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July 11, 1994

94-115

NEW ORLEANS--400 helping hands from Georgia spend 5 days in New Orleans.
NEW MEXICO--Finding God's way to live takes planning, research; photo.
ATLANTA--They move furniture as avenue of ministry.
NEW MEXICO--Prison ministries need Christians from all walks; photo.
KENTUCKY--Vacation Bible School links Baptist, Catholic church.
NEW MEXICO--Baptist foundations group taps Lyle Garlow as administrator.
NASHVILLE--Correction.

400 helping hands from Georgia
spend 5 days in New Orleans

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press
7/11/94

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--There's nothing out of the ordinary about a church youth group or some senior adults driving over to another state for a few days to do a nice little summer service project.

But when a caravan of 30 vehicles -- including 27 cars and vans, two church buses and one UPS truck -- drove into New Orleans, "the city that care forgot," from Powder Springs, Ga., on Saturday night, June 25, TV news cameras and city officials, including the mayor of New Orleans, came out to see what was going on.

Probably no group has ever attacked the city of New Orleans in one week with as much compassion as the people from the First Baptist Church of Powder Springs.

Armed with mulch, playground equipment, basketball hoops, rakes, shovels, paint brushes, clown paint and a puppet show, nearly one-fourth of the church membership came to New Orleans to work at 12 different locations in the city for five days.

While 208 men, women and children, most of them entire families, actually made the trip to New Orleans, everyone from the Powder Springs church had something to do with the effort.

A year before they ever came to New Orleans, the entire church congregation did a tremendous amount of preparation. A lay-led committee was organized. There were tons of supplies to buy, from rakes and bolts to balloons and matching T-shirts. Fund-raisers were held. In preparation for one of their main projects, the construction of a playground in a city housing project, they measured, cut, drilled, bolted, assembled and then disassembled each piece of wood before loading it all on the truck to make every minute count in New Orleans.

Worksites were found with the assistance of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Schedules were planned; prayer teams were organized; daily devotional material was written; and letters of encouragement were assigned so each team member would receive a note from a fellow church member while in New Orleans.

United Parcel Service donated the use of one of their large trucks to take the equipment to New Orleans. Clay Anderson, the owner of Sweetwater Lumber in Austell, Ga., and a member of First Baptist in Powder Springs, donated all the lumber needed. Many other people in Powder Springs gave money through fund-raising events during the year to help toward the \$42,500 amount needed.

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Housing and food had to be found conveniently for 208 people as well. New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, located just 10 minutes from the city's central business district where most of the work sites were located, had available all the rooms and meals needed by the Powder Springs group.

Several teams were organized, each designed to meet a particular need in New Orleans: landscaping, construction, cleaning, entertainment and education. The Powder Springs church's ministry sites were the Florida Avenue Housing Project, Friendship House, Christopher Inn Retirement Center, St. Martin Manor Retirement Center, Annunciation Inn Retirement Center, Micky Markey Park, North Robinson Park, McQueen Park, Jackson Square in the French Quarter and Lazarus House.

But even with all the work to be done, construction team member Kirby Southerland thought one of the most important tasks would be spending time with the people in New Orleans.

"Kids are all the same; they need attention," Southerland said while working on the new playground. "If we didn't build this they would be happy we were here."

"We were excited to be here!" said Allen Davis, associate pastor and minister of education at the Powder Springs church. "We recognize that we came as a support to established churches. We realize that one-shot stops wouldn't amount to much if it were not for those churches already established and ministering to this area." Davis and others from his church worked closely with the First Baptist Church of New Orleans in planning and organizing the trip, as well as in solving problems.

Because of the high interest in the trip from the church members, "We came with the anticipation that we will get more out of the mission trip than the people who live here," Davis said.

A bleak verbal picture had been painted for the team before coming to the city and they were prepared to expect the worst. The mission team, however, was "pleasantly surprised" when residents of the complex came out to help in the project.

"We've had many of the kids out here helping and that gives them a sense of ownership," Davis said. "When they are out here playing on the equipment, they can say, 'Hey, I helped build this.'"

The trip also provided a time to strengthen the bonds of families who experienced the mission trip together. Fathers and sons and mothers and daughters worked side-by-side sharing the love of God through meeting the needs of others.

"Our church is reaching out and at the same time training our young people by setting an example," said John Rogers, coordinator for a team renovating the facilities of Friendship House, a Southern Baptist ministry located near New Orleans' French Quarter.

The mayor of New Orleans, Marc Morial, visited one of the work sites one morning to thank the Southern Baptists from Powder Springs.

"I think it's wonderful!" Morial said. "This is a display of the true spirit of missions. It is our teaching and helping of others that makes progress in our city. Actions speak louder than words."

"It was heartwarming to see these angels of God interacting with the children," said Janie Rhorer, director of special events for the city of New Orleans.

Michael Woods, pastor of First Baptist Church in Powder Springs, was not able to go on the New Orleans trip, but he wrote the following in an open letter to the team members: "I have prayed that First Baptist Church, Powder Springs, would be known as a ministering church. I have not only prayed but planned and worked toward that end. The church is at her very best when she is ministering."

Such a trip can revive any church, Rogers added. "Our church will be stronger as a result of this mission trip," he said.

**Finding God's way to live
takes planning, research**

By Terri Lackey

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Henry and Patti Webb discovered in their youth their lives ran more smoothly when they had a plan. Both avowed "natural" planners, the Webbs, however, learned by trial and error that good life planning and knowing and doing God's will did not naturally go hand-in-hand.

They found they had to work very hard to discover God's priorities and then live them. The Webbs are living their current motto -- "Seek God's will and do it" -- by sharing how they have learned to "put their lives together God's way."

Henry Webb, director of the discipleship and family leadership department for the Baptist Sunday School Board, and Patti, a retired school teacher, have written their message in a copyrighted workbook, "Priority Living: Putting My Life Together God's Way." They shared their information with about 100 participants in a Discipleship and Family Development Week seminar at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, July 2-8.

In the week-long "Priority Living" seminar, the Webbs revealed four steps to living life God's way. They are: purpose (Who does God want me to be?); review (Where am I now?); priority concerns (Where does God want me to go?); and priority actions (How does God want me to get there?).

"Priority living is all of the decision-making processes that help me determine who God wants me to be, where I am now, where God wants me to go, and how God wants me to get there," Henry Webb said. "Prayer is essential throughout the process."

Priority living areas include spouses, families, ministry, finances, mind, body, friends and work, the Webbs said.

Patti Webb said she was a "good home or domestic planner and good at planning entertainment events, but in many areas of my life I just didn't get out of my comfort zone.

"I had the desire to get out and set goals, but I tended to try to improve in too many areas of my life."

Therefore, Patti Webb said she was forced to write a purpose statement for her life that guided her when choosing priority issues. The Webbs have made writing a personal purpose statement the first step in outlining priority issues.

"My purpose statement identifies God's reason for my existence and who he wants me to be," Henry Webb said.

In their workbook, the Webbs list several examples of purpose statements, paraphrasing directives in the Bible. Some of those are:

- To glorify God, enjoy his presence and be his servant.
- To reflect God's honor and glory by living life to its fullest.
- To be all that God wants (has created) me to be.
- To be like Christ.
- To have an intimate personal relationship with God.
- To be God's obedient servant and steward to accomplish his will.
- To be used by God to create, give, enrich and sustain life.

"Reviewing our life is the second step of discovering God's priority issues for our lives," Patti Webb said.

"Reviewing our lives involves looking at ourselves from God's perspective in order to know where we are now and where God wants us to be," she said. "God is the one who guides the review through his Word. It's easy to fall into the trap of not seeing from God's perspective.

"Do you ever have plans that are good and virtuous, but not God's?" she asked. "That's why you have to review your priorities according to the Bible."

When a person reviews his life through the Bible, he is more apt to see where God is telling him to go with it, Henry Webb said.

"When you review your life based on God's Word, then you can find out where God wants you to go compared to where you are now," he said.

That leads, he said, into the third step of discovering priority concerns.

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"Priority heart concerns are present or future opportunities or needs of such God-given intensity that they demand my planned attention and focused energy now," he said.

"Priority concerns come out of two sources. One is attitudes or behaviors God wants you to change in order to conform to his will.

"And another is looking at yourself, others and the world from God's perspective in order to recognize a major need God wants you to meet as part of his mission.

"When you get a concern, it might consume you," Webb said. "A priority concern might make you say something like, 'I have to do something about this' or 'God has a dream and it has my name on it.'"

The next step in the process of living God's way, Patti Webb said, is to define priority actions or how God wants you to get there.

"A priority action is a specific activity, step or method God wants me to use to accomplish one of my priority concerns," she said.

"Your actions have to accomplish what God has given you as a priority concern, and that concern is essential to your purpose statement," Henry Webb said.

"Every action must achieve a priority concern or it isn't a priority action," he said. "However, some actions are not priority, but they are essential because they are maintenance activities of life.

"Priority living does include the mundane that has to be done. But we must be careful that we do not let maintenance activities squeeze out what God has led us to identify as priority," he added.

He said the priority concern of a servant of God should be obedience.

"Success and failure should not be a concern. Obedience and stewardship should."

As a personal example of a priority concern and action, Henry Webb recounted the story of helping his son pay for college. With a year of high school left, his son identified a college he would like to attend. The Webbs, in debt with no resources to help fund the tuition, gave themselves one year to get out of debt. They were able to accomplish their goal by cutting up their credit cards and consolidating their loans. When they paid off their debt, they used what they had been paying on monthly loans for their son's tuition.

"I would say if we hadn't been convicted about our debt, we would still be up to our ears in debt," he said.

The 50-page workbook the Webbs designed walks readers through the steps of writing personal purpose statements, identifying priority concerns and actions, and moving toward personal goals.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press.

They move furniture
as avenue of ministry

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
7/11/94

ATLANTA (BP)--Some Southern Baptists have found ministry can literally be a moving experience.

In Virginia and Georgia, volunteers help locate and move furniture for homeless families who find housing.

"This has apparently been a real problem for a number of families," said Joe Watson, a member of Briarlake Baptist Church in Atlanta. "They get jobs and they can get into apartments through various programs, but furniture is a big ticket item that they're not able to deal with."

About a dozen members of Briarlake started their ministry in May of last year. The project allows the team to share the gospel and encourage families to be a Christian witness in their new neighborhood, Watson said.

"Probably none of us likes to move furniture. But if you want to serve, (the Lord) opens up areas," he said. "It's really an outreach ministry. It gets us into areas where people definitely have problems."

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In Hampton, Va., the Peninsula Baptist Association offers a similar ministry, named Operation Daystar, which resulted in at least 100 professions of faith, said home missionary Lynn Latham.

"I started it because we have a lot of refugees, and they needed furniture," said Latham, director of church/community ministries for the association. "I began asking the churches for furniture. We had so much we ended up with three buildings full."

About 25 of the association's 65 churches and missions participate, she said, adding coordinators try to get churches that will deliver from the same area as the person with the need.

More than just another community service, churches use the furniture ministry to ask recipients about their spiritual needs as well as material needs, Latham said. "They don't go in without making a Christian witness."

Government and civic agencies were initially hesitant to work with a religious group, but workers have earned their trust, she said.

"They saw that even though my main intent is to share the Lord, I'm not real pushy about it," she said. "They trust us, they work with us and we have wonderful opportunities."

"We don't always get to see the whole result. God has to work in some people's lives in little bits," she said. "We may just be affirming them and letting them know that church people are not what most people think church people are like."

In Atlanta, Watson's group has seven pickup trucks to move furniture to their storage warehouse and to the new homes. Workers discover the needs, move the furniture and present the family with a cookbook and Bible.

"When we move in, we have a dedication service of the home," he said. "We not only share the plan of salvation, we want to be sure they're a Christian witness in that community that they're moving in."

Families also are encouraged to be involved in a local church, he said. Some men who receive the group's help volunteer to work on other jobs, he added. "They're able to get into the sharing ministry too," he said. "It makes them feel like they're wanted."

Workers have helped more than 40 families after a year in operation, Watson said.

Team member John McClure said he gets a blessing every time he helps a family. "I've got a hundred times more than I've put into it out of it," said McClure, chairman of benevolence work for the Sunday school class that supports it.

The group always finds enough furniture to meet the needs, he added. "Somebody up there is helping us."

Last year, a family was in need of living room furniture and a bed, said Watson, "and we really didn't have anything."

"I came to a meeting at the Memorial Drive shelter and Smoke Rise Church shared with me that they had a warehouse and a number of items. And the items that they happened to have were exactly what we needed."

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**Prison ministries need
Christians from all walks**

By Terri Lackey

**Baptist Press
7/11/94**

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Tom Turner and Al Peratt don't have much in common. But their one linking passion fuses them in a ministry field many Christians find undesirable: prison ministry.

Both men are committed to seeing prison inmates on the receiving side of the Great Commission edict. Both also feel prisoners are largely ignored by churches as a group with legitimate ministry needs.

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"If we looked at the prison population as a group of people living in another country who had never heard the gospel, we would be summoning our forces to tell them about Jesus," said Turner, coordinator for prison ministries at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. Turner taught a week-long class on training prison volunteers at Discipleship and Family Development Week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, July 2-8.

"Too many people are immune to the Great Commission and what it means. They learned the words years ago, but to respond to it is another matter," said Turner, a retired professor of physics at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark.

Turner presently teaches MasterLife and Experiencing God courses to inmates at the Craggy Correctional Center in Buncombe County near Mars Hill, N.C., where he lives.

He got "the fire in my gut" to take the gospel to prisoners during the 1993 discipleship week at Glorieta, he said.

Al Peratt's passion to minister to prisoners is perfectly understandable. He was one.

On federal parole until May 1995, Peratt is a former member of the Hell's Angels motorcycle gang, a retired drug dealer and a recovering alcohol and drug addict. He is also a Christian.

"I was a real bad boy -- a Baptist boy gone wrong," he said. Ironically, Peratt said his first real taste of Christianity came to him 28 years ago when he worked one summer in the kitchen of Glorieta Baptist Conference Center's cafeteria.

A California native, Peratt went on to college and majored in music at California Baptist College in Riverside, where he said, "I went crazy."

He began running with motorcycle gangs and smuggling dope. When he got caught, he served his first prison stint in the 1970s at the Chino State Prison in California. His second sentence was served in the South Dakota State Prison. There he said he began to think about the direction his life had taken.

"I started trying to remember when was the last time I was completely honest with myself. And I remembered it was at Glorieta."

From that time on, Peratt said he has lived the Christian lifestyle. Even in prison he said he started a Christian choir called the Ball and Chain Choir.

Now living in Sioux Falls, S.D., where he serves as music director for the Sioux Land Baptist Association and attends Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Peratt said he spends many hours going into the local jail and talking about Jesus.

Peratt, a "licensed preacher," said he isn't allowed into the local penitentiary until he completes parole.

"But what I can do is go into the jails and hit on the inmates before they hit the big wall (penitentiary). One thing I can offer as an ex-convict pastor is support," said Peratt, who also works with inmates once they are released from jail.

Turner said the best way into prison ministry for individuals who feel "the call" is to contact their local penitentiary chaplain. For those wishing to go into county jail ministry, he said they may call the local sheriff. A church interested in prison ministry might start a committee to work with chaplains or the local sheriff's office, he advised.

Inmates are not the only ones who need Christian direction, Turner said. "There is a real ministry need for their families and especially the children."

Turner said he dreams one day of seeing "regular slots" for prison ministry in state convention offices and in churches.

"God is at work here and we are to join him at what he is doing," Turner said. "People who get involved in prison ministry are responding to a call from God."

For more information on prison ministry, call or write Turner at 101 Forest Ridge Drive, Mars Hill, NC 28754; (704) 689-5413.

Vacation Bible School links
Baptist, Catholic church

By Melanie Childers

LEXINGTON, Ky. (BP)--When a Baptist church and a Catholic cathedral closed the street between them to hold a joint Vacation Bible School, they opened the way for cooperation and relationships.

For the fifth consecutive summer, Chevy Chase Baptist Church and Christ the King Cathedral in Lexington, Ky., pooled their resources to provide a joint "community Bible school."

This year's event drew a record daily attendance of about 150 children and 85 workers -- twice last year's totals.

Catholic and Baptist teachers worked side-by-side in every classroom, explained Lisa Wolfzorn, a coordinator from Chevy Chase Baptist Church.

"We don't discuss doctrinal differences," she said. "We just teach the basic gospel message."

The churches gained permission from city officials to block off Colony Boulevard every night from 6 to 9:30 so children could walk safely to classrooms in both buildings.

A block party -- refreshments and an informal time for children, parents and teachers to get acquainted -- was scheduled for Friday night on the street.

"Last year was the first time we used both facilities," explained Melissa Holland, a coordinator from Christ the King Cathedral. "That made it a whole lot more visible to the community that this is a joint effort."

Chevy Chase averages about 300 people for Sunday morning worship; Christ the King is a congregation of about 2,000 families.

Nan Wash, a Chevy Chase member instrumental in organizing the first joint Bible school, said the idea surfaced during a meeting at the church about how to involve the community in Vacation Bible School.

"Someone mentioned that a lot of the community is Catholic," she explained. "So somebody else said, 'Why don't we invite them to join us?'"

Meanwhile, across the street, Christ the King had halted its summer Bible school program after several frustrating attempts yielding limited success.

Historically, many Catholic children have received religious education every day through private school, Holland explained. Consequently, Catholics generally have not been known for strong summer Bible school programs.

"When Chevy Chase invited us to join them, we jumped at the chance," Holland continued. "We wanted to offer that to our families, and frankly, the Baptists do it well."

Leaders from both churches agreed the biggest challenge has been finding suitable literature for Bible school.

Rather than using either Southern Baptist or Roman Catholic materials, leaders chose from a growing list of non-denominational resources, they said.

"We look for basic, Christian teaching that would not be offensive to either group," Holland said.

Consequently, Vacation Bible School assumes a somewhat non-traditional structure.

This year, classrooms -- located in both churches -- were arranged as five New Testament cities, such as Lystra, Damascus and Philippi. While teachers remained in their areas, children were escorted to a new city every evening.

"Teachers prepared the same lessons every day, but just geared them to a different age-level," Wash explained.

Similarly, no "sit-down" or "stand-up" chords were played by the pianist during opening assembly. Instead, skits and songs supporting the school's theme engaged the children interactively.

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Holland said she long has been an advocate for ecumenical activities. "I'm a firm believer that we've been raised on a lot of myths," she said. The Bible school helps dispel those myths, she added. "It's important to break down the walls of misunderstanding, without losing your own sense of identity, history and theology."

Holland named strong friendships with Baptists as the most enjoyable feature of the Bible school for her.

"It's great to see people, ... set doctrine aside and find common ground in Jesus Christ, who unites all of us," Wolfzorn added.

Also, she said, "It's an example and a witness to the community."

Wash agreed. Monday night, she said, a child from the neighborhood who had seen a flier and all the commotion came to register himself for Bible school.

"The little boy came running breathlessly up to the table," she recalled. "Then he asked, 'Where do I sign up?'"

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**Baptist foundations group taps
Lyle Garlow as administrator**

By John Loudat

**Baptist Press
7/11/94**

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (BP)--J. Lyle Garlow has been named the first administrator for the Association of Baptist Foundations, according to the association's president, Lee Black.

Black, president of the New Mexico Baptist Foundation and Church Loan Corporation since 1981, currently is in his second year as president of the association of state Baptist foundations.

Garlow was contracted as the first administrator of the organization during a meeting of the association's executive committee in Oklahoma City June 13. He retired in December 1992 after 21 years as the associate executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

A native of Oklahoma, Garlow is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, with a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a doctor of divinity degree from Oklahoma Baptist University.

Garlow also has served as chairman of the board of commissioners of the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission and on the board of directors of the Southern Baptist Convention Foundation.

According to Black, the plan to employ an administrator was introduced in a meeting of the association in Albuquerque last summer.

"Sweeping changes" to the constitution and bylaws and the approval of the budget at the annual meeting in March allowed for the new position, according to Black.

Black said Garlow will not do anything already being done by others. Instead, "he will bring (the work of the association) to a new level."

"The association's goal in engaging an administrator is to enhance a better understanding by Southern Baptists of the important services offered by Baptist foundations. The administrator will also serve as a contact between the association and other Baptist agencies and institutions," Black said.

He added, "Lyle represents an answer to much prayer. ... This marks a positive step forward in the ministry of the association."

The decision also should serve to improve networking between the state foundations, Black said.

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(BP) photo available upon request from the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma.

EDITORS' NOTE: In (BP) story on SBC President H. Edwin Young's sermon at the Orlando annual meeting, "Young prescribes spiritual healing for a sick America," dated 6/14/94, a clarification is needed in the 14th paragraph, which starts "Even some Southern Baptists"

Please replace that paragraph with the following:

Even some Southern Baptists have reached their own desperation, he noted.

"In our own denomination last year we had some 62,000 men who were ordained to serve churches and institutions in the SBC," Young said. Last year those who were a victim of burnout, who said simply, "I am leaving the ministry" and those who were a part of bailout where the church couldn't live with them or they couldn't live with the church or for other reasons -- of the 62,000-plus ordained men in the SBC, those who were thinking bailout or evidenced burnout last year were over 18,000, he added.

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