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April 20, 1994

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'True Love Waits' cards vital
to success, spokesman says

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
4/20/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--With "True Love Waits" officials now projecting more than 100,000 abstinence pledges have been signed by teen-agers and college students, the Baptist Sunday School Board-sponsored campaign already has accomplished one of its two primary goals.

Achievement of the second, spokesman Richard Ross says, "still hangs in the balance."

"If this campaign is to achieve its goal of impacting the moral conscience of this nation we must have concrete evidence that hundreds of thousands of young people are gladly choosing abstinence until marriage," Ross, youth ministry consultant at the BSSB, said. "That evidence is signed pledge cards on display June 14 at the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando and July 29 on the Washington Mall near the U.S. Capitol."

Based on media inquiries to date, Ross said "scores" of reporters are expected to be on hand at both national "True Love Waits" events.

"They will either report on a surprising turn by teen-agers toward abstinence or they will focus on how the campaign failed to meet its goal," he said. "The choice is ours and it comes down to whether churches, Christian organizations and individuals send in their covenant cards for use in the displays."

"True Love Waits" set a goal of 100,000 covenant cards signed by Southern Baptist teen-agers and college students and a total campaign goal of 500,000 cards, combining the SBC count with those signed by young people from the other 24 participating denominations and Christian organizations.

Referring to reports from state convention contacts and a Lebanon, Tenn.,-based company which is producing the acrylic card holders being used in the national displays, Ross predicted the campaign would have no problem meeting its Southern Baptist goal.

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As of April 19, more than 95,000 card holders had been distributed to participating churches and individuals, he said, adding the majority were sent to Southern Baptists. In addition, tens of thousands of covenant cards also have been signed by youth from churches and organizations who have not ordered plastic holders, he said.

"We still want to encourage participants to buy the acrylic holders because they are vital to the creation of the national display which is capturing the attention of the media. But it is just as important for churches that choose not to purchase holders to mail in their covenant cards. That's the only way we can get an official count. We'll find some way to present the cards without holders to the media," he said.

The acrylic holders can be purchased by writing: Innovative Acrylic Designs, P.O. Box 1089, Lebanon, TN 37087, or calling (615) 444-2263. The cost is \$1.50 per holder, plus a \$3 shipping and handling charge for orders of less than 20.

Southern Baptist churches and individuals who already have their acrylic holders should insert their signed covenant cards and mail them to the following address: The Anderson Company/True Love Waits, 4352 34th Street, Orlando, FL 32811. They must be received by June 10.

Non-SBC churches and organizations should send their acrylic holders with cards inserted to the following address by July 25: Beltway Movers/True Love Waits, 6308 Gravel Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22310. SBC churches that do not have their "True Love Waits" rally until after June 14 may also send their cards and acrylic holders to the same address. All cards shipped to the Orlando address will automatically be shipped to Virginia after the SBC for inclusion in the Washington display.

As another sign of support for "True Love Waits," campaign organizers are asking supporters to wear white ribbons on July 29, the date of the national celebration in Washington.

"It's just another way to visibly demonstrate our support for the decision teenagers are making for sexual purity until marriage," Ross explained.

Additional questions about "True Love Waits" may be directed to the campaign's toll-free hotline, 1-800-LUV-WAIT.

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'True Love Waits' to be part
of National Day of Prayer

Baptist Press
4/20/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Participants in the National Day of Prayer symbolic observance May 5 in Washington will take time to pray for "True Love Waits," a nationwide abstinence education campaign sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"True Love Waits" spokesman Richard Ross will present a brief challenge about the campaign, followed by a prayer led by a Washington-area youth who has promised to remain chaste until marriage.

"We're thrilled with this opportunity, first because it will be an opportunity for a time of concentrated prayer for 'True Love Waits' and, secondly, it will present the campaign to key national religious and government leaders attending the event," Ross, youth ministry consultant at the BSSB, said.

A national "True Love Waits" celebration is planned in Washington on July 29. Several hundred thousand covenant cards signed by teenagers and college students from the Southern Baptist Convention and the other 24 denominations and Christian organizations participating in the campaign are expected to be displayed on the Washington Mall near the U.S. Capitol.

The theme of this year's National Day of Prayer observance is "Heal Our Land." The national symbolic observance is being held May 5 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Cannon House Office Building adjacent to the U.S. Capitol.

The evening before the observance, Ross will meet with Focus on the Family leader James Dobson and his wife, Shirley, to update them on the status of "True Love Waits." Mrs. Dobson is chairman of this year's National Day of Prayer observance.

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Statewide rally draws media
to 'True Love Waits' emphasis By Russell N. Dilday

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--It was no joke April Fools' Day when more than 3,500 Arkansas Baptist youth attended a statewide rally focused on the national "True Love Waits" campaign for teen sexual abstinence until marriage.

The "Call to Commitment" rally -- covered by three Little Rock-area television stations and given radio coverage on the Arkansas News Network -- was part of the 1994 state youth convention at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock.

"This is the most comprehensive media coverage of anything Arkansas Baptists have done that was of a positive nature," said Bill Falkner, an associate in Arkansas Baptists' discipleship and family ministry department.

"I was amazed at how positive their reporting was. They were not castigating us as a bunch of radicals," Falkner said.

More than 1,700 commitment cards signed by teens pledging sexual purity until marriage were displayed on the lawn of the Old State House in Little Rock during the April 1 rally.

Michael Mixon, a member of Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Crossett, Ark., said he signed a commitment card "because I want to do God's will and be a role model for other people." He said putting the commitment card on the State House lawn meant he was "going public" with his pledge. "I wanted to be a witness to others."

Participants heard youth communicator Randall O'Brien of Waco, Texas, detail some disturbing statistics about teen sexual habits.

"Which facts will comprise your story?" O'Brien asked. "Forty percent of ninth graders, 57 percent of 11th graders and 72 percent of 12th graders say they have had sexual intercourse. Would you agree that America has taken a glutton's chomp of the forbidden fruit?"

He said Americans also are "paying the price for straying from God's Word. Each day 33,000 more Americans are affected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), more than a million teens have become pregnant in the last 10 years and one in three college coeds are infected with STDs."

He said the statistics are not much better among teens from eight major denominations attending conservative churches. "Among those surveyed, 73 percent said they receive little or no sex education from their churches. I thank God for the True Love Waits program. If Satan has a voice in our society, why not God?"

O'Brien defined "safe sex" as "intimacy between monogamous, married adults. God came up with the idea of us being sexual beings. It is a gift from God, but a wedding gift.

"There's only one thing you and I can wear to have safe sex," he said as he pulled off his wedding ring and displayed it to the crowd.

The youth also heard former Miss Arkansas Shannon Boy of Little Rock tell them "temptation is tough. It was tough when I was your age and it's tough for me now."

"But whatever you're doing, stay focused on God," she urged. "It's easy here, but when we go back to our hometowns, we start to return to our old habits."

She gave participants two "tips" to keeping their pledges. "Surround yourself with people who will support you and decide why you signed that card. We all have a different motivation, so be committed to what is right. Decide what you want to do tonight."

The convention was sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention discipleship and family ministry department.

**Missionaries request
prayer 'war' for Rwanda**

By Craig Bird

MOMBASA, Kenya (BP)--Despite having to evacuate Rwanda, the 11 Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to the country have formally asked Southern Baptists to join them in praying for the people they left behind.

The text of the request, sent by the missionaries now in Kenya, follows:

"We, the Southern Baptist Mission in Rwanda, thank Southern Baptists for their prayers in recent days as it became necessary to leave Rwanda when violence broke out in the aftermath of the death of Rwanda's president. We saw your prayers answered as the Lord not only provided safe conduct for all of us, but also gave us supernatural peace during those difficult days.

"Having now exited Rwanda, leaving our many friends and fellow Baptists to endure continuing violence, we are convinced that the cessation of violence and killing is not in the hands of armies or governments, but in the hands of our Lord who has resolved to use His church to accomplish His purpose on earth.

"Because of this conviction, we now appeal to all Southern Baptists to join us in prayer for Rwanda and for the church there. We pray that:

1. The Lord will preserve His church (Christian believers) in Rwanda.
2. The church will be strengthened by what is happening in Rwanda and thus be better equipped for ministry.
3. The will of the Lord will be done in Rwanda as it is in heaven.

"These are not simple prayers. They are full of implications that must be acted out by the church. But, if peace is to come, it will be because God's people have united their hearts in crying out to God.

"We claim God's promise in 2 Chronicles 7:14 that if God's people, who are called by His name, will humble themselves and pray and seek His face and turn from their wicked ways, then He will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land.

"Our wicked ways are not only murder and violence. They are manifestations of selfish, uncaring hearts that seek our own comfort and desires above the Lord's Kingdom and His purposes.

"Rwanda's devastation is a result of spiritual warfare manifested in physical destruction. Please join us in prayer for our country."

The prayer request, the missionaries explained, is an intentional effort to call American Christians to "spiritual warfare" on behalf of Rwanda.

"I don't know how many people in America pray like this, but we do all the time in Rwanda -- because the reality of demons and the powers of darkness have been evident in Rwanda long before the evil made the world headlines," one missionary who has worked in the country for 14 years told Baptist Press.

Other missionaries repeatedly refer to the evil forces in the country and the need for "God to send his protective angels to battle them."

They cite appalling ethnic atrocities in Rwanda -- women and babies beaten and dismembered, hospital patients bludgeoned to death, men's legs amputated so they bleed to death while their tormentors jeer, "You're not so tall now, are you?" -- as evidence of demonic powers at work.

Late news reports from Kigali, Rwanda's capital, quote Red Cross officials as saying their ambulances attempting to pick up wounded civilians are being turned back at many roadblocks by grinning men who declare: "There are no survivors here anymore -- they all just died."

One center of darkness in Rwanda, the missionaries charge, is a woman named Nyabingi. She "controls the northern half of the country even though fetish worship is officially outlawed. But she is so powerful the government could not do anything about it."

Nyabingi reportedly has numerous priests who serve her and houses reserved for fetish worship under her guidance.

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The missionaries think it's significant that Rwanda's civil war began in the north. As people were displaced and moved south, they brought their spirit worship with them.

"Before, when you went to the north, you could literally feel the oppression in the area. When the refugees fled to the central and south parts of Rwanda the dark feelings came with them," they said.

When Rwanda's president was killed and gangs spilled out of the refugee camps surrounding Kigali to murder and loot, the influence of Nyabingi was strong.

"This is a powerful evil force that is utilizing spiritual warfare," another missionary said. "We need Christians everywhere to pray long and hard with us against it."

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MBTS trustees OK budget increase,
discuss CP support, faculty slots

By Brenda Sanders

Baptist Press
4/20/94

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees handled business matters, such as the adoption of an increased budget for the 1994-95 fiscal year, smoothly and, for the most part, with little discussion following the retirement announcement of President Milton Ferguson during their opening session, April 18.

Trustees met in executive session for one hour and 45 minutes during the afternoon session on April 18. When observers were allowed to re-enter, board members were standing in a large circle around the room and observers were invited to join them in holding hands and singing, "Blest Be the Tie."

Trustee chairman James Jones, evangelism director for the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, told observers that during the executive session trustees had "shared several concerns" with one another and concluded: "God has been at work in this body and caused us to be of one mind."

Board members adopted a \$3.7 million budget for 1994-95, a 5.7 percent increase over the current operating budget.

Trustees also voted to affirm the seminary administration's intent to increase faculty compensation by a total of 8 percent by August 1995.

In a related action, the board voted to increase student matriculation fees from \$600 to \$700 per semester for the 1994-95 academic year. The increase is comparable to fee increases at all other Southern Baptist seminaries, according to Glenn Miller, Midwestern's financial services director.

A resolution concerning support for the Cooperative Program was presented by trustee Kent Cochran, a sales manager in Kansas City, Mo., and was adopted by the board. The document echoes a similar resolution passed at the 1992 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting and urges Midwestern trustees, administration, faculty and staff to "maintain support of the Cooperative Program and avoid any conflict of interest which would be occasioned by any participation with any organization, program or meeting which would compromise support of the Cooperative Program."

Vernon Davis, Midwestern's vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty, reported to trustees the seminary will have four faculty vacancies by the end of the academic year in the areas of Christian theology, New Testament, religious education and church music. He said two candidates being considered to fill vacancies in the areas of New Testament and religious education withdrew from the process just prior to the trustee meeting.

In addition, Randall Bradley, assistant professor of church music, announced on April 14 his intention to accept a faculty position in September at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee. During their meeting, trustees adopted a resolution of appreciation for Bradley's five years of service to Midwestern.

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The board approved President Ferguson's recommendation to elect Jo Ann Butler to a five-year contract on the faculty as associate professor of church music education. She has taught church music at the seminary since 1983, first in an adjunctive capacity, then since 1987 as visiting professor of church music education.

Trustee Roger Oldham, pastor of First Baptist Church in Martin, Tenn., presented a motion to amend the seminary bylaws concerning the institution's Academic Freedom and Tenure statement, suggesting the tenure statement "have the same force as bylaws."

The motion will be voted on during the board's semiannual meeting, Oct. 17-18.

Midwestern trustees closed their meeting by electing new officers. Lewis Adkison, senior pastor of Circle Drive Baptist Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., will serve as chairman. He has been a member of the board since 1987.

Other officers include: Richard Proctor, an attorney and municipal court judge from Wynne, Ark., who will serve a fourth term as first vice chairman; Bob Lilly, pastor of Catonsville Baptist Church in Baltimore, Md., who was elected second vice chairman by acclamation; and Lowell Socolofsky, a data processing instructor from Omaha, Neb., who was elected by acclamation to a sixth term as secretary-treasurer.

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Orlando 'Cross Over' plans
now involving 173 churches

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
4/20/94

ATLANTA (BP)--Cross Over Orlando "promises to be one of the most challenging and exciting Cross Overs yet," said Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis.

This year, 173 churches and 1,200 volunteers are participating in the door-to-door thrust, and a two-day telephone campaign will be used to recruit prospects for three church starts.

Since being introduced with door-to-door visitation in 1989, Cross Over activities have grown to include rallies, street evangelism with creative arts, block parties and church starting efforts.

Block parties, added to the Cross Over agenda in 1992, have become one of the most popular events. Block parties typically attract crowds with free entertainment and food. Volunteers share the plan of salvation with people who attend.

This year, 19 block parties are planned in six central Florida associations. Each party reflects the creativity of local organizers as well as the area's ethnic diversity, said Bobby Sunderland of the Home Mission Board's evangelism section.

For example, First Baptist Church of Sanford will host a children's party. Volunteers will drive ice cream trucks through neighborhoods, giving children coupons for free ice cream. Coupons can be redeemed at the block party.

First Baptist Church of Cocoa Beach is planning a beach party, and other churches will host block parties in a mobile home park and a housing project.

Several churches hosting block parties are African American congregations, and six Haitian churches are working together to sponsor a block party, Sunderland said. Other parties are planned in Hispanic and Jamaican communities.

"In recent years one of the highlights of the Southern Baptist Convention has been the evangelistic thrust," Lewis said. "I look forward to participating, and hope hundreds or even thousands of other Southern Baptists will as well."

To volunteer for door-to-door visitation, street evangelism or block parties, contact Sunderland at (404) 898-7688.

To work a three-hour shift in the phone campaign, call Ronnie Reynolds, church starter strategist for the Greater Orlando Baptist Association, at (407) 293-0450.

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Northwest Baptists receiving executive director nominations

PORTLAND, Or . (BP)--The committee seeking a new executive director for the Northwest Baptist Convention has completed its organizational procedures and is accepting nominations.

"With the help of many from Northwest Baptist churches, as well as from our convention staff, we have completed a profile describing the new executive leadership for whom we feel God is preparing us," said Wm. K. Peters, search committee chairman. "Some nominations have already been filed from the Northwest. We would now like to broaden our search by accepting nominations from the entire Southern Baptist Convention."

Peters, veteran Northwest denominational leader, served as interim executive director for the convention before Sims' employment in 1980. More recently he was director of missions for the convention and, until his retirement, he was director of Golden Gate Seminary's Northwest Campus in Portland, Ore.

The Northwest committee requests nominations be in writing and accompanied by a letter of recommendation stating the nominee's qualifications, training, experience and spiritual qualities. The letter also should indicate a willingness by the nominee to be considered and include a full resume reflecting qualities that would prepare the nominee for this key leadership position in the Northwest.

Nominations or queries may be sent to Peters at 9590 SW Brentwood Place, Tigard, OR 97224.

Sims, who turned 66 in February, is scheduled to retire at the end of the year.

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Vote on Kansas City church
3 votes short of ouster

By Bob Terry

Baptist Press
4/20/94

RAYTOWN, Mo. (BP)--By only three votes, a motion failed the necessary two-thirds majority for the Blue River-Kansas City Baptist Association to cut off fellowship with Broadway Baptist Church in Kansas City, Mo.

The vote was 265 for withdrawing fellowship and 136 opposed during an April 14 special called associational meeting. With 401 votes cast, it would have taken 268 votes to disfellowship the church.

Spokespersons from both sides of the controversy left First Baptist Church in Raytown saying they hoped they had not damaged the association. But few people left happy with the outcome and fallout seemed certain from both sides.

About 700 people had filed into the Raytown church to consider a recommendation from the associational credentials committee to withdraw fellowship from the downtown Kansas City church. The credentials committee accused the church of failing to demonstrate a cooperative spirit with the association and the credentials committee and failure to promote harmony and unity in faith and practice among association churches.

Association officials reported 89 of the association's 117 churches registered for the special session and 404 of a potential 629 messengers were issued ballots -- the largest called meeting in its history.

Behind the controversy was an Oct. 30, 1993, Kansas City Star article depicting Broadway and its co-pastor Paul Smith as theologically liberal and charismatic in worship style. Smith was depicted as speaking in unknown tongues during a prayer for the writer of the story, and the church's ministry to the homosexual community was outlined.

The article said members of the church sometimes referred to God as "Mother," that women function in ministry roles and as deacons and that Smith advocated a theological position known as "ultimate reconciliation," a position that everyone ultimately will be united with God in heaven.

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On Nov. 15, 1993, Morton Rose, associational executive director, recommended that concerns raised by the article be referred to the association's credentials committee. The committee then spent four months working with Broadway before making a recommendation March 15 to withdraw fellowship from the church.

Speaking in behalf of the committee, Bob Collins, pastor of Plaza Heights Baptist Church in Blue Springs, reported that investigation led the credentials committee to one overriding concern: Smith's position on ultimate reconciliation. Collins said the church's denominational relations committee reported the church had no official position on homosexuality and the feminine language for God was a practice used by Smith, not the church as a whole.

The denominational relations committee also reported a majority of the church differed with Smith on the doctrine of ultimate reconciliation, Collins said. "But we could not come back to the association with only hearsay evidence," Collins continued. That is why the credentials committee asked Broadway church to study and vote on the Baptist Faith and Message statement of faith.

"If the church took a stand expressing strong disagreement with co-pastor Paul Smith, then we could say we had tangible proof that the church did not agree with ultimate reconciliation," Collins said.

He chided Broadway's denominational relations committee for not allowing or asking the church to vote on the Baptist Faith and Message. It was the church's refusal to vote on the document that led to the charge of being uncooperative and of failing to promote harmony in the association.

Broadway spokesman Jerry Johnson, a lay member of the church council, said the church's denominational relations committee held two Sunday morning open sessions to inform people of the requests made of the church by the credentials committee. He said a church-wide meeting was held the previous Sunday to distribute copies of the Baptist Faith and Message to all members and to make sure they understood what was requested of them.

Johnson told Missouri Baptists' newsjournal Word & Way the denominational relations committee recommended a vote and the congregation chose not to vote on the Baptist Faith and Message.

Before a vote on the motion to dismiss Broadway from associational membership could be taken, the messengers debated whether to vote on the issue at all.

Credentials committee member Wade Paris, pastor of Swope Park Baptist Church in Kansas City and the lone dissenter on the committee, moved to refer the issue back to the credentials committee.

Paris said in a voice choked with emotion, "I believe with all my heart we can resolve this issue and the association will not need to bear this burden." Paris' motion also called for the association to express disagreement with several doctrinal positions attributed to Smith and to Broadway, but the only part of the motion discussed was whether to refer the matter back to the credentials committee.

Joining Paris in arguing for referring the issue back to the credentials committee were Leslie Hollon, pastor of Wormal Road Baptist Church, and Joe Marlow, a layman from Holmeswood Baptist Church.

Hollon described the associational meeting as "a family of faith who is hurting and who need time to work out the hurt. ... This is the beginning of a family conversion, not the conclusion."

Marlow contended the issues before the association surfaced over a long period of time. "We need time to look at them rather than expel a church because of the views of one of its seven pastors."

Others disagreed. Credentials committee member Sidney Scott, pastor of Rockwood Baptist Church in Kansas City, said the committee already had spent time in dialogue with Broadway. "I believe the messengers deserve the right to vote on the issue."

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Dick Price, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Independence, said he was embarrassed by what Smith had said in the newspaper. He contended the views had created tensions and stress in the association. "I want to end this matter tonight," he declared.

When the vote was called, messengers overwhelmingly rejected the motion to refer the issue back to committee.

Speaking for Broadway, Johnson said the church repeatedly has expressed its "sincere desire" to remain a part of the association but the church would not compromise its commitment to the priesthood of the believer and local church autonomy. He said Broadway "not only tolerates diversity, we respect it."

Johnson said the church requires its pastors to believe four things: The Bible is true; God is trinity; all need Jesus; and all need each other. "Beyond that, what we are trying to accomplish at Broadway is more important than agreement." He added the priesthood of the believer applies to pastors as well as laymen.

Collins stated the credentials committee did not believe the difference over ultimate reconciliation was a trivial matter. "To preserve unity at the expense of truth is a betrayal of the Lord Jesus Christ," he said.

Others asked what kind of precedent was being set by the vote. "If a church treasurer embezzles money are you going to kick the church out of the association because it has a member who is a thief?" a speaker asked.

About an hour after moderator Roger Goodwin, pastor of Grandview Baptist Church, called the meeting to order, the messengers voted to cease debate and vote on the credentials committee recommendations.

Before Goodwin announced the credentials committee motion had been defeated, he cautioned messengers to act in a Christlike spirit toward one another and to be cautious in what they said to the media outside. Television cameras and reporters were banned from the meeting.

The close vote caused several participants to predict the issue is not dead. Kent Cochran, a messenger from First Baptist Church of Raytown, told the Kansas City Star the Broadway controversy will be brought back up within six months.

Broadway spokesman Johnson acknowledged the vote will make it more difficult "to put this episode behind us." He said it "clearly says a significant number of Kansas City-area Baptists are not pleased with Broadway."

Meanwhile some churches reportedly are considering pulling out of the Blue River-Kansas City Baptist Association because Broadway remains a member. Price told the Word & Way Bethel Baptist voted unanimously to withdraw from the association if Broadway were not ousted. Approximately 10 churches are said to be considering similar action.

Price said he also has resigned as evangelism chairman for the association. "What do you need an evangelism chairman for if the association believes in ultimate reconciliation?" he asked.

Some hope Broadway will withdraw voluntarily. "It is the only honorable thing to do," Reed said. "If the church cannot state it is in agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message, it should not be in the association."

Johnson indicated Broadway plans no future action related to the association. "We have been a supporting, participating member of the association and we plan to continue so," he told the Word & Way. "The only test for fellowship among Baptists should be the lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture. Then we should let the Lord decide how to use the diversity in our churches."

**Seminary prof helping shape
schools' character standards** **By Dwayne Hastings**

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--Some may say the wall of separation between church and state suffered an inappropriate breach when Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Daniel Heimbach became involved with the Wake County School Board. Heimbach is serving on a task force "to select pivotal character traits" for the foundation of a new curriculum in Wake County (Raleigh, N.C.) schools.

Yet the Christian ethics professor said all Christians are obligated to bring their values into the public arena.

"Christians are first of all obligated by God to be a witness for him, and that is not only a witness to his plan of salvation, but also a witness of his character and his presence and his concern for all dimensions of life, particularly social justice and of restraining evil and promoting good in society," said Heimbach.

"We need to be concerned about what is happening in society because God is concerned about it. We should be motivated to participate and seek to influence the public square, not only because one believes God to be the moral ruler, but because we have a participatory form of government.

"Our American system requires that we bring our Christian value judgments to bear on public policy issues. It is not at all inappropriate. It is very appropriate.

"Every moral framework or perspective is in fact religious," Heimbach said. "There is no religiously neutral point of view or value judgment. Every value system is based on or oriented by some faith commitment. It may not be acknowledged or may not even be conscious, yet you cannot have judgments in public policy that are detached from religious faith of some kind. It's just that some are more explicit than others."

Heimbach, who reviewed the ethics curriculum at the U.S. Naval Academy during his stint as deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for manpower in the Bush administration, said the promotion of moral character is an area "in which the schools have not been doing a very good job."

As an example, he pointed to values clarification, a program introduced in public schools to help students objectively and scientifically think through ethical issues but which generally avoided calling any behavior right or wrong.

That experiment failed in public schools, Heimbach said, creating "a real vacuum as it regards principles of morality. Teachers were not advocates for one thing over another. It was a disaster."

Children have been led to believe there is "no real right or wrong," Heimbach said. "The message was 'anything goes.' Now, just about everybody, secular, Christian, whomever, realizes that just did not work, and schools are getting more and more undisciplined.

"This is becoming more and more critical, because we used to be able to assume at a college level that people had a moral framework, inculcated by their family or their church or their synagogue or community association. They might lie, but they knew it was wrong. We are finding an increasing number of students in the public sector do not have a well-defined sense of what is right and what is wrong."

Heimbach, after speaking at a local church's men's prayer breakfast, was approached by the chairperson and was asked to join the school system's task force.

The Character Education Task Force is attempting to identify a list of virtues, "inner qualities that incline the individual to choose right over wrong," that will find broad support throughout the community and will be the basis of a curriculum in the county's classrooms, said Heimbach.

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"We are just saying to the students, 'We expect you to be this way. There are specific character traits that you should have. There is a difference between right and wrong. We want you to chose what is right,'" Heimbach said.

The local task force, which will seek parental and community input, has identified eight character traits it believes will promote character development in young people: courage, good judgment (prudence), integrity, kindness, perseverance, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline.

"These are standards of right and wrong the community can stand behind," Heimbach said. "When you get to the question of why it is right to be honest, why it is right to be responsible, why it is wrong to be lazy, then the answer of why is left to the parents."

Heimbach stressed the school system should not stand in place of the parent: "Public school teachers should not become moral authorities in place of the parents or do the parents' job for them, and they certainly should not be undermining what parents are trying to do."

There is a desire to pull the community together with this effort, Heimbach said. "We feel there are a number of character traits, from different philosophical and religious traditions, that are not unique to Christianity or Hinduism or Judaism or humanism, but rather are shared broadly."

The task force has then steered clear of declaring an ultimate source of moral authority for the virtues it has identified. Heimbach said, "We don't want the school teachers in the position of saying that this is the right view of moral authority and these others are not."

"We don't want the school system to be a vehicle to promote a moral system or framework that is unique to one religious viewpoint and not shared by others; that is the province of the church and the family. It is the community of which you are a part that is saying, 'This is the kind of person we want you to be,'" Heimbach said.

There is not always unanimity on the character traits that are proposed, the professor acknowledged. "There have been some issues upon which there have clearly been divisions, divisions because of contrasting world views."

For instance, the task force has declined to include tolerance as a virtue. "Some believe very strongly in that as a positive character trait," Heimbach said. "Others do not because tolerance is used as a lever to avoid making moral judgments about certain controversial types of behavior."

"From a Christian worldview, certain kinds of sexual behavior are clearly wrong, and yet there are those from a very permissive humanist point of view who are saying that the behavior should be accepted, because we should be tolerant. Tolerance by itself is not a virtue. It's a character trait, but it can just as well be a vice as a virtue," Heimbach said.

Heimbach noted the work of the Wake County task force is "entirely original" in its process although a few other school systems across the country are exploring ways to introduce virtues back into the schools.

He said Wake County "is in a leadership role in this program. We wanted to do something that could be an example to everybody else, and in fact that is what is happening." The Character Education Task Force's work in designing a curriculum with character traits and standards of right and wrong has prompted a "tremendous response," Heimbach said. "This effort in Wake County is pretty much ahead of the game for the country."

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Prof voices ethics concerns
over scandal at Naval Academy By Dwayne Hastings

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--"What bothers me most about it is the number of individuals involved," said Daniel Heimbach, professor of ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, of the recent cheating scandal at the U.S. Naval Academy.

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"It's not that there were just a couple of midshipmen who did not live up to the Honor Code and were caught, but there seems to be such a large number who evidently thought they were going to get away with it," said Heimbach, a graduate of the academy who reviewed the ethics curriculum there during his stint as deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for manpower in the Bush administration.

An official Naval inquiry earlier this year resulted in 29 midshipmen being separated from the academy for cheating on an electrical engineering examination in December 1992 and 41 others being disciplined in the incident.

Heimbach visited the academy several times to review the ethics curriculum, talking to professors involved in teaching and developing courses and reviewing with them how the matter of ethics was approached in the classroom.

While this most recent ethics scandal suggests "a level of inadequacy of moral reasoning" in cadets, Heimbach also said the academy's leadership should be concerned about how ethics is integrated into the school's curriculum and how the Honor Code system is managed.

"They should also take a hard look at how the engineering department is being run," said Heimbach, adding he doubts much more can be done in the area of moral education at the Naval Academy.

"I can't see that they could do very much more without having the whole academic program be a moral ethics curriculum as opposed to learning about engineering and science and everything else the students have to learn," Heimbach said. "They already do an awful lot."

Heimbach explained the academy currently uses an "Ethics Continuum" comprised of leadership courses and portions of other courses, designed not only to provide subject knowledge but also instill moral thinking and decision-making skills in the cadets.

Whether it be at the nation's service academies or in Wake County, N.C., public schools, Heimbach said no ethics curriculum will remedy all the community's problems. "We should not be surprised when we find individuals falling short of the types of character traits that will be held up as ideal," he said.

Yet the existence of an ethics curriculum intertwined with a student's classes will put the student in a better position to deal with the pressures and temptations at the service academies, colleges and universities, Heimbach noted.

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EDITORS' NOTE: Southern Baptists will observe May 1 as Senior Adult Day. The following two articles highlight the ongoing ministries of two church members in their 90s.

Love of teaching keeps
'Graney' active at age 93

By Russell N. Dilday

Baptist Pr ss
4/20/94

MAGNOLIA, Ark. (BP)--She is just "Graney" to her Sunday school students and other members of Central Baptist Church in Magnolia, Ark., but 93-year-old Verbie Graney wouldn't have it any other way.

"Everybody calls me Graney because I call myself Graney too," she said. "I like Graney better than I do Verbie anyway."

Most church members would gladly let her call herself anything she chooses. She has served faithfully as a Sunday school or discipleship teacher in Baptist churches the past 76 years.

"Maybe during that time there was about three months when I wasn't in a teaching position," she recalled. "I had two babies that came along and two moves during that time. But when we moved I always took my church letter with me and got right into a church the next Sunday. It seemed there was always a job there waiting for me when I got there."

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Reflecting on her decades of service, she said "the best of my years have been right here at Central for the past 46 years." During that time, she has directed the southwest Arkansas church's missionary society, church training, various Sunday school departments and has been associational church training director.

She currently is a teacher and department director for the "Love" department at Central, a class for mentally handicapped adults. "The class got its name because it started out of love," she explained.

The class began when Graney "saw that something was missing" at the church. "I realized we did not have Sunday school for our special people. They are special, but they are also equal. We are all created equal."

Graney's love for "special" people stems from her second of two daughters, Jo, who has Down's syndrome. "Jo has been right by my side these years I've done this work. Right with me. I've enjoyed it every minute I've had her.

"I knew they were out there. We started with three and today our enrollment is 34. We now have a department with three classes," she said. "They're all different. Some are high level and some are low level, boys and girls, black and white.

"The first church work I ever did was in BYPU (Baptist Young People's Union)," she related. "I guess I was about 16 or 17 in a little country church in Winsboro, La. I'm the only charter member of that church left."

Graney keeps a folder with training diplomas and certificates that date back 40 years. She said she took the training "because it was available and I felt I needed to be prepared. Teachers need to be prepared if they are going to be successful teachers."

Graney said her love for teaching means "I never get tired of it. It's still a challenge to me and it's a way I can serve my Lord, and I feel that if he's going to give me a job, he'll give me the time to do it. That's why I'm still hanging around, I suppose."

Her experience with teaching the handicapped has extended beyond Central's walls. She taught a class for the mentally handicapped sponsored by the local Kiwanis before it was available in Magnolia's public schools. "They now have special classes from kindergarten through high school."

Her work with the mentally handicapped has even earned her recognition in state circles. "I don't know how, but I got on the Governor's Council on Mental Retardation from Gov. Faubus to Clinton."

Graney also has been instrumental in helping establish several Magnolia facilities for the mentally handicapped, including Independent Living, a home providing shelter for 18 retarded women in the community.

Noting Central Baptist provides the facility for Independent Living, she said the program has been a viable ministry for the church with many of the residents attending the Love class. "Some of these girls had never been to Sunday school or church or anything before. Some of them came from broken homes or homes that didn't want them."

Graney's local involvement in assisting the mentally handicapped has been so extensive, the board of the Columbia Association of Retarded Citizens named their center in her honor. The center provides activities and training programs for clients. She also helped initiate Abilities Unlimited, a Magnolia workshop providing employment opportunities for about 85 handicapped adults.

As a result of her ministry, many of her students have come to know Jesus as their Savior. "Several of my girls have been saved since I've had them in my class. Of course, I talked to them to see if they were sincere and knew what they were doing, then we talked to (Central Church pastor) Brother Rich (Kincl) and they were baptized."

She said the church is supportive of her students. "They feel so at home here. The whole church has accepted those boys and girls, they love the church and the church loves them, and the staff and Brother Rich are very understanding."

She encouraged other churches to initiate ministries for the mentally handicapped. "You can do it if you stay on your toes. There is really no difference from teaching other classes."

Graney said primary qualifications for effective teachers are "to be caring, have a lot of love and be sure each of the students gets something from coming to Sunday school. You have to know their level and be where you can reach each one at their level."

Perhaps her greatest acclaim comes from her students. Spencer Estes said, "Mrs. Graney is a wonderful woman. She is a good teacher and helps you to do it."

"I love her very much and she teaches us about Jesus," said class member Linda Gail. "She's just outstanding."

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(BP) photo available upon request from the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

Layman's lifelong commitment helps
multiply churches in North Dakota

Baptist Press
4/20/94

By Russell N. Dilday

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--Ernest Ward keeps with him a small typewritten saying by an unknown author titled, "Christian Giving." It reads:

"He is no fool who gives away that which he cannot keep in order to gain that which he cannot lose!"

It is believable when the Arkansas Baptist layman says it is his favorite saying. In 1954 Ward helped form the first Southern Baptist church in North Dakota, pledging to give it \$100 a month. Now, 40 years later, the 96-year-old is still honoring that pledge and has given more than \$50,000 to the pioneer church.

Amazingly, the church he helped form served as a mother church that now numbers 25 descendant churches and missions in North and South Dakota and Minnesota.

Ward, born in Oklahoma Territory in 1897, was a land abstracter who got his business start during the Oklahoma oil boom. He later was a partner for a nationwide title abstracting service. Ward was on an abstracting job in Bismarck, N.D., in 1954, the year his wife died, when he received an offer to help start a Southern Baptist church in the state.

"Director of missions Benny Delmar approached me and some others in the winter of '54 about starting a new work in North Dakota," Ward recalled. "A group of us Southern Baptist men got started in a trailer and organized" the new work. "We later rented a Seventh-day Adventist church to meet. We only had six or eight people at first. We just lacked people."

Delmar served as interim pastor until the church called its first full-time pastor, Glenn Field, in 1955. Field remembered the church's seemingly insignificant start. "It was in a mobile home on a pretty cold night in December of 1954 and four or five men with Mr. Delmar formed what was known as First Southern Baptist Church. We later changed the name to Capitol Heights Baptist Church to reflect its location."

Field said Ward was a well-respected community figure. "Mr. Ward came to church services all the time and was one of my great supporters," he said. "He talked to people about going to church and was a great inspiration. A lot of people in Bismarck said he was the most respected man in the oil business because he never went out and drank with them and was highly respected in his business dealings."

He also remembered sacrifices made by the original members. "Some of those years were kind of hard years. The men took money out of their savings accounts and put earnest money down on the land where the church now is."

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Ward said there were more than just financial problems for the church. "The Northern Pacific Railroad went through Bismarck building a road and just dumped the employees, and we had a rough time with that sort of citizen," he commented. "It was like going to a foreign land."

Ward completed his job in Bismarck and moved to Arkansas, marrying his current wife, Evelyn, in 1956 and joining Pulaski Heights Baptist Church in Little Rock, where both are still members. She began to share his interest in the tiny new work in North Dakota.

"We eventually built the building in 1956 and Mr. Ward donated \$5,000 to the building program," Field said. "I talked with him and asked if the money could be used for furniture. I told him to pick out the furniture and they both did a great job."

"The church sent us furniture samples," said Mrs. Ward. "Ernest paid for pews, a pulpit and chairs for the auditorium and the company trucked it up there to Bismarck."

Ward said they support the church because "we felt that it was a worthy cause. It was the first Southern Baptist church in the state and most people were either Catholic, Lutheran or nothing."

The Wards also continued to send their monthly gift which Field said the church put in its general fund to help his salary, missions giving, church expenses and renting a building from the Seventh-day Adventists. "The \$100 a month was a big help," Field said. "And I've seen the time when \$25 a month was a big help."

Field said he's not surprised that Ward still gives to the church. "Mr. Ward is a very determined man," he said. "And when he has some confidence that what he's doing is a good thing, he's going to stay with it and not let anyone turn him aside. He's not the kind you could turn away from something."

Harry Trulove, president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, agreed. "He is a very energetic, positive-thinking individual that doesn't give up. He lost a fortune in the Great Depression and that did not discourage him. He put together another fortune."

Trulove said Ward had once told him of his changing priorities. "Harry, one of the things I realize as I get older is that material things don't count as much as they used to," Ward said. "I'm just more concerned about doing the Lord's work."

Ward said he gives to Capitol Heights "because it was one of my first loves. I have a sentimental feeling toward it and it makes me feel grateful and happy to give to it."

Ward remains faithful to his original pledge. Trulove reported that in addition to sending Capitol Heights a monthly check, Ward has established a charitable remainder annuity trust that will benefit, among other Baptist ministries, Capitol Heights. "After his death, the church will continue to receive \$100 a month until Jesus returns," Trulove said.

Ward is still active at Pulaski Heights Church and maintains a ministry of his own there. "I call all the members of the church on their birthdays and wedding anniversaries and I call the church shut-ins each week," he said. "I think it is one of the contributions I can make. I don't get around a lot and I can't hear too well, but the feedback I get on it keeps me pepped up."

"In my prayers I thank God he has let me live this long," Ward said. "And I pray for guidance in making my gifts, that I may be led to properly distribute my wealth."

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(BP) photo available upon request from the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

White congregation renewed
by black church's faith

By Beth Heard

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--In 1986, Birmingham's Hunter Street Baptist Church was dying.

The voices of 220 congregants worshiping on Sunday morning were only an echo of the 1,100 of 15 years before.

No young couples brought babies for dedication; no children laughed in the hallways. In an inner-city community changing both culturally and racially, this white church had a problem.

Meanwhile, a few blocks away, Sardis Baptist Church, a black congregation, was bursting at the seams. Even with two worship services, members and guests had to arrive before 10:30 a.m. to find a seat for the 11 o'clock service.

This is a story of how God grew a mustard seed and provided for a multitude. In 1972, unbeknownst to the members and ministers of Hunter Street Baptist, Samuel Pettagrue, pastor of Sardis, and some of his friends visited the building at Hunter Street, surveyed the property, and "claimed the church." Not a takeover threat or a death wish, just a prayer: "God give us these facilities."

"When we first claimed this building they had over 1,100 members," Pettagrue recounted. "They hadn't even built their family life center and all the rest of it. And this was fine because I figured the Lord was just preparing all of this for us."

Fourteen years followed without a response to the Sardis church's specific request. They looked at other property to buy, but all attempts fell through. It wasn't until the mortgage of the building they were already in was paid off, an action they felt God indicated was necessary before their prayers could be answered, that Pettagrue met for the first time with Buddy Gray, Hunter Street's pastor.

From 1980-86 Hunter Street's average attendance had dropped by 50 percent. Forty percent of every dollar was being spent to maintain the facilities. "Based on the curve, we'd last three or four more years," Gray said. At the time, Gray was the church's new pastor. As he considered Hunter Street's plight, he realized a decision would have to be made or the church would not survive.

"We had a sanctuary that would seat 1,800 folks, and we had 220 in attendance," Gray said. "We didn't have any young people, zero young married couples. We had one baby and it was mine and my wife's."

Pettagrue and Gray met, prayed together and then addressed their separate congregations. Sardis Baptist voted unanimously to buy the Hunter Street facilities.

Hunter Street was more reluctant, however. Gray said a lot of sadness was expressed as members reflected on times past. But a decision was reached as they realized Hunter Street "was about people, not a building" and as they considered the ministries Sardis would bring to the area. "The ministries of Sardis really made a difference, because it wasn't as though we were abandoning the community. We were just getting out of the way," Gray said.

"If we define the church as people, the church left a long time ago, and the remaining people were faced with tough decisions."

After a year of negotiations, a sale agreement was reached and Hunter Street decided to relocate in Hoover, a growing suburb south of Birmingham. Asked why Sardis Baptist didn't wait three more years for the church to die, when the facilities would then be literally given away, Pettagrue told Gray, "God told me if I let Hunter Street die, he would let my church die." Instead of dying, Hunter Street was given a new start.

"The good news is Sardis Baptist Church had a vision," Gray said. "I think we can both see how God did have a bigger plan in mind. The kingdom of God is growing in both places."

Since moving to Hoover in 1988, Hunter Street has grown from 200 to more than 2,500. In the last three months Sunday school has jumped by 300.

"We're in a great spot at a great time with great folks," Gray noted. "Most of the people who come to our church have a house, a kid, a car and a job, but they realize that there's more to life than those things. We are finding a real hunger for something beyond those things that people have, and that's been very rewarding to see."

Sardis Baptist Church is making extensive use of their new facilities as well. Growing from 1,500 to 3,000 since the move, the church has expanded to include more than 50 active ministries, including a Christian school, day-care and food and clothing centers, a recreation program, a prison outreach and a medical ministry.

"We know what the Lord can do, and we know what the church can do if it only lets its arms out, lets its heart go out," Pettagrue said. "We can't take any credit at all for growing; God did it all."

"Like he told the children of Israel, 'I'm going to give you vines you did not plant, buildings you did not build.' That's what the Lord does."

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