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June 13, 1994

94-100

FLORIDA -- WMU executive board approves coeducational missions options.

FLORIDA -- Brotherhood president responds to WMU coeducational initiative.

FLORIDA -- FMB names 55 missionaries in historic joint service.

FLORIDA -- FMB trustees prepare for 1997 by selling Hong Kong property.

FLORIDA -- Prayer for Muslim world brings results in Africa.

FLORIDA -- Resolutions committee studies Catholic-Evangelical document.

FLORIDA -- Cross Over activities see 540 professions of faith.

FLORIDA -- Phone campaign produces prospects for new churches.

FLORIDA -- Block parties train hundreds to witness.

FLORIDA -- Pastors divide, conquer to complete assignment.

FLORIDA -- Adrian Rogers defends virgin birth of Jesus.

FLORIDA -- Ross: 'Students of tomorrow' offer challenges, promises.

**WMU executive board approves
coeducational missions options**

By Brenda Sanders

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--A recommendation to provide coeducational missions options -- including organizations and resources -- for adults, youth and children was adopted by the executive board of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union during their meeting June 11.

The recommendation, presented by Evelyn Blount, executive director of the South Carolina WMU, prompted some discussion and questions from members of the board before unanimous approval.

In response to a question concerning perceived competition with the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, Dellanna O'Brien, WMU executive director, noted she had already made Brotherhood President James Williams aware of the proposed recommendation and said, "This is a day when options are in order. We're simply trying to provide more options for churches to get their people involved in missions."

Blount pointed out the Brotherhood Commission already provides missions education for women and girls, but emphasized, "We do not need to move into coed missions organizations because of what the Brotherhood Commission or any other agency is doing. We need to do it because of the leadership of God and to meet the needs of WMU."

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Names approved for the new coed organizations were Adults on Mission, Youth on Mission and Children in Action.

O'Brien stressed WMU's primary focus still will be to provide quality missions education for women, girls and preschoolers. She said plans are not yet finalized concerning staff needs for the new coed programs but said it is anticipated local church WMU officers will expand their duties to cover coed options, including organizations, churchwide projects and events.

Board members also approved a recommendation of their long-range planning committee to engage in dialogue with administrators at Samford University to consider the development of a Women's Institute for Ministry at the school's Birmingham, Ala., campus. O'Brien noted, "There are many needs in our country and we want to explore new ways that we might be involved in equipping women with the skills that are necessary to meet those needs."

She said the development of a women's institute might include a graduate degree program focusing on social ministries and a continuing education approach.

The executive board also approved the long-range planning committee's recommendation that a national WMU volunteer service coordinator be secured by Jan. 1, 1995, to plan and direct a national volunteer program. O'Brien said the committee desires that the person filling this position be a volunteer who would provide their own living expenses.

In other business, board members voted to focus materials and projects for 1997-98 on racial and cultural prejudice.

The board approved a 1994-95 budget of \$14,635,000, a 3.9 percent revenue decrease from 1993-94. The expected \$700,000 deficit includes one-time costs incurred in launching a membership campaign and new curriculum pieces, national training resulting from organizational redesigns, and postal increases.

Also approved was a goal of \$100 million for the 1995 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions and a goal of \$42 million for the 1996 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions.

Proposed price increases for a number of WMU's age-level publications were approved for 1995-96. Representing a total increase of 17.44 percent, this is the auxiliary's first such price increase in three years and will take effect with the publications' October 1995 issues.

The executive board seated the state WMU president from Wyoming, Lottie Crim, as a voting member of the board. WMU state presidents and staff make up the executive board and are seated based on state convention membership, following the formula of the SBC Executive Committee.

**Brotherhood president responds
to WMU coeducational initiative**

By Art Toalston

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission President James Williams issued a two-page response to Woman's Missionary Union approval June 11 of coeducational missions organizations and resources for adults, youth and children.

Apart from its preschool programs for boys, WMU traditionally has offered programs of missions education for women. The SBC Brotherhood Commission, which traditionally had responsibility for missions education of men, has added a coed dimension to its work in recent years.

Williams, in his June 13 statement, voiced surprise at the WMU action and hope for a continued cooperative relationship with WMU.

The full text of Williams' comments follows:

"I was not aware of the nature of the recommendation concerning coeducational missions education options presented to the WMU Executive Board yesterday. I was aware that the task force would be completing their work, reporting, and bringing recommendations to this Board meeting, but I was not aware of the specific details of the recommendation until I received a copy of the Baptist Press release.

"In spite of that reality, I would hasten to say we have had a very fine relationship with WMU in the arena of coeducational missions education options. I want to affirm our historic partnership with them in missions education and missions support. We are committed to working together to develop coeducational missions education strategies. Their action in this Board meeting is certainly in keeping with the commitment we both have to presenting viable missions education options to Southern Baptist churches.

"We do have, by mutual agreement, policies for handling coed options initiated by either agency. We have the utmost trust that any specific plan, program, or product resulting from WMU's Board action will adhere to and honor those policies.

"Brotherhood already has a coeducational missions involvement option for youth called World Changes. And, that option is being expanded to include collegiate and Senior Adult groups. These options provide missions education opportunities within the context of hands-on missions involvement like housing renovation and construction. We have also recently added an Adults In Missions Department to focus on the development of coeducational missions involvement opportunities for adults. The new agreement with the Foreign Mission Board related to volunteerism will enable us to provide quality missions education while they participate in overseas missions projects.

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"In our experience with men and boys we have become aware they are preferring to learn about missions while doing missions. As we move to the future, we intend to strengthen our commitment to partner with WMU, our mission boards, and other Southern Baptist agencies to provide a comprehensive approach to missions education.

"In a discussion with Dellanna O'Brien following receipt of this information, we both agreed that we would continue to support the gender specific programs of each agency."

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**FMB names 55 missionaries
in historic joint service**

**Baptist Press
6/13/94**

By Robert O'Brien

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Fifty-five men and women joined Southern Baptists' foreign missions force June 12 in a historic joint session of the denomination's Pastors' Conference, Foreign Mission Board and Woman's Missionary Union.

About 13,000 onlookers gave a standing ovation after Foreign Mission Board trustees had risen in a unanimous vote of approval for their appointment.

The evening began with a session of preaching at the Pastors' Conference and converted to a parade of foreign missionaries, worship banners and international flags, bathed in a roving spotlight and popping flash bulbs at the Orange County Convention/Civic Center in Orlando, Fla.

Projected on a large screen, the candidates then gave testimonies to their call and vision for world missions live and on videotape.

The candidates represent a geographical cross section of Southern Baptists and come to their new roles with a variety of foreign missions ties.

They include three children of current or former missionaries, five former missionaries and nine former journeymen and International Service Corps workers.

Mark Grossmann, appointed with his wife, Martha Jane, to work in Kenya, has two brothers and sisters-in-law on the mission field -- Dave Grossmann and his wife, Cecilia, missionaries in Chile, and Roger Grossmann and his wife, Vicki, missionaries in Guatemala.

New missionary Duane Hammack, assigned to Hong Kong with his wife, Sandy, has a sister and brother-in-law, Cynthia and Tom Martin, who are missionaries in Bolivia.

The trustee vote to approve represents only part of Southern Baptists' responsibility to them and foreign missions, FMB trustee chairman Leon Hyatt of Pineville, La., told the audience.

He urged pastors and others to use their influence to provide the prayer, financial support and personnel to send missionaries, keep them on the field and increase their ranks to meet Southern Baptists' goal of 5,000 overseas by the year 2000.

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He said that as of June 12 the board needs 914 more missionaries to reach that goal.

FMB President Jerry Rankin said Southern Baptists had already affirmed foreign missions through their prayers and by giving the largest Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions ever this year -- nearly \$82.9 million.

He told the missionaries they would scatter out to countries across the world to do a variety of tasks but reminded that their main job is to open the eyes of a lost world to see Jesus Christ as Savior.

"They will see the reality of Jesus as you faithfully fulfill your assignments, exhibit his indwelling presence through interpersonal relationships and reflect his grace in times of suffering discouragement and hardship which are inevitable on the mission field," Rankin said.

Rankin expressed gratitude that the Foreign Mission Board had a record number of missionary appointments last year but reminded the audience that only 35 percent of 636 requests for personnel were filled.

He challenged his listeners to respond to the pressing needs and closed with an invitation for them to give, pray and volunteer to go as career missionaries or volunteers.

"Who will respond to the need for a church planter to Bangladesh that the 110 million Muslims of that destitute corner can know Jesus?" he asked.

"Who will go as a strategy coordinator so that the 65 million people of Vietnam can recognize Jesus at a time they're on the verge of restored diplomatic relations with the United States?"

"Where are those who should respond to the multitude of requests in Russia and the former Soviet republics while the doors remain open?"

"Currently, Foreign Mission Board personnel are assigned to 85 unevangelized megapeople groups with more than 1 million people each, but there are still 127 of these people groups untouched by the gospel," Rankin said.

"Who will say, 'I will go to the Karamonjara of Uganda, the Baluchi of Pakistan, the Mandingos of Guinea Bissau or the 5 million Makhuwa in Mozambique'?"

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Mary E. Speidel contributed to this story.

FMB trustees prepare for 1997
by selling Hong Kong property

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
6/13/94

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees took actions on missionary property in Hong Kong, noted Jerry Rankin's first year as FMB president and heard reports of worldwide advances in missions during their meeting prior to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando, Fla.

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The board, meeting June 10-11 in Orlando, earmarked \$5 million for the purchase of apartments in Hong Kong for missionary housing. That amount will be more than repaid by the sale of a missionary residence, which cost the board \$35,586 in 1968, for its current market value of \$7.7 million.

Over the next two years, the Hong Kong mission will request trustee approval for a number of these types of transactions as the missionaries prepare for 1997 when China's government takes over Hong Kong, explained Faye Pearson, area director for missionary work in East Asia.

Hong Kong missionaries will not leave or scale back, as some had feared, but shift resources from ownership of land and housing mainly to ownership of apartments and office space, Pearson said.

That will save thousands of dollars because China says it will raise Hong Kong land taxes significantly. The shift also pre-empts any legal questions regarding rights of land ownership under China's rule.

"We don't have the resources to pay these taxes," Pearson said. "So we felt this was the time to develop a strategy for moving our people into apartments. China isn't interested in our apartments; they're interested in land. In China, the source of your wealth is your land.

"If for some reason after 1997 we're asked to give up our property, we wouldn't have funds to house all our missionaries," she said. "So by selling the land and property now and relocating our missionaries, we're assuring that our people will be in place in 1997 and beyond. Once we have this behind us, we'll focus on the reason we came to Hong Kong -- evangelism, planting churches and ministering to people."

Currently about 58 Southern Baptist missionaries work with 45,000 Hong Kong Baptists in 115 churches and chapels. Hong Kong Baptists have a goal of expanding to 200 churches with 100,000 believers by 2000.

Trustees also heard reports from Rankin and other FMB administrators on advances in worldwide missions.

"The gospel isn't just a message -- it's something that's happening" in a big way around the world, said Rankin, who just returned from his first overseas trip since becoming FMB president. He and his wife, Bobbye, spent three weeks traveling across the African continent.

"What we saw in Africa -- what's happening overseas -- is what we're all about as a Foreign Mission Board," noted Rankin, who said the Africa trip evoked memories of his 23 years in Asian missions before his election last June 14 as the board's 10th president.

He recounted how missionaries -- working amidst war, poverty, hunger, disease, isolation and economic chaos in Africa -- have baptized converts, started churches, fed the hungry and changed lives.

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The Rankins spent an afternoon with missionaries from Rwanda -- "still shattered by the devastation and horror they witnessed as they fled anarchy and genocide ... some describe as worse than hell."

Visibly moved by the Rwanda missionaries' dedication, Rankin noted they had, "without looking back, refused the offer of alternate assignments, moved into communal housing in remote Bukoba, Tanzania, and are seeking to bring hope and relief -- physically and spiritually -- to the hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees struggling to survive."

Rankin urged Southern Baptists to avoid getting sidetracked by secondary issues and to remain firm in support and encouragement to more than 4,000 missionaries serving in many difficult areas around the world.

Lewis Myers, vice president for World A strategies, reported "remarkable progress" the board has made in less than a decade in World A.

Today, he said, 14 percent of the Southern Baptist foreign mission force works in World A, that portion of the globe which has had little or no chance to hear the gospel message. "Fif percent of our literature is produced for World A; 8 percent of our TV is focused on World A and 11 percent of our budget is spent in World A," he said.

The FMB now focuses on 85 of the 212 unevangelized people groups, far more than any other mission group, Myers explained.

"Only God knows what could be done in World A if we had all the personnel we need and they had all the financial resources they need, coupled with all the prayer resources latent in the Southern Baptist Convention," he said.

In a report looking ahead to mission personnel composition in the 21st century, Thurmon Bryant, vice president for mission personnel, predicted that the career missionary will continue to be the stackpole around which foreign missions outreach will be built beyond the year 2000.

But he believes assignments in short-term ministry will "increase appreciably."

Jim Furgerson, who heads the FMB's volunteers in missions work, said a recent study conducted by Short-term Evangelical Missions Ministry shows volunteers double their contributions to missions, give more systematically and sacrificially, and double the time they pray for specific missions causes.

And a study by the South Carolina Baptist Convention showed churches that participated in a state partnership with the FMB increased their giving to the Cooperative Program over three years by 16.7 percent, Furgerson noted. During the same period, churches that did not participate in the partnership increased their CP gifts by only 2.3 percent.

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Bryant said the largest work group in the United States is people who work without pay -- 90 million volunteers. "As we move into the 21st century, volunteers and short-term personnel among Southern Baptists will be available and increasingly demand a work place in overseas missions."

Among the challenges the Foreign Mission Board will face in the next century, he believes, will be an even greater need to appoint people with a servant spirit.

Such a spirit, he said, will be needed to work creatively and compassionately among the impoverished, needy and vulnerable people who likely will be the least evangelized group of the 21st century.

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Bob Stanley and Don Martin contributed to this story.

**Prayer for Muslim world
brings results in Africa** By Bob Stanley

**Baptist Press
6/13/94**

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Earlier this year during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, Southern Baptist foreign missionaries and many supporters back home prayed for the Muslim world.

When Jerry Rankin and his wife, Bobbye, visited Africa for three weeks in May, they saw firsthand the results of these prayers.

In one West African country where 90 percent of the people are Muslims, the missionaries committed themselves to 78 hours of intercession for Muslims.

During Ramadan, a Muslim priest came to a Baptist center there, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board president told FMB trustees June 11 at their meeting in Orlando.

The priest said he and some colleagues were sitting around with nothing to do and began to talk and wonder what the Bible was all about. He asked if the center had a Bible they could read.

In another strong Muslim country, eight missionaries, who hadn't had any baptisms the year before, "had just spent the week before we met them in their prayer retreat," Rankin said.

They had been studying Henry Blackaby's book, "Experiencing God," and were praying earnestly for God to indicate he was at work in their country.

As one of the missionaries went for a walk one afternoon, a man approached and asked why he was there. When he explained he was a missionary, the man replied he had heard of Jesus Christ and wanted to know about him.

The missionary told him about the gospel message and the man quickly accepted Jesus as Savior. Then he asked the missionary to go with him to his village so his family could also know about Jesus.

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After consultation, three missionaries decided to go to the village despite the risk Christians face in Muslim regions. Protocol required they inform the village chief why they had come. They did so -- with some anxiety.

"Why should only this man's family hear what you have come to say?" the chief asked. He called the whole village together to hear them. In the midst of their testimony, the call to prayer sounded from the mosque. The men all left to wash and pray but quickly returned to hear the missionaries.

"If what you are saying is true, there must be two ways to God -- the Muslim way and the Christian way," one old man up front commented.

"No, there's only one true way," the missionary replied boldly. Then he patiently explained again why the Bible teaches salvation comes only through the atoning death of Jesus.

"Then we must follow Jesus," the old man declared.

When the missionaries asked who would believe, 14 came forward, stood shoulder to shoulder with the palms of their hands lifted in Muslim fashion, and prayed to receive Jesus.

Rankin said the missionaries returned with "a renewed vision and an awesome sense of a powerful God who answers prayer and is moving to bring a lost world to redemption."

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R solutions committee studies Catholic-Evangelical document

By Norman Miller

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Members of the 1994 SBC Committee on Resolutions met June 11 for preliminary discussions on proposed resolutions, including one addressing a widely debated document, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium," signed by SBC agency heads Larry Lewis and Richard Land and other well-known evangelicals.

The evangelical-Catholic document contains language concerning doctrinal matters that has fostered objections among some who believe Southern Baptists have officially agreed to stop evangelizing members of Catholic churches worldwide, a charge which Lewis and Land have denied.

Lewis, president of the SBC Home Mission Board, met with the committee for a half hour, discussing and explaining various points of misunderstanding and contention as noted by committee members. Land, executive director of the SBC Christian Life Commission, was scheduled to join the discussion but remained in Nashville after a brief hospitalization. Land is expected to attend some portions of the SBC, however.

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In the ensuing hour and a half discussion about the document, committee members affirmed the areas of social concern with which Southern Baptists agree and work with Roman Catholics but registered serious exceptions to sections of the document pertaining to the biblical doctrine of salvation, evangelism, missions, ecclesiology and other theological issues.

Committee consensus noted the serious implications of passing a resolution which did not address specific issues of theological concern. One member asked, "Must we affirm that the Roman Catholic approach to biblical faith and trust in Jesus Christ is just as viable as the Southern Baptist model?"

In answer to this question and others asked in the meeting, the committee is expected to present a resolution affirming the historic Baptist doctrine of salvation "through faith alone in Christ alone without any addition of good works or human efforts."

The second most-discussed resolution concerned the system whereby SBC agencies and institutions are governed, an issue stemming from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees' dismissal of Russell H. Dilday as president in March.

Committee members drafted a resolution which affirmed the system and "exhorted all trustees and all administrators who face potentially divisive issues" to follow biblical mandates when dealing with the issues and other Christians.

The committee is working on about 10 resolutions to present for consideration by messengers to the SBC on June 15 and 16, including concerns over the controversial French abortion pill, RU-486, which is currently under scrutiny by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration; the EEOC's proposed regulations regarding so-called "religious harassment" in the workplace; President Clinton's health care plan; AIDS; and world hunger.

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Cross Over activities see
540 professions of faith

Baptist Press
6/13/94

By David Winfrey & Sarah Zimmerman

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--At least 540 people made professions of faith as a result of Cross Over Orlando, the two-day evangelism effort prior to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Preliminary reports indicate 263 professions of faith from block parties, 220 from door-to-door witnessing and 57 from street evangelism events.

Cross Over became a regular part of pre-convention activities in 1989, and the record number of professions of faith -- 1,267 -- were recorded last year in Houston.

Cross Over's success, however, should not be measured solely by the number of professions of faith, said Darrell Robinson, vice president of evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Cross Over Orlando was sponsored by the HMB, six central Florida associations and the Florida Baptist Convention.

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In addition to seeing people become Christians, Cross Over equips Christians to witness and demonstrates new evangelism techniques. More than 2,100 people were trained during Cross Over this year.

Cross Over also creates a climate for evangelism by saturating the area with the gospel, Robinson said. During Cross Over, the plan of salvation was presented 4,461 times and 4,366 Bibles were distributed.

Larry Lewis, HMB president, said Cross Over demonstrates the need to share Christ "home to home, heart to heart and face to face." It also illustrates the principle of every person's responsibility to witness and the need to permeate a community with the gospel.

Robinson participated in the door-to-door efforts of First Baptist Church of Casselberry. In addition to the 12 professions of faith reported by 14 teams at the church, three people made professions of faith during the next day's worship service.

Dave Bennett, evangelism director for the Missouri Baptist Convention, said he led a person to faith in Christ at an Orlando shopping mall.

"I'm elated," he said afterwards. "I know who the doctor is, but I get to midwife and help."

April Lively of Douglasville, Ga., said she came to participate in Cross Over after reading a story about last year's event in Houston.

"I just wanted to come here and tell people about Jesus," said Lively, who describes herself as a shy person but was involved in leading two people to professions of faith.

"Once you do it (witness) a few times, it's something that comes naturally," she said. "I would like to see our church do something like a block party."

Organizers said they hope other volunteers also see the viability of such activities and ministries in their hometowns.

"It's so easy to go on a mission trip and not realize, 'Hey, our own hometown is a mission field,'" said missionary Bill Sims. "That's what these Cross Overs are getting people to see."

Mission Service Corps volunteer Bill Cox agreed. "The people that we trained here locally will go back into their churches as witnesses."

Cross Over could be a catalyst for more witnessing efforts by central Florida churches, said Jerry Passmore, evangelism director for the Florida Baptist Convention.

"I think there's an excitement in that some people are sharing their faith, maybe for the first time," he said. "Once you've won somebody to the Lord you're generally 'ruined' forever. You want to do it again."

Phone campaign produces prospects for new churches

By Sarah Zimmerman

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Across the United States June 11 and 12, Southern Baptists let their fingers do the walking in an effort to start three churches in the Orlando area.

The telephone blitz is one of the newest additions to Cross Over Orlando, the evangelistic effort preceding the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

On Saturday, June 11, calls were made from a 100-line phone bank based at First Baptist Church in Winter Park, Fla. Calls also were made from the offices of the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, Ala., Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, Tenn., and Home Mission Board and Georgia Baptist Convention in Atlanta, many of them using WATS lines.

Callers asked if residents were involved in a local church. If they were not, callers told them about the new churches and asked for permission to mail them information about the church starts.

The 11 WMU employees making phone calls June 11 said they were nervous at first, but they found positive responses to the calls.

"It's like some of them were sitting there waiting for a new church in the area and the programs it will provide," said WMU employee Sherry Hunt.

Of the calls made from Orlando Saturday, 340 people expressed interest in the new churches, said Ronnie Reynolds, church starter strategist for the Greater Orlando Baptist Association.

Reynolds estimated that a total of 75,000 calls would be made in the two-day telephone campaign. Based on previous experience in phone campaigns, he expects the calls to result in 5,250 positive responses and 470 people attending the churches' first services.

"This is a way to get in front of a lot of people very quickly and produce an instant crowd," Reynolds said. "Imagine how long it would take to contact all those people by going door to door."

Residents who expressed interest in the new churches will receive a letter thanking them for taking time to talk to the caller plus four other pieces about the new churches. They will receive a written invitation and another phone call inviting them to the first service before the churches start in August and September.

Prior to the weekend phone campaign, Reynolds conducted area surveys and determined three locations where new churches were needed. One is in a primarily Anglo community near Disney World, another is in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood east of Orlando and the third is in an African American area known as Washington Shores.

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New churches are needed, Reynolds said, because 70 percent of the 1.4 million people who live in the Orlando area are unchurched. Currently, Southern Baptists have one church for every 10,000 people.

Despite its geographic location, Reynolds said Orlando is not a southern city when it comes to religion. People who have moved to central Florida from around the nation and world have greatly influenced the area's religious preferences, he said.

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**Block parties train
hundreds to witness**

By David Winfrey

**Baptist Press
6/13/94**

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--More than 600 Southern Baptists learned how to share their faith while training for evangelistic block parties in connection with Cross Over Orlando.

The 17 parties hosted by churches throughout central Florida on June 11 resulted in 263 professions of faith.

That number was short of the 1,000 coordinator Bill Cox and others had prayed for. But area Baptists said they appreciate the resources and attention to evangelism provided during the one-day effort.

Evangelistic block parties offer food and entertainment in a Christian setting while allowing church members to share their faith and discover prospects. During the June 11 parties, 5,682 people were fed, 4,366 Bibles were distributed and 2,041 gospel presentations were made. Some 628 church members participated in the training.

"I've been looking forward to this for along time," said US-2 missionary Tammy Howard. "I just think this is a powerful tool that God is going to use."

Volunteers from three churches helped Howard, a two-year missionary, host a party at the apartments where for a year she has hosted activities and Bible studies for residents.

"I hope this will be the beginning point to start a congregation," she said, adding that Cross Over "just multiplies by 1,000 what I can do."

Workers at three other parties also hope their efforts will develop lists of prospects for starting churches, said missionary Bill Sims, a pioneer of block parties during the 1980s.

At King's Way Baptist Church, workers fed, entertained and gave clothing to residents of the largely African American community. Pastor Enric Richards said he was excited about the opportunity to show residents the church cared about them.

"Jesus talked about ministering to the whole man," said Richards. "Here you're ministering not only to their spiritual needs, but to their physical needs as well."

The party also inspired church members to reach out to offer Christianity to their neighbors, he said.

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"It gives you some ideas, and you see how God can use different methods and techniques for reaching the lost," Richards said. "We're probably going to have something like this two or three times a year."

Toby Frost of the Home Mission Board evangelism staff said 12 of the 17 churches hosting parties plan to host another one this summer.

One more party is scheduled in connection with Cross Over. Saturday, June 18, First Baptist Church of Leesburg has rented a carnival for the event.

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**Pastors divide, conquer
t complete assignment** By Sarah Zimmerman

**Baptist Press
6/13/94**

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--With sweat dripping from their foreheads like water from a leaky faucet, Mike Dawson and Brent Barker had to make a decision.

They could quit doing the door-to-door surveys and be back at Orlando's First Baptist Church at 1 p.m. as they were instructed, or they could keep going until they knocked on each of the 44 doors assigned to them.

The pastors decided to divide and conquer. Rather than going as a team, they went to the remaining homes individually. By 1:45 p.m. they were back at the church, refreshing themselves with iced tea and lemonade while they completed a two-page survey for each house where someone was home.

Dawson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Norcross, Ga., and Barker, pastor of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Bogalusa, La., were among thousands of Southern Baptists knocking on doors as part of Cross Over Orlando. First Baptist Church was among more than 130 churches in six central Florida associations participating in the door-to-door events.

In the neighborhood surveys, volunteers who came to Orlando early for the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, along with local church members, conducted religious opinion surveys. Residents were asked if they were affiliated with a church or religious group, how often they attended, what are today's sources of stress and how churches could address those issues. The survey included questions about heaven and eternal life and led to an opportunity to explain how to become a Christian.

Dawson and Barker found a number of homes where no one answered the door, a couple of people who said they were too busy to talk and a man who warned them that solicitors were not allowed in the neighborhood. Dawson quickly assured him they were not selling anything.

The men also found a family who had recently moved to Orlando and was looking for a church home, a Catholic couple who invited them inside to talk about the survey, a Mormon woman who teaches women's classes in her ward and a Methodist woman who works with children's ministry at her church.

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Dawson has participated in the pre-convention evangelistic thrust every year since it began in 1989. This was only the second year he had not led someone to make a profession of faith. He was naturally disappointed -- seeing someone accept Christ as Savior is still a thrill for him. But he rejoiced in early reports indicating at least 15 people had made professions of faith through the efforts at First Baptist.

And he was glad to once again be part of the convention-wide effort to reach a city for Christ.

"I had felt for years that it was a waste for this many Southern Baptists to descend on a city and there not be some kind of concentrated witness," Dawson said. "Cross Over was what I had been waiting for."

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**Adrian Rogers defends
virgin birth of Jesus**

By Norman Miller

**Baptist Press
6/13/94**

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--The virgin birth is crucial to the existence of Christianity as a religion, said former SBC President Adrian Rogers as he addressed the 1994 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference in Orlando, Fla., June 12.

Preaching on the holiness of Jesus Christ and the unity found among the disciples of Jesus Christ, Rogers, pastor of the Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis, Tenn., addressed comments about the virgin birth of Christ made recently by Cooperative Baptist Fellowship leader Cecil Sherman and comments in some Baptist state papers that conservatives in the SBC are fractured.

Rogers said, "I may get in trouble for what I am about to say ... but friend, Jesus is a holy child." Without naming Sherman, but referring to him as "one of the leaders in the moderate faction," Rogers cited Sherman as saying, "The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is not an important doctrine; it's an incidental doctrine. It's only mentioned in two of the Gospels."

"I reject that with all of the emphasis, unction and function of my soul," said Rogers as the crowd erupted in applause. "Jesus is the holy child. That's not 'incidental' -- it is fundamental. Without the virgin birth there's no incarnation ... no Christianity. It falls apart like a house of cards."

In a recent Baptist Press story, Sherman said he personally believed in the virgin birth but said he may not fire a seminary professor solely on the basis of the professor's disbelief in the virgin birth.

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Rogers said those who do not believe in the virgin birth "have difficulty with the character of the Word of God because the Word of God teaches it. If you don't believe in the virgin birth, you have difficulty with the character of Jesus; because if Jesus is not the Son of God he is the son of Adam, and in Adam all die. If you don't believe in the virgin birth, you have difficulty with the character of Mary, because if Mary had a child under those circumstances, then she was not a virgin but a harlot. ... If you don't believe in the virgin birth, you have difficulty with your own character."

Outlining the pivotal nature of the virgin birth, Rogers said, "If Jesus is not born of a virgin, he is not sinless. If he is not sinless, he is not worthy of the sinless sacrifice. If there's no sacrifice, there's no atonement. If there's no atonement, there's no new birth. Jesus was born of a virgin so that we might be born again."

Referring to what Rogers said some of the SBC state papers are saying, he said, "Some people are just salivating, hoping that we'll disintegrate and fracture. ... Some of the state papers have been saying, 'Hey, the conservatives are about to split up.' Don't you believe it for skinny minute."

Rogers interrupted the crowd's applause and said, "Brother, I want to tell you, when you get people who believe the holy Word of God and love the holy child of God and are filled with the Holy Spirit of God, there is unity. And it goes beyond who's elected president of any convention."

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**Ross: 'Students of tomorrow'
offer challenges, promises**

By Chip Alford

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--College students of tomorrow will increasingly be characterized by moderate to severe behavior problems, a tendency to commit violent acts without regret, a growing openness to New Age philosophy and a hesitancy to become independent from the family nest, according to Richard Ross.

Ironically, though, the same generation may be the key to a "spiritual revival" in America, Ross told participants in the Association of Southern Baptist Campus Ministers' annual meeting June 11 at Rollins College in Orlando. Ross, the author of several books on youth ministry and a youth ministry consultant at the Baptist Sunday School Board, also serves as a part-time youth minister in Nashville. He has gained international media attention as a spokesperson for "True Love Waits," a sexual abstinence education campaign sponsored by the BSSB.

While admitting no one can make completely accurate predictions about the future of a particular generation, Ross shared several "informed guesses" about college students of the second half of the 1990s based on trends he's noticed among today's teen-agers.

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Ross said campus ministers can expect to see an increasing percentage of freshmen who began life as "high-risk" babies, born to mothers who abused alcohol or drugs or did not receive adequate prenatal care.

Studies have shown between 20-35 percent of pregnant women drink regularly during pregnancy, Ross said, pointing out fetal alcohol syndrome is cited by some health experts as the No. 1 health risk to American children.

In addition, 11 percent of all babies born in the United States are "drug exposed," Ross said, with approximately 370,000 exposed to "crack" cocaine before birth.

Many of today's youth were "high-risk babies" themselves and some will enter college later this decade. "This has several implications for student ministry," Ross said.

"Teaching now must be more direct and concrete than ever. Abstract thinking will be very difficult for these students. Use tangible illustrations and give them 'souvenirs,' things that they take out of a learning experience to remind them of a truth they've learned."

These "high-risk" students also will respond well to "peer helping," Ross said.

"They like hearing insights and truths from their peers and they also like hearing their peers solve problems," he said, adding this characteristic fits in well with ministry models used by many campus ministries.

Another helpful ministry strategy will be focusing on short-term programs and projects.

"This group does much better seeing things in little packages," he said, adding a good rule of thumb is lectures should be no longer (in minutes) than the average age of the audience.

Campus ministers can also expect to see more students who have become desensitized to violence, a few to the point that they "can kill without regret," Ross said. Many of these students were abused or neglected as children and never developed "the physiological equipment necessary to care."

The students of tomorrow also will be more accepting of New Age philosophy as truth, Ross said. He cited a 1992 survey conducted by The Search Institute which showed 48 percent of Southern Baptists believe human nature is basically good, 27 percent believe meditation and self-discipline leads them to the realization that spiritual truth is within them, and 29 percent support the idea that an individual should arrive at his or her own religious beliefs independent of any church.

"Teen-agers have been surrounded by New Age theology to the degree that they are willing to consider it a sensible and reasonable way to view the world," Ross said.

Campus ministers also will discover tomorrow's students will respond well to leaders who present the Christian lifestyle as "counter-cultural," Ross said.

"I think one of the reasons 'True Love Waits' has done so well among teen-agers is that it has a touch of a counter-cultural message in it. So many adults expect teen-agers to be sexually active and (teens) like the feeling of going against the stream (by signing pledge cards to remain chaste until marriage)."

Many of tomorrow's college students will still live at home or will likely return home during their college years, Ross said.

"Some adults are calling them the 'boomerang generation' because they throw them out there but they keep coming back," he said, citing the following reasons for the growing phenomenon:

- 1) Some students are paralyzed by the complex personal and career choices they are called on to make in college, so they stay at or return home for security and support;
- 2) Others are unwilling to start at the bottom economically and decide against breaking away so they can continue to enjoy all the comforts of home;
- 3) Some have failed to develop self-sufficiency because they've always had "the best of everything"; and
- 4) Some are held back by parents who delay the "launching process."

One campus minister attending the meeting pointed out many cultural and ethnic groups do not see living at home as "unusual or problematic" for college students and that some even expect it of their teens. He suggested the idea that students should "leave the nest" to develop self-sufficiency could represent "some Anglo cultural bias."

Ross, who admitted that could be true, said the key is that students are allowed to develop socially, emotionally and spiritually, whether they live at home or not.

Despite the discouraging predictions about tomorrow's students, Ross said he believes there are some signs they could be at the "forefront of a spiritual awakening" in America.

"One thing that gives me cold chills when I think of this late at night is that other spiritual awakenings have been preceded by a renewed emphasis on moral purity and holiness among young people. And it sure makes me wonder about 'True Love Waits' and it having a small place in cleaning up a generation so that that generation could be the focus of revival. That's a possibility.

"I think we're sending you a group of freshmen who are open to being instruments of revival. I think there are the seeds there for folks who could literally turn this country upside down."