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March 31, 1994

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**EDITORS' NOTE:** Please substitute the following story for one with the same headline in (BP), dated 3/30/94.

**2 SBC agency heads sign  
evangelical-Catholic document**

**By Louis Moore**

**Baptist Press  
3/31/94**

**NASHVILLE (BP)**--The two Southern Baptist leaders who signed the historic "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium" say nothing in the document should be misconstrued as diminishing the need for Southern Baptists to share their personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior with others.

Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, and Richard Land, executive director of the SBC Christian Life Commission, both signed the document after playing pivotal roles in critiquing the rough draft to bring it in line with Southern Baptist theology and polity.

The 25-page document, which was released March 29 in New York City, is non-binding on the Southern Baptist Convention. In its introduction, the document says, "This statement cannot speak officially for our communities. It does intend to speak responsibly from our communities and to our communities. In this statement we address what we have discovered both about our unity and about our differences."

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The statement was signed by a group of evangelical and Roman Catholic leaders who met Sept. 28-29, 1992, to lay the groundwork for the document. Negotiations to compose the final document were carried out through the mails during the past 19 months. Spearheading that effort were evangelical leader Chuck Colson of Prison Fellowship and Roman Catholic thinker Richard John Neuhaus of the Institute on Religion and Public Life.

The statement itself was drafted by a committee of Neuhaus, Colson, Kent Hill and George Weigel. Lewis and Land offered six pages of critiques of the first working draft, and most of their concerns were incorporated in the fifth and final draft of the document.

The document calls for reduced conflicts between evangelicals and Catholics and more cooperation on social issues such as abortion, education, pornography, religious liberty and race relations.

"We hope it (the document) will create a climate encouraging more official actions" to bring evangelicals and Catholics together and to better understanding and cooperation at the grass roots, Neuhaus told the New York Times.

Land said the statement reflects the fact that "the relationship (between evangelicals and Roman Catholics) has reached the stage where we can not only talk about points where we agree but we can honestly, openly and dispassionately lay out the areas where we diverge on doctrine and other matters.

"Nothing in this document should be construed as in any way diminishing the task of every Christian to seek to evangelize the entire world with the gospel of Jesus Christ," Land said.

Lewis said, "It was an effort to build bridges between Catholics and evangelicals on those critical issues of our day.

"We do evangelism not proselytizing," Lewis said. "Understand that Southern Baptist witnessing efforts are not directed at proselytizing anyone, but to bringing people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is the responsibility of all Christians. Our evangelistic efforts are not geared toward church membership. We are not wanting people to join a Baptist church but to accept Jesus Christ as Savior."

However, Lewis said, "I feel like evangelicals have a lot more in common today with conservative Catholics than we do with liberal Protestants who deny the cardinal doctrines of our faith like the very deity of Christ and his atoning death and resurrection."

Darrell Robinson, HMB vice president for evangelism, noted, "There is no change in our approach to evangelism or view of Catholics or any other faith. We want to evangelize every person who has not accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, whether they are Baptist, Catholic or have no church affiliation or background. After that decision is made, then God will lead a person to a church."

On the other hand, SBC Foreign Mission Board Executive Vice President Don Kammerdiener said the document "goes overboard." He also said, "I think our evangelical brethren have given up a great deal here."

He reacted specifically to portions of the statement that say evangelical/Catholic relations in places such as Latin America and Eastern Europe are "marked more by conflict than by cooperation, more by animosity than by love, more by suspicion than by trust."

"If this is an attack on witnessing among the Latin American peoples or among the nominally Christian -- but basically secular -- peoples of Western Europe or the United States, I would heartily disagree, said Kammerdiener. "I feel that it misunderstands the nature of the true spiritual condition of these people."

Noting his experience as a missionary in Latin America, Kammerdiener said, "I do not agree that we are 'undermining' each other. I don't see that happening, and I lived a long time in Latin America. The people I have witnessed to ... are not committed Christians. They are nominal folks who don't have any idea of what the gospel is all about. I challenge the idea that this is undermining or is somehow a wasteful use of missions resources. If the intent is to attack mission witness (in such areas), it is a very, very serious mistake."

The joint statement itself specifically urges both groups to avoid "misunderstandings, misrepresentations and caricatures of one another."

The document makes a strong distinction between witnessing about one's faith in Jesus Christ as Savior to another person and "sheep stealing," which is proselytizing members of another Christian group to make one's own numbers larger.

"It is understandable that Christians who bear witness to the gospel try to persuade others that their communities and traditions are more fully in accord with the Gospel," the statement says. "There is a necessary distinction between evangelizing and what is today commonly called proselytizing or 'sheep stealing.' We condemn the practice of recruiting people from another community for purposes of denominational or institutional aggrandizement. At the same time, our commitment to full religious freedom compels us to defend the legal freedom to proselytize even as we call upon Christians to refrain from such activity."

It also says, "It is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community to proselytize among active adherents of another Christian community."

The document affirms the historic Protestant principle of justification by grace through faith because of Christ.

"All who accept Christ as Lord and Savior are brothers and sisters in Christ," the document says. "Evangelicals and Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ. We have not chosen one another, just as we have not chosen Christ. He has chosen us, and he has chosen us to be his together. However imperfect our community with one another, however deep our disagreements with one another, we recognize that there is but one church of Christ. There is one church because there is one Christ and the church is his body."

The document says the group affirms the infallibility of the Scriptures but notes that evangelicals and Roman Catholics differ seriously on the role of tradition and the inspiration of church leaders throughout church history.

"We do not presume to suggest that we can resolve the deep and long standing differences between Evangelicals and Catholics," the document says. "Indeed those differences may never be resolved short of the Kingdom Come."

On social issues, the document says:

-- "We will persist in contending to secure the legal protection of the unborn. Our goals are to secure due process of law for the unborn, to enact the most protective laws and public policies that are politically possible, and to reduce dramatically the incidence of abortion.

-- "We will do all in our power to resist proposals for euthanasia, eugenics, and population control that exploit the vulnerable, corrupt the integrity of medicine, deprave our culture, and betray the moral truths of our constitutional order.

-- "In public education, we contend together for schools that transmit to coming generations our cultural heritage, which is inseparable from the formative influence of religion, especially Judaism and Christianity.

-- "We contend together for a comprehensive policy of parental choice in education. Parents are the primary educators of their children; the state and other institutions should be supportive of their exercise of that responsibility.

-- "We contend together against the widespread pornography in our society, along with the celebration of violence, sexual depravity, and anti-religious bigotry in the entertainment media.

-- "We contend for a renewed spirit of acceptance, understanding, and cooperation across lines of religion, race, ethnicity, sex and class.

-- "We contend for a free society with a vibrant market economy.

-- "We contend for public policies that demonstrate renewed respect for the irreplaceable role of mediating structures in society -- notably the family, churches and myriad voluntary associations.

-- "We contend for a realistic and responsible understanding of America's part in world affairs. Realism and responsibility require that we avoid both the illusions of unlimited power and righteousness, on the one hand, and the timidity and selfishness of isolationism, on the other."

SWBTS trustees send letter  
to SBC pastors, associations

By Herb Holling r

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Trustee officers of Southwest Baptist Seminary have sent a letter to all Southern Baptist pastors and directors of associational missions explaining the trustee position in the firing of President Russell H. Dilday Jr. on March 9.

The four-page letter is co-signed by trustee chairman Ralph W. Pulley Jr. of Dallas; vice chairman Lee Weaver of Fort Worth; and secretary T. Bob Davis of Dallas.

The letter begins by announcing William B. Tolar's appointment as acting president of the seminary and then the rest of letter is the trustee explanation and reasoning for the Dilday dismissal. Tolar is academic vice president and provost of the seminary.

"Due to the inordinate amount of publicity which the recent action by the trustees has generated, we feel it important to speak directly to our Southern Baptist family," the officers said in the letter. There are 38,000-plus churches and 1,200-plus associations cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention, according to 1992 statistics.

The officers asked pastors to share the information in the letter with members of their congregations. After reviewing the SBC constitutional responsibility given to the seminaries, giving boards of trustees full authority in all matters of operation, the letter said SWBTS trustees "had no choice but to require a change in executive leadership."

An offer of early retirement, the letter said, was rejected by Dilday "out of hand with an unwillingness to read the provisions."

"Although a strong attempt had been made during the last five years to work in concert with the president, it was increasingly impossible and an impasse had been reached," the officers said in the letter.

However, the trustees suggested there were some things in the process they might have done differently.

"In retrospect we realize that an overabundance of caution was exercised in limiting access to the president's office, but the action grew out of concern that the president's office could become a focal point for demonstrations which were already occurring on campus. The president's secretary was back in her place in the office by 3 p.m. the same afternoon.

"Contrary to published reports, armed guards were not employed from outside sources," the letter read. "Only campus security personnel were on site.

"We now understand had we better informed our Southern Baptist family about the difficulty we were having, the shock of the dismissal would not have been so great. We apologize for the appearance of abruptness."

The letter goes on to describe "philosophical differences" between the trustees and Dilday.

Cited was the invitation to have R. Keith Parks, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship mission coordinator, speak at the seminary's commencement and which invitation Dilday declined to withdraw.

"It is totally inappropriate to have a representative from a competing organization at such an important event," the officers said in the letter.

Also cited: a "continuing difference of opinion on the kind of training ministers of music for our churches should receive at the seminary." Trustees classed the music curriculum at the seminary as "excellent" but "often out of step" with church music as "revered and sung in most Southern Baptist congregations."

Trustees cited an administrative reorganization plan recommended by Dilday that was "unacceptable to trustees."

The officers said the conflict between the board and Dilday has often been described as "gridlock or log-jam."

"The trustees tried to work cooperatively with (Dilday) but efforts led to frustration and lack of confidence and trust." The officers then listed four areas Dilday was unwilling to cooperate with the board:

1) Repeated criticisms of the denominational leaders, members of the board and others.

2) Failing to adhere to directives of the board (that Dilday) not be involved in the SBC controversy. Trustees feel he is "strongly sympathetic" to the CBF agenda.

3) Saying the "heart" of the controversy in the SBC is a battle over the nature of Scripture, the officers said Dilday used his office to champion "the position from one side of the debate ... as he shifts the emphasis from the nature to the purpose of Scripture."

"Dilday demonstrates a commitment to the principles of higher criticism, which spawned theological liberalism (modernism), neo-orthodoxy, the death of God, situational ethics, etc. From a decidedly biased position, Dr. Dilday is dedicated to berate, misrepresent and assail those who hold the Bible to be God's inerrant, infallible and authoritative Word."

4) The relationship became one of constant confrontation, both individually and collectively.

The officers noted in the letter that students and faculty members have expressed loyalty to the former president.

"We understand their dilemma and think their concern is commendable," the letter read.

News reports that Dilday had received a positive or favorable annual performance review the night before he was fired were labeled "rumor" by the officers, "... simply a misstatement of fact or it is his own interpretation of what happened."

Officers said Dilday was challenged in his actions and attitudes that night as "has been the case for the previous two years."

The officers concluded the letter by saying the purpose and mission of the seminary "is very much intact."

"We are looking to the higher good and long term ministry of the school," the letter reads. "The action of the trustees was based on a desire to look to the future of the seminary's ministry with the SBC and to the vast unreached world."

The officers asked students, faculty and Southern Baptists to "help us move on from this point ..."

"The officers and members of the board of trustees are grateful for all Southern Baptists who have prayed and continue to pray for Dr. Dilday and the trustees. We have confidence that God has a ministry for the seminary which will foster harmony within the convention and bring honor and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ."

Seminary officials said the letters were being mailed beginning March 31. A Fort Worth company printed the letters without charge. Because of the bulk and sorting procedures used, the first class letters are being mailed for 27 cents each, officials said.

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Dilday counters assertions  
in SBC-wide trustee mailing

By Toby Druin

Baptist Press  
3/31/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Russell H. Dilday Jr. said he is "appalled" by "inaccuracies and distortions of truth" in a letter explaining his March 9 firing being sent by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees to Southern Baptist pastors and directors of associational missions.

Apprised of the contents of the letter by the Texas Baptist Standard newsjournal, Dilday responded to each of the points on which the trustees find fault with him.

The idea that the retirement plan offered to him was a "generous offer" is "absolutely false," said Dilday. "It was offered in a confrontational spirit, which I looked at long enough to realize while generous in total it was really a buyout, almost an effort to bribe me to leave, and no matter how generous I could not in good faith accept it."

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Dilday continued, "When they speak of an impass, gridlock, that simply does not represent an accurate description of the actions of the board. They have approved every recommendation I have brought with one or two exceptions, and we have moved forward without slowing the process at all."

Dilday said the only statement the trustees have made on the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship was the one made at the March meeting when instead of speaking directly about the CBF, they affirmed the Cooperative Program. No policy existed about speakers from the CBF for him to violate, he said. Parks had been invited to speak before he joined the CBF staff, and Dilday simply reported it to the trustees at the March meeting, noting the invitation still stood, he said.

As to that having any bearing on his dismissal, Dilday said, the decision to fire him already had been made before the trustee meeting began.

The trustees are on record as saying they do not want to change the current approach and philosophy of the music school, Dilday said, but simply to add different dimensions, and the faculty and administration were "working laboriously and patiently" to meet those expectations. "They have done second mile kind of work to meet board expectations in this area," he said.

The recommendation on combining the vice presidential positions with those of the deanships was a "bold effort to reduce administrative costs by \$200,000 to \$300,000 yearly," said Dilday. "The trustee letter says the plan was unacceptable, but they did not disapprove of it; they deferred action on it. In the committee discussion, they said they liked the idea.

"Not since 1989 when we (he and the trustees) made a covenant not to be involved in what could be construed as denominational politics" has been done so, said Dilday. "I have kept that (agreement) perfectly. I would challenge them to make any suggestion as to how I have violated it, though it is true that early on I was opposed to the takeover."

Dilday said that "not a single time" had he failed to carry out any directives in the minutes of the board.

"And as to my supposed sympathy with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, I am on public record as not endorsing the Fellowship as the way forward in the convention. I have taken no action that would imply anything other than that my total commitment has always been to support the Cooperative Program and the Southern Baptist Convention. That reference in the trustee letter is simply a false statement."

The criticism of his book on biblical authority "is an absolute misreading of my book," Dilday countered. "And as to my 'berating' those who hold to the Bible being inerrant, infallible and authoritative, my total commitment has been and is that the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God without any question whatsoever, and I have held that to be the standard for the seminary, its faculty and curriculum as well."

As to his pre-firing performance appraisal, Dilday said, "Not once in that appraisal on March 8 did they challenge my actions or attitudes. The only challenges were about faculty members about whom others complained.

"In their judgment of the performance of the president," he said, "they used words like, 'You are doing a marvelous job in these areas.'"

He said the minutes of the board last year, signed by T. Bob Davis, say the trustee executive committee unanimously commended the president for his work.

"The only complaint last year was the statement by Damon Shook that I had brought in faculty members who were biblically and theologically conservative but not politically conservative," Dilday said.

"I am just appalled that they would send to pastors and denominational leaders such a distorted, untrue and misrepresentative statement."

**Southwestern trustee changes call for inquiry into firing** By Herb Hollinger

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The executive committee of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary board of trustees offered an explanation and apology for the circumstances surrounding the firing of President Russell H. Dilday Jr. in a statement March 31.

In a related action, trustee Wayne Allen has decided not to call for an investigation of the firing.

Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church in Carrollton, Texas, had called for the SBC Executive Committee to investigate the March 9 dismissal of Dilday. Allen was one of seven trustees who voted against the firing while 26 voted for it.

The executive committee of the board of trustees, in a prepared statement March 31, acknowledged that "several things in the action of the (trustees) should have been done differently or left undone."

"We see now that limiting access to the presidential office suite by changing the door locks was an overabundance of caution. In retrospect, this was unnecessary and should not have been done. Had we to do things over, we would not have done this.

"Nevertheless, it was done from the perspective that appeared to be a recommended course of action. We apologize for any perception that this cast aspersions on anyone's character. That was not the intent.

"Dr. Allen has heard our hearts and accepted that whatever others may think, the action was taken by us as the will of God, as we understand it and not in a hateful attitude."

Referencing the limited public response made by trustees immediately after the firing, the executive committee said it agrees that "more explanation from the beginning would have been helpful and desirable.

"The original intent was to avoid dragging charges through the media. However, the seminary's constituents had a need to know the basic reasons for the dismissal. Again, we apologize for any misconceptions and reactions that arose from earlier statement or lack of statements."

The statement concluded with an appeal for forgiveness "on all sides and offer a hand of reconciliation to everyone."

After meeting with six trustees March 29, all of whom voted for the firing, Allen said he still does not agree with the firing decision or the manner in which it was done. But, he said in a news release, "I do believe that the intent of their heart was sincere and that is of utmost importance to me." The six included the board's three officers.

Allen said "I believe them and accept that apology. These six trustees indicated they intended to make some kind of public apology to thousands of Southern Baptists who had the same impression that I had," Allen said.

Trustee officers also announced March 31 they are sending a personal letter of explanation to every Southern Baptist pastor and director of associational missions.

In not pursuing the request of the SBC Executive Committee, Allen said he did not believe "such would accomplish any lasting good and would only bring greater damage to the seminary, to the SBC and the Kingdom's work."

Allen said it would be his personal desire and conviction for Dilday to remain as president; however, "that does not seem realistic ... ." He asked for Southern Baptists to give the seminary's new leadership an opportunity to build trust and demonstrate a willingness to listen and be open to the ideas of everyone.

Allen also encouraged pastors to continue giving through the Cooperative Program or, if the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship theology is a person's conviction, "then be honest and join their ranks."

"I believe and expect that the leadership of the SBC will move towards genuine healing, not compromising convictions, but being more understanding of others and their conviction."

He asked "fellow pastors" to examine the theology of the CBF and "if their theology is more akin to your own conviction" than join the moderate-backed fellowship.

"If your theology is more akin to the SBC, then continue to support it and expect them to be accountable for their actions," Allen said. "Above all, we must stop the name calling and finger pointing. We must get on with the task of telling a world that the Bible is true and relates to every area of life, that God loves them and that Jesus is the only hope for eternal life."

Allen said he tried for years to bring about healing in the denomination, which is why he allowed his nomination last year for Texas Baptist Convention president.

"I was hopeful, if elected, I would be used to produce unity. However, I was quickly branded as a 'Fundamentalist' who would take over the state. That label, plus the fact I was opposing a very fine and dedicated Christian, resulted in a very sound defeat.

"I accepted that without any ill feelings. When the issue came up at Southwestern and because it was my impression that the method indicated a political and mean-spirited takeover, I was totally devastated. I could not refrain from speaking out and I did. But following the meeting (March 29) I am convinced that this was not the case and therefore can once again begin building a trust in our denomination."

The executive committee of the trustees includes the officers: Ralph Pulley, Jr., chairman, Dallas; Lee Weaver, vice chairman, Fort Worth, Texas; and T. Bob Davis, Dallas, secretary-treasurer.

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Supreme Court hears arguments  
in crucial church-state case

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
3/31/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments March 30 over whether the establishment of a public school district in an incorporated community of religious adherents is a violation of the separation of church and state.

Attorneys on both sides faced constant questioning by the justices in a case involving a public school for disabled children created by the New York Legislature in the village of a separatistic Jewish sect. The lower courts ruled the action promoted religion, thereby breaking the First Amendment's establishment clause.

There was "no government participation in the teaching and propagation" of religious indoctrination, contended Nathan Lewin, attorney for the Board of Education of the Kiryas Joel Village School District. "Accommodation by government to the needs of a religious community is permissible."

Arguing on the same side, New York Assistant Attorney General Julie Meres told the justices the legislature's action was the "alleviation of a burden" created by the disabled children's attendance at the nearest school district. The environment at the school was "so alien that it had a negative effect" and overwhelmed the benefit of the education received, she said.

Members of the Satmar Hasidic Jewish sect practice cultural separation, have special dress and grooming, and speak Yiddish.

The legislature's "transfer of power was not to a religious organization but to the residents" of the community, she argued. "The state acted without promoting religion."

The school district's "boundary lines were drawn to accommodate only those with Satmar Hasidic beliefs," countered Jay Worona, attorney for those opposing the legislature's action. We "believe a political constituency established along religious lines" has been founded.

Approval of such government action will teach children the solution "is to have government separate people," Worona said. Accommodation "is certainly acceptable. This is not."

Some justices, especially Sandra Day O'Connor, seemed to have problems with the use of a special law, rather than a generally applicable one, to solve the problem.

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Some justices, notably Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Associate Justice Antonin Scalia, voiced concerns about Worona's arguments.

He could say the district's boundaries were "drawn by the speaking of Yiddish" rather than by religion, Scalia said. "The state principally was accommodating their customs, weren't they?"

Worona agreed. Later, he said the sect members' lifestyle "can't be divorced" from their religion.

Like O'Connor and Scalia, Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and David Souter also questioned the attorneys frequently.

An aspect not focused on in the oral arguments was the Lemon test, the court's standard in deciding establishment clause cases. The New York Court of Appeals ruled the legislature's establishment of the school district primarily advanced religion, thereby violating the second prong of the Lemon test.

The Lemon test, which was instituted in the 1971 *Lemon v. Kurtzman* opinion, requires a government activity to pass a three-part standard. In order to avoid being a violation of church-state separation, Lemon says an activity must: 1) Have a secular purpose; 2) not primarily advance or inhibit religion; and 3) not foster excessive entanglement with religion.

In its brief, the board of education not only said the lower court decisions misapplied previous court opinions but asked the justices to overturn the Lemon test. The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission filed a friend-of-the-court brief siding with the school district and asking the court to replace Lemon with a more suitable test.

The court's opinion in *Board of Education of Kiryas Joel Village School District v. Grumet* probably will be issued in two to three months.

"Several justices recognized that this case is not about giving tax dollars to promote religion," said Michael Whitehead, the Christian Life Commission's general counsel, after observing the arguments. "It is about using tax dollars to provide appropriate special education services for children with spina bifida or Down's syndrome or other disabilities.

"Critics would use the Lemon test to deny these handicapped children an appropriate school within their municipality, just because the children and their parents are religious. This case is a perfect example of how sour the results of the Lemon test can be," Whitehead said. "The fact that the cultural differences of these citizens was based, in part, on religious tradition should not disqualify these taxpaying citizens from having the same kind of special education school which other municipalities have.

"Lemon turns the First Amendment on its head by fearing the appearance of religious accommodation more than fostering religious liberty."

The CLC's brief calls for the court to replace Lemon with a test providing for accommodation of religious expression without establishing religion. It is the third time in four years the CLC has called for a new test.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, which represents several Baptist groups and conventions but not the Southern Baptist Convention, joined a brief defending the Lemon test and opposing the legislature's action.

Brent Walker, the BJC's general counsel, said in a written statement, "The Lemon test is not hostile to religion. It permits courts and legislatures to accommodate religion in an appropriate case -- to protect religion without establishing it. Carving out a political entity and turning it over to a religious sect is a blatant establishment."

He "took some encouragement from (the silence on Lemon), but that doesn't necessarily mean that Lemon will not be dealt with. ... (T)hat issue is very much in play. ... (T)hat may mean they have already made up their minds," Walker said in a telephone interview after the arguments.

"I think it's going to be a close vote. I think it could very well be 5-4 one way or the other based on what I heard in the courtroom."

David Sapterstein, director of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism, said if "this school district is allowed to prevail, then every religious group that is a minority in any particular school district -- Catholic, Methodist, Hindu or anything else -- will demand their own school district. That is the end of the public school system as we know it in America."

In a written statement, Steven McFarland of the Christian Legal Society said, "The First Amendment doesn't prohibit legislatures from leveling the playing field for religious citizens; it doesn't grant nonbelievers a monopoly on government aid or legislative representation."

In addition to the CLC and CLS, other groups filing briefs siding with the school district include The Rutherford Institute, American Center for Law and Justice, National Association of Evangelicals, Family Research Council, United States Catholic Conference, Knights of Columbus and Agudath Israel.

Organizations joining the BJC in opposing the school district's establishment were the National Council of Churches, Presbyterian Church (USA), Americans United for Separation of Church and State, American Civil Liberties Union, People for the American Way, National School Boards Association and American Jewish Congress.

The village, which is in Orange County, New York, consists of about 10,000 Satmar Hasidic Jews. It became a municipality in 1977. It has separate private schools for non-disabled boys and girls. Federal and state laws, however, require public schools to provide an education for disabled children.

The public school's students are all Hasidic Jews with impairments. The seven-member school board contains all Hasidic Jews, but the superintendent is not Hasidic. The teachers, who live outside the Hasidic village, are from diverse religions and teach only secular subjects.

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Midwest residents hoping  
for flood of volunteers

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
3/31/94

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptists in the Midwest are hoping for another flood this year -- a flood of volunteers.

"We hope to have 200 volunteers a week now through September," said Ray Gilliland, Home Mission Board disaster relief coordinator.

Flooded rivers in Missouri, Iowa and Illinois in nearly 140 communities last year caused millions of dollars of damage. Some homes were totally destroyed, but others need extensive repairs, Gilliland said.

"We still have a number of displaced persons. Some of them have been out there seven or eight months," said John Farris, volunteer coordinator for Missouri Baptists.

Most of the cleanup has been done, but volunteers are needed to rebuild houses, from tearing out walls and replacing sheetrock to replacing floors, Farris said.

Residents in the flooded areas are "living in a state of panic. There's an awful lot of stress right now," said Mary Ellen Sanders who lives in St. Charles County, Mo. Farris added domestic violence has increased in areas affected by the flood.

Some people are living in "sub-human" conditions, but they do not ask for more help because they feel like they have been given too much already, Sanders said.

In addition to displaced families, several churches are relocating, Farris said. Sanders' husband, Jim, is pastor of Orchard Farm Baptist Church. It is relocating because all the homes in the community were destroyed in the flood.

Volunteers skilled in hanging sheetrock, framing, plumbing, painting and making electrical repairs are needed, but all volunteers do not have to be skilled. Gilliland recommends groups have at least one skilled person for every three or four volunteers.

Volunteers must furnish their transportation and meals, but housing is usually provided. Construction supplies are provided, but volunteers should bring their own tools.

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Gilliland works with the staffs of state conventions and associations to assign volunteers where they are most needed.

For information on being a volunteer, call the HMB at 1-800-4SBC-AID.

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Volunteers needed in Orlando  
for WMU mission projects

By Susan Doyle

Baptist Press  
3/31/94

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union is looking for volunteers interested in participating in mission projects June 6-10 in Orlando, Fla.

The projects precede the WMU annual meeting, which will be held at First Baptist Church in Orlando, June 12-13.

While the mission projects are scheduled for Monday through Friday, any amount of time volunteers can contribute will be appreciated, said Pat Ferguson, mission project coordinator for WMU.

WMU mission project volunteers will work with US2 missionaries assigned to the Orlando area by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. The US2 missionaries work in resort ministries and church starting/evangelism.

Volunteers are needed for the following assignments:

-- mingle with crowds after puppet shows by US2 missionaries in malls, campgrounds and hotels;

-- help US2 missionaries host "Parent's Night Out" activities for children in area hotels;

-- stay in area campgrounds and help US2 missionaries build relationships with other campers; and

-- lead backyard Bible clubs and Big A Clubs for children living in apartment complexes.

"Basically, we need volunteers who can be available to do anything to help the US2 missionaries in the programs they already have established," Ferguson said. "If you just enjoy talking to people, we can find a job for you."

Volunteers will receive assignments in advance and will be told what supplies to bring.

For information about the projects, call (205) 991-4083 or write Pat Ferguson, WMU, P.O. Box 830010, Birmingham, AL 35283-0010.

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Conference focus on when,  
not if, AIDS hits home

Baptist Press  
3/31/94

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--It is not a question of if, but when your church will be touched by AIDS, said Eric Raddatz, executive director of the Baptist AIDS Partnership of North Carolina as he opened the second annual AIDS Conference sponsored by the ministry and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., March 28.

The conference was designed to "put a face on AIDS" and to alert the body of Christ that its task is enormous, Raddatz said.

"In our state of North Carolina, there are thousands of HIV positive individuals, walking and living in our communities. We must learn how to bring the message of salvation in Jesus Christ while holding the hands of those dying with AIDS."

Christian Life Commission Executive Director Richard Land said AIDS is not a uniquely American phenomenon, rather it has "reached epidemic proportions in some parts of the Third World. Outside the United States, AIDS is almost exclusively spread through heterosexual activity and drug use.

"The only ethical issue for those of us reaching out to people with AIDS is whether we will be Christlike or whether we will deny someone (ministry) because of his lifestyle," Land said, adding Jesus never denied anyone ministry because of lifestyle.

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"I have no doubt that if Jesus Christ were walking the earth today incarnate, he would be ministering to people with AIDS," Land said. "No matter how people acquire AIDS, Jesus Christ loves them, Jesus Christ hurts for them and Jesus Christ died for them."

Land said churches must prepare themselves for ministry to AIDS patients by developing AIDS ministry teams and helping families in caring for an AIDS patient.

Rebecca Meriwether, deputy chief of the communicable disease section of the North Carolina Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources, said she believes the church may have been slow to act because of the fears surrounding AIDS and because of the primary community victimized by AIDS.

"I think there is the need to understand the incredible human tragedy that AIDS represents, the need for the ministry that these people have," Meriwether said.

Meriwether explained that HIV is transferred in three ways: The first is by sex, which can be homosexual or heterosexual and anal, vaginal or oral; the second is by injecting infected blood into one's body, by infected blood coming into contact with an open cut or by blood coming into contact with a mucous membrane; the third is from mother to child in the womb or during birth.

The virus attacks humans when its genetic material enters the body and copies itself as our main genetic material, DNA, Meriwether said. Then HIV inserts itself into the chromosomes of white blood cells.

"HIV hides inside cells where antibodies can't reach it," Meriwether said.

"It's actually gotten into the very nature of our being, of our genetic material.

"My personal view is that we may never find a cure for this disease," she added.

"I think most people, being realistic, say that (a cure) is a very, very long way off, save some sort of miraculous insight."

The number of people in the United States who have AIDS is estimated to be between 800,000 and 1.5 million, Meriwether said. Because the estimate has not wavered in recent years, some people mistakenly believe the AIDS epidemic is leveling off. In reality, the numbers are stagnant because people die and others become infected.

What does all this mean to the minister? First, fears should not be a hindrance, Meriwether said.

"In a usual ministry situation, the chances of getting infected are practically none."

Secondly, AIDS is tragic, and the need for ministry becomes greater with every person who learns he or she has HIV.

"AIDS doesn't care whether you're a Christian or not," said Shirley, whose husband died from the disease March 5. Shirley was part of a five-person panel discussion at the AIDS conference.

Devery, a 34-year-old father of two, spoke to the conference via videotape, too ill to attend: "I just got out of the hospital Thursday. It seems like I'm in there every month."

In order to escape AIDS, Devery tried to commit suicide nine times before coming to Christ.

Devery's mother, a nurse who works with AIDS patients, said there's a lot of stress involved in caring for people like her son.

"The disease is in his body, but I carry it every day, too. Watching my son go from a young man full of energy to a tall, thin, very frail young man is very hard," she said. "I have spent a lot of time crying over it and praying over it."

Bill, who carries the HIV virus but whose life hasn't been disrupted by illness, said: "You hate to go to the doctor because the T-cell numbers (are discussed). You hate taking medicine. Often, you hate panel discussions (such as this) because you're reminded of it."

Tony Bishop, director of Olive Branch Ministries in Raleigh, N.C., said there is only one way out of the homosexual lifestyle and that is a relationship with Jesus Christ. Bishop, a repentant homosexual, and his wife, Louise, minister to homosexuals through support groups, counseling, prayer and referrals.

"One of the things that helped me as I was struggling to come out of the homosexual lifestyle was the renewing of my mind," Bishop said. "I asked God to fill my mind with the truth and to help me think as he thought."

Another key to helping homosexuals is to deal with what caused their behavior, Bishop said. He said several factors that can lead to homosexual behavior are sexual abuse; disconnected relationships; a lack of unconditional love; a strong need to belong; a need for intimacy with members of the same sex; escapism from bad situations and rebellion.

Bishop suggested six ways Christians can help homosexuals:

- See the person. Do not focus only on his or her homosexuality; rather, realize that the real problem is lostness.
- Remember that the gospel means good news. Christians offer an answer, a Savior who wants a relationship.
- Actively love the person. Do not be afraid to say, "I love you," or to touch him/her. Pray with him/her and share your own life struggles.
- Avoid making homosexuality the focus of your discussions; realize the problem is sin.
- Care enough to confront the person if he/she is actively participating in a sinful lifestyle.
- Know how to refer the person to whatever resources are available to help.

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Chele Caughron, Dwayne Hastings, Sheri Paris, Lori M. Smith and Jon Walker contributed to this report.

Prof urges church to face  
AIDS patients' inner needs

By Dwayne Hastings

Baptist Press  
3/31/94

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--The church must heed the call to wake up and recognize the deep emotional and spiritual needs of those who bear HIV within their bodies, said Paul Carlisle, professor of counseling at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Will the church get on this one before it's too late?" Carlisle said, noting that the organized church normally recognizes a ministry need 12 years "after it has gone past."

Carlisle was speaking as part of the second annual AIDS Conference sponsored by the Baptist AIDS Partnership of North Carolina and the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary March 28.

A call to minister to persons with AIDS is a "call to compassion," Carlisle said.

"Can you imagine being told you've got AIDS and there is no cure?" Carlisle asked. "One hundred percent of the people who have it are going to die. You're not going to fix it. These individuals need your presence."

Ministering to the psychological and emotional dimensions of those afflicted with AIDS requires that we admit we come to the issue with our own presuppositions and prejudices, Carlisle noted. We are adept at "perceptual gymnastics" in justifying our attitudes and behaviors.

"There is no active Christian pastoral care you can give if you are all the time putting 'band-aids' on yourself," Carlisle said.

If the church is going to help people with AIDS, "we are going to have to get up and go to them. There is no such thing as drive-through encouraging where we can tell people, 'Come on by and I'll pat you on the back,'" Carlisle said.

Being HIV-infected drives some from God, yet many are pushed "toward a dependence on God," Carlisle said. It is at that point Christians have an opportunity to let those bound up in fear and loneliness know that they are accepted by God.

"You can't beat forgiveness," exclaimed Carlisle.

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We are wrong to suggest to those afflicted with HIV that God is "some kind of Monty Hall" or to say to them, "If you'd just pray more, everything will be all right," Carlisle said.

"Pain is normal here. Confusion is normal here. Loss is normal here. But our hope is not here," Carlisle said. As much as we might want to believe otherwise, "God's presence does not prevent discouragement."

Christians are uniquely qualified to "encourage in love and to comfort all the way through" from the initial decision to be tested to caring for someone who is terminally ill, said Carlisle. "Your presence is significant."

The person who fears he may be infected needs support as he ponders "the whole idea of 'am I or am I not?'" Carlisle said he encourages anyone at this stage to be tested because "knowing gives a sense of control" to the individual.

"Loss is central to the AIDS issue," Carlisle said. Facing a loss of life, relationships, health and dreams as well as a sudden loss of control nearly drowns the person in fear and anxiety. Carlisle suggested "anticipatory counseling" to prepare patients for the results of HIV testing because "anticipatory grief is significant."

Carlisle said people are used to grieving over the death of older persons but "it is different when grieving and working with people who are in the upper teens, children and young adults."

Someone with AIDS will run through multiple grief cycles, and unless a person is ministering to them in God's strength, their fears and anguish will be overwhelming, said Carlisle.

"Resting in God's sovereignty is the answer for anyone who has AIDS," Carlisle said, offering the type of prayer he would pray if he had AIDS: "God, you know what has happened, what is happening, and I'm going to trust you with it."

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Hastings is a student at Southeastern.

**U.S. ban on missionaries  
in Lebanon goes to 8th year**

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press  
3/31/94

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Missionaries will be denied the right to live and work in Lebanon for at least another six months.

A U.S. State Department undersecretary, Thomas Donilon, has informed Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin that a travel ban on Americans in Lebanon was extended into its eighth year on Feb. 24.

In a letter to Rankin, Donilon noted that groups in the past who targeted and kidnapped Americans still operate in the country. But he did offer a glimmer of hope for the future.

The travel ban, which has come up for review annually since it was imposed in 1987, will now be reviewed twice a year. That change results from an order by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, according to Donilon, assistant secretary for public affairs.

Donilon's comments came in reply to a letter from Rankin asking that the ban be lifted -- at least for those who want to perform religious, charitable or humanitarian services. Rankin cited the improved situation in Lebanon and the pressing needs of the Lebanese people.

"Lebanon has taken significant strides towards re-establishing stability," Donilon acknowledged in his letter. "The United States has actively supported the government of Lebanon in its efforts to reconstruct the country after years of civil war."

Despite those gains, he concluded, "Lebanon unfortunately remains a dangerous place for Americans. I know you will agree that the safety of Americans should remain the paramount concern of the United States government."

One State Department official quoted in mid-February pointed to a recent car bombing and the assassination of a diplomat in the shattered Lebanese capital of Beirut as indicators that security problems still persist.

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The original travel ban came as murders, kidnappings, bombings and plane hijackings had become commonplace, posing a greater threat to the lives of Americans than the State Department was willing to allow. All Americans -- including 22 Foreign Mission Board missionaries -- were told to leave Lebanon as a result.

Several Foreign Mission Board representatives forced from their ministries at the time said they felt it was their right to decide how much danger they should risk. Some sought special exceptions, but to no avail.

Missionaries continue to serve in a support role to Lebanese Baptists from a base in Cyprus, a Greek- and Turkish-occupied island about eight hours by boat off the coast of Lebanon. Lebanese Baptist ministries include a convention of churches throughout the country, a school, publications center and theological seminary in Beirut.

Until they left in 1987, Foreign Mission Board missionaries had maintained a presence in the country since 1948.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Foreign Mission Board writer Martha Skelton wrote the following stories after visiting Germany, now struggling with the realities of reunification after the initial euphoria of the Berlin Wall's fall.

Germany reunited: difficult  
marriage follows happy wedding

By Martha Skelton

Baptist Press  
3/31/94

WEIMAR, Germany (BP)--Imagine going to bed one night and waking up the next day in the same house, the same city -- but in a different country.

For former East Germans, this was no dream. It happened in 1990 with the reunification of Germany. Everything was the same; nothing was the same.

Nor were they the only ones affected. West Germans suddenly faced the economic responsibility for a united Germany. The costs of bringing the east to parity with the rest of the country have triggered higher taxes, reductions in job benefits and security, and a rise in tensions among Germans, foreign refugees and a small but vocal neo-Nazi movement.

For all Germans, these are challenging and complex times.

"It's similar to 1933, Hitler's time," says Eric Shrader. "If there was work and things to do, most wouldn't pay any attention (to neo-Nazis)."

Shrader, a Christian layman, is liaison with the human resources department of Weimar, a city in eastern Germany. He works with organizations and churches, like the Baptist church in Weimar, to meet the needs of the city's 20,000 children and young people -- a third of the population.

Weimar's situation typifies many cities in the east. Under communism, young people had many clubs, trips and activities. With East Germany's fall, that stopped. Children were left standing in the streets with nothing to do.

At age 16, youths not bound for college are apprenticed to different jobs. But many companies have failed, and there aren't enough jobs to go around.

Neo-Nazis often influence idle young people. "They have no hope for the future and someone offered an alternative," explains Shrader.

Christians try to offer another alternative. But they too feel the repercussions of German reunification -- as do mission groups sharing the gospel in this land. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has 42 missionaries assigned to work in Germany, and Georgia Baptists recently extended to 1995 a partnership with the reunified German Baptist Union.

Baptists in Germany were unified before the national partition following World War II, and ongoing contacts made the Baptist union's own reunification take place more quickly than many had expected. East and West German Baptists officially reunited in 1991.

But reality has tempered the euphoria of national reunification and the Baptists' similar move.

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It's the difference between a wedding and a marriage, explains Hans Guderian, church growth director for the Baptist Union's Home Missions Office. Emotion and celebration have settled down for the long haul.

"If a couple in love had to live separately 40 years (th n) come together, they would cry, then recognize they developed a bit separately," he says.

Before reunification, West German Baptists had 72,000 members in 600 churches; East Germans, 18,000 members in 300 churches. (The East German union included Brethren and Pentecostals who withdrew when no longer forced by the government to be in an umbrella group.) The unified Baptist group now has 87,000 members in 593 churches and 315 missions/preaching points.

The changing economic situation affects many churches and pastors in the east. East Germany had many small churches that could maintain a pastor when he also received government-subsidized housing, medical care and other coverage. Unified Germany offers some similar benefits, but the cost of housing, food and transportation has skyrocketed for eastern pastors. Small churches must grow or merge to support a pastor or depend on lay leadership.

Ironically, the successful reclamation of Baptist properties confiscated by the communists in the east -- and valued in millions of German marks -- will generate income for Baptist missions-educational projects.

The first such effort will locate a Bible school in Berlin, consolidating it with Baptists' theological seminary, youth seminary, lay training institute and a future seminary for Christian social and charitable workers. Baptists hope to buy part of the 1936 Berlin Olympic village for the project. The total estimated cost of the plan: \$22 million.

"It would be the largest Baptist complex in Europe," Guderian says. "It will bring us more together, because East Germans will see we invest something in their part of our country."

There's plenty of work for churches all over Germany. A year-long focus on evangelism by the union begins in May 1995. Baptists plan everything from personal evangelism to big events for all ages.

Their 10-year goal: 2,000 new churches in places where there's little or no evangelical witness.

German Baptist researchers have found 1,980 towns of 5,000 people or more with no Baptist church; 1,630 towns have either no church or only a state-supported church. Baptists also have identified cities of 100,000 people or more where they hope to start additional churches until there is at least one congregation for every 10,000 people.

Germany is a very secular society, but people are more "open" to religion now than in other times.

"They're asking about the meaning of life, about the future, about hope," says Wilfried Bohlen, German Baptists' director for pioneer missions. "But they don't ask the Christian church. They look to the sects, esoteric New Age movements."

East German Christians have experience working in an overwhelmingly secular society. Their contributions should be utilized, says Hans Guenter Sachse, former home missions director for East German Baptists. Sachse now works as a discipleship/evangelism consultant for the overall union.

For some in the east, both among the general population and Baptists, reunification has meant being absorbed into -- and overshadowed -- by the predominant west.

West German society has always identified with the Western world, Guderian agrees. Even the Hitler years have become connected in the minds of many with East Germany only.

"West Germany has nothing to do with Hitler -- only Berlin. That's the image many people have," explains Guderian. "We must come together ... share the burdens, share the responsibilities."

European Baptist General Secretary Karl-Heinz Walter sees Germany as a microcosm of what's happening all over Europe. The west moved quickly to do what was necessary, but not sensitively enough, he believes. Now the west needs to be sensitive to the east's identity, experiences and perspective.

One East German Baptist told Walter, "We want to be one country. Nobody was against that. But today there's a feeling that the west has taken over without paying any respect to (the east's) history. For those born in the east, this was 40 years of their life and they say, 'Is this meaningless?'"

Still, encouraging signs are appearing that younger generations of German Baptists are open to the new, unified life of their country and churches.

Siegfried Holtz, a former East German youth leader, now heads children's Sunday school for German Baptists' youth department. When he was hired, "they didn't look for someone from the east," he says, "(but) for someone to do this job." The east-west identity is fading. When Holtz's family moved from East Berlin to Hamburg they didn't think of it as moving west; they moved north.

Nor should the west be surprised that East Germans, especially Christians, have not welcomed the secular onslaught resulting from the fall of the Wall.

"A society was put on top of us that was called Christian, a western-American one. We were shocked to see that most of what came here had little to do with faith," says Ulrike Holitschke of Weimar. "It was a market society selling Christianity."

Ulrike and her husband, Marco, faced years of difficulty for their faith. He was an honor student but denied the chance to study medicine in former East Germany because of his open Christian faith. Many such stories exist.

"Every Christian knew when he decided to go with Jesus Christ that he wouldn't be allowed to make a career or be able to do what he was capable of," Holitschke says. "But Christ is more important to me."

For years, their Weimar congregation consisted of 11 determined and dedicated people. They knew a very different day had dawned when the German Baptist Union asked if they wanted an American missionary to work with them.

Southern Baptist missionary Rick Dill, who had worked for years in West Germany, visited the church. He and his wife, Nancy, felt called to the east. After his visit, the Weimar group got together in a small room and prayed. "We prayed about help to make the church grow," one member says. "There was no thought of a pastor; we barely were able to pay rent on a building."

The church accepted the Dills -- and has had good growth since. Its goal to reach people for Christ hasn't changed. The "how" has changed drastically.

Holitschke was fascinated by Georgia Baptist collegians who came to Weimar from America to do English-language camps and work with young people.

"In (East German) times, a youth meeting was a sermon," he says. "Young people don't respond to that. It's wonderful to see something different."

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

Communist model city  
enters 'post-atheist' era

By Martha Skelton

Baptist Press  
3/31/94

EISENHUTTENSTADT, Germany (BP)--When the new city of Eisenhüttenstadt in East Germany was founded in the early 1950s, the country's communist leaders proclaimed that industrial smokestacks would define its skyline.

And no church spires would ever pierce its sky.

Four decades later, the communists are gone, but small groups of Christian believers remain. Yet their ministry has never been more challenging.

In this industrial city of 51,000 people, insecurity, disillusionment, exhilaration and other conflicting emotions overwhelm many. As a model city of the East German years, Eisenhüttenstadt attracted many dedicated communists. For them, it wasn't only a wall or government that fell; it was their way of life, their sense of superior ideology, their belief in all the things they had been told.

"(East Germans) have been hurt," explains Southern Baptist missionary Joey Tomlin. "They've lived under the two worst dictators of modern history: Stalin and Hitler."

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But that isn't the whole story. Dedicated Christians also live in this city. A Baptist church that struggled through the communist years has new co-workers. Tomlin and his wife, Teresa, of Statville and Lincolnton, N.C., respectively, work with the church in evangelism and starting new ministries in this part of Germany. Their strategy: build trust and a network of relationships.

The Tomlins arrived in the country to start language study in December 1990, right after the Berlin Wall fell. In 1991, during talks with other missionaries and German Baptists, they saw the door open to work where missionaries could never go before.

"We found we could go east and be in Germany at the same time," Tomlin says.

The Tomlins' arrival coincided with the church's first opportunity ever to start whatever outreach efforts they wanted.

Among the things they've done since August 1992:

-- They introduced an "evangelism information weekend" with a special speaker.

The 35-member church decided that an outright revival or tent meeting might work in other parts of Germany, but not in Eisenhuettenstadt. "People here wouldn't come to a 'religious' meeting, especially if you say you 'have the answer,'" Tomlin says. "Communism said that."

So people invited by members were able to hear about Christianity, then ask their own questions. Members pray the contacts made will bear fruit later.

-- Tomlin teaches evening English classes at the equivalent of a community college. The school got his name from a newspaper article about him. His students include not only college students but local business and professional people looking to improve their English.

Some class members also have joined a German-language introductory Bible study in the Tomlin home. Several are teachers. In fact, teachers and other educated people are more open to the gospel than others. Many adults in other walks of life are set in their ways and preoccupied with day-to-day living.

-- Mrs. Tomlin has focused on reaching out to other young mothers in a society that for decades has downgraded parenting. The Tomlins have a daughter, Ahnabeth, 5.

-- Through German Baptists' partnership with Georgia Baptists, several events designed to meet the needs of young people have been held.

A group of university students from Georgia came in June 1993 to lead "English camps" at a local school. During the day they taught English, performed skits and engaged German students in conversation. At night the church provided a place for student gatherings featuring music and skits. It attracted 70 unchurched teen-agers. The same month, a student gospel choir gave a concert in Eisenhuettenstadt as part of the partnership. About 600 people attended.

-- Mrs. Tomlin and volunteers from the church held a Vacation Bible School last summer at an apartment complex. It was a new concept to church members -- and apartment residents. Ahnabeth Tomlin and her mother dressed up like clowns and gave out 400 invitations to attend. They taught at least 100 children each day.

None of the activities has resulted in instant "success," Tomlin says. The reason: In Germany, people don't respond immediately to the gospel, he explains. After months or a year of coming to religious activities, they may start asking serious questions. After more time passes, they will make a thoughtful, deliberate choice. When they commit to Christ, they are faithful.

The Tomlins' busy first year didn't pass without struggle.

The city seemed gray and uninviting when they arrived. One of the church members showing them around told them Eisenhuettenstadt wasn't known as a friendly city.

"That was like lighting a fire in me," Tomlin says. He has been interested in dealing as a Christian with the claims of atheism since high school. His best friend was an atheist.

With the rampant reports about industrial pollution of the region's air and water, they also had to lay to rest their fears about hazards to which they were exposing their daughter.

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They also witnessed the resurgence of neo-Nazi hatred troubling Germany. Because of the city's location near the Polish border, it had a refugee facility. Many nights during their first months there, "we heard bottle bombs exploding, saw young people gathering with bats. There were blue lights, sirens, buses with police escorts bringing refugees in."

The tense situation abated in spring 1993 with passage of a new German law that made immigration more difficult and cut down considerably on the number of refugees in town.

The overall reality of the east has been more difficult than they expected.

"Atheism is a vacuum," Tomlin says, and it is God-shaped. In Western Europe, people often speak of the post-Christian era. In the east, they are struggling with post-atheistic society.

At such a time and place, the missionary says, "We are looking for new ways of telling the old, old story."

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(BP) photos (one horizontal, one vertical) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outlines available on SBCNet Newsroom.

**Missionaries minister  
to Germany's 'heart'**

By Martha Skelton

Baptist Press  
3/31/94

WEIMAR, Germany (BP)--In the cultural heart of Germany, a group of dedicated Christians is ministering with a heart for God. Weimar, a city of 65,000 people in what used to be East Germany, isn't one of unified Germany's larger cities. But it's called the country's cultural heart and has been selected by the European Community to be the cultural city of the year for Europe in 1999.

Giants of literature like Goethe and Schiller lived and worked here, as did musical titans Bach and Liszt. It's also the founding city of Bauhaus architecture.

Southern Baptist missionaries Rick and Nancy Dill of Jasper and Oneonta, Ala., respectively, and their daughters, Melinda, 15, and Laura, 13, now live in Weimar. They work with a Baptist church that has grown in just over a year from an attendance of 11 people to more than 100.

The Dills believe a divine sense of timing brought them and the tiny church together. The church needed the encouragement and sense of direction that a pastor could bring as new opportunities to share the gospel were opening. The Dills, who had worked for a decade in West Germany, were seeking a new avenue of service.

Not that the transition was easy.

Finding a place to live took almost six months. Weimar is a beautiful city, but it had the deteriorated look of the rest of the East in 1992. Restored buildings stand beside crumbling structures with outmoded plumbing and heating.

"It's difficult to describe," Dill says. "There was World War I, the Depression, World War II and 50 years of communism. Nothing had been done."

Working with the core church group in Weimar, they discovered a number of house groups meeting to pray and study the Bible together, led by laymen who at some point had become Christians. Some of them began responding to the Baptist group's worship and outreach efforts.

The church has evolved into a lively congregation with informal (by German standards) worship services, a daytime ministry to children and budding Sunday school and youth programs. It balances older, more mature believers and younger, enthusiastic singles and families with small children.

"In our church we have music professors, architects, an archaeologist, government workers and teachers," Dill reports.

Worship is planned with the understanding that non-churchgoers will come. The services are "not organized to death and poured in concrete," explains Dill, who seldom wears a coat. "Germans who come out of this society that knows nothing (about going to church) won't know to wear a suit. Everybody feels uncomfortable if they're underdressed."

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In the first year with its new pastor, the Weimar church undertook a number of initiatives:

-- "Special guest" Sundays were introduced, with printed invitations members could give to family and friends.

-- A partnership missions team from Statesboro, Ga., helped put on a production of the Christian musical "Celebrate Life!" out of which a ministry to teenagers grew. The church rented the second-largest hall in Weimar for the performance; 600 guests filled the seats and 200 more stood.

"I can't believe the Baptist church did this," one member said.

-- Mrs. Dill started English classes. "Many wanted to learn English and hadn't been given a chance," she said. More than 50 people, both Christians and non-Christians, now participate in three classes.

-- Rosie Manke, a German Baptist trained in children's work, moved from Wiesbaden to Weimar to lead a weekday program for about 200 kids. Church members assist her in rooms the church has rented in a rough neighborhood. Manke lives and works there.

The Weimar church now faces the challenge of helping new believers mature while continuing outreach efforts. Strong teaching is a major need, according to the missionaries.

"It's incredibly important (that) we are a group that knows what it believes and is not ashamed to say what it believes," Dill says. "We must take the time to deepen our own roots or we will fly apart."

Church members look ahead with optimism. They're already crowding the walls of their newest meeting space. They've started a building savings account, even though the economy has hit hard at their members' budgets.

"We're petitioning the city for a plot of land without an inkling of being able to pay for it," Dill admits. Why?

"God has worked other miracles."

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

Colson: America becoming  
post-Christian culture

By Shawn Switzer

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"Biblical ignorance today is preposterous," Charles Colson told a national TV audience and a crowded studio audience.

The former Watergate conspirator, a highly regarded Christian author and speaker, made the statement during a televised town hall meeting March 25 broadcast live on ACTS and FamilyNet, the Southern Baptist Convention Radio and Television Commission's cable and broadcast TV services.

Colson said a recent poll revealed that less than half the Christians surveyed knew the meaning of John 3:16, only nine percent knew about the Great Commission and only 40 percent knew who taught the Sermon on the Mount.

"Too many people attend church on Sunday morning and listen to a sermon to coax them through another week, and claim that is Christianity," Colson said. "It's not. As a result, Christians have not impacted our culture."

Colson said over the past 30 years Americans have gone through a cultural revolution that has squelched the fundamental Christian values expressed by their forefathers. "Americans no longer share the basic assumption that Christianity is truth," he said.

In addition to the rise in divorce rates, Colson said key indicators of what has happened to the moral heart of America are soaring crime rates and the nature of crimes acted out without conscience.

"When I went to Buckingham Palace to receive the Templeton Prize, Prince Philip asked me what to do about the rise of crime in England," Colson said. "I told him to get children into Sunday school. Studies done recently showed that the crime rate in Britain was at its lowest during the same time Sunday school attendance was on a rise. And vice versa.

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"America's founding fathers believed government could not create virtue, but it could restrain sin. They realized that the family, church and community would produce elements of virtue within society," he said. "Nowadays, our government has become more powerful and values have changed among our cultural leaders. So what you have is the inability of our society to produce virtue from within and the only way to survive is for power to be exercised from the top."

Colson attributed the decline in the American way of thinking to the 1960s when people began to make their own rules.

"The product of the '60s today is a belief that truth is anything you want it to be," he said. "Sixty-five percent of the American people say there is no such thing as absolute truth. Seventy percent say there are no moral absolutes."

"The church is not aware of how quickly we have lost the culture of biblical truth. Christians must get away from going to church Sunday morning to listen to a sermon that makes us feel warm and fuzzy," he said. "If the body of Christ doesn't become proactive, we will never change our culture for Christ."

Colson said the primary purpose of the church is to fulfill the Great Commission. "The Christian life cannot be confined within the church. The only way the Great Commission can be fulfilled is if we make disciples, baptize them in Christ's name and teach them all Christ has taught to us. Then we can send new disciples into the world to infiltrate America's neighborhoods."

Colson said Christians should go to church to be equipped by the body of believers through fellowship and worship. He observed that the church has strayed from the principle of the priesthood of believers.

"The priesthood of believers holds that everyone in the church is to be a minister of the gospel," he said. Not just the pastor.

"Evidence of the coming kingdom is the community of reborn believers who love, support and minister to one another. If we do these things the world will see a difference in Christians when it seeks us out."

Colson said lay leaders put unnecessary pressure on the pastor to increase church growth.

"If a church is out for recruitment, it sometimes will shortchange repentance," he said. "The job of the church isn't to grow in numbers, but to grow in holiness and in depth of commitment to Christ. When we push our pastors to preach sermons that produce church growth, we are doing them a great disservice. He is to equip you for combat against

forces of evil. Christians should take their training every bit as seriously as a Marine preparing for combat.

"What we are witnessing in America is a breakdown of conscience," Colson said. "America has a generation of kids who have never been taught right from wrong. Since the 1960s, there has been a 560 percent increase in violent crime in America. Our children must be taught values at home."

Colson said the loss of virtue in America's culture has consequences, and that he knows first hand about consequences associated with a lack of virtue.

"I have traveled to 600 prisons in 35 countries around the world," he said. "I've witnessed the steady change in the kind of people admitted into prisons. There is evidence of less and less training in what is right and wrong and less conscience on the part of the offender."

When truth has been abolished and when instruments of virtue aren't cultivated, Colson said, senseless acts of crime such as the increase in the numbers of drive-by shootings and the rise of gang activity reflect the breakdown of conscience in our society.

He said this pattern starts in the family and filters through the church, and that a recent poll showed that almost half of parents surveyed say they are spending less time with their children than their parents spent with them.

"Children aren't being taught godly values in school," he said. "Students aren't allowed to pray in school any longer. They are being taught how to use condoms when they are 8 years old."

Colson said what is being bred is a post-Christian culture, a generation without conscience.

"This is scary to me," he said. "If we lose a whole generation, we have lost everything. I can translate values to my children, but if I miss my children I must reach my grandchildren. If I don't impact my grandchildren with the gospel, it's too late.

"Throughout history every culture has been changed from the bottom up not from the top down. If Christians will be faithful we will see our culture changed," Colson said.

FamilyNet is carried by 135 television stations reaching more than 40 million homes. ACTS reaches into 20 million homes on the Faith and Values Channel.

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EDITORS' NOTE: The following three stories focus on ministry in multi-housing areas such as mobile home parks and apartment complexes.

Mobile home parks open  
to new ways of caring

By Clay Renick

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LUDOWICI, Ga. (BP)--They're newly married and away from home. The husband is in the Army and their money is tight. They live in a mobile home with a young child and a growing sense of loneliness.

"They've proven by their behavior that they're not coming to our churches," said Mike Temekin.

H directs multi-housing ministries for the New Sunbury Baptist Association near Hinesville, Ga. That area has approximately 100 trailer parks. Temekin hopes to start mission churches in many.

"It's a growing trend," said Mike Hoffman. He's the state coordinator for church planting in manufactured housing communities. Since 1980, the number of mobile homes doubled in Georgia from 150,000 to 300,000.

According to Hoffman, 85 percent of those residents are not involved in any church.

Temekin understands the struggle near Hinesville. He was in the Army for nine years. "A low-ranking soldier," he said. "And low rank, means low pay."

He went door to door in one park to survey 10 residents. He found many with no interest in traditional church. But a pattern developed.

"They need friendship," Temekin discovered. "The world that their husbands promised before they were married does not exist."

H is trying to enlist older women from local churches.

"They need a mom," he explained. "Another mother ... so they don't have to call all the way to Yakima, Wash., to ask their mother what to do when the baby cries."

Fort Stewart in Hinesville is home to the 25th Mechanized Infantry. That can mean long separations for young families.

"They spend money they don't have," Temekin said.

"We go into the park and say that we want to provide materials and programs that will ... build a sense of community," he said. "We're learning as we go."

Residents liked the idea of classes in money management for adults and Big A Bible clubs for children.

"Our goal in our outreach is not to make people like us," he explained. "It's to make people like Jesus."

"It's a huge mission field," said Claud Healan. He's the area missionary in northeast-central Georgia. "We've never had any success in having those people come out of their community to go to church.

"They see their park as their community."

One park near Lawrenceville, with 200 professions of faith, led the association in baptisms.

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"We work in parks that have 700 and 800 homes in them," Healan said. In most other cases, he said, "When a town's got that many (people), it's got four or five churches."

"When I see the church -- I see walls," said Tom Craighead. He's pastor of Bray Road Baptist Church in East Lansing, Mich.

His church wanted to change that. So they removed seats from an old school bus to use it as a portable chapel in mobile home parks.

One couple lived in an eight-foot-wide trailer. The wife worked at McDonalds and the husband helped at a junkyard. They had two children and asked Craighead if they could attend his portable Sunday school.

"For two or three weeks they failed to get on the bus," Craighead recounted. He stopped by the trailer and found an overloaded fuse box.

All electricity ran off one fuse -- and the wires were hot.

"If that had caught (fire), it would have been about two minutes to a total burn down," Craighead said.

He fixed the problem and told his congregation. He also had learned that the family had their food stamps canceled with Christmas approaching.

One couple donated \$100 in groceries -- and they also were on food stamps.

"The kids are in Sunday school now," said Craighead.

"Instead of two dead children, we've got a family ... on their way to Jesus."

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**Multi-housing ministries  
require multiple approaches**

**By Clay Renick**

**Baptist Press  
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HOUSTON (BP)--Multi-housing ministers deal with extremes. They often encounter small groups, big problems and unexpected results.

Stan Felder is an example. He wanted to lead a big congregation. Instead he started an outreach in Houston's Springbrook Apartment complex, known for the lowest rent in the area.

They average 30 at services, but had 140 decisions for Christ the first year.

"It's more like a family than a church," said Felder, a special education teacher. "We do stuff all week long."

"When families move in," he explained, "they can't move out. There's no place to go ... unless they get a better job."

Felder encourages the residents to memorize Scripture.

"It dawned on me that our teaching won't change their lives," he added. "It's the Word of God."

Several young people in the mission can quote the Book of Philippians. One boy memorized the books of James, 1st Peter, 2nd Peter and 1st John. He pulled Felder aside one day to listen.

"It took an hour," said Felder.

They started seven years ago as part of the Westview apartment missions, an outreach of First Baptist Church in Houston.

"We couldn't bus everybody to church," Felder recalled. So they decided to have services at the complex. The manager liked the results and furnished a free apartment for the group.

Since then they've gone through 22 managers and three owners. Some were hostile.

"We've almost been kicked out three times," Felder said.

They even had their last service one day and started loading furniture. Then word came giving them permission to stay.

"When the mission field moves in, most Baptist churches move out," said Harvey Kneisel. "We're utilizing the mission field that's there."

Kneisel is minister of missions at First Baptist in Houston. He helped start the apartment outreach nine years ago at Westview Baptist Center. They had 90 people at services in apartment complexes around Houston; now there are 2,500.

"It's not all that difficult when you're multiplying 30 missions," he added.

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Felder helped 13 students enter Baptist college from his church. Now seven of those feel a divine call to full time Christian service. Springbrook also has licensed three young men to preach.

"We've seen such a small group go so far," Felder said, adding, "They're not average Christians."

At the other end of the country, another church planter tries to adjust to the change in multi-housing.

Bill Moore wants to start a new mission in Missoula County, Mont. -- and is using bridge spikes and blue tarp. A mobile home park there doesn't have a building for meetings.

"(It's) probably the worst area in our whole community for abused children, home life and stealing," he said.

Moore is a retired church planter. His latest project is in West View Mobile Home park, with 385 units and 1,330 people.

"It's bigger than many Montana towns," Moore explained.

One in four Montana residents now live in mobile homes. Building costs are high. Available land is scarce.

Missoula County has grown from 53,000 to 70,000 in the last five years.

"It's hard to pull them out of the trailer park to get them in church," Moore added. "But the people have said they would go to church -- if it was in the park."

Other missionaries agree. The people in multi-housing areas are interested when the church goes to them. Barbara Oden is trying to do that in New York City.

She's helped start 32 apartment congregations in Houston and is coauthor of the book, "Multihousing Congregations," published through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"The needs of people are basically the same," Oden said. "People in New York City are sick of the crime ... They're looking for somebody to come along with a change."

Several churches in the south Bronx want to start an outreach in high-rise apartments. Oden is setting up a school for lay missions in multi-housing. Building managers there welcome any program for residents.

"The pastors are real open," said Oden. "It's going to take all of us ... to get the job done."

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HMB president warns against  
church walls becoming prisons

By Sarah Zimmerman

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Southern Baptists say the church is a body of believers, but their practice often contradicts that teaching, said the Home Mission Board president.

"We act like a church has to have a building, even though there is no New Testament reference to the church meeting in its own place," Larry Lewis said during a conference on starting churches through ministry. Lewis cited examples of the New Testament church meeting in homes and even caves.

"I'm not against that (a church having a building) unless the building walls us in, unless it becomes a prison. Some people think you can't have quality Bible study unless it's in their building."

Lewis urged conference participants to start churches where people gather, even if the congregation never constitutes or owns a building.

"Nowhere does the Bible say lost people are supposed to come to church," Lewis said. "Lift up your eyes to people who need to be reached, to the ethnic or socio-economic clusters that need to be penetrated, to a swarm of people who, no matter what you do, will not come to you."

Seeing the church as the body of Christ because the Holy Spirit dwells in believers is essential in church-planting efforts, Lewis said.

"When we start a church, we are not starting a service society or a fraternal organization," Lewis said. "We are birthing Jesus in that place."

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Virginia cooperation panel  
holds first monthly meeting

By Michael Clingenpeel

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A committee of leading Virginia Baptist pastors set aside practical issues in their first meeting to rebuild trust lost during years of denominational struggle.

The Presidential Council on Cooperation agreed in a March 10 session in Richmond, Va., to hold three-man meetings later in the month to bring together one conservative, moderate and unaligned person for fellowship.

The council was appointed Nov. 30 by Ronald Crawford, president of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Its goal is to "explore ways to enhance cooperation, trust and mutual respect in Virginia Baptist life," said Crawford, pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church in Richmond.

The six-hour meeting sparked few heated exchanges between conservatives and moderates, mostly because issues that have divided the two groups largely went unaddressed. Instead, committee co-chairs Tommy Taylor and Neal Jones led the 19-minister, one-layman committee to talk about their points of agreement. The meeting concluded with members joining hands for prayer.

"I feel good about the meeting," said Taylor, pastor of Virginia Beach's London Bridge Baptist Church and leader among Virginia conservatives. "The Spirit was present and moving in our hearts. There was love and an increase of mutual respect for each other, which is so basic. We did get into some of the substantive issues which have tended to divide us, but even there it was overall without rancor and hostility. ... I am more encouraged in leaving than I was in coming."

Jones, pastor of Columbia Baptist Church in Falls Church, agreed: "I feel like the more that we can behave together as a family, the more we are going to project to the world that we do love each other and we respect each other even though we have differences. That's not to ignore the fact at all that we could sit around forever saying how much we love each other. We've got to get to the substantive issues ... but ven on the budget, I felt like we did a little better job discussing that here with more understanding than in an earlier meeting like this."

The meeting, held in the chapel of the Virginia Baptist Building, was conducted under background rules, meaning the actions of the committee could be reported but no statements could be attributed to individual members. The committee agreed only the co-chairmen would speak for them afterwards.

Though not an official body of the BGAV, the council can ask the BGAV to hear its recommendations and make recommendations to BGAV committees. Precedent for a presidential committee was set in 1987, when Jones, then BGAV president, appointed a task force on the denominational crisis. That task force eventually reported specific recommendations to the BGAV, including a memorial of concern sent to the Southern Baptist Convention.

The committee will meet next on April 4, again in Richmond. Plans call for meetings each month until the annual meeting of the General Association in November. Both Taylor and Jones expressed hope that a new plan for cooperation would come from the council.

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