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**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Draper rules out consideration
for Southwestern's presidency

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
4/6/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Putting rumors to rest that he would be a candidate for the presidency of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Baptist Sunday School Board President James T. Draper Jr. told BSSB employees April 5 he "will not allow my name to be considered."

"At a time when I am challenging employees of the Baptist Sunday School Board to our greatest days of ministry to churches and individuals, I want to state my firm conviction that God led me here to serve as your president. I believe it is his will for me to remain at this position as we pursue the challenge that he has given to us," Draper said in a prepared statement during a chapel service.

The presidency of Southern Baptists' largest seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, came open March 9 when trustees fired Russell H. Dilday Jr. A presidential search committee has been named. Draper said he was sending a copy of his statement to search committee chairman Miles Seaborn, a Fort Worth pastor.

Draper acknowledged he had "been asked to allow a group of individuals to present my name to the presidential search committee" and that he had "received many calls asking about rumors linking my name with the seminary or inquiring if I would be interested in being considered for the presidency."

Draper's ties to Southwestern go back three generations. His grandfather and father graduated from the seminary before him. He is a former trustee and served as trustee chairman until he resigned in 1991 to move to the Sunday School Board.

"My most fervent and frequent prayers in these past weeks have been for the total constituency and many friends of the seminary. I urge all of us to continue to pray for Southwestern, the trustees and Dr. Dilday in these days of transition," Draper's statement continued.

"And for the Baptist Sunday School Board, I believe God has formed in our hearts and minds a great vision for the future of this institution. He is pulling our hearts and lives together as a team and placing a growing spirit of excitement and enthusiasm about the work of this board. We have a great opportunity to help move Southern Baptists forward together in these next years. Let us be builders of bridges to link a lost world with the Savior," the statement concluded.

During his chapel message, Draper said he has "never been more excited than I am today about the future of the Baptist Sunday School Board, the opportunities he has placed before us and the responsibilities he has given to us."

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The Baptist Sunday School Board is the best agency to build bridges, Draper said, because it has the "most comprehensive assignment" from the Southern Baptist Convention. Through its materials and ministries, the BSSB reaches more than 90 percent of Southern Baptist churches every week. He also praised the quality and dedication of BSSB employees.

"Because of our assignments and responsibilities, I believe we bear a greater accountability than anybody else for what happens in our Southern Baptist Convention. I believe the burden is on us to fully be what God has assigned us here to be," Draper continued.

He called on employees to join him in five commitments, beginning with a commitment to "continuous improvement in the midst of a world of change."

"If we even sit still long enough to enjoy what we've accomplished, we're outdated," Draper said.

Also, he said the BSSB must design materials and services that are relevant to the life needs of people and "serve all Southern Baptists and help our agencies learn to function together."

Fourth, Draper said the board must "assist churches to share the gospel in their communities and around the world." Finally, "we must lift up the bridge of the gospel in all that we do so that people might be saved and grow in their faith."

"Are we willing to be God's people in this changing world, to build bridges upon the truth and reach out and touch everyone?" Draper asked. "That's our challenge. I believe that's where we're headed."

"I commit myself afresh to you and this board and to the responsibilities and opportunities we have to help Southern Baptists find a way to move forward together," he concluded.

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The text of Draper's prepared statement is posted in the SBCNet Newsroom.

Open persecution coming
in Russia, Christian warns

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
4/6/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--Svetlyana Nevrova was laid to rest Jan. 15.

A 19-year-old evangelical who loved to sing in her church choir, she had been stabbed 60 times four days earlier and left for dead in a ditch in Ukraine.

Larissa Detyura, a 20-year-old Baptist woman, was murdered Jan. 7 in Maykop, Russia. She was kidnapped and tortured, then brought home and tossed into her yard, where she stopped breathing. Afterwards, anonymous death threats appeared in her parents' mailbox.

A Russian evangelical leader brought these stories and others to Capitol Hill in late March as evidence that the window of religious freedom in the former Soviet region already is slamming shut.

The evangelical, Boris Perchatkin, is trying to alert the West that the republics of the region are fast becoming strongholds of religious persecution -- this time against Protestants.

The West first got wind of this through a bill introduced in the former Russian legislature that would have restricted non-Orthodox activity. The bill failed when Yeltsin dismissed Parliament last year.

"One and a half years ago I myself didn't believe this was going on," said Perchatkin. "But as I am working more and more on it, this horrible picture is forming. We have a very short time."

Who better than a dissident believer to recognize the bloody slashes of religious persecution when he sees them?

Perchatkin himself was scourged for years under the repressive labor camp regime of current Russian President Boris Yeltsin -- then a provincial leader. Perchatkin also was one of several dissidents President Ronald Reagan asked to see during a 1988 visit to Moscow.

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As order breaks down in Russia and the surrounding republics that once were part of the Soviet Union, strongmen attached to the Muslim and Russian Orthodox establishments are filling the gap, his reports show.

"People are surprised how things have changed so quickly," he said. "A lot of people believed Yeltsin, that democracy had come. They decided to stay in Russia and preach to their own."

But in Washington, Perchatkin carried a list bearing the names of thousands of Christians in the former Soviet region who fear for their lives and are ready to leave -- now.

Baptists comprise about half of the names listed; the rest are primarily Pentecostal and Seventh-Day Adventist. At least 700 families would emigrate immediately if Western nations would receive them, Perchatkin told Baptist Press.

In Washington he met with U.S. congressmen, State Department officials and advisers to President Clinton. He told them the former Soviet region -- widely viewed as relatively free despite its growing pains -- is actually a time bomb of persecution that, when it explodes, will vent unimaginable horror.

From his home in eastern Russia, Perchatkin began helping Christians leave the Soviet Union in 1970. Defying communist directives, he fed information to the West on repressed believers. He left to live in the United States in 1988.

From a base in Portland, Ore., he has been working to collect and verify data on persecution through other former dissidents and a network of witnesses in the region.

The data show increasing regularity and uniformity of religious persecution -- not everywhere, he stressed, but "growing and growing."

Protestantism is being labeled foreign, an American influence with the sinister motive of stealing Russia from Russians.

Perchatkin himself had shared in the worldwide euphoria that freedom had overrun Russia in recent years, he admitted. He needed to secure eyewitness accounts before he could take in the reality of intensifying persecution by local authorities against anything non-Orthodox or non-Muslim.

He warns that after the next Russian presidential elections in 1996 -- if not earlier -- widespread, open persecution of Protestants will become the rule in Russia. He predicts a systematic "cleansing" of Protestants, similar to that experienced by all faiths under Josef Stalin, as nationalists tout the Orthodox and Muslim religions as "ours."

Perchatkin's grandfather was a Baptist pastor when Stalin came to power. "Over the course of five years, his community was physically destroyed," Perchatkin said. "Between 1928 and 1933 nine people were shot, including my grandfather. Three people survived. The rest were sent to prisons and labor camps, or just disappeared."

Similar atrocities seem nearly unavoidable in the future, he said. "We think if nationalists come to power in Russia, that will be the end." Among six full-time workers at a Moscow office Perchatkin operates are Valery Sanderov, a former Catholic dissident exiled in labor camps for seven years, and Gleb Yakunin, a human rights advocate and former Orthodox dissident elected to the Russian Parliament in December. Yakunin also was formerly imprisoned and then exiled in a Siberian labor camp. Last fall the Russian Orthodox patriarch stripped him of his priesthood.

Many evangelicals who want to leave Russia fear a fate much-publicized recently in the country's media. In the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan, a Baptist household was nearly wiped out by extremist Muslims on New Year's Eve. The father, Vladimir Limorev, and eight others -- including his four children -- were brutally beaten, then killed or left to die in their burning home in Dushanbe, Tajikistan's capital. Limorev's wife, who fled for help, was the sole survivor.

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Official reports initially said the motive was robbery. But the children died from having their heads smashed against the walls of the house, Perchatkin said. Limorev had been receiving anonymous threats for some time as he had begun to win young Muslims to Christianity.

But extremist Muslims are only part of the danger. An alarming alliance was forged in February when the Russian army opened its arms to a military organization, about 1 million strong, with historical roots in the Cossack people. It has declared its allegiance to Russian Orthodoxy -- and war against Protestants.

Until then this group operated as an illegal vigilante force mostly outside Moscow. But now they will maintain contingents of infantry and special forces, with artillery and rocket divisions.

In areas under Cossack control, Perchatkin recorded two incidents of persecution -- almost identical but several months and thousands of miles apart. In both cases the oldest sons of pastors were taken from churches during services and hanged in their own homes. Locals spread rumors that the churches were teaching child sacrifice.

Both pastors were organizing Protestant churches with Orthodox converts.

Perchatkin's organization also has secured photos of Cossacks, local militia -- and Orthodox priests in full robes carrying icons -- blocking the entrance of a Baptist church. This is a common occurrence, he said.

"It pretty much looks like there is going to be a catastrophe very quickly," Perchatkin said.

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'Christy' premier praised
by local crew member, pastor

By Lonnie Wilkey

Baptist Press
4/6/94

TOWNSEND, Tenn. (BP)--The Easter night premier of the movie "Christy" was of more than just casual interest for several Baptists.

Jay T. Rockwell, a deacon and Sunday school teacher at Calvary Baptist Church in Kingsport, Tenn., was the director of stunts, special effects and animals for the movie which is based on the late Catherine Marshall's best-selling inspirational novel about a young girl who, in 1919, left her home in the city to teach at a mission school in the remote mountains of east Tennessee.

The movie was filmed about a quarter-mile from Bethel Baptist Church in Townsend, Tenn., and used several local residents as actors, including Curtis Franklin, son of Bethel pastor Curt Franklin.

Franklin and Rockwell were contacted by Tennessee Baptists' Baptist and Reflector newsjournal after the premier for their reactions.

"I was very impressed with the family atmosphere and the importance of the Lord" portrayed in the movie, said Franklin, whose church was attended by the movie's producer, Ken Wales, during the local filming.

Rockwell, too, was pleased with the outcome. He directed the special effects and doubled for actors on stunts. His wife, Becky, was a double on stunts for actress Tyne Daly.

"It went off really well. It was a great quality piece, and to have the message that it has is the icing on the cake," he said.

Rockwell, who turned down a similar job with a show that would have meant more money, said the movie's message was one reason he took the job.

"I'm blessed to be working on a project like this," he said.

Rockwell said the movie and subsequent TV episodes became "a project for the Lord."

He encourages people to let CBS television officials know that they liked the movie and want more family-oriented shows on TV.

Six one-hour episodes of "Christy" are scheduled to be aired on Thursday nights. Check local listings. Future episodes depend on viewer response.

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Letters should be addressed to: . . .

Jeff Sagansky
President, CBS Entertainment
c/o CBS TV CITY
Los Angeles, CA 90036

"This is a way for good moral Christian people to stand up and say, 'This is what we want,'" Rockwell said.

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(BP) photo available upon request from (BP) central office in Nashville.

Retiring FMB prayer leader
plans more prayer ventures

By Don Martin

Baptist Press
4/6/94

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--With her eyes open and head up, Minette Drumwright began praying for China as she climbed to one of the highest points of the Great Wall.

"We couldn't make any public Christian indications (in that sensitive setting). We needed to pray conversationally, as though our Lord were right there as a literal part of our discussion, because he was and is," said Drumwright, who retired March 31 as director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's international prayer strategy office.

She and 17 other Southern Baptists prayed for China's lost people as they walked on the wall's hand-chiseled steps, worn smooth by millions of others drawn to the awesome site. The group, casting aside normal protocol for prayer, focused wide-eyed on the Asian nation of more than 1.2 billion people and even on individuals they passed on the stone walkway.

"We went to World A to be a part of challenging Satan's power and the darkness he creates," Drumwright said, recalling the 21-day "prayer pilgrimage" last year. It took the group to several countries in World A -- that part of the globe that has had little or no exposure to the gospel -- including Uzbekistan and Mongolia.

Drumwright considers the time on the Great Wall as one of the high points in her leadership of the mission prayer effort.

"Volunteers go to the mission field for different reasons," she said at a recent prayer conference. "Some go to dig wells, some go to do medical projects, some go to teach and many go for partnership evangelism. This (prayer pilgrimage) group went to do the most crucial work of prayer and intercession, to employ prayer as a strategy."

Viewing prayer as the ultimate missions strategy has been a cornerstone of her work. She brought this conviction to the prayer office when she became its leader in 1985, after working as assistant to the board's executive vice president for nearly three years.

Drumwright, a native of San Antonio, Texas, is the widow of the late Huber L. Drumwright, who died in 1981. Her husband had been dean of the school of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and was executive secretary-treasurer of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention at the time of his death.

"When I came to the Foreign Mission Board in '82, I was still reeling from the trauma of my husband's death and struggling with how to 'do life' without his life, love and laughter," she said at a board gathering to recognize her retirement.

"I came here in brokenness, with no comprehension of the joy that lay ahead. The Lord and the Foreign Mission Board gave me the most wonderful gift ... by giving me this work to do."

Drumwright's work included the launching of the board's toll-free missions PrayerLine (1-800-359-PRAY), which now averages more than 10,000 calls a month. A new text telephone line (1-800-414-PRAY) for hearing-impaired callers will soon be added.

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She and her prayer office co-workers, Terri Willis and Joanie Marsh, also have channeled thousands of foreign missions prayer requests into Southern Baptist publications that reach more than 1 million homes a month.

That's not all. Drumwright also:

- guided the production of the Global PrayerGram, which distributes missionaries' urgent prayer requests;
- administered the Global Prayer Network, which enlists the prayers of Baptists all over the world;
- helped coordinate prayer partnerships with 14 state Baptist conventions;
- launched the "First Sunday Concert of Prayer," which encourages churches to focus on praying for the lost world on the first Sunday of each month; and
- directed the annual Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization and worked with more than 1,000 Southern Baptist churches that have committed to pray for a specific unreached people group.

Experience has taught Drumwright and board leaders that prayer works in missions.

"There's no question that the scope of prayer support generated by this kind of emphasis has a direct link with the significant results we're experiencing around the world," said FMB President Jerry Rankin.

Drumwright's retirement plans include part-time seminary teaching and possibly one or more short-term missions assignments. And, she quickly adds, she plans "to experience the adventure of grandmothering" at a new level with her three grandchildren.

Drumwright also will lead two more prayer pilgrimages in the coming months -- one in Latin America and another in North Africa.

"My retirement doesn't change the emphasis of prayer in my life," she said. "It's really sobering how much importance God puts on prayer and on our role in how he accomplishes his will and his work.

"I came to work at the board believing any ministry begins, ends and proceeds with prayer, and that certainly has not changed."

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

Acteens asked to share shoes, bears for missions

By Susan Doyle

Baptist Press
4/6/94

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Girls attending the National Acteens Convention in Birmingham June 21-24 are asked to bring a pair of shoes or a stuffed bear to share in a ministry project.

Acteens is the missions organization for girls in grades seven through 12 sponsored by Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union. NAC is held once every five years for Acteens members who have completed the seventh grade and their leaders.

Each of the more than 16,000 teens and their leaders who are expected to attend are asked to participate in the ministry project.

The bears and the shoes will be given to Southern Baptist home missionaries to use in their ministries across the country.

Carolyn McClendon, a Southern Baptist home missionary and director of the Baptist Friendship House in New Orleans, will be one of the recipients of bears and shoes.

"The bears and the tennis shoes will go to the children in our community and to children who participate in our park program," she said. "Those children come from low-income, high-crime, one-parent situations. Most of them probably have tennis shoes -- but they would have never had a new pair -- only hand-me-downs left over from someone else."

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The bears also will be special possessions for the children, McClendon said. Most of the children who will receive the bears come from families that can't afford some of the basics.

"Many of the families are on welfare, food stamps, things like that," she said. "When they have to buy even school supplies, it usually means something else has to go -- rent, utilities, food. We'll be helping to lessen those kinds of financial tights."

Other missionaries who will receive bears and shoes to use in their work include: Andrew Begaye, Gallup, N.M.; Dorcas Camacho, Houston, Texas; Valerie Carter, Richmond, Va.; Ken Goode, Albuquerque, N.M.; Tami Ruckman, Savannah, Ga.; Beverly Smothers, Johnson City, Tenn.; Joshua Vang, Decatur, Ga.; and Dottie Williamson, Clinton, Miss.

Acteens are asked to bring inexpensive canvas or school shoes. WMU officials organizing the project ask that brand-name sneakers, dress shoes, sandals and bedroom shoes not be donated. The shoes should be placed in a ziplock, plastic bag, with the size written on the bag.

Bears should be new and 10-16 inches high. Acteens are asked to spend no more than \$15.95 per bear. Bears which have advertisements on them will not be accepted.

NAC registration opened Jan. 1. Acteens are encouraged to register in advance. Registration forms are available from state WMU offices.

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Medical plan rates for ministers,
others see no change at midyear

Baptist Press
4/6/94

DALLAS (BP)--Rates will not change at midyear for any of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board's medical plans in the Personal Security Program and Seminarian Security Program. These programs offer coverage for ministers, church employees and seminary students.

Some participants who move to a different ZIP code area could see a rate change soon after the move. Participants who have a birthday in 1994 that puts them in a higher age bracket will see a rate change on Jan. 1, 1995.

Rates in the plans have not changed in almost two years. The Annuity Board last raised rates July 1, 1992. Since that increase, medical trends used by insurance companies have been as high as 22 percent, according to Joel Mathis, senior vice president for insurance administration at the Annuity Board.

Current trends are rising at about 16 percent to 19 percent a year, he said. Many medical insurers have increased rates accordingly, Mathis said. This is the longest period between rate changes in the personal and seminarian medical plans since a three-year span in 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Mathis credited good claims experience, plan design and managed care as factors in keeping rates down.

Mathis also pointed out that the Annuity Board has never canceled any participant's coverage for high or frequent claims. "We're committed to our participants," he said. "We've worked hard to keep the plans viable and competitive, both in rates and benefits. The faithfulness of our participants has contributed to that."

Further, another flexibility feature of these programs is portability, Mathis said. "Your coverage can go with you to any Southern Baptist church God calls you to serve," he said.

Not only has the Annuity Board kept rates down, Mathis said, but some benefits in the personal and seminarian comprehensive medical plans increased on Jan. 1, 1994:

- The individual deductible was reduced from \$500 to \$400.
- Family total deductible was reduced from \$1,000 to \$800.
- Co-payment maximum was reduced from \$5,000 to \$4,000 for individuals and from \$10,000 to \$8,000 for a family.

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-- Maternity claims are considered as any other covered expense -- the caps were removed.

Benefits also increased on Jan. 1, 1994, for participants who choose to use services of providers in the plans' preferred provider network:

-- The individual deductible is reduced from \$250 to \$200.

-- Family total deductible is reduced from \$500 to \$400.

-- Co-payment maximum is reduced from \$2,500 to \$2,000 for individuals and from \$5,000 to \$4,000 for a family.

-- Maternity claims will also be considered as any other covered expense.

The Personal Security Program for ministers and church employees includes comprehensive medical; two catastrophic plans; PruCare Health Maintenance Organization; term life, including optional spouse and child coverage; accidental death and dismemberment; personal accident; and long-term disability coverage. The Seminarian Security Program includes comprehensive medical, major medical, PruCare HMO, term life, accidental death and dismemberment and personal accident coverage.

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EDITORS' NOTE: This story was inadvertently omitted from a three-part series on multi-housing ministry in (BP) 3-31-94.

Mobile home pastor offers
front-line compassion

By Clay Renick

Baptist Press
4/6/94

CONYERS, Ga. (BP)--Frank Holmes felt hopeless when he lit the fuse. He had taped several M-80's together and wanted to die.

Drug problems and divorce were too much to bear. He had been in a mental hospital and even tried suicide on the expressway.

This would settle it, he thought. The explosive equaled dynamite. He set the charge in his mouth.

Then the fuse went out.

"I couldn't understand what was going on," he said.

He was able to make it back to the mental hospital waiting room.

"I can't live like this anymore," Holmes whispered. A verse came to mind from a childhood song:

"Jesus loves me this I know"

"God, if this is true," Holmes stated, "then you're the one who can do it."

"Instantaneously my life was changed forever," he said. Although retained for a month at the hospital, he read the Bible and witnessed to other patients.

That was several years ago. Now Holmes leads a mission at Lake View Estates, a mobile home park in Conyers, Ga., with 750 homes and 2,000 people.

"It's like walking into a Third World country in parts," he said.

Eight out of every 10 residents are on welfare. Rents are weekly with the turnover rate at 60 percent.

The Stone Mountain Baptist Association wanted to start a mission there and asked Holmes for help. He had been sponsoring crusades in Cabbagetown, a mill area in southeast Atlanta.

"There's no hype in Frank," said David Travis of the Stone Mountain association staff.

"He's been in every trailer out here -- helping people," added Bud Britt, a Lake View resident.

Holmes moved near the community to survey the needs.

"It had a bad reputation when we moved out here," add d Britt about Lake View.

"But it's changed. . . . When he (Holmes) brought that church out h re, it was a big difference."

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They started in a 12- by 50-foot trailer that had been used for crack and prostitution. At the first outdoor service 150 came and five residents made personal commitments to Jesus Christ.

Now they average 55 on Sunday morning and operate ministries with food, rent and counseling.

Many of the women at the park have children by several men. Live-in boyfriends are common. Dropouts start at the seventh grade.

Holmes has been threatened twice.

One man was abusing a girlfriend's daughter and said he would kill the pastor if authorities got word.

Church members are careful when they visit. Vandals even tore the front porch off the church.

"They can burn it down," said Holmes. "It doesn't matter. We're still going to be there."

One 19-year-old girl became a Christian at an outdoor project. Lake View had 40 decisions that day. But later the girl's baby died from crib death, and she drowned when her car flipped into the lake.

Holmes performed both funerals.

"She never would have been saved," he said, "without us being there."

As pastor, Holmes doesn't receive a salary. Eastwood Baptist Church in Conyers helps sponsor him financially. Mission support also comes from Central Baptist Church in Lithonia, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Stone Mountain association.

"He really is a pastor for the community," said Travis about Holmes. "Whether or not they're part of the church, they turn to Frank."

Holmes's approach includes:

- visitation five days a week.
- a shelter for abused women and their families.
- outdoor events with a gospel message. That fosters a sense of community and attracts children.
- Friday night youth program and day camp in the summer.

When Holmes started the outreach, Georgia Baptists had four churches in mobile home parks. Now there are more than 30.

"We've driven our vans through the parks," said Mike Hoffman. "We've gone door to door and said 'ya'll come to our church.' It always ends up with a couple kids and few families."

Hoffman is the state coordinator for church planting in manufactured housing communities. He said the people respond when the church goes to them.

"If the people really want to see the power of God," said Holmes, "let them get out there where the people are hurting."

HOUSE MAIL

(BP)

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