pending study of the product mix and visibility of church growth issues in church leadership periodicals. The recommendation had been for deleting the periodical, effective August 1994, because of circulation plateaued at approximately 13,000 and an estimated annual loss of \$50,000 in fixed production and editorial costs.

The proposal included placing more articles on growth in "The Sunday School Leader" and church leadership ministry materials.

In another matter, trustees in the business and finance committee declined to approve immediate purchase of a building owned by Street Piano Co. of Nashville and located next to the board's Frost Building. They urged the administration to explore the possibility of purchase at a later time when the cash flow position might be more favorable.

Gene Mims, vice president of the board's church growth group, and Harry Piland, director of the Bible teaching-reaching division, reported on improvements in youth and adult Life and Work Sunday school periodicals scheduled for introduction in October. Following field testing now in progress, Piland said writers will be brought to the board in March for fast-track production.

"This material will be in your churches, being taught in October," Piland said.

Mims said efforts to reverse declines in unit sales of dated literature have "no short-term solutions." Dated Sunday school literature registered declines compared to the previous year of 4.5 percent for October-December 1993 and 4 percent for January-March 1994.

Also, he observed, the future must include a broader base of income sources. Churches have changed from, and likely will not return to, traditional approaches to buying literature and other products, he added.

He cited as positive examples the redesign of "Home Life" and "Christian Single" magazines; sales of the pew edition of "The Baptist Hymnal," which topped 2.5 million in December 1993; and sales of Lifeway products, which generated \$1.3 million in revenue for the first quarter of the 1993-94 fiscal year.

"Experiencing God" continues to sell approximately 1,000 copies each day, he said.

Charles Wilson, vice president for trade and retail markets, said sales of the first of four episodes in the "Secret Adventures" video series for children have reached 100,000 copies, exceeding initial projections by 200 percent.

With the relocation and redesign of some stores in the board's national bookstore change complete, relocation or remodeling of 12 stores for each of the next two years is anticipated, trustees were told.

"We have gone through radical and extensive changes," Wilson observed, adding that he challenges trade and retail markets personnel to "challenge the status quo."

Draper told trustees "we believe God is using the materials and services we provide to churches and individuals as bridges. Through them, people accept Christ as their Savior, grow in maturity, make new beginnings from past mistakes and have fresh opportunities in ministry and service.

"We will achieve the Great Commission (to take the gospel to the ends of the earth) only as we work cooperatively with sister agencies, state conventions, associations and churches."

He offered commitments to trustees and to Southern Baptists to continuous improvement in a world that is constantly changing, to match BSSB resources with Southern Baptists' needs, to assist churches and individuals in sharing the gospel with people around the world and to lift up the bridge of the gospel in everything the agency does.

--30--

BSSB trustees elect  
chief financial officer

Baptist Press  
2/9/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Theodore R. "Ted" Warren of Dallas was elected by trustees of the Baptist Sunday School Board to serve as chief financial officer and vice president of the business services group, effective immediately.

An executive with 25 years' experience in the oil industry, Warren was president of Grace Drilling Company, 1990-93. When the company was sold in September 1993, Warren elected to resign. Earlier, he was executive vice president of Texas Oil and Gas Production Co. of Dallas, 1988-90, and president and chief operating officer of FWA Drilling Co. of Wichita Falls, Texas, 1981-88.

As chief financial officer, Warren's responsibilities include providing counsel to President James T. Draper Jr. on overall business performance of the board while recommending major policies, plans and objectives related to financial matters. He also will monitor, analyze and report on the board's financial state and works with strategic business units and the corporate financial staff to develop, analyze and monitor business plans.

As vice president of the business services group, Warren will oversee the work of the business and finance, production services, information systems, facility management, distribution services and human resources departments, along with investments and legal services units.

In presenting Warren to trustees, Draper said more than 100 nominations for the positions were received. An executive search firm interviewed 37 candidates and seven were interviewed by Draper, two vice presidents and members of a trustee selection committee.

A native of Missouri, Warren, 46, holds a B.S. degree in petroleum engineering from the University of Missouri at Rolla. He also holds M.A. and MBA degrees from Harvard Business School.

--more--

A member of Park Cities Baptist Church of Dallas, he is a deacon, Sunday school teacher and regularly leads witness training and "Experiencing God" workshops. "Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God" is an adult discipleship course produced by the BSSB.

While leading a workshop in December, Warren told trustees God posed a question to him through Luke 14:33, "In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."

"I enjoyed having a good job in the oil business and making money," Warren recalled. But after the workshop he said he determined to do whatever God wanted him to do for the next step of his career.

"God has been at work in my career and giving me experience to help at the Baptist Sunday School Board," Warren said. "God has been at work in preparing my character. He also has been at work in making me available."

He challenged trustees to think in God-sized terms about the future of the BSSB.

"What's the vision? Where does God want us to think? How big will we let God think and work through the Baptist Sunday School Board?" he asked.

"The better stewards we are on the financial side of the house, the more ministry we can do."

--30--

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

Challenge to Southern Baptists  
to be focus of Draper book

Baptist Press  
2/9/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Baptist Sunday School Board President James T. Draper Jr. told trustees Feb. 7 he is writing a book to discuss with Southern Baptists "who we are, where we are going, how we are going to get there" and other issues.

Tentatively titled "Bridges to the Future: A Challenge to Southern Baptists," Draper said he is completing the manuscript and hopes the book will be available for the 1994 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in June in Orlando, Fla.

To be published by the board's Convention Press, Draper said, "I hope it will stimulate dialogue about who we are as Southern Baptists and, more importantly, who we can be in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth."

In response to a question from a trustee in a later session of the Feb. 7-8 meeting, Draper expressed "cautious optimism" about the future of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"I think the denomination is fragile. I see some very positive things. I do not see an end to the tensions because of alternate ways of funding and participation. I think we're in the process of redefining the denomination."

He added: "I'm hoping we can affirm the priesthood of the believer, autonomy of the local church, the primacy of missions and a cooperative way of working and get on with it."

Noting a "lessening of some of the tensions that existed," Draper said there has been a toll. "Many things we do because of frayed nerves not because of wise thinking.

"I am optimistic about the denomination," he emphasized, citing responses he is receiving to BSSB materials and the positive spirit he finds in churches and other denominational meetings he is attending.

"The strength of the denomination is in the churches. This denomination exists for the churches."

--30--

**BSSB trustee leads robber  
to become a Christian**

NASHVILLE (BP)--A trustee of the Baptist Sunday School Board stopped Feb. 7 in a city where he had been robbed at gunpoint in 1991, this time to lead one of the men who had robbed him to accept Jesus Christ as his Savior.

Robert Cheek, 73, a retired pastor from Jasper, Texas, and his wife, Shirley, were on their way to Nashville in August 1991 for the inaugural of James T. Draper Jr. as BSSB president when they stopped in Memphis, Tenn., to spend the night. As they entered their motel room, they were held at gunpoint, forced into the bathroom, robbed and threatened with bodily harm before the two robbers fled without hurting them.

Before stopping at a Memphis penitentiary to visit the inmate named James, Cheek said, "We had bathed this thing in a lot of prayer."

After first expressing shock at seeing the Cheeks again, James wept upon learning they had come in friendship.

Then "he gave his heart to the Lord," Cheek said.

On their return to Texas, the Cheeks planned to stop at a prison in Tiptonville, Tenn., to witness to the other man who robbed them.

Southern Baptist Library and Archives	
<b>(BP)</b> BAPTIST PRESS 901 Commerce #750 Nashville, TN 37203	

HOUSE MAIL