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Teach values in schools,  
panelists tell Texas CLC

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
4/29/94

DALLAS (BP)--Religious indoctrination has no place in public schools, but the already-frayed social fabric will be shredded unless schools find a way to teach consensus values, speakers told the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission and its board of consultants.

A state senator joined three school board representatives for a panel discussion as the commission -- the 18-member governing body for Texas Baptists' moral concerns and public policy agency -- met with many members of its 63-person board of consultants, April 21-22, at the Bishop Mason Retreat Center near Dallas.

Some groups that express urgent concern about teaching values to school-age children are unwilling to work with anyone outside their circles -- even potential allies, according to Sen. Jim Turner, D-Crockett, chairman of the Texas Commission on Children and Youth.

"We recognize the need in our society to re-establish a moral base. Yet those who represent morals and values struggle against each other. They don't know who their friends are," said Turner, a deacon at First Baptist Church in Crockett whose commission has been criticized by the Eagle Forum, a conservative advocacy group founded by Phyllis Schlafly.

"We have a lot of distrust in our country today, most of it ill-founded, and it is pulling us apart."

Unless the values vacuum is filled, Texas prisons will continue to overflow, said Turner, whose work on the state Punishment and Standards Commission sparked his interest in children and youth issues.

One of 18 adult Texas males is in prison or jail, on probation or parole, and the ratio is expected to be one in 12 by the turn of the century, he noted.

Children not only need to be taught moral values but also shown love and compassion by adults, he said.

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"We need to link caring, responsible adults to children on a long-term basis," Turner said.

Imparting values to the next generation will take more "civic energy" than some communities are willing to expend, according to Sandy Kress of the Dallas School Board.

"Many primitive societies do a better job of preparing their adolescents than we do," he said.

Rather than segmenting values instruction into a separate part of the school day, the teaching of values should be integrated into the basic core curriculum and modeled by teachers, Kress said.

Incorporating values into existing instruction is the approach that has been taken by the Leander Independent School District near Austin, according to Leander School Board president Debbie Manns.

The district began by adopting 10 commonly held, non-sectarian, ethical principles, said Manns, a member at Highland Park Baptist Church in Austin.

Parents were encouraged to sign "parental pledges" regarding the enforcement of certain behaviors, children were assigned "hero letters" as writing assignments, and character development was adopted as the district's top teaching goal.

Mary Rutledge of Cliff Temple Baptist Church in Dallas, former president of the Dallas School Board, cited the experience of the Dallas Independent School District in introducing "Education for Responsible Parenthood," a kindergarten-12 program that emphasized the teaching of human growth and sexuality in an age-appropriate manner.

Packets for home study were made available for parental review and use, with the understanding that parents who objected strongly could have their children excused from the program. The supporting materials also were made available to churches.

While pointing out parents need to be taught communication skills and -- quite often -- receive grounding in values themselves, parental involvement can only be encouraged, not demanded, Rutledge said.

"The classroom is the only captive audience you have. You have no control over the parents," she said.

Church-state separationists -- who oppose using public schools for religious instruction -- need to take the lead is proposing a better way of teaching values, according to Weston Ware, citizenship associate with the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"Our kids are not being taught how to perpetuate our society," Ware said. "We have to find a way to allow the teaching of values, of family, of civilization."

Ware urged the directive teaching of values through stories -- historical, fictional and biblical -- as opposed to exclusively a "dilemma" approach in which students are presented problems and called on to select a course of action.

Based on every measurable indicator other than rhetoric, society in general and Texas in particular do not value its children, according to children's advocate Shirley Hammond.

While juvenile crime increased by 9 percent nationally in the last five years, it increased by 97 percent in Texas, said Hammond, director of Texans Care for Children -- a private nonprofit child advocacy organization founded by Phil Strickland, director of the Texas Baptist CLC.

"Clearly, Texas does not value its children and its families," she told the commission. "The long-term results will be a disenfranchised citizenry and a ravaged economy."

The alternative, she said, is to focus on prevention and early intervention in the lives of at-risk children and youth.

**2 former Texas presidents  
support change in CP funding**

DALLAS (BP)--Two past presidents of the Baptist General Convention of Texas have endorsed a proposal which recommends a change in that state's Cooperative Program with a primary focus on Texas Baptist causes.

J. Richard "Dick" Maples, pastor of First Baptist Church in Bryan and BGCT president from 1992-93, and Phil Lineberger, pastor of First Baptist Church in Tyler and BGCT president from 1990-91, have endorsed a plan under consideration by the Cooperative Missions Study Committee of the Texas convention.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention.

State and regional conventions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining funds to the SBC Executive Committee for national and international ministries. The percentage of distribution is at the discretion of each state or regional convention.

The 22-member Texas committee, appointed following the 1993 annual state convention meeting, has not agreed on its final recommendations but the apparent consensus favorite is one which emphasizes Texas causes.

Under the plan, churches will continue to send CP contributions to the state convention but would be required to designate how funds beyond Texas would be distributed.

Currently, gifts to the CP from churches are automatically divided 63.35 percent for Texas causes and 36.65 percent for the SBC. Currently funds beyond Texas, about \$21 million in 1993, automatically go to the SBC unless a church designates otherwise.

If a church does so, the action is called a "negative designation" and the contributions of that congregation are not considered "Cooperative Program" gifts.

The recommendation under consideration would require each church to specifically designate how its funds beyond Texas would be distributed and would consider all gifts "Cooperative Program" gifts.

The proposal would allow a variety of things under "worldwide Baptist causes," including the SBC, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Criswell College or any other Baptist entity.

"Such a plan, as we have read it, is completely fair to all Texas Baptists, including churches which support the SBC totally, those which support only part of the work of the SBC and those which are struggling to support the SBC," the two former Texas presidents said in a prepared statement.

However, if adopted, the proposal would dramatically change the longtime Cooperative Program relationship between the churches, the state convention and the Southern Baptist Convention, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is the distribution point for the CP gifts to SBC agencies.

"The Cooperative Program which was adopted in 1925 is considered by most Southern Baptists to be a God-given method for funding world missions," Chapman said in response to the Texas committee's proposal. "The Texas proposal as released is a far cry from what Southern Baptists have known, cherished and practiced."

But the two former Texas presidents said the proposal would have a unifying effect, allowing Texas Baptist churches "to remain unified around the BGCT and its current leadership and mission vision."

"Texas Baptists are fragmented regarding the SBC, its leadership and budget," Maples said. "Texas Baptists, for the most part, want out of SBC politics. This is a way of doing that while respecting the autonomy of each church as well as the autonomy of this state convention."

Lineberger said the proposal will allow churches to decide how and with whom to cooperate, "a proposal which even (Chapman) seems to agree."

Chapman, a former Texas pastor and president of the SBC, said the plan appears to be "an open invitation to Southern Baptist churches in Texas to become more directly involved in SBC missions by sending their gifts directly to the SBC for world missions and ministries."

The Texas Cooperative Missions Give Study Committee has not decided on its final recommendation and likely will not do so until its final meeting, currently scheduled July 29.

Any recommendation will be presented to the annual meeting of the BGCT, scheduled Oct. 31-Nov. 1 in Amarillo.

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Herb Hollinger of Baptist Press and the Texas convention's public relations office contributed to this report.

Supreme Court hears arguments  
on abortion clinic buffer zone

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
4/29/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--A buffer zone prohibiting pro-life speech around an abortion clinic violates the Constitution because it is viewpoint-based and a prior restraint of speech, an attorney told the U.S. Supreme Court April 28.

A court injunction establishing two different-sized zones around a Melbourne, Fla., abortion clinic "criminalizes (the pro-life) side of the debate," Mathew Staver told the justices in oral arguments in *Madsen v. Women's Health Center*. "This injunction is overkill. This injunction, instead of a surgeon's scalpel, cuts with a butcher's knife."

The clinic's attorney argued the health care of women seeking abortions is at stake.

The area around the clinic should be considered a hospital zone, said Talbot D'Alemberte. "I just don't think (pro-life protest) is the kind of thing we want to encourage around a hospital zone," he said.

In April 1993, a Florida judge amended an earlier injunction to create a 36-foot zone, which includes a public sidewalk, in which no pro-life speech or literature distribution may occur. The injunction established a 300-foot zone in which the pro-life defendants and those acting "in concert" with them are not allowed to speak to a clinic patient unless she indicates a willingness to listen. It banned sounds or images which could be heard or seen within the clinic. The injunction also created 300-foot zones preventing picketing and similar activities around the homes of clinic employees.

The court acknowledged Judy Madsen and the other two defendants had never blocked access to abortion clinics, even though they had been active in Operation Rescue. The prior injunction prohibited trespassing and blockading of the clinic, as well as physical abuse of clinic employees.

Operation Rescue, which often blockades abortion entrances, had protested at the clinic.

The Florida Supreme Court upheld the injunction as a content-neutral restriction. In another case involving the same injunction, however, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the injunction as a viewpoint-based restriction.

The judge ruled in an overbroad fashion and "clearly tried to restrain a belief," Staver told the justices. Madsen was prevented from speaking freely, even though she had not acted illegally previously, he said.

The injunction "covers the whole world," he said. "We know because anyone who penetrated the 300-foot zone was arrested."

While some of the justices seemed unwilling to accept Staver's argument against such an injunction, some also expressed skepticism about D'Alemberte's contention pro-life speech and conduct should be prevented based on its effect on the vital signs of women preparing for and undergoing abortions inside the clinic.

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Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy referred to it as a "heartbeat test."

If he has a heart problem, should he carry a sign around saying, "Heart Condition - Do Not Upset Me?" asked Associate Justice Antonin Scalia.

Under questioning by Scalia, D'Alemberte admitted the "possibility of a chilling effect" on free speech.

Solicitor General Drew Days argued on behalf of the Justice Department for the high court to uphold the injunction.

Afterward, pro-lifers described the case as critical for the future of free speech, while pro-choice advocates called it a matter of safety for abortion clinic clients and workers.

"Instead of using handcuffs on the lawbreakers, the Florida court tossed a hand grenade into the crowd, injuring law-abiding protesters like Judy Madsen as well," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "Decimating the free-speech rights of innocent people in the crowd is judicial overkill.

"We urge the court not to fall for the rhetoric which labels all pro-lifers as terrorists," said Whitehead, who observed the arguments. "We urge the court not to cave in to the demands of the abortion industry to use the force of law to crush social protest."

The Christian Life Commission joined on a friend-of-the-court brief by the Christian Legal Society supporting Madsen.

Eleanor Smeal, president of Fund for the Feminist Majority, said the injunction "was absolutely necessary to guarantee the public safety of the patients, the doctors and the health care workers. Let us not forget for one moment that we entered court about one year ago in Florida right after the death of Dr. Gunn. Let us not forget for one moment that one of the doctors who testified in this case had been threatened himself with death. Let us not forget for one moment that other clinic workers were threatened with death. Let us not forget for one moment the atmosphere in which these clinics had to work . . . . This judge moved to protect the safety of doctors."

In March 1993, David Gunn was shot dead outside a Pensacola, Fla., clinic where he performed abortions.

National Organization for Women President Patricia Ireland said if the clinic loses "we will assume that our abortion rights supporters will be able to move from the sidewalk in front of the court where we're currently restricted right up the stairs to the Supreme Court's front door, indeed to the front door of the Supreme Court's justices' homes. We will assume we'll be able to set up sound equipment outside the White House and the Congress and play it loud enough that no business will be able to be conducted inside. And in those instances we are not talking about health. We're talking about the processes of government."

Madsen, who said she never had been to the Melbourne clinic before the injunction was issued, said, "Just as Martin Luther King should not lose the right to speak because some member of the Black Panthers advocates violence to achieve racial equality, my right to speak does not depend on the acts of others."

Staver told reporters, "This particular case is about free speech vs. censorship, not abortion rights. Any kind of speech may be intimidating to another individual, but we don't censor speech simply because someone disagrees with the content, because if we do we will always censor every other individual's speech."

The court is expected to issue its opinion in June or early July.

In addition to the CLC and CLS, organizations joining in briefs siding with the pro-lifers included the National Right to Life Committee, American Family Association, Americans United for Life, Family Research Council, National Association of Evangelicals and Operation Rescue.

Supporting the clinic in briefs were NOW, People for the American Way, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Americans for Religious Liberty, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, as well as Florida and 24 other states.

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Litigation to increase,  
church law expert says

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
4/29/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--An increase in litigation is a trend for the remainder of the 1990s, an expert in church law and tax matters told more than 100 church staff persons during an April 25-28 "Legal Issues in the Church" seminar.

Richard Hammar, an attorney and editor of "Church Law and Tax Report" of Matthews, N.C., said he believes for the rest of this decade litigation will intensify based on an increasing number of persons training for the legal profession and based on recent surveys of court litigation.

"This country has 850,000 attorneys," Hammar observed, "moving toward 1 million in an already saturated and glutted profession. As the legal profession continues to spiral out of control, we will see an increase in litigation."

As further evidence, he said 93 million cases were filed in state courts in 1993.

"Of those, 20 million were civil lawsuits," he said, "and the number of civil cases is expected to double by 1996."

In a 1993 legal survey done by "Church Law and Tax Report," results indicate a direct correlation between the size of church and the amount of damages it pays. Larger churches, Hammar said, pay more in damages than a small church will for the same act.

Among the subjects of litigation cited in the survey are disputes involving employees, membership, clergy, property, zoning, taxes, personal injury and sexual misconduct. The two categories in which no litigation was reported were securities/funding and copyright.

Hammar said four distinct problems in the area of sexual misconduct are potentials for lawsuit. Those are sexual contact with a preadolescent, sexual contact with a teen, seduction and harassment.

Churches are uniquely vulnerable to sexual misconduct charges, he said, because they are "institutions of trust, and predators use this to their advantage."

Churches are particularly vulnerable if they have no screening procedures for those who work with children.

"Astronomical" jury verdicts, therapists who recommend lawsuit as a part of the healing process, media publicity, flexible statutes of limitations and innovative theories of liability contribute to a greater willingness of persons to file civil suits.

Theories of liability, he said, include negligent (careless or inadvertent) selection, supervision or retention of persons who work with children and youth. Common problem areas include camping, overnight and scouting-type activities, during which incidents may occur that are "devastating at all levels. The reputation of the church suffers for years. Members may wonder if their children also have been violated."

Hammar recommended steps to prevent possible problems with sexual abuse of children and teen-agers, including a six-month rule, screening forms, a church policy and church member education.

The six-month rule is a requirement that a person be a member of the church for at least six months before working with minors.

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Screening forms, which could be completed by both volunteer and paid workers with minors, would include a photo identification card, general information, questions about criminal convictions, prior church membership and volunteer work and a driver's license number. He also advocated asking on paper or in an interview if the person being considered for a position relating to children or youth has ever been a victim of child molestation.

Checking references, prior church affiliation and prior church service is key to the value of such forms, he said.

A church policy might include quoting the state child abuse reporting law, a list of the symptoms of abuse and procedures for reporting suspicions to a designated person.

Education could take the form of books, audio and video tapes or training manuals in child abuse prevention.

People who have had prior convictions should "never again" be allowed to work with minors, Hammar said. "According to medical science, pedophilia (sexual contact with a preadolescent) is widely considered to be an incurable disorder. Pedophiles are thought to be highly promiscuous, with each having between 100 and 500 victims."

At best, pedophiles are felt to be controllable under "limited circumstances," he continued. "While grace and forgiveness are important, you have a duty to children in the church," he cautioned, adding that other opportunities for volunteer service exist apart from working with minors.

Of major concern to churches should be the relevance of a congregation's corporate status to possible lawsuits, he emphasized.

A church that is not incorporated may find itself facing litigation seeking damages not only from church assets, but also from governing board members and individual church members, in cases of gross negligence. Some churches, he said, may have been incorporated long ago, and the term for incorporation expired after 20 or 50 years, without anyone taking notice. He said church documents of incorporation should include provision for "perpetual" duration.

Other areas in which churches should explore the likelihood of liability, he said, are:

- negligent supervision;
- clergy seduction;
- counseling ministries and services;
- basis for employee termination; and
- the wording of church deeds, relative to donated property and future disposition or use of the property.

Hammar recommended congregations work with an insurance carrier to provide an amount at least equal to the value of the church's unencumbered assets, and to take into account activities and other risk factors for which coverage should be provided.

The "Legal Issues in the Church" seminar was sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's church leadership department.

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A list of related resources has been posted in the SBCNet News Room.

Churches can take steps to reduce  
threat of lawsuits, lawyer says By Chip Alford

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NASHVILLE (BP)--While churches can't eliminate the possibility of getting sued, they can take steps to reduce the threat of "successful lawsuits" against them, a lawyer for the Baptist Sunday School Board said.

"I think it's a trend of the '90s that the courts are more willing to consider cases involving religious affairs and activities. Churches need to be prepared for that," Norm Finney, manager of legal services at the BSSB told participants attending the April 25-28 "Legal Issues in the Church" seminar in Nashville.

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Finney suggested church leaders identify possible church-related risks and liabilities and then take steps to eliminate or reduce them.

Review should take place in four areas, he said: property, personnel, policies and practices. Among questions that should be asked in each category, he said, are:

1) Property. Are there "attractive nuisances" (e.g. pools, ponds, cliffs) on the church property that could result in accidents and injuries? Do any church fixtures (e.g. stairs, step-downs, doors, chairs) need repair? Is church equipment (e.g. buses, vans, mowers) in good working condition? Does playground equipment meet "industry standards" related to safety? Is there adequate signage for information and protection (e.g. "Keep off the railing," "Not an exit," "Watch your step") and are the warnings enforced? Is the church equipped with adequate lighting? Are fire exits properly marked?

"I can tell you, in some cases if someone gets injured, the only question is going to be, 'How much?'" Finney said.

2) Personnel. Do you have an appropriate screening process for paid and volunteer childcare and youth workers? (Finney suggested conducting interviews, asking for references and taking any complaints against workers seriously.) Are persons driving church vehicles licensed and do they have a good driving record? When staff members are terminated, are you treating them fairly?

"It may be your right to fire them, but it's also important how you do it. ... When it comes to employment law, nobody has ever improved on the Golden Rule. Treat people like you would like to be treated," Finney said.

3) Policies. Do you have written policies concerning certain procedures (e.g. who can drive church vehicles or sign church documents) and are you following them? Do you have policies stating what should be done in emergency situations or when child abuse is discovered, and are church workers/members aware of them? If you rent your church facilities, do you require that a contract be signed? (A good idea, according to Finney.) Do you have adequate liability insurance coverage and are there any gaps in your coverage?

"A lot of times we think our policy covers a certain area and then later we find out it doesn't," Finney said, adding churches might consider hiring an independent insurance consultant to advise them about proper coverage.

4) Practices. Are church payroll records routinely audited? (Another good idea, Finney said.) Are church-sponsored recreational activities being properly supervised? Is there a plan for routine maintenance of church vehicles?

"Pay particular attention to brakes and tires," Finney said.

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Photocopies can violate federal law,  
legal consultant to church staffers

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press

4/29/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--The use of a photocopy machine at church could be hazardous to a church's financial health and its reputation, if using the machine violates copyright law, participants in a seminar on "Legal Issues in the Church" learned April 25-28.

Larry Cannon, legal consultant for the Baptist Sunday School Board, told more than 100 church staff persons attending the seminar that some churches have paid large financial prices and suffered embarrassment for the temporary "convenience" of photocopying original writings or music without proper permission from the owner of the material.

"The owner of a creative work has the right by federal law to copy the work, prepare derivative works, distribute the work for sale or rental, perform the work publicly and display the work," Cannon said.

Public performances such as singing a song or playing a video require permission and, in most cases, payment of a fee for that privilege. The exception is performance of religious music at religious assembly, and Cannon said the word "religious" is crucial to the exception in both uses of the word.

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Cannon explained that showing a video or portion of a video as the basis for discussing a teaching point is an exemption under the law. To show the same video as a means of entertaining a group does not qualify, even if the showing takes place at church.

"Fair use," an exception some persons use to justify copying or using materials without permission or payment, is not widely applied to churches. The limited application of "fair use" is for literary criticism or comment, news reporting, teaching (one copy of a selected item for each student, only when there is not adequate time to get permission), scholarship or research (one copy for an individual's use).

Cannon said libraries are permitted to make one copy of an item for archival purposes, but if the reason for making a copy is to avoid paying for the copy, that is never "fair use."

Duplicating tapes of a church's worship service to distribute to homebound members may well require paying a fee to the companies that hold copyrights to the music used in those services, he said. Some churches find dealing with that process too complicated, thus they duplicate only the sermon portion of the service to avoid copyright violations.

An economical means for churches to secure permission to copy music and cover fees is to secure a church copyright license from Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc. (CCLI) of Portland, Ore. For an annual fee, ranging from \$85 for a church under 100 members to a maximum of \$600 for a congregation of 10,000 or more, churches may legally copy the music of more than 1,000 publishers for congregational use. These include the Sunday School Board's Genevox Music Group, Broadman Press, McKinney Press and Van Ness Press. Detailed information may be obtained by calling CCLI at 1-800-234-2446.

Another organization, Church Music Publishers Association of Nashville, which is supported by a wide range of organizations, including the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference, offers a free brochure on "The Church Musician and The Copyright Law." To obtain a copy, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to CMPA, P.O. Box 158992, Nashville, TN 37215. For \$2, the same organization will provide a list of church music copyright holders.

Cannon's advice to churches contemplating the use of any materials that require multiple copies is, "If you can't buy it, get permission from the publisher."

The "Legal Issues in the Church" seminar was sponsored by the Sunday School Board's church leadership department.

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**African American church uses  
cell groups to touch lives**

**By Valerie Hancock**

**Baptist Press  
4/29/94**

WILLINGBORO, N.J. (BP)--Members at New Life Fellowship Church in Willingboro, N.J., don't attend Sunday school on Sunday mornings. Wednesday evenings aren't spend going to prayer meeting. Nor do they meet for regularly scheduled business meeting the third Wednesday of each month.

Instead, members spend one evening each week in each others' homes for prayer, Bible study and a time of sharing. On Sunday morning they attend a "Celebration Service" in a local high school auditorium with praise and worship music, prayer/share time and a message from the pastor.

The church started in 1991 when Spencer R. Rodgers Jr. was called to leave his position as pastor of a traditional Baptist church and begin a cell-based church, a concept used widely by churches throughout the world. Among the proponents of such ministry is Touch Outreach Ministries in Houston.

"The rootage of the cells is clearly in the New Testament. It is a rediscovery of the way the early church was," said Rodgers, senior teacher and pastor and a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

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"I'm convinced God intended fellowship among the body to develop in this way. In small groups there is an opportunity among the body to grow in amazing ways."

Develop and grow it has. Since its inception, the church has grown from one cell group to 14 groups of eight to 10 members in five different zones. Each cell is led by a "shepherd(s)" who organizes and leads the group in Bible study and prayer. Each zone also is led by a "zone shepherd." Rodgers said he hopes to eventually have a zone pastor for each zone in addition to himself, senior pastor over the entire body.

"Our goal is to meet people where they are and to be a real church to them -- that is our slogan, 'A Real Church for Real People.' Real people have real problems and they don't leave them behind when they come to church," Rodgers said. Located in suburban Willingboro, the church is about 30 miles northeast of Philadelphia.

Structure is the main ingredient that separates the cells from typical small Bible study groups. The people are always the agenda and the structured Bible study may be put aside to meet the needs of the group, Rodgers said.

"One particular instance when a person in the group was really struggling with something, the group stopped Bible study, surrounded the person in a circle and began praying," he recounted. "The group did not know the specific need but with God's guidance knew how to pray."

A wide variety of believers, all African Americans, from different backgrounds and walks of Christianity have been drawn to the cell-based church.

Lisa Murray and her husband, Edward, moved to Willingboro from Newark, N.J., in 1991. They had been searching for a church family when a man pulled into their driveway one day and invited Edward to attend the men's cell group. "We were waiting for the Lord to lead us and we had not sensed his 'yes' until we went to New Life Fellowship," said Lisa.

Now the Murrays are leaders of a couples cell group that meets each Wednesday evening. Lisa said she thinks the cell groups are an effective ministry because the people have contact with each other many times throughout the week and sometimes every day.

"God has called us out to be his chosen ones and to represent his kingdom. Ministry is done through people and it can't happen if the people are isolated from each other," she said. "I find that in a structured environment people are isolated. When everything takes place within a building, all focus toward God is there, but God doesn't work just in that building."

There are occasions when God redirects their group, Lisa said, to go in a different direction, and she said that is exciting. "Power and presence is the main difference between our body and other churches. When we are totally committed to go where God wants us to go, the enemy's kingdom is literally torn down -- that is power," she said.

The official church staff consists only of Rodgers and a part-time administrative assistant. Rodgers' wife, Maria, is very involved with the ministry as well. They have one son Adrian, 7, and two daughters, Danielle, 6, and Alanah, 2.

Rodgers said it is wonderful to have such committed and enthusiastic members devoting their energy to New Life Fellowship Church. "When the people are committed and determined to serve God and do his will, being a pastor is the best job in the world."

One of the many committed members is zone shepherd Lucius Shuler. Shuler and his wife, Ruth, also a zone shepherd, were members of the traditional church where Rodgers had been pastor before. Shuler said he was rather disillusioned about his role as a deacon and after serious prayer and consideration he and his wife felt called to join Rodgers in his new ministry.

"As a deacon, a number of things were disillusioning. I was responsible for providing pastoral care to 15 to 20 families, staying in contact, visiting, finding out what their needs were spiritually. It was just overwhelming and I felt that I just could not do that and do a good job," Shuler said.

As a zone shepherd, Shuler's duties are very similar to that of a deacon, but the structure of the cell-based church makes completing these tasks easier to accomplish, he said.

In a traditional church, "If it weren't allowed to exercise our individual and collective gifts. It was just too large a group and now we are involved in small individual groups and we have a system of passing information up and down the line. There is no challenge in regard to whose responsible for what. Everyone is involved with the ministry."

Individual involvement is a key factor in the cell-based structure and many times that characteristic draws people into the fellowship, said Rodgers.

Dennis James came to New Life Fellowship Church when a friend invited him to attend a Sunday Celebration Service. After visiting, James said he liked the message and the teaching. "It's pretty progressive and it seems to help you with your everyday life as opposed to just coming to church and going home."

After attending the men's cell group and worship services a few months, James dedicated his life to Christ and is now the percussionist for the church's praise team.

A mixture of contemporary and traditional gospel music highlights the praise- and worship-oriented Celebration Service each Sunday morning. "We have a dynamic choir and instrumentalists who lead in worship. We are constantly striving for open worship and the body is always involved with prayer," Rodgers said.

Seeing the power of open prayer at work at a Celebration Service drew Jane Manuel to the church. Though raised in church, she discovered after attending New Life Fellowship she was not a Christian and had never truly given her life to the Lord. Jane credits her cell group with helping her become strong enough to pray out loud, something she had always been afraid of doing before.

"I used to look at people in church and want to be just like them because they looked so content and peaceful. Now I have gained that peace and the knowledge of that comes from prayer," Manuel said.

Rodgers said the direction of the church is guided much in the same way cell groups are -- by God's agenda. "Sure, we have goals and ideas for the future, but if God were to change them all tomorrow we would follow. His will is our top priority," Rodgers said.

The church has put pen to paper and specifically named its goals, "Toward 2000 A.D.: The Next Seven Years," which defines where the church is headed spiritually. Rodgers said he also hopes to expand the church's ministry to include drama, inner-city work and missions.

"I feel it is important that the members have the experience of sharing what they have learned and the very real relationship that they have with God with others who may not know him," Rodgers said.

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West Virginia state editor  
to return to church staff

Baptist Press  
4/29/94

SCOTT DEPOT, W.Va. (BP)--Rick D. Hatley, editor of The West Virginia Southern Baptist, has resigned to return to a local church staff position in Kentucky.

Hatley, who also served as director of the church development division for the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists, will leave June 30.

Hatley will become associate pastor/education for Central Baptist Church in Winchester, Ky.

Hatley, editor since April 1992, was on church staffs in Kentucky and Illinois prior to the state post. He is a native of Dawson Spring, Ky.

"The love for the local church and my family," Hatley said was the reason for his resignation.

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Hatley is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. and Murray State University, Murray, Ky.

He and his wife, Carol, have three daughters: Jessica, Jennifer and Emily.

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SBC resolutions committee asks  
for proposals to be submitted

Baptist Press  
4/29/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The SBC Resolutions Committee chairman has called for a preview of resolutions proposed for the June 14-16 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando, Fla.

Tommy Lea, professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, said messengers could send a copy of their proposed resolutions to the committee prior to the annual meeting to assist the committee.

"We will preview them in our committee meetings before the Orlando convention starts," Lea said.

During the convention the committee will recommend specific resolutions for adoption.

Copies of proposed resolutions may be mailed to the SBC Executive Committee, Convention Relations Office, 901 Commerce St., Suite 750, Nashville, TN 37203.

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Southern marks 10th anniversary  
of church social work school

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press  
4/29/94

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Since its founding a decade ago, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's church social work school has helped define church social work for Southern Baptists and other Christians, according to the seminary's social work dean.

"Our graduates are around the world allowing God to work through them as instruments of the kingdom and bringing about social justice and caring about the least of these my brothers and sisters," said Diana R. Garland, dean of the Carver School of Church Social Work. Garland was one of the speakers at a recent celebration of the school's 10th anniversary which drew approximately 115 alumni and other supporters of the Carver school to the Louisville, Ky., campus.

Church social work was relatively undeveloped as a specialization within the social work profession until the formation of the church social work school, noted Garland, dean since 1993 and a Southern professor since 1980.

"We were essentially creating something that had not existed conceptually before, although certainly people were ministering as church social workers," Garland explained. "There was not literature, however, and little that defined the church as a context for social work."

Today, Southern is the nation's only seminary that offers a fully accredited master of social work degree.

C. Anne Davis, founding dean of the church social work school, said she had dreamed of a separate social work school since joining the seminary faculty in 1970. "I've seen a dream come true," she said. Davis, who continues to teach on the social work faculty, told those present she hopes they also can "find something worth investing your life in for 25 years."

For several years, social work courses were taught in the seminary's curriculum as part of the school of religious education. The roots of Southern Baptist social work education, however, stretch back to 1907 when the Woman's Missionary Union Training School was founded in Louisville.

The training school was renamed the Carver School of Missions and Social Work in 1953 and in 1963 the school was merged with the seminary.

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In an address on the training school's history, Laine Scales, a professor at Palm Beach (Fla.) Atlantic College, maintained that the present Carver school continues the heritage of the WMU-sponsored institution. The women at the training school used professional social work methods to meet Christian aims, said Scales, a 1986 M.S.W. graduate of Southern. "They invented new models for practice at their own settlement house and then, as graduates, used these methods in Baptist work all over the nation and in foreign countries."

In coming years, the Carver school will offer specializations in areas such as children and family services, gerontology, rural social work and international social work, Garland said. Additionally, the school plans to publish a journal on church social work and to offer a doctoral degree in social work.

"We have unprecedented support from the administration and the trustees to continue to grow and develop our field of church leadership," Garland said. "What we need, however, is the kind of support that only our alumni and colleagues can give us."

Garland told alumni they could help the school by doing research in church social work. "We need you to conceptualize what it is that you do," she said. "And we need you to write those experiences, those conceptualizations, that research for those who will come behind you." Garland emphasized that the school also needs prayer and financial support from alumni.

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**Baptists provide relief  
to Texas tornado victims**

**By Orville Scott & Ken Camp**

**Baptist Press  
4/29/94**

DALLAS (BP)--A series of tornadoes which killed at least three people, injured scores of others and caused more than \$250 million in property damage in several north Texas communities April 25-26 generated a wave of compassionate response by Baptist volunteers.

As dazed storm survivors surveyed the wreckage of their homes, Baptist churches joined hands quickly with Texas Baptist disaster relief volunteers to provide them with food and shelter.

A number of the victims, meanwhile, credited God for enabling them to survive the onslaught.

First Baptist Church of Lancaster; Hampton Road Baptist Church of DeSoto, Texas; and First Baptist Church and Southside Baptist Church, both of Gainesville, served as shelters initially and then began providing food for victims, emergency relief crews and clean-up volunteers.

On Tuesday afternoon after a twister wreaked a six-mile-long path of destruction across Lancaster, volunteers set up the Texas Baptist disaster relief mobile unit at First Baptist in Lancaster. The mobile unit houses a field kitchen through which volunteers can prepare up to 35,000 meals a day.

Before the unit arrived, First Baptist Church volunteers served food and cold drinks to several hundred people. When they were unable to drive into storm-ravaged areas, volunteers walked and carried food and drinks to storm victims trying to salvage some of their belongings from the debris.

In its first three days of operation, about 6,000 meals were prepared at the field kitchen of the disaster relief mobile unit. The numbers were expected to increase drastically over the weekend with an anticipated influx of volunteer clean-up and repair crews, according to Bob Dixon, executive director, Texas Baptist Men.

More than 1,200 homes in south Dallas County were affected by the storms, including 183 that were completely destroyed and 287 that sustained major structural damage.

One of three known casualties from the storm was Ed Burnett, a deacon at First Baptist in Lancaster. Burnett, 81, and his wife, Dorothy, survived the twister huddled in a closet, but he died suddenly of an apparent heart attack while surveying the damage to their home.

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Most survivors, while saddened by loss of homes and material possessions, were quick to say they were alive and that's what counts.

When the storm struck, First Baptist Church member Kimberly Brown attempted to get her three children into the safest place in the house.

Her six-year-old, A.C., was in bed. As she tried to lift him, an eerie air disturbance seemed to grip him. She tugged desperately and managed to snatch him from the bed just as the roof blew off the room.

As they sought shelter in the bathroom, Alexis, 8, screamed, "No mother, the mirrors," remembering warnings about broken glass. As they fled, the bathroom caved in also. They huddled in the laundry room where Brown covered the children with her body to protect them from falling debris as they sang "Jesus Loves Me."

When they were able to crawl out of the remains of their house, 4-year-old Elliott said, "Jesus didn't do this."

"No, Jesus saved us," said his mother. "Jesus protected us. He gave us all the signals."

At Hampton Road Baptist Church, pastor Gary Dyer said representatives of the American Red Cross called him at 10:30 p.m. on April 25 to ask if the church could be used as a shelter.

"When we arrived at 10:45, people were already here. We began at about 11:30 icing down soft drinks and brewing coffee," he said.

"We loaded up church vans and personal vehicles and went out into the neighborhoods, handing out muffins, soft drinks, hot coffee, cheese and crackers and circulating the word about the shelter."

While only a handful of displaced DeSoto residents spent the night at Hampton Road's overnight shelter, more than 300 disaster victims, police officers and emergency response personnel passed through the facility throughout the night, Dyer said.

At least one member of Hampton Road Church was injured in the storm and several families were known to have lost their homes. "To some extent, I would imagine every member of our church was effected," Dyer said.

Among those members was Virginia Burk, minister of childhood education at Hampton Road Baptist Church. The roof was completely blown off the rental house in which she had been living for about a month and a half.

When she and her adult son, Hurdie, realized they were in the path of a tornado, they ran to an interior closet and covered themselves with pillows and heavy quilts.

"We could hear things flying past the door and the sound of glass shattering. We were probably inside the closet 15 or 20 minutes altogether, just praying," she said.

"It was the strangest feeling. It was almost like I was outside myself watching it all happen. As I was holding hands with my son, praying with him, I just knew God was going to take care of us."

Throughout the day following the tornado, church members and friends helped Burk and her son sort through belongings and move into a house owned by Hampton Road Baptist Church.

Across the street from Burk, another member of Hampton Road, John Scales, was watching television with a friend in his living room when he felt a sudden drop in barometric pressure.

"I found shelter in the bathroom for myself, and my friend grabbed cover and stayed in a corner of the living room," said Scales, who had served as a disaster relief volunteer with Texas Baptist Men when a tornado hit Wichita Falls several years ago.

Scales' friend narrowly escaped injury when a two-by-four shot through a wall and landed just inches from his head. Much of the roof was blown away, and all of the interior of the house was rain-soaked.

"I just came out of it thankful the Lord didn't take us," Scales said.

One of the twisters in Gainesville demolished a mobile home park managed by First Baptist Church member Marilyn Dowling. Fortunately, advance warnings enabled the Dowlings to alert about 65 residents of the park and get them into an underground storm shelter.

Dowling, unable to awaken one elderly mobile home resident, crawled through a window to get him out of his home and into the shelter.

"I think they would have been killed had they remained in their homes," said the Dowlings' son, Matthew, a freshman at Howard Payne University, Brownwood, Texas, who returned home to help with the cleanup. "There was nothing left of some of the homes except rubble."

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Baylor, Waco drug investigation  
leads to arrest of 3 students

Baptist Press  
4/29/94

WACO, Texas (BP)--Law enforcement personnel from Baylor University and the Waco Police Department announced April 28 the completion of a four-month undercover drug operation that resulted in six arrests, including three students, and the disbanding of a local drug ring.

Termed the "Leviathan Project," the undercover operation began in January, according to Jim Doak, director of Baylor's department of public safety. The project was initiated, Doak said, when there were indications that some Baylor students might be involved in drug use and distribution in the campus vicinity.

Of the six arrests, three individuals were Baylor students, although one was charged with a non-drug-related offense. Arrested were Baylor students Roderick Blake, 23, for possession of marijuana; Robert Rountree, 21, on delivery of marijuana; and Barry Burghard, 22, for carrying a concealed weapon, a 9 mm pistol, which is a third degree felony.

"We believed it was necessary to investigate the problem from an undercover approach," Doak recounted, "and we sent one of our officers to special undercover training. He then enrolled at Baylor in January for the spring semester and was carrying a course load of about 12 hours. He successfully blended into the campus and community scene." Most of the drug-related offenses involved the possession or sale of marijuana in one-fourth ounce bags sold at \$25-30 each, Doak said. Sgt. Ray Casares of Baylor public safety was in charge of the investigation and two Waco police officers worked with him.

"We undertook this project for one reason: to send a very strong message that drug use anywhere around Baylor will absolutely not be tolerated. That was the message President (Herbert H.) Reynolds wanted to convey," Doak added. "We plan to do this again, if necessary."

"It is comforting to know that the vast majority of Baylor students are not involved in drugs and most of those who were approached by our undercover officer immediately walked away," Doak said. "Our ongoing purpose is to eliminate all drug operations in this campus community, and we believe we have taken a significant step towards accomplishing that goal."

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ADVISORY: Mark Coppenger, vice president for convention relations for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, in league with several SBC agency public relations directors, is hosting a fall communications seminar at Ridgecrest, somewhat reminiscent of W.C. Fields' "summer seminars." The dates are Oct. 1-4. University of Texas journalism professor Marvin Olasky and three editors from World magazine in Asheville, N.C., will anchor the program. Ridgecrest will need room deposits by May 15. For information, call Coppenger at (615) 244-2355.

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CORRECTION: In the (BP) story, "Commission, committee nominees announced," dated 4/27/94, please correct the name and city of one of the Historical Commission nominees to Jon F. Caudle, Richwood, W.Va.

Thanks,  
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