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**Christian sex ed program
getting positive response**

By Ken Walker

**Baptist Press
3/7/94**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Sex. Why are so many Christians unwilling to tell their children that it's good and part of God's plan -- within the confines of marriage?

"There's a fear that if we talk to our children about this, they will become sexually active," said Karl Babb, a family enrichment specialist at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.

"Well, they're already talking about it more than we know," Babb said, "and our silence is causing problems."

Babb posed that question and others at the Kentucky Baptist Convention's recent Haworth Conference on family and pastoral ministry concerns in Louisville.

To emphasize the point, Babb quoted a commentator on NBC-TV's "Dateline:" "Remember, by the time your kids hit 12 or 13, they've already seen a decade's worth of sex in the media. So if you don't teach them what you want them to learn, they'll simply learn it flipping channels."

"Christian Sex Education" was the theme of the conference, designed to teach church leaders how to train parents for such talks with their children.

The centerpiece of the campaign is a six-volume BSSB Christian Sex Education series published last summer. The books are designed for young children (ages 4-6), middle age (7-9), preadolescents (10-12) and teen-agers.

The series includes a guide for parents and church leaders, plus one for couples titled, "Celebrating Sex In Your Marriage."

Ironically, while the BSSB thought mainly churches and libraries would buy all six, the top market has been young parents. Initial demand quadrupled original estimates; more than 4,000 sets have been sold in eight months.

"The positive response we've had has been amazing," Babb said. "Parents have told us, 'We're in desperate straits and we've needed this material.' They say they buy the sets so their children can grow up with (the books.)"

Jimmy Hester, a BSSB discipleship and family development editor, reviewed the extensive planning, evaluation and field testing behind the series.

The material had to meet both sound biblical and educational guidelines, Hester said, and respond to present-day family situations. It is aimed at building healthy individual and family behavior, he said.

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One reason for the extensive field testing was the possibility of adverse reactions -- which never materialized, H ster said.

"Parents told us, 'Man, this is good stuff,'" he recounted. "People are hungry. Look at what's out there ... look at the alternatives."

"This affirmed my feelings that we need to train parents," said Jim McMurtrie, pastor of First Baptist in Madisonville, Ky. "Parents are groping for any kind of help. They don't have the tools. And this is going to put it back in the home, where it belongs." McMurtrie said his church has already promoted the series and is planning parental training sessions.

According to BSSB materials, Christian sex education is:

- the process of guiding children and youth to develop and live with a set of Christian values about sex and its place in human development.

- the progressive sharing of facts and feelings in light of the child's developmental needs and an awareness of God's purposes for human sexuality.

The materials note that Christian sex education includes:

- clarifying your own beliefs and values on sexuality.
- helping children build healthy self-esteem.
- helping children develop responsible decision-making skills.
- helping children learn to cope with peer pressure.
- establishing boundaries and limits.
- communicating in a natural manner about sexuality.
- responding to questions honestly.
- counteracting outside messages by "modeling" and communication.

Six essentials to Christian sex education, according to the BSSB materials, are:

- prayer.
- good information.
- good communication skills.
- biblical foundation.
- knowledge of development.
- healthy role models.

And ongoing parental responsibilities include:

- affirming that sexual desire is God-given and a normal human emotion.
- maintaining openness to discussing sexual morality at home.
- recognize that Christian young people are caught up in the same pressures and temptations regarding sexual feelings and behavior as non-Christians.

Key statistics fueling the need for Christian sex education, according to the BSSB materials, are:

- TV shows an estimated 20,000 acts of implied intercourse in a year.
 - A nationwide survey of more than 11,000 high school students showed 54 percent are sexually active. By their senior year, 43 percent of teens in evangelical churches are sexually active.
 - By age 15, 33 percent of boys and 27 percent of girls have experienced intercourse.
 - Of junior high youth, 72 percent of boys and 44 percent of girls reportedly want to imitate what they see in sexually oriented, R-rated movies.
 - More than 3 million teens are infected by sexually transmitted diseases each year. More than 1 million teen girls become pregnant.
 - Condoms fail at least 15 percent of the time to prevent pregnancy.
- One additional BSSB handout notes the "freedoms of abstinence:"
- Freedom from pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
 - Freedom from birth control and abortion.
 - Freedom from exploitation by others.
 - Freedom from guilt, doubt, disappointment, worry and rejection that comes with a sexual affair.
 - Freedom from the pressure to marry too soon.
 - Freedom to be in control of your body.
 - Freedom to get to know your dating partner as a person.
 - Freedom to enjoy teen-age life and many friends.

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- Freedom to plan for the future and the kind of life you want.
- Freedom to form strong marriage bonds and deep trust with one person.

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Think tank begins grappling
with gaming industry growth

By Randal K. Cowling

Baptist Press
3/7/94

ATLANTA (BP)--It's a conflict between morality and lifestyle increasingly faced by Southern Baptist churches across the country as they learn how to minister to their communities when gambling is legalized.

In response to increased calls from churches in regions where gambling has been legalized, Southern Baptist ministers from communities where legalized gaming is prevalent gathered for a Feb. 28-March 2 "think tank" to formulate a strategy for training and awareness for churches across the Southern Baptist Convention.

"We see the need to help our churches where gambling has come to impact their church field," said Bill Lee, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board special ministries department, sponsor of the meeting. "Our focus is to provide training and materials for churches that will equip them to do ministry with people affiliated with the gaming industry."

Across the United States the gaming industry is spreading like an out of control range fire with 48 states having some type of legalized gaming. The gaming industry includes: parimutuels (horse and dog racing); bingo; casinos; riverboats; lotteries; card rooms; charitable games (raffles and drawings); Indian reservations; and legal bookmaking.

In 1992 there were proposals and initiatives in 45 states to begin or expand legalized gaming activity.

Presently, the Home Mission Board has appointed missionaries in Atlantic City, Las Vegas, Reno, Lake Tahoe and Laughlin, Nev., where the gaming industry has been predominant. However, with the expansion of gaming along the Mississippi River and on Indian reservations, traditional Southern Baptist church settings now are being impacted as never before.

Churches in Mississippi and Louisiana, for example, are experiencing the onslaught of riverboats and casinos. Presently, 69 dockside casinos are in operation along the Mississippi River and the Gulf Coast. John Landrum, a former pastor and now chaplain to the Mississippi Coast, is working with employees of the casinos in Gulfport, Miss.

The HMB special ministries department has enlisted Frank Stark of Stafford, Mo., to serve as a gaming ministry consultant. He has served as a Mission Service Corps volunteer and has led the Raceway Ministries, a ministry to the stock car racing circuit.

Stark will be assisting field personnel in gaming impacted-communities.

As a result of the think tank several conferences are being planned and resources written to assist churches discover how they can minister in a gaming impacted community.

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ACTS celebrates 10th year,
ministry programs most-viewed

By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press
3/7/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--ACTS (American Christian Television System) is 10 years old this year.

The faith and values cable television service of the SBC's Radio and Television Commission was the vision of Jimmy Allen, former president of the RTVC and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He guided the network from inception through its formative years.

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"Jimmy Allen's vision was the cornerstone for what ACTS has become over the past 10 years," said RTVC President Jack Johnson. "What began as a small cable service reaching a few people in a limited geographical area now reaches into more than 20 million homes nationwide. We must now take Jimmy Allen's vision into the next century, using all the new technology that becomes available to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

ACTS was the first religious programming network to feature multi-denominational involvement -- Baptist, Catholic, Church of Christ, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Seventh-day Adventist -- local promotion and programming, with no on-air solicitation of funds.

The growth of ACTS has not been without turmoil. In July of 1992, ACTS entered into a shared channel arrangement with VISN (Vision Interfaith Satellite Network), owned and operated by the National Interfaith Cable Coalition (NICC).

The channel was first called VISN-ACTS, with VISN receiving 16 hours a day for programming and ACTS receiving eight. Last January the name of the channel was changed to "Faith and Values Channel," though ACTS and VISN continue to operate as fully autonomous networks sharing a common delivery system.

"Some people got the idea it was a merger," said Johnson, "and nothing could be further from the truth. It is simply a shared channel arrangement. Prior to the shared channel agreement our programming reached into 8.2 million cable homes in a limited geographical context. Now we reach into every major city in the United States, important demographic and geographic areas for Southern Baptist outreach with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

NICC is a consortium of 28 members representing 54 traditions, including Protestant, Jewish, Catholic and Eastern Orthodox.

"There has been some concern," said Johnson, "that ACTS is sharing a channel with VISN members who are not evangelical Christians. I see sharing the channel as a positive, not a negative. It enables us to present the truth of the gospel to people who otherwise might not have opportunity to hear it. And I happen to believe that when the truth of Christ is presented, the truth will be victorious in any confrontation with other teaching. The shared channel arrangement enables us to more effectively carry out the Great Commission, which is what we are about."

"ACTS exists as an autonomous network. VISN has no control over the content of our programming and we have no control over theirs. This was not a merger, blending, marriage, union, coalescence or linking of the two networks. This was simply an arrangement to share the same cable channel."

Johnson said ministry programs continue to be the most-watched on the channel, and monthly telephone calls and letters requesting spiritual help have tripled since the onset of the arrangement.

"Ministry programs such as 'The Baptist Hour,' 'The Central Message,' 'In Touch,' 'Invitation to Life,' 'Prestonwood Presents,' 'The Winning Walk' and 'Word of God for Today's World' reach into 1.2 million cable homes in New York City where we have only 12 Southern Baptist churches," Johnson said. "Now that's evangelism, reaching millions of people who might otherwise not have an evangelical witness."

"The TV ministries of preachers Frank Pollard, Charles Stanley, Ronnie Floyd, Ed Young, Jack Graham, Ron Phillips and Robert Hamlin are reaching the lost in all of our major cities because of the shared channel agreement."

RTVC Executive Vice President Richard T. McCartney said, "Without the vision and courage of a person like Jimmy Allen, there would not be an ACTS network and the communications ministries of Southern Baptists would be weaker. Jimmy Allen was willing to take risks and move forward on the foundation built by Paul M. Stevens and Samuel Lowe. The result has been a vast increase in the electronic outreach of Southern Baptists."

"Today Jack Johnson is putting his own stamp on what his predecessors have done," McCartney said. "He is preparing the Radio and Television Commission to take its place on the electronic superhighway that is leading us into the 21st century."

**Mother of Morris Chapman
dies in Jackson, Miss.**

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Barbara Curtis Chapman, 82, died March 5 of respiratory failure at Manhattan Health Center in Jackson, Miss. She was the mother of Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Mrs. Chapman, a native of French Camp, Miss., had lived in Jackson since 1958, had worked as a secretary with the Mississippi's Game and Fish Commission and was a member of Woodland Hills Baptist Church. She was a graduate of French Camp Academy and Sunflower Junior College.

Survivors include her sons Morris, of Nashville, and Ron, of Jackson, and four grandchildren.

The funeral was March 7 at Jackson's Wright and Ferguson Funeral Home. Memorials may be made to French Camp Academy or Woodland Hills Baptist Church.

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EDITORS' NOTE: Writer Mary E. Speidel and photographer Charles Ledford developed the following three stories on Southern Baptist mission work in the Caribbean during a trip there.

**Missionaries find 'gold mine'
for gospel with Chinese seamen** By Mary E. Speidel

Baptist Press
3/7/94

PHILIPSBURG, St. Maarten (BP)--A passenger aboard a luxury cruise ship peers through a porthole. Below, yachts glide across turquoise water. Tradewinds rock fishing boats docked at the pier.

Welcome to St. Maarten, 37 square miles of Caribbean paradise shared by France and the Netherlands. The island, also known as St. Martin on the French side, boasts five-star resort hotels, glitzy casinos, 36 beaches and bays, and duty-free shops.

But some of St. Maarten's visitors aren't lured by travel posters.

A tuna boat named "Chien Ching" chugs into the harbor at Philipsburg, capital of Dutch St. Maarten. Seaman Zhang Zhao, 19, spots Southern Baptist missionaries James and Sheila Wang waiting on the pier. He waves from the deck. It's been more than five months since Zhang has seen them.

When Zhang comes ashore, he greets the Wangs in Mandarin, China's main language. Like most of his fellow seamen, Zhang is from China. A few of his colleagues hail from Taiwan.

Before Zhang left home, his Christian family in China's Henan province prayed he would find other Christians on his voyage. Two weeks later, he met the Wangs near a pier in St. Maarten where they were showing the "Jesus" film.

The missionaries, who live in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, were starting a ministry to Chinese tuna fishermen who dock twice a year on St. Maarten. Zhang was starting his first five-month stint at sea.

"Their help to me has been very great," said Zhang of the Wangs. "They are praying for me and my family. They are teaching me about Jesus' life."

Zhang struggles for more words. "I'm so happy I can hardly express myself," he said.

Wang, originally from Shanghai, China, downplays the praise. "We're just teaching God's Word, spreading the gospel," he said.

The Wangs have been doing that among the seamen since 1991. That year they found about 30 Chinese tuna boats at the pier while surveying St. Maarten's Chinese population. Their survey was part of work as itinerant missionaries among Chinese people in the Caribbean.

They learned the fishermen dock in early October and April and stay in port about a month to sell their catch, replenish supplies and make repairs. About 20 to 30 men make up each crew.

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Since the survey, the Wangs have flown from Santo Domingo to St. Maarten twice a year to minister to the seamen. "When we find out the boats are in, we're ready to go," said Wang, who is 65 and still going strong. He leads Chinese Baptist Church in Santo Domingo.

So far, about 60 seamen have accepted Christ as Savior through their ministry. Even the Wangs are surprised by the seamen's responsiveness. "We didn't know there was a 'gold mine' here," said Wang.

In 1992 the Wangs met one of the boat's captains, Lo Chin-Tsai, who is a Christian. Lo invited them to lead an evangelistic service aboard his boat, the "Tung Hung."

"It's important that we bring God on board," said Lo, an aborigine from Taiwan who grew up in a Presbyterian family.

Boarding Lo's boat is no easy task, but Wang didn't balk during a recent visit. He slung his legs over the railings and jumped on board the first boat docked by the pier. Mrs. Wang followed. They crossed two other boats in similar fashion before finally arriving at Lo's.

The Wangs rarely board the boats, since they lead most of their activities on the pier and at nearby New Testament Baptist Church. But their willingness to do so impressed Eduardo Wang, 18, who was with them the first time they hopped onto Lo's boat.

"They don't let age or circumstances stop them," said the younger Wang, no relation to the missionaries. "That taught me a lot about spreading God's Word."

Eduardo Wang attends Chinese Baptist Church in Santo Domingo. Each time the missionaries go to St. Maarten, they try to take Chinese young people from their congregation with them. "We give them this training in missions so wherever they go, they'll be prepared to do mission work," said Mrs. Wang, who is from New York City.

The Wangs didn't plan their own preparation for missions. They met in Taiwan as colleagues at the Fulbright Foundation/China. She was preparing for a foreign service career. He was a 35-year-old widower with two young children.

After their marriage, Wang, a high school dropout, earned a master's degree in business administration. He worked his way up to financial vice president at ITT Corporation's San Juan, Puerto Rico, branch. Later they felt God leading them to be missionaries after Wang became lay pastor of a Chinese Baptist mission congregation in San Juan.

Wang's corporate background has helped him as a missionary evangelist.

"I'm a real introvert," Wang admitted. "But in my job at ITT, I couldn't lock my office door. I had to interact with employees. I was their leader."

Wang seems anything but shy leading an evangelistic service under a street light on the Philipsburg pier. Afterwards, the missionaries mingle among the Chinese fishermen to get to know them better.

The seamen are recruited by agents from Taiwanese fishing companies. Part of a Chinese mainlanders' salary goes to his recruiter and to the Chinese government. Still, a seaman's average pay runs about \$200 a month, nearly seven times what he would earn in China, Wang estimated.

But they earn every cent. At sea the fishermen work about 19 hours a day with no days off -- for five months straight.

"It's hard not only just to stand there working so long, but the waves are so great, it's hard to stand up," said one seaman.

Some say their captains beat them to make them work harder, even when they're sick. "The most difficult thing is when you're sick and there's nobody to take care of you," said one. "There's no comfort."

Later a seaman removes his sandal to show Mrs. Wang his injured foot. The next day the Wangs bring him some ointment to treat the wound. Another day they take a fisherman to a doctor. He has scabies.

But the Wangs concentrate on meeting spiritual needs.

"We could give them \$50, but that doesn't last," said Mrs. Wang. Through Jesus Christ, "we give them a hope and a purpose."

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(BP) photos (two horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available on SBCNet Newsroom.

**Spiritual warfare challenges
St. Martin missionaries**

By Mary E. Spidel

MARIGOT, St. Martin (BP)--On an island where tourists "worship" sunlight, Bob and Becky Harper feel the powers of darkness.

The Harpers are Southern Baptist missionaries in St. Martin, a Caribbean island in the Leeward chain. It's known as St. Maarten on the Dutch side of the 37-square-mile island, shared by the Netherlands and France.

The seaside town of Marigot where the Harpers live offers a Caribbean flavor of France -- sidewalk cafes, an outdoor market, shops with Parisian fashions. It also offers a taste of what Harper calls "sophisticated spiritism" -- astrology, psychic activity and the like. The New Age movement and atheism also thrive.

Harper felt the power of these influences while briefly teaching English at a New Age bookstore owned by a French family in Marigot, capital of French St. Martin. His pupil was an elderly uncle in that family. His textbook was the Gospel of John. While they read from the New Testament, nearby one of the owners read tarot cards.

"Whenever I go in that bookstore, I feel totally uncomfortable. You can feel the demonic power," said Harper, who grew up in Asuncion, Paraguay. He is the son of retired missionaries Leland and Betty Harper of Ironton, Mo.

During the lessons, Harper's student asked all kinds of questions about Christianity. Curiously, each time Harper got ready to go to the store for a lesson, the missionary got physically sick.

"He would sweat feverishly. It was like oppression, like a Satanic attack against him for going in there. It was like (Satan saying), 'You're on my territory,'" said Mrs. Harper, from Odessa, Texas.

She felt such power herself at a professional trade show. She was working at a booth they rented to help make contacts for starting a Baptist church among the "metropolitan French." The Harpers came to St. Martin to reach that group, a term for people from France rather than from French dependencies.

During the show, a rum dealer approached her. "He spit right in my face and told me I didn't have a right to be there. He cussed me out from one end to another," she said.

At the time, Mrs. Harper didn't think the incident bothered her much. But when she got home later, it hit her full force. "I got really sick. I said, 'I'm sick of this. I'm sick of the oppression.'"

The Harpers' daughters -- Cindy, 11, and Marcy, 8 -- have felt some of the oppression. Peers often ridicule them because their parents are evangelical missionaries. "One of the most difficult things for me is seeing my daughters suffer persecution" because of what their parents do, said Harper.

But for the Harpers, missions means living in the "real world."

"When your whole life revolves around church and you're not in the world, you're insulated," said Harper, a former engineer in Texas oil fields. "When you get out in the world and see how worldly people act, you're shocked."

The Harpers have been anything but insulated on St. Martin. One year at the trade show, their booth stood across from the New Age bookstore booth. The French are avid readers, so the Harpers sold evangelical books in French.

"We would have one person at our booth and the New Age people would have 50. But then we had to remember: We're in the world," said Mrs. Harper.

During the show the Harpers got to know one of the New Age store's owners, a young woman. They gave her a book by evangelist Billy Graham. In turn, she offered to sell the Harpers' Christian literature in her bookstore.

"I had prayed for so long to find a place to sell these books," said Harper, who had tried unsuccessfully to get other bookstores to do so. Now he supplies the New Age store with evangelical books sold at cost. "Right next to a Billy Graham book there's one on how to read tarot cards," said Mrs. Harper. "But we really have to pray on the days Bob goes in there. It's a force you can feel. It automatically goes against your spirit."

The Harpers have won other victories, too. One of the sweetest came on a Sunday afternoon beside the Caribbean.

"I want what you've got," a Romanian-born tennis player who had lived in France told the Harpers. They had befriended him earlier when he was suicidal over a break-up with his girlfriend. That day on the beach, they led him in praying to accept Christ as Savior. It was the first time they saw someone become a Christian since they came to the island.

Since then he has returned to France, like many of the French the Harpers have met during nearly five years in St. Martin. They try to refer such people to Southern Baptist representatives in France.

The couple won another victory in starting a small Baptist congregation near their home. That was especially hard, because many of the French don't stay long on the island.

About five new believers, along with two more mature Christians, form the core of the congregation. Worshipers include some "metropolitan French" and some from French islands like Guadeloupe. Harper leads discipleship training, a men's Bible study and a Sunday morning Bible discussion-worship service.

The Harpers, who have tried all kinds of evangelistic methods with few results, have fought some tough spiritual battles in St. Martin. They often want to quit. But at least for now, they stay to shed light on the darkness.

"We've had times when we've told the Lord, we've done everything on this island we can do," she admitted.

"It's absolutely the prayers of (Southern Baptists) that have kept us here."

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(BP) photos (two horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines available on SBCNet Newsroom.

**Missionary cruises for Christ
aboard boat called 'Commission' By Mary E. Speidel**

**Baptist Press
3/7/94**

COLE BAY, St. Maarten (BP)--Tom and Patti Higginbotham go where people are. And on the Caribbean island of St. Maarten, they don't have to go far.

The Higginbothams are Southern Baptist missionaries on the 37-square-mile island, the smallest in the world to be divided between two governments. Shared by the Netherlands and France, it's known as St. Maarten on the Dutch side, St. Martin on the French.

The missionaries, from Walker, La., live in the community of Cole Bay in Dutch St. Maarten. Every day except Sunday Higginbotham leaves their home just after 7 a.m. and drives over Cay Bay Hill.

He stops at a mountain lookout above Simpson Bay Lagoon, where several hundred pleasure boats dock during peak tourist season. On clear days, you can see the nearby islands of Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Kitts.

Sitting inside his car, Higginbotham gazes at the blue-green water.

"These people are a real independent bunch," he says, noting some cruisers live on their boats for several years while sailing around the world. "But when you get warmed up to them, they're real good people."

At 7:30 sharp, he pulls out his VHF radio and greets boaters below: "Good morning, cruisers. Whether you're on a motor yacht or a sailing yacht, welcome to St. Maarten Radio Net. My name is Tom Higginbotham with the boat 'Commission.' I'll be your net controller today."

Higginbotham gives the daily weather report, then asks if any new arrivals want to check in.

The radio crackles. "Good morning, this is 'Elizabeth' ... and we're just coming in from the south. We'll probably be here for a couple weeks."

"Glad to meet you here today," Higginbotham answers. "If there's anything we can do for you, we're on the net each morning. We'll be glad to help you."

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Later he will visit the newly arrived sailors in his outboard motor boat, the "Commission." Higginbotham provides newcomers a packet containing tourist brochures, a map of the island, an evangelistic tract, a New Testament and information on St. Maarten International Baptist Church. The Higginbothams started the congregation in their home.

When the couple arrived on the island in 1991, they noticed the sailboats from a balcony outside their apartment. In the evenings they and their daughters -- Kimberly, almost 10, and Allison, almost 3 -- would sometimes watch the boats while sitting by the drawbridge at the lagoon's entry.

"We realized nobody was doing anything to reach these people," said Mrs. Higginbotham.

The missionaries felt God wanted them to try. They started by going to the drawbridge to note which boats were coming in, then providing welcome packets. Higginbotham began a radio network to make friends with cruisers. The couple saved money to buy a motor boat to gain better access.

Higginbotham learns of many arrivals by radio, but sometimes he parks his boat near the drawbridge and watches boats from all over the world enter the lagoon.

"I kind of follow them like a shark, trailing them and waiting until they drop an anchor. Baptists are the first people who visit them whenever they come to the island," said Higginbotham, a former petroleum inspector on barges and ships along the Mississippi River.

But the cruisers aren't the only people the Higginbothams reach.

Mrs. Higginbotham has met other internationals by volunteering at an American school attended by children from all over the world, including daughter Kimberly. The missionary teaches music and works in the office.

A student's mother asked her if she and her husband would start a Bible club for children. Every other Saturday the children learn about Jesus at the missionaries' home. Higginbotham leads a Bible lesson; his wife teaches about foreign missions using material produced by Woman's Missionary Union. The activities also include worship, recreation and crafts.

In the summer the missionaries have led Vacation Bible School on the property of Sheraton's Port de Plaisance resort near their home. Higginbotham docks his boat in the resort's marina beside Simpson Bay Lagoon.

Flags on the boats there represent about as many countries as the worshipers who attend services at St. Maarten International Baptist Church. On any given Sunday, you can find people there from almost every continent. The approximately 15 regular worshipers are Irish, Canadian, Dutch, Indonesian, American, English, Scottish and South African. They include boaters and other internationals whose jobs have brought them to the island.

One regular worshiper, Peter Dixon, lives with his wife, Claire, and Labrador, Toby, aboard a catamaran called "Antar." The Dixons left jobs in their native England to sail around the world. Now they live in Simpson Bay Lagoon, working temporary jobs on St. Maarten to earn extra cash.

Higginbotham sometimes boats over to join them for tea around 5 p.m. "Tom's looked after us since we got here," said Dixon, while sipping tea aboard his yacht. "We've found a friend."

The Higginbothams have found making friends has been the best way to share their faith among the diverse mix of people on St. Maarten.

"We have to show people being a Christian doesn't mean our heads are in the clouds or we're removed from everybody," said Mrs. Higginbotham.

"Jesus went where people were. He got dirty and rubbed elbows with them."

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Program host says Satan attacks church through teens, children By C.C. Risenhoover

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Kenny Price said he accepted Christ as his Savior while driving a bus for his father's country/western band in 1977. The host of "Straight Talk From Teens," which is telecast on ACTS and FamilyNet Saturdays at 11 p.m. Eastern Time, also was the drummer for the band.

ACTS is the faith and values cable television service of the SBC's Radio and Television Commission. FamilyNet is its broadcast television service.

"We were on our way home from a concert in Maine when the most important question I ever faced came into my mind," he said. "The question was, 'Is your life going to count?' The only way I could answer that question positively was to give my life to Christ."

A native of Florence, Ky., Price said his best friend, Bo Weaver, had been saved earlier and had witnessed to him.

"I cussed him out," he said, "but he wouldn't give up on me. He just kept telling me that God loved me and wanted me in his kingdom. So I knew that the first thing I was going to do when I got home was see Bo."

Price said that when he finally got to Weaver's home it was 3 in the morning, but he just could not wait to tell his friend about his decision.

Weaver, who now is pastor of a church in Florence, and Price together went to Christ for the Nations Bible School in Dallas. Price earned a masters degree from Christian Life School of Theology at Columbus, Ga.

The father of a 5-year-old son and three daughters ages 3, 7 and 9, Price met his wife of 16 years, Kathy, while attending Christ for the Nations. They married during his second year of school. The family now lives in Middletown, Ohio.

"I've been a youth pastor for more than 15 years," Price said, "but I could easily have taken a different road.

"My father, whose name is also Kenny, was a singer on 'Hee Haw' for 25 years and on 'Midwestern Hayride' in Cincinnati for 20 years. I became the drummer for Dad's band and got to know a lot of the big names ... Tex Ritter, Ernest Tubb, Merle Haggard, George Jones."

Price said that while he was at Christ for the Nations God spoke to him about raising up an army of teen-agers who would be radicals for Jesus.

"My first ministry was to junior high students at a church in Arizona in 1979," he said. "Until about three years ago that's what I did ... ministered to teen-agers through churches. But then I went to Lima, Ohio, with a friend who was going to be a guest on 'Straight Talk From Teens.' The general manager was doing the program at the time and asked me to be the host. God was just opening another door to me."

Price said that on the program he does not browbeat or preach hellfire and brimstone.

"I try to show teen-agers that I care for them ... that I love them," he said. "I try to help them weigh the consequences of their actions and to make the right decisions. We have a 1-800 help line and we direct troubled teens to different agencies across the country. Right now we average about 400 calls a night." Price said the program is topical, dealing with issues teens are concerned about.

"We talk about things like suicide, abortion, drugs, parents, dating ... there's no subject that we won't deal with," he said.

"There's an attitude in America, and by many in the church, that no one cares what teen-agers say or think. But there's a reason why the secular media and the fast food industry spend billions to reach teen-agers. And Satan's disciples know that the best place to attack the church is through children and teen-agers. Teen-agers really control the world, but the church hasn't figured that out yet because mom and dad have the tithe. And the guy who owns MTV and Nickelodeon, he controls the kids."

**Tornado's havoc fails to derail
church's hope, missions spirit** By Shannon T. Simpson

SYLVARENA, Miss. (BP)--When clocks in Sylvarena, Miss., stopped at 12:25 a.m. on Nov. 22, 1992, even the devastation of the tornado which leveled Sylvarena Baptist Church couldn't daunt the congregation.

Sylvarena members had planned, decorated and cleaned in preparation for the church's 125th anniversary celebration the night before the tornado tore through the region.

What they saw the morning after the twister was a total loss. Pews were exposed to sky in the remains of the sanctuary; twisted steel beams and sheet metal lay in a pile where the family life center had been.

"We never doubted we would rebuild," said Bill James, a deacon at Sylvarena.

The church had relocated its plant about four years before the tornado, at a cost of more than \$400,000. Members confess there was some dissension over that effort.

"We were about \$5,000 in debt when that storm hit," James said. "We didn't even know how we were going to meet our building note."

Now, however, "We are better off financially now than we were then," he said.

"We may have caught ourselves building a memorial to God, not an organ to serve him. Maybe he thought we needed to start over."

"Praise the Lord, we'll never see that kind of debt again," said another deacon, Joe Houston.

The church is now so stewardship-conscious that most of the construction work and all ongoing janitorial work is done by the members themselves.

"That storm was a blessing," said Sylvarena member Barbara James, not related to Bill James. "We really learned that God would provide."

Josh James, Bill James' brother and building committee chairman, echoed the sentiment: "That Sunday morning (after the storm), there were about 25 people here, ready to rebuild." And rebuild, they did.

In the aftermath of crisis, Sylvarena built a new sanctuary and pastorium on the sites of those destroyed by the 1992 twister. There are plans to finish work in July on a 135- by 60-foot family life center and fellowship hall to replace its predecessor.

Add to that the fact the 172-member church exceeded its Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal for 1993 by \$1,125, for a total gift of \$11,125. That's almost \$3,000 above the church's 1992 offering.

With its gift of \$3,926, the church was also listed among the top 40 on the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village "Honor Roll of Churches."

How does a small church like Sylvarena give so much, especially in time of crisis? "When you've got people that tithe, you don't have any problem with offerings," said Josh James.

Added pastor Hueston Adkins: "This church did not just turn inward in that time of crisis, but kept its mission spirit, and gave out of poverty -- gave so much."

"The church was continually in prayer after the storm," said Bill James, "not specifically for the Lottie Moon Offering, but for thanksgiving. All the other (financial blessings) just came about as a result of those prayers."

"At dawn the day after the storm," said Houston, "I realized I was so happy to see people alive, who I wouldn't have spoken to before. It was very sobering."

Looking to the future, Bill James said he claims 1 Cor. 2:9 for the church: "We haven't seen anything yet."

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Simpson is a newswriter for The Baptist Record, Mississippi Baptists' newsjournal.

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