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NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee

901 Commerce Street

Nashville, Tennessee 37203

(615) 244-2200

Herb Hollinger, Vice President

Fax (615) 742-8800

CompuServe ID# 7042C

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522

DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232

NASHVILLE 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300

RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151

WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

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**RTVC Nicaragua documentary to
be distributed by NBC By C.C. Risenhoover**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"Nicaragua: Finding Peace" is the latest television documentary produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission for distribution by NBC.

Sept. 4 is the anticipated broadcast date of the program for most NBC affiliates. The network will feed the program to its affiliates by satellite the night of Aug. 31 or morning of Sept. 1, depending on the time zone. Viewers will need to check local TV listings.

The RTVC's Rosser McDonald, who produced and directed the documentary, said the vastness of Nicaragua -- the largest country in Central America -- captures the essence of the term "mission field."

"The raw harshness of the land can be overwhelming," he said, "but not when pitted against the faith and commitment of God's people there."

Geographically, Nicaragua straddles two of the great tectonic segments of the earth's crust, which when they collide commonly produce active volcanoes and earthquakes. A massive earthquake in 1972 destroyed what was the thriving capital city of Managua, killing more than 6,000 people.

"The capital city is said to have no heart because the area was cleared and left vacant," McDonald said. "Strikes, bickering and political gridlock prevent progress on severe economic needs and reforms. Nicaragua vies with Haiti as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere."

Adjectives describing the country come in pairs and often seem contradictory: Beautiful and fearful. Optimistic and pessimistic. Progressive and regressive.

Human life in Nicaragua parallels the geography. The tropical climate and fertile soil are opposed by rugged terrain and often destructive weather. The sweeping rain forests are beautiful, yet to the nationals they are the hiding grounds of potential invading armies. The people are critically divided politically. They hope for a brighter tomorrow but are aware of the grim reality of how history has often unfavorably repeated itself in their country.

McDonald said that in the midst of desperation and suffering the RTVC crew found Christian hope and peace in many of the people. They captured this faith on film, illustrating God's work in a land better known for revolution and guerrilla warfare. One of those interviewed was Roger Gonzales, a deacon in Galilea Baptist Church.

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"People like Roger epitomize what has happened in Nicaragua over the past 20 years," McDonald said. "He aided the Sandinista revolution by distributing propaganda materials against the dictator Somoza. But after Somoza was driven out, the Sandinistas replaced his dictatorship with one of their own. A deep sense of betrayal fueled an about-face for Roger, who then supported the anti-Sandinista Contra revolution."

In 1990 the Nicaraguans rejected both the Sandinistas and Contras and began a movement toward civilized peace. That, however, has been difficult because unemployment is up to 50 percent, food is in short supply and inflation is on the rise.

"Roger (Gonzales)," McDonald said, "does not depend on any system of government. He receives his strength and confidence from knowing he is in God's hands for eternity, regardless of political and economic circumstances in his country. His face displays a Christian love for other people and for life despite the agony he has seen and endured."

Another man of faith featured in the documentary is Carlos, pastor of Gethsemane Church, who lost five sons and nephews in the war against the Somoza dictatorship.

"God is not a Sandinista sympathizer," Carlos says, "but some of his children are."

The documentary captures the faith and commitment of Christians in the Miskito Indian village of Saupuka, which is in the largest Central American rain forest and is on the banks of the Coco River. Caught in the crossfire of guerrilla wars, the Indians were forced into resettlement camps and later into United Nations refugee camps. They have rebuilt Saupuka after it was burned by guerrillas and reclaimed by jungle growth.

They immediately built a temporary Baptist church out of bamboo and are now working on a permanent building in which to conduct their six weekly services.

Also featured in "Nicaragua: Finding Peace" is Missionary Aviation Fellowship pilot Bill Syring and his wife Sherrie and Baptist missionaries Jim and Viola Palmer.

The documentary is a testimony to the intensely personal perspective of how Christians are working together to present Jesus to the lost in a land gutted by civil strife.

Churches, groups or individuals interested in information on how to host a local premiere by satellite can call RTVC consulting services at (817) 737-4011.

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**Foundation adds mortgage bonds,
underscores stewardship goal** By Mark A. Wyatt

**Baptist Press
6/09/94**

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--Churches and other nonprofit groups can arrange for mortgage bonds in a new service of the California Baptist Foundation's California Plan of Church Finance.

The service is being initiated after a lengthy preparation and rigorous examination, by the foundation subsidiary, which also is California's largest issuing agency for unsecured, limited offering investment notes.

"This will affect churches in two ways," said K. Milton Higgins, foundation executive vice president. "By having the ability to make public offerings, it will help churches which may not be able to sell their full issue or may not want to go through the rigors involved." For a fee, the foundation will take on the job of brokering the notes, Higgins said.

The second benefit is available to those outside the issuing church, Higgins said: "It gives people in churches a chance to invest in other churches. It develops stewardship. That's our whole idea."

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The California Baptist Foundation is the first such Southern Baptist agency to offer mortgage bonds. "We may be the only nonprofit mortgage bond company in the United States," Higgins added.

While the foundation is an agency of California Southern Baptist Convention, Higgins noted two-thirds of the CPCF's work presently is with non-Southern Baptist churches in 10 western states. Other nonprofit institutions such as hospitals, schools and Bible colleges also can use the foundation's financial services, he said.

Tiburon Baptist Church located north of San Francisco reportedly is the first to take advantage of the new service for an \$800,000 renovation project the church is conducting. Higgins said discussions also are under way with a number of other churches.

Gearing up to provide the new service has taken nearly a year and cost the foundation an estimated \$100,000 for training, consulting fees and a reserve account required by federal regulators. In addition to being registered by the Securities and Exchange Commission, the new corporation is "open to scrutiny from the National Association of Securities Dealers and the California Department of Corporations" among other regulatory agencies, Higgins said.

"Basically, we have a stock broker's license but we're going to focus only on mortgage bonds," said Chet Reid, president of the California Plan of Church Finance. Adding mortgage bonds to the foundation's services was a natural progression as church note programs get larger and costs escalate, Reid said.

"We've gotten into this area because there's a demand from our churches," Reid explained, citing as an example a California church which had to use a Wisconsin-based firm to handle a \$3.6 million mortgage bond issue.

The new service is sure to help build on the foundation's \$700 million in limited offering notes issued since 1948.

Limited offering notes must be sold within a church's constituency and typically generate \$2,000-\$3,000 per family unit, or one and a half to two times the church's annual budget. By comparison, mortgage bonds may be offered to a broader market and are limited in size only by what the market will bear.

For a mortgage note program with terms up to 20 years, CPCF charges a fee of 4 percent of the principle amount. An additional 2 percent is charged for brokering notes. Higgins noted that fee currently is less than one-third the amount charged by many competitors.

In a mailing to 26,000 previous noteholders last month, Reid notified prospective investors about the new opportunities. The letter stated that mortgage bonds issued through the foundation's California Plan of Church Finance "will be IRA and KEOGH acceptable and will bear interest rates between 6 and 10 percent" depending on maturity length and other market factors.

Foundation officials hope investors also will find the ministry aspect of the plan appealing. Besides keeping the financing business "in the family," Reid noted, all profits are "solely owned by the foundation" which can then use them to help build churches in California.

For further information about the California Plan of Church Finance mortgage bond service, Reid may be contacted at the California Baptist Foundation, 7120 N. Whitney, Suite 105, Fresno, CA 93720-0153 or by calling 209-322-1001.

**Church 1 aves association over
vot for controversial church**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Heartland Tabernacl in Belton, Mo., has announced its immediate withdrawal from Blue River-Kansas City Baptist Association. According to a letter mailed to all member churches, the cause for the action was the association's failure to dismiss Broadway Baptist Church in Kansas City.

In a called meeting of the association April 14, messengers fell three votes shy of a two-thirds majority needed to dismiss Broadway. Th church came under scrutiny of the association following a 1993 Kansas City Star article on the downtown Kansas City church and its senior pastor, Paul Smith.

The article described Broadway's unconventional worship style. Practices such as calling God "Mother," ministering to homosexuals and speaking in tongues were attributed to Smith and the church.

Following the associational vote on Broadway's relationship, sev ral churches talked of pulling out of the association in protest of Broadway's continued membership. However, BRKC moderator Roger Goodwin, pastor of First Baptist Church in Grandview, said Heartland's letter is the first and only one he has received.

Heartland pastor David Baker said the church reached its decision by a unanimous vote in an April 27 business meeting. His letter to associational churches was dated May 18. The letter stated that Heartland intends to maintain its relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Missouri Baptist Convention and a local association.

The associational vote on whether to remain in fellowship with Broadway was a culmination of meetings between the association's credentials committee and Broadway's denominational relations committee. The credentials committee focused on Smith's view of "ultimate reconciliation" as its main grievance against the church.

Broadway's delegation reported that Smith's views were not repr sentative of the church but the credentials committee wanted what one member called "tangible proof." The committee requested that Broadway vote on a doctrinal position of ultimate reconciliation as proof that Smith's view was not necessarily representative of the church's position. The church's refusal prompted the credentials committee to recommend messengers vote on whether Broadway should remain in the association.

Following the April 14 vote, the credentials committee asked to meet with Broadway members again, but no official meetings have been scheduled. Goodwin sent a letter to all association churches April 22 asking them to pray about the matter and to give the credentials committee time to r solve the issue.

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**Cal Baptist faculty
form AAUP chapter**

By Mark A. Wyatt

**Baptist Press
6/09/94**

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (BP)--A faculty spokesman at California Baptist College said a desire to "help the college" is what prompted formation of a chapter of Association of American University Professors.

"At this point we see it as a totally positive asset, a professional organization looking to see how we can help the college and the administration," said history professor Ed Reed.

Reed was elected president as the new chapter was organized May 20. Other chapter officers include Beverly Howard, vic pr sident, and Jeannette Wong, secretary.

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Initial membership in the Cal Baptist AAUP chapter reportedly numbers 15 or more of the school's 48 full-time professors.

Administration reaction to news of the faculty organization was generally positive. Dennis Sheridan, vice president and interim academic dean, noted some Cal Baptist faculty members have been AAUP members for years. And Sheridan said he appreciates the chapter leaders' stated intent to be cooperative.

"To the extent that they are seeking to promote and advocate for their profession and their colleagues, I think that is a very positive step," Sheridan said.

Sheridan said formation of the AAUP chapter "does not represent unionization of the faculty in any way that I can determine. That would require a recognition on the part of the (Cal Baptist trustee) board that this chapter has the right to represent the entire faculty," Sheridan explained.

"Collective bargaining not an issue," agreed Wayne Swindall, professor of philosophy and chair of the humanities division at Cal Baptist. "This connects us to a wider expanse of involvement in academia. AAUP is an institution that looks after the interests of professors academically."

To represent faculty concerns in local matters, Cal Baptist presently recognizes an organization called the Faculty Association.

Swindall described the Faculty Association as "an informal group that meets to discuss things that pertain to our interests ... something that focuses on grievances."

Chapter members "see no conflict between" AAUP and the Faculty Association, Reed added. "We are not trying to take over duties and responsibilities of the Faculty Association," he said.

Reed also discounted speculation that the recent postponement of pay increases is what sparked organization of the AAUP chapter at this time. "I think you could probably draw some logical conclusions, although I wouldn't want to state that," he said.

He said starting the AAUP chapter was "not in response to the budget crisis" which prompted trustees last month to authorize cutting up to \$1 million from the Cal Baptist 1995 spending plan.

"The formation of the chapter was under way well before the May (trustee) meeting" and does not signal any hostility toward the college administration, Reed said. "I would say that none is intended. That is not our purpose, not our plan."

Reed noted chapter members intentionally "kept our first meeting away from current events and focused on what can we do as a professional organization to help" Cal Baptist.

Also discussed were professional development projects and ways to increase the role of faculty governance, which Reed described as a "major concern" of AAUP.

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Draper, local Baptist workers
connected during SBCNet visit By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
6/09/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--While few persons get to visit informally with the president of a national denominational agency for an hour, several Southern Baptist directors of associational missions (DOMs) did just that on June 8 when they met with Baptist Sunday School Board President James T. Draper, Jr., in "conference room 4" of SBCNet.

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The meeting on the denomination's data communications network may not have been quite as personal as sitting in an actual room together, but the conversation was as spontaneous and wide-ranging as a face-to-face visit.

Billed as a "Dialogue with Dr. Jimmy Draper," the meeting was hosted by Gerald R. Steffy, director of missions in the Metro Peoria Baptist Association in Illinois, and participants were invited by an on-line announcement.

As with any other meeting, participants who were on hand for the start of the session were welcomed and introduced themselves as they "entered" the room. There were latecomers, persons who did not stay for the full time and an occasional person who wandered in not knowing what the meeting was about. At one point a youth entered the room and joined in a conversation about the ability of children to understand the language of the King James Version of the Bible. Then, apparently bored with other topics of the conversation, he moved on to another area of the network.

Topics, initiated by the directors of missions, included Vacation Bible School materials, upcoming Sunday school curriculum changes, SBCNet features, geodemographics, trimester versus quarterly publication of literature, the planned shift from October to September for the beginning of the Sunday school year, use of the King James Version of the Bible in comparison to the New International Version and the recent improvements in some BSSB-produced leisure-reading materials.

After the hour-long session, Steffy pronounced the meeting a success, pointing to Draper's "helpfulness in sharing new information we need" and enabling directors of missions "to be able to share that with others."

Draper told participants that "no matter how small the church, computer knowledge is vital."

He also said he believes meeting the challenges of the 21st century will require the Sunday School Board to continue its "willingness to risk, change and discover the needs of our churches and people."

"We believe we are on the cutting edge of change and discovery of the needs and opportunities before us," he continued. "We are trying to keep before us the vision we have and the understanding that we don't succeed unless we help you succeed."

Steffy said the meeting with Draper was the fourth on-line meeting for DOMs. Tentative dates for future meetings, which are confirmed with announcements on SBCNet, are July 6, Aug. 2, Sept. 7, Oct. 6, Nov. 8 and Dec. 6. In August, Steffy plans to present impressions from a trip he will make to Estonia in July. The September meeting is expected to be a dialogue with Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

SBCNet may be accessed by using a computer, modem and a membership kit distributed by the Sunday School Board. Kits, at \$20 each, contain software, account information and a \$15 credit toward usage, plus a free month of CompuServe's basic services. Kits are available in DOS, Macintosh and Windows versions and may be ordered by calling 1-800-458-2772. Additional information about SBCNet may be obtained by calling David Haywood, SBCNet coordinator, at 1-800-325-7749, ext. 2895.

Persons who are already members of CompuServe may join SBCNet without purchasing a kit by simply typing "GO SBCNet" at any CompuServe prompt.

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RTVC crew goes around world
to film documentary for ABC By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press
6/09/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"It was an awesome experience," Bernie Hargis said regarding his 15 days aboard the USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), a Nimitz Class nuclear aircraft carrier also known as the "Gold Eagle."

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Hargis, a producer/director for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, was aboard the ship to film a documentary -- "Sea and Sky" (its working title) -- about the spiritual side of Navy personnel. It will be telecast by ABC Sept. 25.

The three-man RTVC crew, which included John Flenniken and Pat Gutierrez, literally went around the world in three weeks. They flew to Singapore, boarded the carrier and got off in Bahrain. From there they flew to London, then home.

"I've always been fascinated as to how an aircraft carrier works," said Hargis, "but it was more exciting than I had imagined. You're also awed by the size of the ship. The USS Vinson is one of our most advanced. There are 5,600 sailors aboard who make up the crew and air wing. Everything is run with precision and we didn't get second chances to tape anything. If you missed a shot, you just missed it."

Hargis said the ship carried 80 aircraft and that he was very impressed with the pilots.

"They're very young," he said. "I think the average age was 23, but they all seemed to be serious, goal-oriented Ivy League types."

Hargis said the RTVC crew began shooting at 7 a.m. and worked 14 to 16 hours each day.

"It was physically tough," he said. "We weren't climbing staircases. We were climbing ladders and that can be especially grueling. It was hot and we were soaking wet by 7:30 in the morning."

Core resources for the documentary were the three chaplains on the ship, Hargis said. The chaplains provided the names of the Christian men who would make good interviews. They ranged from a cook to the admiral and included a jet pilot, helicopter pilot, medic and engineer.

Hargis said the ranking chaplain aboard the ship is Capt. Tim Morita, a Japanese-American who is a Southern Baptist.

"He grew up in a Buddhist home in Hawaii but accepted Christ and became a Baptist preacher," Hargis said. "He's very articulate, very intellectual. He graduated from Yale."

Hargis said all three chaplains are weight-lifters, that they are not big but are bulked up. He said the Catholic priest, Lt. Comdr. Conrad Targonski, won some sort of body-building competition.

"He's from Chicago and everyone calls him Father Ski," Hargis said.

He said the other chaplain, Lt. Phil Clark, was a Lutheran from Indiana.

"One of the people I was very impressed with was Rear Adm. Vern E. Clark," Hargis said. "He made a lot of the shoot happen for us."

"The schedule ran us ragged, but it was a good shoot. The only problem was that if you missed an opportunity there were no repeats."

"It was our first time on a flight deck and the noise is indescribable. It's an assault on all your senses. You're only four to six feet from the tip of a wing. With four catapults, planes can launch within seconds of each other. Some seem to be just 10 seconds apart. They land every 70 to 90 seconds. The choreography is amazing, very visual. It's like all that 'Top Gun' stuff."

Air Wing 14, which is aboard the carrier, is comprised of F-14D Tomcats, F/A-18C Hornets, A-6E Intruders, E-2C Hawkeyes, S-3B Vikings, EA-6B Prowlers and SH-60F Seahawk helicopters.

The carrier, equipped with the latest in technology, is considered to be one of the most modern and formidable fighting vessels in the world. It is the head of a battle group of several ships, including a nuclear submarine.

"One of the most exciting experiences was when we went to another ship that didn't have a helicopter pad," Hargis said. "We were lowered by rope from the helicopter."

He said the chaplains deal with numerous motional and spiritual concerns of the young sailors who spend six months at sea.

Churches, groups or individuals interested in information on how to host a local premiere by satellite can call RTVC consulting services at (817) 737-4011.

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**Prisoner finds salvation,
leads 3 others to Christ**

By C.C. Risenhoover

**Baptist Press
6/09/94**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"I want to know if God can forgive me. I'm asking God to forgive me. I'm accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and am asking God to restore me to sanity," a prisoner wrote to "The Baptist Hour" last fall.

"The program had quite an effect on him," said Darel O. Robertson, correspondence counselor for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, which produces "The Baptist Hour."

"His first letter was very emotional. He said he felt he had to write, that he had come to a point in his life where he finally realized that he had hurt a lot of people."

He said the letter included a two-page confession of the man's crimes, and some of what the prisoner told was "very rough."

Robertson said he began corresponding with the inmate and sending him material.

"He has devoured all our Bible studies, every piece of literature we've sent him," the counselor said. "And through personal witness he has won thre people to Christ. His witness has resulted in other prisoners writing us."

Robertson said the inmate leads worship services in the prison when a minister does not come and is actively discipling other prisoners.

"When a prisoner writes to us," Robertson said, "we contact a local church and ask for help in ministering to him or her. But it's often difficult to find people who will minister to inmates. In the case of this particular prisoner, a minister went to visit him only once. He has had to depend totally on the Lord, with no on-site spiritual support."

Robertson said he had helped enroll the man in the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's study courses for prisoners.

Recently he received a gift from the inmate: a cross made from a sock.

"This man was the typical anti-social person until he met Christ," Robertson said. "The behaviors of those we receive letters from run the gamut and they are charged with all sorts of crimes."

The RTVC's counseling service in 1993 had carried on continuing correspondence with 184 prisoners and expects that number to increas significantly in 1994, Robertson said.

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