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March 28, 1994

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**Orlando's Jim Henry enters
race for SBC presidency** By Herb Hollinger

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Pastor Jim Henry of First Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla., ended speculation about his candidacy for president of the Southern Baptist Convention with an announcement March 27 to his church that he will be nominated but "not have a structured campaign effort."

"After much prayer, thought and counsel, I believe it to be God's will that I offer myself as a candidate (for president)," Henry told his congregation in a prepared statement following the morning worship service. "And will allow my name to be nominated at our annual meeting in Orlando ..."

Instead of a "structured campaign effort," Henry told the church he will "trust the Holy Spirit to speak to the hearts and minds of my brothers and sisters in Christ as they choose their leadership for the near future. In that process and in the sovereignty of God I have complete trust."

The announcement assures messengers to the June 14-16 annual meeting of the SBC -- in Orlando -- of at least a two-person ballot. Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., also is an announced candidate.

Wolfe was publicly endorsed Feb. 8 by two former SBC presidents, Jerry Vines and Charles Stanley, at a ministers' Bible conference at First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla. Vines is co-pastor of the Jacksonville church and Stanley is pastor of First Baptist Church in Atlanta.

After reading his statement to the church, Henry also said he did not equate God's leadership in his candidacy "necessarily with victory," nor did he want the congregation to pray for his victory.

"I have complete peace that I will be in God's will, win or lose," he said. And, he added, he hopes following the election the SBC would become a unified people.

Both Henry and Wolfe are high-profile pastors who are friends -- Wolfe once nominated Henry for president of the SBC Pastors' Conference -- and share some similarities. Both are considered conservatives among Southern Baptists. Both are 56 and have held their current megachurch pastorates for a long time. Henry has been at Orlando for more than 16 years and Wolfe has been at Mobile for 23 years.

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Neither has indicated who will bring nominating speeches at the June meeting. Wolfe has received the backing of a group of 60-70 conservatives who meet periodically, including with Wolfe after the SBC Executive Committee meeting in Nashville in February.

There has been speculation Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas, would nominate Henry. However, Graham told Baptist Press March 28 that it was Henry's decision and it would be inappropriate for him to comment on the matter. He said he is praying about the matter, has spoken to Henry once recently, and suggested there were a number of people who would be willing to nominate the Florida pastor.

Apparently, Wolfe will have the backing of many of the former SBC presidents among others while Henry's supporters say he can bridge a growing split among conservatives in the SBC.

Henry told his congregation he would like to focus on the future and "build community and fellowship and love in this body." Anyone who believes in the inerrancy of the Bible and sees evangelism as the "heartbeat" of the SBC should be welcomed, Henry said.

In addition, Henry's church led the entire SBC in giving to the Cooperative Program. The CP is the denomination's financial channel for missions and education.

The Orlando church gave \$931,224 in 1992 through the Cooperative Program with 13.9 percent of undesignated gifts and a per-member average of \$94.44. It was the second year in a row the 10,000-member church has led the SBC's 38,000 churches in total CP giving.

According to the March 28 issue of The Orlando Sentinel, the Orlando church gave \$896,983 in 1993 or 14 percent while Wolfe's church gave \$199,681 or about 5 percent of its regular undesignated offerings in 1993. Wolfe, chairman of the SBC Executive Committee, said in September of last year he would lead his church, currently at about 5 percent, to raise its CP giving by half a percent each year until it reaches 10 percent.

Wolfe told the Sentinel he was not disappointed Henry decided to run. He said he expects the race to be close.

Henry, a native of Nashville, has been active in the denomination, serving as trustee of the Foreign Mission Board and the Baptist Sunday School Board. He was also a member of the SBC Peace Committee which was commissioned by the denomination in the 1980s to try to ease tensions caused by a moderate-conservative controversy.

Henry and Wolfe are the only two announced candidates for the SBC presidency. H. Edwin Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, concludes two one-year terms as president at the June Orlando meeting.

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2 Baptist churches
added to tornado toll

By David Reid

Baptist Press
3/28/94

PIEDMONT, Ala. (BP)--The tornado which took the lives of 19 United Methodist worshippers March 27 at Piedmont, Ala., also destroyed two Baptist churches nearby.

The storm, which struck the Ten Island and Mt. Gilead Baptist churches while worshippers sang, left several members of each congregation with minor injuries.

Tornado drills, conducted the previous week in a local school, may have been responsible for the lack of fatalities and serious injuries at the Mt. Gilead church.

"The children had just practiced tornado drills, so when it hit, they immediately dived under the pews," said Don Carroll, director of missions for the Calhoun Baptist Association to which both churches belong.

"The roof came straight down, but by then everyone had crawled beneath the pews -- and the pews were the only thing that held the roof off of them," Carroll said. "Some of the light fixtures fell between the pews and weren't even broken."

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About 60 worshipers at each church had little warning of the approaching tornado.

At the Ten Island church, worshipers had just finished singing happy birthday to a member of the congregation when the minister of music remarked about the sound of the wind outside, Carroll said.

"The pastor quickly told everyone to go to the basement. Two men in back didn't make it and were injured, but not seriously," he said.

Disaster relief crews from the Etowah and Randolph Baptist associations were preparing to help in the clean-up.

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European Parliament stance
on homosexuality stirs furor

Baptist Press
3/28/94

ROME (BP)--The president of the Union of Christian Baptist churches in Italy was among 65 Protestant church leaders who recently approved a resolution by the European Parliament (EP) in Strasbourg, Austria, which recommends the same legal basis for the union of two homosexuals of either sex as now granted to heterosexual marriages.

According to European Baptist Press Service, not all Baptists in Italy agreed with the resolution, however, and some did not like that their president was involved in the matter.

On Feb. 24, a group of 65 pastors and deacons from four denominations -- Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist and Waldensian -- signed a declaration which affirmed that they "welcome and appreciate" the EP resolution.

The action by the EP is sure to divide Christians throughout Europe. News of the approval by the 65 Italian church leaders to the EP's action appeared in the March 2 issue of NEV, the press service of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy.

The March 3 issue of the information service of the German Evangelical Alliance carried the negative reaction of the chairman of the European Evangelical Alliance, Willi Sartorius. "If homosexuals can adopt children, that would be the end of the family," Sartorius said. The family has been the smallest and most important unit of a healthy society, he said. Through a political decision like this, Sartorius added, "mankind discriminates against its Creator and disqualifies itself."

The statement by the Italian church leaders was written during a "Theological Up-Date" or "Aggiornamento," which took place at the Waldensian Theological Seminary in Rome. In their declaration, the 65 Protestant church leaders, including men and women, said they "welcome and appreciate the Strasbourg parliament's recommendation that national legislation should recognize the right of their homosexual citizens to stable cohabitation, likening them to those between heterosexual partners, guaranteeing equal right to both types of relationships"

European Baptist Press Service spoke with the president of the Italian Baptist Union, Franco Scaramuccia, who was present at the Aggiornamento. He and 16 other Baptist pastors were among those who signed the declaration.

"I want to make it very clear from the outset that the signing was not in any way a decision of Italian Baptists or of the Italian Baptist Union," Scaramuccia stated. "I signed the declaration as an individual, and in no way did I act as the official representative of the union."

However, Antonio Ramirez, a Rome Baptist lay leader and publisher, criticized the president and the group of 65 people for not stating clearly that their position was in no way intended to reflect the opinion of Italian Protestants. "Some headlines almost made it appear as if the approval by the 65 was reflective of all members (of these denominations)," Ramirez said.

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The Italian Baptist president recounted during the Aggiornamento the EP's resolution was presented and discussed. "We felt the participants should react to the proposed legislation. It is most unfortunate that some news media picked up the story and made it seem as if I had committed Italian Baptists to my personal position," Scaramuccia said, referring to the specific headline in one paper.

"Furthermore," Scaramuccia continued, "I want to make it clear that the declaration does not address our feelings about the homosexual lifestyle, nor about the heterosexual lifestyle. We limited (our statement) to the question of equality before the law for all European citizens."

The Italian Baptist leader also explained that in Italy, and possibly elsewhere in Europe, there are many couples not legally married, both heterosexual and homosexual. He said these couples often have stable relationships and even raise children. "This is the real state of affairs in our country," Scaramuccia said. He also underlined the declaration insists the word "marriage" or "matrimony" should be avoided in the legislation. "We did not want marriage to be confused with homosexual union," he said.

"Homosexuals already have the same civil rights anyone else has," countered Ramirez. "These rights are regularly exercised by homosexuals and the state in no way interferes with them in the private sphere which is inviolable and does not require any further normative protection."

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Foreign Mission Board to use
MSC vols in U.S.-based jobs

By Bob Stanley

Baptist Press
3/28/94

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--As part of its effort to increase the use of volunteers worldwide, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will begin using Mission Service Corps volunteers to fill positions on its U.S. staff.

The board has five MSC assignments open in its Richmond, Va., office now, but hopes to expand use of the volunteers in the future.

The current jobs range from a research project assistant to a secretarial assistant to help process short-term mission candidates and overseas assignments. The research assistant would prepare profiles of countries, people groups and cities and update databases and other research projects.

"We're in a period when many people are searching for meaning in their lives -- trying to find something significant rather than just earn a paycheck," said Don Kammerdiener, the board's executive vice president. "We believe some Southern Baptists who haven't had an opportunity to go overseas would like to touch the world through positions like these."

Other job openings include:

-- Word processing specialist to work in records management transcribing FMB trustee meeting minutes from hard copy into an electronic database.

-- Indexer to index The Commission (the board's magazine), news and feature stories, photo resources and audio-visual materials into an electronic database.

-- Data entry specialist to assist with processing enlistment information on volunteer applicants.

All the jobs would be unpaid one- to two-year assignments involving about 30 hours' work per week.

The MSC assignments enlarge upon a home office volunteers program in which 61 local Southern Baptists work up to half a day a week assisting the Richmond staff.

People interested in the new program may contact Jim Edwards, staff personnel director, by calling 1-800-999-3113, Ext. 364; or writing to him at the Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230.

The board has used MSC volunteers overseas from the time the program started in the late 1970s until a new International Service Corps began in the 1990s.

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COMMENTARY

**Schindler didn't turn
away; what about us?**

By Erich Bridges

My barber, Ed, will never forget what he saw during the final Allied push into Germany in the closing days of World War II.

In 1945 he was a kid from Detroit, speeding across the German countryside with other American GIs in a mad rush to link up with Russian forces and crush the last Nazi resistance.

Ed's platoon hurriedly liberated a number of small concentration camps holding Jews, captured Russian soldiers and others. Such places presented many scenes of horror -- not only the dead and the dying, but the revenge being taken against camp guards or officials who hadn't already fled.

One German commandant nervously strode toward the GIs seeking protection, only to be accosted by a Russian prisoner who snatched the commandant's pistol and blew his head apart in front of the stunned Americans.

The incident Ed can never escape, however, occurred outside the camps. It happened in a beautiful little village nestled in a pristine valley, a picture worthy of a postcard. Immaculate houses and manicured gardens graced clean streets, lined with smiling German citizens who greeted the American troops -- Germans supposedly happy to be freed from Hitler's oppressive rule.

One thing marred the pastoral scene: a terrible stench from an abandoned train sitting on a hillside track near the village. Opening the bolted cattle-car doors, GIs discovered Jews and other camp-bound prisoners -- dead at least a week -- packed so tightly they still stood, like rotting statues.

"We didn't know," cried the villagers of the human freight that had rolled through their community for years, according to Ed's bitter recollection.

"We didn't know, we didn't know, we didn't know," they chanted like a mantra, as if repetition would make the Americans believe. Hadn't they seen countless arms reaching out of countless cattle cars -- or heard countless cries of men, women and children? Hadn't they smelled the stench of death?

But Germans had no monopoly on guilt, according to World War II historians. Many Poles enthusiastically supported larger and more numerous Nazi concentration camps in Poland. Many Ukrainians willingly helped with deportation and death. So did many French, Hungarians, Austrians and others in occupied Europe. Many countries closed their doors to Jewish refugees.

History reveals Allied leaders themselves knew in detail by 1943 what was happening to the Jews of Europe. They could have bombed the death camps well before the end of the war, but didn't. That judgment -- similar to international reaction to genocide in today's world -- allowed, or did nothing to prevent, the murder of many more people.

At Auschwitz alone during one six-week period beginning in December 1944, Nazi clerks catalogued 99,922 sets of children's clothing -- removed from their small bodies. The adult total numbered more than 400,000.

Far from ceasing or yielding to military priorities, the extermination campaign intensified right up to the end -- when the Nazis tried to empty the camps with mass executions and forced death marches to cover their crimes. The sheer scope of their extermination of 6 million Jews -- and the Nazis' own meticulous record keeping -- defeated the cover-up from the beginning.

"Where was God?" is a question often asked when people think about how the Holocaust could have been allowed to happen. But contemporary German cleric Dieter Trautwein poses another: "Where was everybody else?"

Where was Western "civilization," of which Germany supposedly was a high flowering? And where were Christians -- Christ's hands, feet and voice in the world? The story is told of a German church beside a railway that regularly carried deported Jews to their fate. Whenever a death train passed, the pastor told the choir to sing louder to drown out the cries for help.

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Into this maelstrom walked Oskar Schindler, the real-life hero of Steven Spielberg's Oscar-winning film "Schindler's List," based on Thomas Keneally's 1982 book. Schindler, a German businessman, was a womanizer, a hard drinker, a man whose Catholicism was minimal at best. He came to Nazi-occupied Poland to make his fortune off war profiteering and the slave labor of Jews.

He made a fortune, all right, but then spent it bribing his many Nazi contacts to save the lives of more than 1,100 Jewish workers -- the "Schindler Jews" he put on his famous list and sheltered in his factory. Despite friends in high places, he was arrested twice by the Nazi SS. He could have been executed either time if not for his legendary charm and open wallet. He risked his life innumerable times to save a few more Jews.

Why did he do it -- this selfish young man who had intended to drink, laugh and profit his way through the war? Why did he look -- and act -- when so many others turned away? Schindler himself could not fully answer that question in later life, and it remains something of a mystery even to the "Schindler Jews" and their descendants, who now number more than 6,000.

Schindler wasn't the only hero. Other rescuers, "righteous Gentiles," refused to turn away -- several thousand of them. Christians who sheltered Anne Frank and her family. Corrie ten Boom of "The Hiding Place." Fritz Graebe, a German Lutheran who saved hundreds of Jews. The Greek Orthodox bishop of Zante, who, when ordered by Nazis to submit the names of all Jews on his island, turned in a list with one name -- his own.

What would we have done? Every Christian should see and read "Schindler's List" to consider that question more deeply.

Yes, it's graphic and violent by its very nature, but as one "Schindler Jew" said after seeing the film, the violence depicted is nothing compared to what actually happened. It provides a dramatic and powerful -- yet bearable -- introduction to this most painful subject for many who might not be able to bring themselves to view actual documentation of the Nazis' atrocities.

This is more important than ever today, when hatred of Jews and other religious or ethnic groups flourishes again throughout Europe and Russia. Spielberg has said he made the film partly in response to the "ethnic cleansing" of Muslims in Bosnia -- once again in the heart of Europe -- and the wholesale murder of Kurds in Iraq.

A Jewish family from Moscow recently moved into my neighborhood. The husband said they had endured hostility from other Russians all their lives. They could emigrate, but Russia was home -- until his wife met someone in a park who told her Hitler should have "finished the job" of killing the Jews.

They love America, but what will their two children face in years to come? Astonishing ignorance and indifference about history now permeate American society. Students who can't name the current U.S. president view the 1940s as a prehistoric era. A 1993 Roper poll discovered more than half of high schoolers couldn't define "holocaust."

Even more alarming, a Gallup poll says one in three Americans believes it's possible the Nazi war on Jews never occurred -- a mind-boggling lie encouraged by hate groups and "revisionist historians" who ignore mountains of evidence, 350,000 living Holocaust survivors and countless other witnesses.

"We're in a day and age in which I can make any claim I want," said Deborah Lipstadt, Emory University professor and author of "Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory." "Then I say it's my opinion and I have a right to it, and you're supposed to back off."

The most frightening aspect of this societal turning away from historical fact is that it applies to the present as well as the past.

Americans know about some places of current suffering, like Bosnia or Somalia, because of saturation TV coverage. But how many know -- or care -- that up to 2 million black Christians and animists are being killed or systematically starved to death by Sudan's Islamic regime? How many can even name Sudan, or any other African country besides Somalia and South Africa?

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Despite the communications revolution, much of the world doesn't exist in the minds of millions of Americans. Local stories and tabloid fluff -- from Tonya Harding to the Bobbitts -- rule in media rushing to compete with TV news programs, which don't have the time or intention to cover the world in depth.

Media analyst Neil Postman says Americans are "entertaining ourselves to death" while millions worldwide suffer and die from evils we could alleviate.

Inevitably, this mind-set infects American churches. Many congregations seem to believe that to survive they must design all programs to satisfy the needs and desires of baby boomers, who often have little interest in ministries beyond their immediate communities. Such a trend poses a much greater threat to the future of Southern Baptists' world mission work, for example, than opposition from hostile foreign governments or cultures.

As we turn ever more inward, will we turn away from more than 1 billion people worldwide who have never heard the gospel, or thousands of Christian martyrs suffering for their faith in many countries, or the 27,500 people -- mostly children -- who die each day from drinking dirty water?

Many sincere Christians feel overwhelmed and helpless in the face of such numbers. Mother Teresa has some practical advice on that score from her 45-year ministry to the poorest of the poor in Calcutta:

"Maybe if I had not picked up that one person dying in the street, I would not have picked up the thousands," she said, recalling her first forays outside the cloistered walls of the convent where she spent her early years. "We must think 'one.' That is the way to begin."

Oskar Schindler would have understood that. He saved 1,100 Jews -- one by one. When he left his factory at the end of the war, they presented him with a ring -- made with gold extracted from the teeth of a grateful survivor -- inscribed with this saying from the Jewish Talmud:

"Whoever saves one life, saves the world entire."

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(BP) photos (two horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Cost of doing church today
outpaces per capita income

By Shari Schubert

Baptist Press
3/28/94

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP)--While the price of some things -- like radios, auto tires and ballpoint pens -- has gone down over the years, the price of churchgoing has gone up, according to analyst Lyle Schaller.

Schaller, a consultant with Yokefellow Institute and a Methodist minister, was the principal speaker during the "Leadership for the 21st Century" conference, held in Springfield, Mo., and sponsored by several Baptist entities.

The cost of maintaining churches -- along with schools, hospitals and other institutions oriented toward person-centered services -- is increasing faster than per capita income, Schaller said.

People expect more from churches today than they used to, and that isn't going to change, he said. Churches are spending more to provide staff for specialized ministries, off-street parking, air conditioning and so forth.

The typical church today needs to take in about \$15 per worshiper each Sunday to maintain its ministries, Schaller said. For some churches, the cost is as high as \$30-\$40. But many worshipers still think \$1 or \$5 in the offering plate is enough.

"We haven't done a good job of communicating what the cost of church is," Schaller said. "One of the reasons ... is we're reluctant to talk about it."

Schaller pointed out if churches try to cope with the issue just by educating people about the cost, however, the probable result will be a focus on reducing costs.

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Television evangelists and charitable organizations, meanwhile, will continue competing for their church members' money, Schaller said. "If you don't ask people for occasional extra money, somebody else will."

Posing the question of what people want from their pastors these days, Schaller said in smaller churches, the main thing they want is a pastor who cares for them. As churches become larger, more emphasis begins to be placed on functions such as preaching or administration, he said.

"For a lot of people," Schaller said, "particularly in smaller churches, the No. 1 issue is not, 'Is our minister theologically orthodox, correct?' or 'Is our minister a good preacher?' The No. 1 question is, 'Does our minister love me?'"

Among larger churches, Schaller said, there is a disturbing, growing amount of evidence that what many congregations are looking for in a pastor is "natural entrepreneurial skills and inclinations." In a competitive world, they want a pastor who is a competitor, he said.

Such an entrepreneurial personality tends not to be compatible with spending an extended time in college and seminary, Schaller continued. Roughly two-thirds of senior pastors of megachurches around the country are seminary graduates; the other one-third either didn't attend or attended briefly.

The trend is triggering considerable debate about the role of seminaries in preparing leaders, Schaller noted.

Focusing on the impact of automobiles on churches, Schaller said, "Probably the most common characteristic of churches represented in this room is, your parking lot's too small."

The 71-year-old recalled a time when many families walked to church, and later, when all the members of a family drove to church in one car. Now, he said, it is not unusual for one family to bring three cars. In 1968, 7 percent of teenagers owned automobiles; in 1992, 30 percent did.

Because people can drive a distance more easily, many churches are becoming regional rather than neighborhood churches, Schaller said. Churches no longer can think of their constituency in just a geographical sense, they must seek to reach groups of people based on other commonalities.

Of course, change isn't easy for many people, Schaller said, noting, for example, what some people really want to know is, "How can we build a youth program that is the same as it was when I was a teenager?" The answer, he quipped, is to recruit teens who were born in the 1920s. "What I hear is, 'How do we turn back the clock?' And the answer is, 'Beats me.'"

The March 14-16 conference was jointly sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board; the six Southern Baptist seminaries; the Missouri Baptist Convention and state Baptist bodies in Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska; and associations in the four states.

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**Church offers horse lovers
spiritual hitching post**

By Patrick Johnson

**Baptist Press
3/28/94**

DEMING, N.M. (BP)--Not everything has gone the way of the horse and buggy. In fact, at one local church, the horse and buggy haven't gone anywhere at all.

Madeleine Martinez, one of a small but growing flock at the Son-Shine Baptist Church 10 miles south of Deming, N.M., started the Son-Shine Saddleites -- a little club for those who want to bring back the age-old tradition of riding horses to church.

"Eventually, we want to get a horse and buggy to pick up all the children for Sunday school," Martinez said after Sunday services at the church.

"It's a country church tradition we're bringing back," said pastor Fred Nims. About five churchgoers now make the weekly trek to the Son-Shine services on horseback, Martinez said.

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Nims who became pastor in December 1993 and already has seen its flock grow from five members to more than 20, said the congregation recently built a hitching post out back of the church. A lean-to for tack and saddle as well as a watering trough also will appear soon, he said.

Nims said he hopes the Saddleites will help the congregation grow by attracting more horse lovers to the church.

One recent Sunday two ponies and a mule stood hitched behind the church, waiting patiently in the sun for the service inside to conclude.

Martinez said it takes her a little over an hour to ride from her house on Star Route 1, covering the four-mile trek on the back of her trusty steed, Popcorn.

"When I got him, they said he wasn't trustworthy," Martinez said of Popcorn. "But he's never been anything but nice to me." She demonstrated by having Popcorn "shake her hand" with his hoof.

Travis McGuinn, his sister Jessica, and Jennifer Littleton now also ride to church each Sunday. After sermons they ride around in the desert brush outside the church, chasing each other.

"We think of ourselves as a beacon in the desert," said congregation member Dave Adams. "We have a lot of love and fellowship here."

For the children and other riders the Saddleites is mostly a way to bring back old-timey feelings, when things weren't as rushed and the Sunday horseback rides to church were akin to meditation.

And there are other reasons.

"I don't have to get car sick anymore," said Littleton. "Only saddle sores."

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Reprinted by permission from Deming (N.M.) Headlight. Johnson is a staff reporter at the newspaper.

Interfaith witness groups

target Mormons, Witnesses By Sheri Paris & David Winfrey

Baptist Press

3/28/94

FORT MILL, S.C. (BP)--Two ministries targeting Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses offer Southern Baptists information about those beliefs and how to witness to their members.

The directors of Watching the Watchtower Ministries and Utah Missions, Inc., reported to state Baptist interfaith witness coordinators during their meeting March 19-22. The conference at New Heritage USA was sponsored by the Home Mission Board.

George Kesterson, a Mission Service Corps volunteer with the board, is founder and director of Watching the Watchtower Ministries.

Kesterson spent 21 years as an active Jehovah's Witness before returning to the Christian faith he deserted at age 12. He estimates 2,000 Jehovah's Witnesses have left the cult as a result of his ministry.

Kesterson reached many Witnesses through a toll-free phone line with weekly recorded messages refuting Jehovah's Witness doctrine. The line received 20,000 calls in 12 months before it was disconnected.

"I have a \$6,000 balance on my phone bill, and until that's paid the line cannot be reconnected," he said, adding he has no regrets for going into debt because of the line. "No cost is too great when it comes to sharing Christ. I still trust God to take care of my needs."

Kesterson, who lives in Danville, Va., is developing audio tapes for training other Christians to start their own ministries. He also speaks in churches, writes, conducts a Bible correspondence course and corresponds with interested Jehovah's Witnesses. "Jehovah's Witnesses," he said, "are the people whom God has given me to care for."

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More information about Watching the Watchtower is available at (804) 793-1009. A weekly recording on Jehovah's Witness broadcasts is available at (804) 793-1554.

Mormons are Mike Reynolds' ministry. The 38-year-old director of Utah Missions, Inc. said he began researching Mormon teachings as a teenager because several neighbors were Mormons and were inviting him to their temple.

In August 1991, Reynolds became director of the ministry, which he said is designed to witness to Mormons and "vaccinate" Christians against Mormon teachings. Mormons have grown from about 1.5 million in 1954 to more than 8.5 million today, he said.

UMI also trains Christians to witness to Mormons and is working to prepare Southern Baptists for their 1998 convention in Salt Lake City. "A lot of Southern Baptists do not understand the complexities of Mormonism and may not understand that it is not Christian," he said.

In addition to leading training conferences for churches and other groups, Reynolds said he spoke in more than 50 churches in 20 states last year. He also witnesses daily to about 15-20 Mormons via computerized public forums.

UMI, based in Marlo, Okla., publishes The Evangel, a newspaper about Mormonism. The ministry's telephone number is 1-800-654-3992.

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Refugee church starts
numbered 65 in '93

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
3/28/94

ALBUQUERQUE N.M. (BP)--Refugees in America started 65 Southern Baptist congregations in 1993, said the Home Mission Board's director of refugee and immigration ministries.

Southern Baptists helped resettle 866 refugees in 1993, said Bill Fulkerson, an assistant director for the HMB's language church extension division. That figure is down from recent years, but Fulkerson said the number of refugees coming into America also decreased.

Southern Baptists have been involved in refugee resettlement since 1962, Fulkerson said. Since then, about 25,000 refugees have been resettled, resulting in 563 congregations, he said.

Of the 65 churches or missions started by refugees last year, Haitians accounted for the most congregations of any ethnic group with 20. Cubans and Vietnamese refugees started 11 congregations each, and Russian refugees started 10 congregations.

Awareness of sponsorship opportunities and a lack of sponsors are the two greatest challenges for Southern Baptist resettlement work, Fulkerson said. "Most of our people don't even know we're into refugee work."

More than 40 million people across the world have been uprooted from their homes, and half of those are refugees to other countries, said Elizabeth Farris, director of Church World Service and Witness' immigration and refugee program.

"More and more people are being uprooted by violence," she said, speaking to the HMB's annual Language Missions Leadership Conference. "When individual Christians and churches open their eyes and see the needs, wonderful things happen."

Traditionally, most Southern Baptist sponsor churches have been ethnic churches, but more new sponsoring churches have been Anglo, Fulkerson said.

Sponsoring a refugee costs an estimated \$3,000, which helps a refugee family with housing, furniture, utilities, food and training during the first six months of residence, Fulkerson said. Most churches can cut that cost by about \$1,000 if they can provide in-kind services, he said.

More information about refugee sponsorship is available from state convention offices or the Home Mission Board's refugee resettlement office at (404) 898-7395.

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