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SBCNet gives Wyoming couple local, national Baptist link

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
2/28/94

GREEN RIVER, Wyo. (BP)--Charles Crim says using SBCNet is "like having an extra staff person."

Crim, a longtime associational director of missions (DOM) in a vast, but lightly populated state knows what it's like to work without a staff. But with the wide availability of computer technology, he's learning how to make the most of newly available resources and shortcuts. He said he believes for Southern Baptists, SBCNet is a significant answer to a variety of denominational needs -- both for lay persons and church staff.

As DOM for two associations -- Wyoming's Green River and Overthrust Baptist associations -- Crim relates to 12 churches and six missions in a geographic area 150 miles east to west and 200 miles north to south.

SBCNet, Southern Baptists' data communications network, has helped to meet some of his communications needs as well as providing a wealth of information useful to him and the churches he serves.

"The West is isolated from mainstream Southern Baptists," Crim observed, "and SBCNet is now the link between the West and Nashville and other Southern Baptist mainline territory.

"I'm not an electronic nut, but I like to do things new. In 1984, we decided to buy a computer, and one of the first things we do now is turn on the computer in the morning and leave it on until late in the night."

The "we" includes Lottie Crim, Charles Crim's wife and a widely known writer of Southern Baptist curriculum materials. Between them, they manage to keep their personal computer busy throughout the day and, in addition to their marriage, they have a partnership of sorts through SBCNet.

She is a writer for adult Sunday School "EXTRA!" materials, the contemporary teaching helps that provide through SBCNet life applications and teaching tools right out of current national and local events. Her deadline is just under two weeks before the lessons are to be taught. On the Thursday after Lottie has uploaded her computer file to Nashville, Charles downloads the edited material for us by churches in his associations.

Charles sees Lottie's completed material when he downloads it, along with other youth and adult "EXTRA!" teaching helps. "I'm not a writer," he explained, "so I don't try to edit her materials. We each do our own thing."

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For Lottie Crim, writing late-breaking teaching helps "is lots of fun. It comes closest to the way I teach. In preparation for any class, I look for current things.

"I've had good response from the West from SBCNet users who say they like lesson illustrations from the West," Lottie observed. "I try to remember people in the South use this too, so I work to keep a balance."

One of her more exciting experiences was uploading a lesson from her laptop computer in the middle of a concourse of the Miami airport.

"It was 3 a.m., and the only way I could get a telephone line and an electrical outlet was to stretch the telephone cord in one direction and the electrical cord to the opposite side of the concourse."

Having prepared her materials while on a mission trip to Paraguay, which has a partnership relationship with the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention, Lottie was not about to let a small inconvenience get in the way of meeting her deadline. She enlisted the help of some fellow Wyoming team members to help keep all the connections in place while she transmitted her assignment from the middle of the concourse floor.

Charles Crim, however, continues to be interested in the variety and the "possibilities" the denomination's computer network offers.

"SBCNet gives me immediate access to what is going on in a wide range of places," Charles Crim observed.

Among the services he said he accesses most often are Sunday school lesson teaching helps, "Facts & Trends" newsletter, Facts & Trends Information Service, home and foreign missions prayer information and Baptist Press, the denomination's news service. He said he also finds the forums helpful in communicating with church staff persons in other parts of the country. He provides copies of most of the material he downloads to pastors in his associations. And he is working with pastors on a system to distribute Sunday school helps to teachers.

One of Charles Crim's wishes is that more pastors in his state would participate in the network to provide a more economical and convenient means to communicate.

"There is one other pastor in the state I communicate with by E-MAIL (electronic mail available on SBCNet). He is about 100 miles from Green River, and we communicate at least once a week."

Both Lottie and Charles communicate with the staff of the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention in Casper by SBCNet E-MAIL also. "Getting current information to the churches about events and providing them copies of the prayer lists is a major thing," he said.

An additional perk for both Crims is their once-a-week computer communication with their son, David, who is a mission pastor in Blue Springs, Mo. Each Saturday the Crims send him a message on SBCNet and he sends them a reply.

"He hasn't written us a half-dozen letters in his life," Lottie Crim laughed, "but he will communicate with us on SBCNet. He loves using the computer."

SBCNet may be accessed by using a computer, modem and a membership kit distributed by the Sunday School Board. Kits are available in DOS, Macintosh and Windows versions and may be ordered by calling 1-800-458-2772. Additional information about SBCNet may be obtained by calling David Haywood, SBCNet coordinator, at 1-800-325-7749, ext. 2895.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press. A list of resources available on SBCNet is posted in the SBCNet Newsroom.

Boyles reigns Okla. church,  
then begins new congregation      By Bob E. Mathews

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Bobby Boyles resigned Feb. 20 as pastor of First Baptist Church in Moore, Okla., then met with about 460 supporters more than two hours Feb. 23 at an Oklahoma City Ramada Inn to plan the start of "The New Southern Baptist Church."

Boyles was elected by messengers to the 1993 Southern Baptist Convention in Houston to preach the convention sermon in June at Orlando, Fla. The church's choir was invited by the Committee on Order of Business to sing at the SBC.

Boyles also was chairman of the 1992 SBC Committee on Nominations.

First services of the new church were to be held Sunday, Feb. 27, in Exhibit Hall E of the Myriad in downtown Oklahoma City, Boyles told the assembly.

Boyles resigned from the Moore church after deacons voted, in his absence, 32-3, as Boyles told the Daily Oklahoman newspaper, "The wording was, 'We feel the First Baptist Church of Moore -- our church, God's church -- would be better served by a new pastor in the future.'"

With Boyles as pastor since 1987, the Moore church became a leader in gifts to the Cooperative Program last year and also led the state in number of baptisms. The church reported 4,003 resident members last year.

Boyles said that since the messengers elected him to be the preacher, messengers to this year's SBC would have to be the ones to change that. "I expect to preach in Orlando," he said.

Waggoner, who also resigned as the Moore church's minister of music, said the choir situation was different now and that room deposits made for choir members were being refunded, indicating the choir will not sing at the convention.

Senior associate pastor Fred Powell will serve as acting interim pastor of the Moore church. "He (Boyles) was not immoral. He did not embezzle funds," Powell said. He added the personnel committee about two months ago had asked Boyles to consider resigning and he agreed to, but didn't. More recently, the deacons recommended that the personnel committee consider asking Boyles to consider whether his ministry there was finished. "Nobody ever said he had to resign and there was no effort to vote him out, ... he was not made to resign," Powell said.

"Moore, First is going to go ahead and try to grow and reach our area for Christ," Powell said. He said "we will have some great men in the pulpit," listing the Feb. 20 preacher as Christian Life Commission's director, Richard Land, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Paige Patterson as a future supply preacher.

Powell said the Moore church "will have a great program of growth and I believe God is going to continue to bless. We may diminish some, but we're going to go ahead and do what God wants us to do."

Powell said he will serve as acting interim until the church acts on March 6 to select an interim. "I have no aspirations but to keep the church going. I believe in taking the high road. These are godly people here."

At the motel meeting, Boyles told the crowd: "This will be a full-blown, go get 'em, make it happen church."

The 37-year-old pastor told the group "the battle is over. Jesus won. The events that happened were of God. He allowed all this to happen so a great new church could be begun in Oklahoma City to win souls.

"We do not need to have ill will toward Moore, First," Boyles said. "On my behalf, please don't rebuke anybody or call for any votes. There is no bitterness in my heart over what's happened."

Midway into the motel meeting, Waggoner and his family entered the room to the applause of the crowd. Waggoner then read a letter of resignation which he had just read to the choir of First Baptist in Moore.

Boyles announced that Waggoner will be the new church's music minister and two secretaries also will join the staff. Boyles said he would serve "for a while" without a salary.

Boyles said he would ask that the new church appoint seven godly men to serve as a prayer council with him.

As to a permanent location, Boyles said the new church ought to be on the south side of Oklahoma City. "We are looking at several locations and facilities, but the church is not the building, but the relationship of the people," he said.

He commented the new group "has no debt, but then too, we have no assets either."

The New Southern Baptist Church will be a temporary name, he said. A permanent name will be selected and approved by the people. Boyles said a chartering day would be announced at a later date.

He assured the crowd the new congregation would be Southern Baptist, would support the Cooperative Program and would be a member and supporter of either the Capital or Union Baptist association, according to its location.

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**New women's ministry is response  
to grass-roots needs, says George By Keith Hinson**

**Baptist Press  
2/28/94**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Denise George sees her new job as women's enrichment specialist with the Baptist Sunday School Board as a response to the needs of women in the local church.

"Hundreds of churches have already begun women's ministries on their own, because of their desire to see spiritual awakening," said George, who recently accepted a position with the BSSB discipleship and family development division. "In the last few years, these churches have been calling for the Sunday School Board to provide them with guidance, direction and resources."

George considers the success of two BSSB resources -- "Experiencing God" and "Fresh Encounter" by Henry Blackaby and Claude King -- as a key indicator there is a desire for revival and spiritual awakening among Southern Baptists, including women.

"Henry Blackaby writes that we should watch and see what God is doing and join him there," George said. "That's what we want to do with the women's ministries that are starting as a result of the movement of God."

"I have letters pouring in by the pounds, literally, coming in routinely encouraging and supporting women's ministry -- asking me if there is anything they can do," said George, who offered four suggestions to those who want to help.

"First, pray for us, become a prayer partner with us and share our vision. Second, give us your suggestions and advice. Third, share our vision with others. Fourth, help us to watch to see where God is at work, and together with us, join him in his work," she said.

For years, George's work in life has been as a writer, wife and mother of two children. She and her family will continue to live in Birmingham, where her husband, Timothy, is founding dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University. The Georges have a son, Christian, 12, and a daughter, Alyce Elizabeth, 10.

Before joining the BSSB staff, George established herself as a writer of several books and more than 800 articles, which have appeared in the publications of more than 20 denominations, including several Southern Baptist magazines.

Her newest book, "God's Heart, God's Hand: Reaching Out to Wounded Women," will be released soon by the BSSB as one of the first publications related to her new position.

"Women are hurting, and they are turning to the local church for help," George said. "We want to help them make disciples and to equip them to become disciplers. It's a Titus 2 ministry in some ways, because women can minister to women more effectively, in many cases, than men can minister to women. Women share the same hurts and the same experiences."

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George's experiences in life have taken her to Massachusetts, where she and her husband were appointed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to work in inner-city Boston. She attended classes at Harvard University while her husband was earning two graduate degrees.

After Timothy joined the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., she continued her studies there. During a sabbatical leave in Europe, the Georges worked with Foreign Mission Board ministries in Switzerland and Eastern Europe.

Now in Birmingham, the Georges are members of Shades Mountain Baptist Church. She continues a lifelong involvement and interest in activities of Woman's Missionary Union.

"Dellanna O'Brien (executive director of WMU/SBC) is a special friend of mine. I greatly respect her and her work," George said. "We do not in any way want to compete with the WMU. For the past 105 years, the WMU has been promoting SBC missions offerings and education -- which is extremely important -- and we want to support them in that. We will not be competing with them."

George said she has been involved with the WMU since age 16. In the past five to seven years, George has written heavily for WMU publications and continues to speak frequently to WMU groups across the country, she said.

George invites anyone with suggestions or comments to write her in care of the Baptist Sunday School Board, 127 Ninth Ave. N., Nashville, TN 37234.

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

Career church secretary  
never doubted her calling

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
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NASHVILLE (BP)--Frances Hill's "lifelong dream" to attend a national seminar for church secretaries and to attain certification has been fulfilled.

Hill, whose 43-year career as a church secretary is still going strong, started thinking about coming to the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville in the 1950s, shortly after she began her work. She finally made the 50-mile trip from her Lewisburg, Tenn., home in late February for three days of classes, culminating in successful completion of the certification examination.

"I wanted to do this years ago," she reflected during a break in classes, "but I didn't have a chance to come here and take the tests."

Hill began her work at Lewisburg's First Baptist Church, where she remained for 28 years. In 1979, she moved to Parkview Baptist Church in the same town, where she has continued her secretarial work.

She had spent her first year out of high school working in a law office when Leonard Sanderson, then pastor of First Baptist Church of Lewisburg, visited her to ask her to consider becoming church secretary.

"I had attended Sunday school and morning worship, but I had never been in the church office," she recalled. "Brother Sanderson would not let me answer but said for me to pray about it and to come to his office to talk on Wednesday."

Hill agreed but said she did not think she would be interested because she "very much enjoyed" her work in the law office. "I was excited because I was beginning to take minutes at court trials and I thought this was special. I did pray, but I told the Lord I wanted to stay where I was."

Before she kept her appointment with the pastor, Hill had a dream about the church office, a place she had never seen in spite of her regular church attendance. In the dream, she said, she could see the inside of the office, including a desk, typewriter, telephone "and a funny looking machine with a cover over it and a crank sticking out. I didn't know what it was, but this seemed to be very prominent in the church office."

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When Wednesday came, she went to the church, intending to tell the pastor she would stay at the law office. When she arrived, she saw the desk, typewriter, telephone and "that funny looking machine with a cover and a crank sticking out ... just like in my dream."

At the end of her lunch-hour visit with the pastor, she started back to her law office job with tears streaming down her cheeks.

"I thought, 'What have I done? I told him I would come!'"

Today, Hill declares she is just as sure God called her to be a church secretary "as I am of my salvation.

"Being a church secretary is not just a job, but a calling from the Lord," she said of her career. "I love the Lord; I love serving him. It's a joy. I'd not change any of the 43 years. I feel it's a called ministry. I felt that way even when it wasn't popular for ladies to feel called," she laughed.

While some might describe their work in terms of specific details, Hill talks of "helping the pastor and supporting the other staff people. I just enjoy helping and serving. I'm responsible to the church members because I'm their secretary, too," she added. "But the pastor is my boss first, and I support him."

She said she believes her spiritual gift is that of "encourager" and added she likes "being needed and helping people. I like being an encourager. It's a joy to know I'm doing what God has called me to do. I enjoy having responsibility. I like to feel I'm part of a team working to win people to Jesus."

While some might feel inclined to coast toward retirement from their 43rd year of work, Frances Hill came to the Sunday School Board to "learn new things and new terminology.

"My next goal is to learn to use the computer," she volunteered. "I really am excited about it, and I hope we do get one (at the church).

"I hope I'll know when it's time for me to retire, but as long as I have joy in my work, I hope to continue."

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

(BP) Brites

Compiled by Art Toalston, Robin Tinley & Ken Walker

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Baptists needn't shun Lent, he contends

MONTEVALLO, Ala. (BP)--You don't have to be a Catholic to find meaning in Lent and the Holy Week, says James Evans, pastor of First Baptist Church in Montevallo, Ala., and author of a new book, "Preparing for Easter." Easter observances date back to the early church, long before Roman Catholicism, Evans writes, adding, "to assure that Christian believers were able to distinguish clearly between Christian and pagan practices, the entire season preceding Easter was devoted to special instruction and worship emphasis." By remembering the importance of events leading to Easter Sunday, Evans notes, "you're not becoming more Catholic, you're becoming more Christian."

Widow gave a modern-day mite

MARGARITA, Venezuela (BP)--A tiny old woman entered the room where physician Robert Mayfield of Crossville, Tenn., was seeing patients as part of a Baptist volunteer team working a week on the Venezuelan island of Margarita. Her body was bent and arthritic, but she didn't begin with a list of her woes. Her face was beaming as she told of praying steadfastly for the medical team and that God would give her enough strength to meet the doctors. She said it was the first day she had been able to get out of bed in a long time. "Whether I was able to come or not, I wanted to put in my part to help these men and women of God," she said, giving Mayfield 100 bolivares, a modern-day widow's mite equivalent to one U.S. dollar.

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Impromptu cantaloupe was her gift

MARGARITA, Venezuela (BP)--The Venezuelan woman was scared stiff as dentist Richard Toland of Parkin, Ark., looked into her mouth and saw more severe tooth decay problems than he had in other patients during a week of volunteer work on the island of Margarita. The woman said she was willing to undergo the lengthy process necessary to improve her condition. But when Toland finished the last difficult extraction, the woman dashed off. She was back in a few minutes, however, having rushed home to peel and slice a cantaloupe, which she brought to the dentist on her best plate. The woman looked on with a wide, cavity-free smile as Toland ate her gift of gratitude.

His darkest hour turned to inner peace

NASHVILLE (BP)--Ladd Lewis, an aspiring songwriter in Nashville, was just 3 years old in 1970 when his father, Billy, underwent surgery to have a cancerous lung removed. "Daddy told me on numerous occasions what transpired in the hospital," recounted Lewis, 26, a member of First Baptist Church. "He said in the midst of his darkest hour he knelt beside his bed and prayed that God would let him live long enough to see his three children grown. He told me upon praying that prayer he had an inner peace and heard the still-small voice of God saying he would be all right." Lewis is grateful for God's extended gift of life to his dad, which ended last November after another bout with cancer. "So much of who I am and what I've done I owe to him and my mother, Anne. My family received a blessing in 1970 that will continue for the rest of our lives."

Photo shoot helps save a life

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, Texas (BP)--Bob Carey was a free-lance photographer for the Dallas Times-Herald, when the newspaper sent him out to photograph a couple who had purchased a home through a federal program three years ago. Though the story and photo unexpectedly wound up on page one, the assignment brought other rewards. While waiting for her husband to show up, the woman began chatting with Carey, who is now director of communications for North Richland Hills (Texas) Baptist Church. She was pregnant and preliminary tests showed her child could have Down's syndrome. Distressed, she was considering an abortion. "We have a young child who's physically handicapped," he recounts, "and I shared some of the positive things that have happened in our lives because of our daughter. After I took the picture, she broke down and said, 'I've decided to keep my baby.'"

Holy Spirit not bothered by 'mess-ups'

ATLANTA (BP)--What do you say to a Christian who is afraid to witness because he or she won't know what to say? HMB evangelism v.p. Darrell Robinson's advice: "Teach them what to say. Equip them in what to say." And then help them realize "that the Holy Spirit gives you what to say when you need it. Jesus said he would. I've said stuff I didn't even know I knew. Haven't you? At the point of need, the Holy Spirit comes through. Somebody says, 'I'm afraid I'll just mess up.' Well, listen, the Holy Spirit will even use your mess-ups. He would have to. Between the worst of us and the best of us, there's not enough difference to make any difference. To use any of us, he's have to use us in spite of us."

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Youth 'dig deep' to share with ss

HOT SPRINGS, Ark. (BP)--When a few vandals attending Arkansas Baptists' recent Joy Explo sprayed the walls of two floors of the Hot Springs Park Hilton with catsup, Hilton officials saw more than red. They saw commitment. Most of the other 4,500 Joy Explo participants dug into their pockets, raising more than \$3,100 to compensate the Hilton for the estimated \$1,500 damage. Randy Brantley, youth associate in Arkansas Baptists' evangelism department, said conference leaders told Hilton officials "although we are dealing with the actions of three or four students, it reflects on the other 4,500 participants. By digging into their pockets, the other students told the Hilton, 'We do not approve of what the others did.'" Brantley said money left over after settling with the Hilton would be given to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

NEWSBIT: Chan Gailey, head football coach at Baptist-related Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., has resigned after a year in the position to become wide receiver coach for the Pittsburgh Steelers. Samford's '93 record was 5-6. Gailey is a former head coach of the World League's Birmingham Fire and assistant coach with the Denver Broncos. Samford's previous coach, Terry Bowden, led Auburn to an undefeated season in his initial year at the Alabama university.

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Tinley, a missionary with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, is press representative in Venezuela; Walker is a free-lance writer in Louisville, Ky.

He tried and tried to keep  
his call to ministry secret

By Dana Williamson

Baptist Press  
2/28/94

ROCK CREEK, Okla. (BP)--Bert Cherry, who turns 90 this March, didn't want anyone to know he surrendered to preach shortly after he was saved at age 16.

But "preacher" must have been written on his forehead.

An evangelist preaching a revival in Cherry's home church in Earlsboro, Okla., noticed him passing out song books before the service and said, "Son, isn't God calling you to preach?"

His high school principal asked Cherry to lead in chapel -- something he had never asked a student to do before, because, Cherry said, the principal knew he had been called to preach.

For some time, Cherry had been praying for the salvation of one of his teachers and a basketball teammate. One day, during a revival meeting in his church, Cherry went behind the barn on his family's farm and told the Lord if the two were saved in the revival meeting, he would surrender to preach. They were saved, but Cherry still didn't tell anyone about his decision.

Later Cherry's English teacher asked the students to write a theme predicting what they would do with their lives. Still somewhat reluctant to reveal his call to preach, Cherry put down in writing what he planned to do. Although the teacher had told the students their responses would be confidential, she went to Cherry's pastor with his theme.

When Cherry's pastor found out about his call, he told Cherry he was going to give an invitation and Cherry should come forward and make his surrender known. He said he wasn't going to do it but during the invitation "against my will I went forward."

The next Wednesday night, Cherry was asked to preach. "I preached everything I knew in 15 minutes," he said.

Cherry enrolled in Oklahoma Baptist University's Academy to complete his junior and senior years in high school and received his college degree from OBU in 1928.

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Cherry's first past rate was at Rock Creek Baptist Church near Shawn e. His pastor at Draper Street Baptist Church (n w Immanuel Baptist in Shawnee) sent him to preach there in view of a call, but Cherry thought he was just going there as a supply preacher.

Even though Cherry said he told the congregation he didn't "have enough sense to be their pastor," they called him anyway. He was 18 years old and making \$5 a week.

After preaching there several months, the church had had no decisions and Cherry said "I told the Lord if there were no decisions in the next two weeks, I'd resign."

The last day of those two weeks was a rainy Sunday and Cherry didn't expect anyone to show up for the services. He went anyway and preached to four church members. He gave an invitation and the pianist came forward, saying she had never been saved.

From OBU Cherry went to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he met and married his wife, Louise, a resident of Buckner Children's Home in Dallas, and the first of his three children was born. His wife died in 1992.

After seminary, he was pastor of First Baptist in Bristow, Okla., when the church passed a motion that no one who danced could hold a church office. The WMU president came to Cherry and told him the WMU secretary went to dances but "she makes a good secretary and I don't want to lose her."

"I told her I had to uphold the rules the church made," Cherry remembered. "From that time on, she started working against me, and it came to the point where the church called for a vote whether to keep me or fire me."

Cherry's supporters came to the called meeting, and he said he knew he could stay as pastor, but he offered his resignation before the vote.

The WMU president said she would see Cherry never got another pastorate.

"I went into evangelism," Cherry said. "Doors opened, and I had one meeting after another, but I missed being with my family and told the Lord I wanted to go back into the pastorate."

"The Lord told me to finish the meetings on my schedule and not to accept any more. No more invitations came, and I was called as pastor of Cleveland, First, less than 40 miles from Bristow where the WMU president said I would never again serve as pastor."

When World War II rolled around, Cherry enlisted as an Army chaplain and was in Germany when both Italy and Germany surrendered.

He served the last 13 years of his pastoral ministry in Carbondale, Ill. Following retirement in 1965, he bought an acreage in the Rock Creek area and joined Rock Creek Baptist Church, where he had served his first pastorate.

Since "retiring" Cherry had served 31 churches as interim pastor, some two or three times. Although he no longer takes interim pastorates, he still does supply preaching.

When he's not preaching, he takes care of cattle and grows a garden of vegetables to give away. Last fall he cut 800 bales of hay.

HOUSE MAIL

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