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-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

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

August 1, 1994

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Southern Baptists to focus
on Rwandan children's lives

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
8/1/94

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--To help stem the rising tide of death in Rwandan refugee camps outside Goma, Zaire, Southern Baptists will concentrate on saving children's lives in two UNICEF camps.

Many are still infants. They will be fed by powdered formula mixed with water pumped from nearby streams and purified by solar-powered systems to be provided through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Southern Baptist water technicians will operate the systems.

UNICEF workers have set up seven camps for children who have become separated from their parents. In many cases, their mothers and fathers were buried in mass graves with other Rwandan corpses that had been rolled into mats and left along the roads to decay.

Southern Baptists have promised to provide teams of doctors and nurses, recruited by the denomination's Brotherhood Commission, for clinics in the children's camps for three months beginning in early August. They will bring powdered formulas, medicine and medical devices for children.

The children's camps are located in the region around 15 sprawling camps, where up to 2 million Rwandan refugees are settling in. Thousands are dying from dehydration as cholera and dysentery sap their bodies of needed fluids.

"I've been in war, but I've never seen anything like this," said Foreign Mission Board missionary Clyde Berkley, who returned in late July to his base in Nairobi, Kenya, from a survey trip to the area. "There's just complete disregard for dead people. They don't have the time to think about them. They don't have the strength to think about them.

"What it looked like in many places was what I might think of as hell," said Berkley, a Vietnam war veteran. "We drove through about 20 miles of refugees ... basically on the roads and everywhere.

"It took us about four hours to get through there, and we estimated we saw about 1,000 bodies on the side of the road. On the other side of the road people were cooking their food or selling their potatoes or something."

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The refugees belong to Rwanda's Hutu majority, whose militias slaughtered hundreds of thousands of the rival Tutsi minority after a Hutu president died in a mysterious plane crash April 6.

As Tutsi forces took control in the country, Hutus fled, fearing revenge attacks. A portion of them went into Tanzania to the east. The majority poured over the Zaire border to the west and settled around Goma. Tutsi leaders have asked the Hutus to return without fear of reprisal. Only a few are doing so.

Berkley, the Foreign Mission Board's associate to the area director for eastern and southern Africa, was accompanied by missionaries who lived in Rwanda until the recent outbreak of violence. "As we talked to them (refugees) we told them, 'You're better off back in Rwanda than you are here,' but they say, 'No, that's not true.' They're afraid to go back."

Many are packing up and moving farther inside the border, deeper into Zaire. "We saw hundreds of them, and talked to some. We asked them what they were doing. They said, 'Well, that's a death camp down there, and we're getting away from there.'"

Southern Baptists have mobilized missionaries in the area for the relief project, for which the Foreign Mission Board has already released \$250,000. Veterinarian Stan Lee, missionary to Rwanda, will be team leader for the project, Berkley said. Another missionary to Rwanda, Katrina Knox, a nurse, will be medical coordinator.

Larry Pumpelly, a missionary to Uganda, also on the survey, will be project coordinator. A missionary colleague in Uganda, Tad Tadlock, will coordinate logistics for the project.

Each volunteer medical team Southern Baptists provide will work for two weeks and include three doctors and two nurses.

Berkley is asking Southern Baptists to pray that the first team can come in early August, although flights are booked to Nairobi until mid-August. If not, missionaries will need to fill the gap because the teams in place at the clinics now are leaving then.

Board leaders also urge Southern Baptists to continue to contribute to hunger and relief to help cover the increasing needs. Contributions may be sent to the Foreign Mission Board in care of the human needs department at P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230, designated for world hunger and relief.

"... These children are the real innocent victims in this situation," said Berkley. "They had nothing to do with all that went on in Rwanda. And we'll have a chance to make a difference in their lives."

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Religious liberty still issue
in Europe, Baptist leaders say By Mike Creswell

Baptist Press
8/1/94

LILLEHAMMER, Norway (BP)--The battle for religious liberty continues in Europe despite changes in Eastern Europe, Baptist leaders have warned.

Freedom of religion was a major discussion topic during the European Baptist Federation's congress in Lillehammer, Norway, the mountain resort city which played host to the Winter Olympics. More than 3,200 Baptists from 41 countries, including many from Eastern Europe, attended the July 26-31 congress, held every five years.

Many speakers agreed religious freedom has improved during the past five years, especially in Eastern Europe. But Baptists still contend with governments and with state churches, such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church in some areas, speakers said. Unlike in the United States, Baptists are a minority religious group throughout the region.

The federation has set up a task force to document violations of religious liberty so they can better address religious liberty questions. It also is setting up a network of attorneys across Europe who can specialize in religious liberty issues and better respond through legal channels.

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The Bulgarian government sent agents posing as Baptists to the congress in Budapest, Hungary, five years ago, said Theo Angelov, president of Bulgarian Baptists and federation vice president. "They posed as Baptists, but they actually were there to report back on what was said in the meeting," he recounted.

"For Baptists to (now) be able to come freely to the congress without worrying that somebody (in government) will listen to them is something very, very special for us," he said during a press conference.

But he warned that the Bulgarian government, working with the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, has waged a harsh anti-evangelical campaign during the last two years.

Public buildings have been denied Baptists, forcing them to meet again in private homes as during the repressive communist years. A media smear campaign also has been directed against evangelicals, he said. Most recently the government has alleged that a "pastor's mafia" is taking over Bulgaria's educational system and culture, Angelov said.

"The situation is getting worse each day," warned Angelov. To meet the needs of church buildings in Eastern Europe, the federation is setting up a church building program in Bulgaria in which low-cost, prefabricated church buildings can be constructed quickly.

Even when religion is not banned outright in Bulgaria, more subtle controls have been in effect in Bulgaria, charged John Floyd, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission board's director for work in Europe. Southern Baptist missionaries and other Christian workers have had problems getting visas to even remain in the country, he said.

"After all the recent events in Europe, we're again seeing people trying to build walls and fences -- new fences, new spiritual hindrances," Angelov said. "New hatreds are growing up in place of the old in many places on our continent."

Roman Catholicism is the main force Baptists must deal with on the Mediterranean island of Malta, said Edwin Carvana, pastor of one of two Baptist churches there.

"Catholics are trying to stop Baptist growth," Carvana charged during a seminar on religious liberty. On Malta, Baptists are seen by Catholics as "separated brothers" or heretics, he said.

"Supposedly we have freedom of religion but when we deal with a devout Catholic in the government, it can be like a stick stuck between the spokes of a wheel and we have problems," he said.

Carvana said he offered to jointly sponsor a meeting to discuss the deity of Christ, but the local Catholic priest refused. "Had I shared a program with the priest, it would have made Baptists look legitimate," he said.

Catholicism also is a problem in Latvia, where Baptist children are forced to attend Catholic religion classes in public schools, said Janos Tervits, a Baptist pastor there.

Amid incidents of religious oppression, Baptists also face growing secularism and an increasing presence of Islam across Europe, Baptist participants said. Baptists from Germany, England, France and the Netherlands told of rapid increases in the number of Muslims in their countries and the challenges to missions that creates.

Two million Muslim Turks now reside in Germany, said Ursula Geldbach of Bensheim, Germany. And schools for Muslim students are increasing in the Netherlands, said Riet de Boer of Nieuw-Weerdinge, Netherlands. Muslims greatly outnumber Baptists and other evangelicals in several European countries.

While France generally is considered a Roman Catholic country, that's no longer true, said Jean-Pierre Dassonville, general secretary of home missions for French Baptists. "It's a secular country, but Catholicism still has a strong impact on people's thinking."

Major cities in Eastern Europe are moving quickly from non-Christian communism towards non-Christian secularism found in Western Europe, warned Karl-Heinz Walter, the Europe federation's general secretary.

Some Baptists also pointed out the inequities between the freedoms Muslims enjoy in Europe versus how violently anti-Christian some predominantly Muslim countries in the Middle East and North Africa are.

"When Muslims want to build mosques in France, we ask them what about the freedom to build churches in your countries, like in North Africa," said Dassonville.

Baptist leaders also outlined several responses to religious liberty questions.

In June, leaders of Baptists, Catholics and other church groups met in Moscow with Patriarch Alexei, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, for three days. Walter told European Baptist Press Service the session represented a "step forward" in attaining religious freedom in former Soviet Union states.

Baptists in Russia have clashed with the Orthodox Church as the Orthodox have tried to regain their former state church status at the same time Baptists have grown by about 25 percent since 1990.

A statement issued by the conference backed support for human rights and called on "all those who follow Christ" to oppose war, violence and enmity with works of love and peace.

"We resolutely urge the state authorities and peoples of our countries to stop all the fratricidal strife in the territory of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) through reasonable concessions and compromises, among other means," the statement said.

A meeting later this year has been scheduled by leaders of the Baptist World Alliance and the federation with the patriarch of the Orthodox Church in Istanbul, Turkey, said Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary. Lotz hopes to address the problems Baptists and other evangelicals have suffered in Bulgaria and other Eastern European countries at the hands of the Orthodox Church.

The BWA has long been one of the most effective representatives of Baptists to governments because it goes in the name of 38 million Baptists in 180 Baptist conventions and unions working in more than 200 countries. In July the BWA welcomed six new Baptist unions to its ranks.

It also has non-government organization status with the United Nations and encourages governments to honor their agreements on religious rights. "We're concerned the document on religious freedom approved by the U.N. be a document all nations take seriously," said Lotz in a press conference.

While Baptists in most of Europe contend with state churches and the teaching of religion in public schools, several longed for complete separation of church and state. "I prefer that there be no teaching of religion in public schools," said Lithuanian Baptist Janos Tervits.

Congress participants generally agreed Baptists cannot enjoy religious liberty unless all have religious liberty.

"The Baptist way has always been to defend the rights of other religions as a way to help preserve our own freedoms," Avery Willis told a seminar on religious liberty. Willis is the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's senior vice president for overseas.

Janos Tervits agreed with Willis. Tervits told seminar participants he disagrees with Catholic theology and would never choose to be one.

But, he said, "But if the Catholic church building is on fire, I'd be first in line to help put out the fire. I'm thankful to God I'm a Baptist. But if I'm asking for rights for me, then others must be free, too."

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'Jesus' film effort in Albania
gets nourishment from Baptists

By Connie Davis

Baptist Press
8/1/94

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP)--"It's like stepping back in time 50-75 years," said Cameron Byler, Tennessee Baptist Brotherhood director, after leading an eight-member missions team to Albania.

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More horse-drawn carts can be found in Shkoder, a city of 80,000 in northern Albania, than cars -- 20 to one -- with bicycles the most popular mode of transportation, said Byler.

The Albanians had been isolated from progress by their communist leaders, who told them they should fear military attacks from the United States, he reported.

That government system also denied Albanians any religious expression. Hundreds of volunteers from eight different countries are in Albania trying to give Albanians a basis for religion.

The Tennessee team traveled to the former Soviet country to set up and operate a base camp and provide meals for about 100 young adults who formed teams to share the "Jesus" film and witness.

Byler and four other Tennessee volunteers worked June 19-July 12, while three others remained on site through July 31.

The project brought five different entities together, Byler said. They include the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission; Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board; Cooperative Services International, a Southern Baptist aid organization; Campus Crusade for Christ; and Helimission of Switzerland.

"I think the exciting thing was that we were on the cutting edge of a project that involved more than just Southern Baptists. And it involved trying to evangelize a nation that had been under communist rule for nearly 50 years," said Byler.

"Our job primarily was to make a home away from home for these kids; give them two days rest and keep their morale up," explained Byler.

That isn't easy in a country where workers couldn't count on access to electricity and water to prepare meals. But it's the forte of Brotherhood volunteers.

"It was just a training run for us," Byler said.

The Tennessee team and a team from Alabama, which set up another camp in the country, did just what they do in disaster relief situations -- transport mobile kitchens. Then, it didn't matter if they were cooking in the courtyard of a former ruler's palace which was visited by goats. In fact, the goats were welcomed, Byler said. They cut down on garbage disposal.

Equipment for the three-year project was provided by the Brotherhood Commission. Finding food was another challenge, he said.

Each day Byler traveled from the village where the camp was located to Shkoder to buy from vendors who sold their wares along the streets. City streets were the only market except for a few small shops, Byler noted.

Albanians are "very gracious," Byler said, even the district chief of police who oversees an area comparable to a U.S. state. The chief checked on the visitors regularly, providing security for them, Byler added.

Albanians are poor. An average income is \$40-\$45 a month, he said.

Christians exist despite past repression, Byler noted. Many of the translators assisting the witnessing teams were Christians. And when he left after three weeks into the project, about 800 Albanians had expressed an interest in learning more about Christianity, he reported.

The volunteer missionaries need prayer, Byler said. Several villages rejected the visitors. And many volunteers face hardships, he noted. The six- or seven-member witnessing teams must carry a projector, generator and water purifier with them.

Some villages they visit are so remote they can't be reached by jeep, which is where the helicopters of Helimission come in. In some cases, fuel for the helicopters had to be transported part of the way, Byler said.

When the teams arrive at a village, they are hosted by families who often don't have electricity or plumbing, have little food and little space. The teams often slept in one room, Byler said.

One team also worked on a university campus in Shkoder.

"They were a tough bunch of kids. They were some of the deepest kids -- spiritually -- I've ever worked with. They were real prayer warriors," said Byler.

The prayers and hard work are paying off, he reported, as some of the missionaries were invited to visit herdsmen in the high alpine country. After 250 herdsmen viewed the film, they begged the team to remain another night so they could contact others in the mountains and ask them to come to see it.

Byler said volunteers will be needed as the project continues. And next summer, a similar summer program is planned in another region of Albania and Tennessee Brotherhood has been invited back, Byler said.

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HMB's Owens notes difference
between worship, entertainment By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
8/1/94

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--What many churches call "worship" is often "evangelical entertainment" and not a response to a holy God, said the Home Mission Board's associate director of prayer and spiritual awakening.

"Worship has become a cover word for services," Ron Owens said during a home missions conference at the Glorieta Baptist Conference Center. "We sing about God, we talk about what God is doing, but we do not spend time in awe of who he is.

"Some people say worship should be a happy time. I'm not against celebration, being joyous in the Lord or enthusiasm. I am against calling this worship."

Because worship focuses on God's holiness, many people experience deep conviction, Owens said. "Worship demands a moral change in response to Holy God."

Conviction, however, makes unbelievers and carnal Christians uneasy, and churches have adapted their services so outsiders can be comfortable, Owens said. "We want dead people to enjoy themselves.

"Worship can never be seeker-friendly. Worship is for God alone, not a bait to catch an unsuspecting sinner."

Many church services are designed for the person who expects to get something out of it rather than for God, Owens said.

"How many people would come to church today (if their only motivation) was that they love God so much they want to get together with other believers and worship him? Who is supposed to get something out of worship? God."

Another factor contributing to a lack of worship is that "the holy has become common. We bring God down to our level and have no problem being chummy with him," Owens said.

"If our view of God is anything other than his self-revelation through his Word, then the god we worship is one of our own making," Owens said.

Worship is a humbling experience that results in changed priorities, Owens said.

"If we knew him the way he intends, there would be much more stooping and less strutting," he said. "Until the holy becomes holy again, we'll keep on arguing and debating peripheral issues."

Worship service leaders need to lead the congregation to meet God, Owens said. Services should flow easily from part to part, with a reason for everything that happens. Owens suggested churches welcome guests at the start of a service so it does not interrupt worship. He also suggested including the offering in the service as an act of worship.

Music during church services is often chosen to entertain or affect the congregation rather than affect God, Owens said. "There is no place for performing or using God for entertainment."

Worship leaders should be aware of music's power to trigger emotions, suggest thought patterns and create an atmosphere, said Owens' wife, Pat.

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There are "no hard and fast rules" concerning music, Mrs. Owens said, but she offered the following questions for people to ask when selecting music for worship:

-- Does the Word of God dominate the lyrics? Are the words in harmony with Scripture? Are they biblically based and doctrinally sound?

-- Is the music well-written?

-- Do the lyrics use normal language? When using a song from an earlier period, help people understand its meaning, Mrs. Owens said.

-- Does it cause you to think highly of God -- his character, his acts, his promises?

-- Does the music accompany the lyrics well? Music should be the servant of the lyrics, she said.

-- Can it be sung by people without great vocal ability?

-- Is it memorable?

"Music that the Spirit of God owns will not be in competition with him for the attention of his people," Mrs. Owens said. "Rather it will be that which calls attention to himself."

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Following Jesus means getting involved in humanity, speaker says

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press

8/1/94

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Following Jesus requires "getting involved in the mess of humanity," a Baptist from London told home missions conference participants at the Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Steven Chalke, director of Oasis Trust, an organization involved in evangelism, church planting and social ministries, noted the first chapter of John says, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

Christians have forgotten what it meant for God to leave heaven for earth, Chalke said, citing the church's depiction of the Christmas story to make his point.

Christmas events portray clean cows with no flies or fleas and clean-shaven shepherds, he noted. "How could Hollywood, with a limitless budget, do the story of Christmas and romanticize it more, make it more plastic than the church has already done?

"We've turned the story of Christmas into a fairy tale and wonder why no one wants to believe it."

Jesus invested his life in people's hurts, Chalke said, challenging Christians to do the same.

"God didn't stand on the sidelines calling out instructions. He didn't do a mass mailing," Chalke said. "Witnessing for Jesus is being Jesus, which is infinitely harder (than other evangelism approaches because) you can't fake it. You can't memorize it."

Chalke challenged participants to serve among the world's poor. From observing most Christians, Chalke said, it seems God's call is always to affluent places and fat salaries. In Scripture, however, God called people to leave their families and their wealth, he noted.

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Texas executive board, convention to weigh CP committee compromise By Toby Druin

Baptist Press

8/1/94

DALLAS (BP)--Texas Baptists' Cooperative Missions Giving Study Committee struck a compromise agreement July 29, protecting the convention's traditional Cooperative Program tie to the Southern Baptist Convention but at the same time making room for support of such entities as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

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Still to be fine-tuned in another meeting Aug. 8, the recommendation, to be presented to the executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in Dallas Sept. 13, and to the annual meeting in Amarillo, Oct. 31-Nov. 1, took more than six hours of discussion in the 22-member panel's fourth meeting July 29 and drew five votes of opposition. The committee's complete report will be carried in the Texas Baptist Standard in the Aug. 17 issue.

As adopted by the committee July 29, the report will recommend a Baptist General Convention-Operated Cooperative Program which will provide:

-- that churches giving to both the adopted Texas Cooperative Program budget and the adopted SBC Cooperative Program budget, and according to the adopted percentage of division between the two, will continue to be recognized as cooperating churches.

-- that churches giving to the Texas Cooperative Program budget will be recognized as cooperative churches by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

-- that the BGCT will continue to recognize the decision of a church to delete up to five line items in either the Texas or the SBC Cooperative Program budgets.

A BGCT-Directed Cooperative Program will provide:

-- that churches may direct the distribution of their gifts between the BGCT and worldwide Baptist missions and ministries. These "worldwide Baptist missions and ministries" may include the Southern Baptist Convention, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist World Alliance and other ministries within the Baptist family.

-- that churches may continue to designate mission gifts to individual causes.

-- that the BGCT will continue to disburse gifts for the special mission offerings (Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong, Mary Hill Davis, world hunger relief) and other gifts designated by the churches.

The Baptist Standard, the state convention's newsjournal, covers the meetings of the committee under background rules that prohibit direct quotes of committee members or attribution of positions taken.

Chairman Cecil Ray of Georgetown, commenting on the committee's action following the meeting, however, said it was important to note that the committee had affirmed the traditional Cooperative Program partnership of local church, state convention and Southern Baptist Convention.

"Contrary to rumors that we have been moving toward separating the state convention from the SBC," said Ray, "we have reaffirmed the Cooperative Program partnership.

"At the same time, the committee has chosen to honor the gifts of loyal Texas Baptists who out of conviction have chosen to support missions through other channels," he said.

Ray and others voiced strong sentiment against doing anything that would "destroy" the traditional Cooperative Program.

The recommendations portion of the report also will include a provision that the Baptist General Convention of Texas budget continue to be adopted by messengers to the annual convention, including distribution of Cooperative Program contributions to the ministries supported by the BGCT and the percentage division of Cooperative Program contributions between BGCT budget ministries and worldwide Baptist missions and ministries. All contributions by churches through the BGCT will be recognized by appropriate reporting, such as the compilation included in the July 27 issue of the Baptist Standard.

The committee wrestled with several options during the course of their six-hour discussion, at one time including Cooperative Baptist Fellowship funds in a separate "other missions gifts" category rather than in a "Cooperative Program" category.

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Opponents of including CBF funds in a Cooperative Program designation stressed "Cooperative Program" traditionally had referred to the partnership between local church and state and Southern Baptist conventions in support of missions, education and benevolence efforts. They asked that anything to be considered "Cooperative Program" include gifts supporting traditional Texas Baptist or Southern Baptist causes.

Those advocating inclusion of CBF funds as "Cooperative Program" said that to give them any other designation would be to continue the "second class" status now perceived for gifts channeled through the CBF or any other means other than the traditional Cooperative Program channel.

The committee was authorized at the 1993 convention after approval of a motion by Ben Loring, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, that a special committee be named by the president of the convention to study how to enhance cooperative missions giving among all Texas Baptists, and report their findings and recommendations to the 1994 convention in Amarillo.

In addition to the recommendations to be made by the committee, the report will include a "findings" portion detailing Texas Baptists' relationship to the Cooperative Program since its founding in 1925, changes in its perception and how it has been affected over the last 15 years of controversy. Over the last 10 years, the percentage of designated receipts going from local churches to support of the Cooperative Program has increased in dollar amount from \$54,533,300 in 1984 to \$58,329,604 in 1993, but during the same period the percentage of the undesignated receipts going to support the CP has dropped every year from 10.5 percent in 1984 to 8.3 percent in 1993.

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EDITORS' NOTE: This is a wrapup, updating the (BP) story with the same headline, dated 7/29/94.

U.S. celebration caps
year of True Love Waits

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
8/1/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--A national celebration for the year-long "True Love Waits" sexual abstinence campaign brought thousands of youth from across the United States together in person and by television July 29 on Washington's National Mall.

An estimated 25,000 teen-agers attended the day of events sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board of Nashville, Tenn., and Youth for Christ of Denver, host of a July 27-31 youth evangelism conference also in Washington.

Thousands more viewed evening events by live broadcast on the Charlotte, N.C.,-based Inspirational Network (INSP).

Begun by the Sunday School Board in April 1993, the campaign is designed to encourage teen-agers and college students to pledge sexual abstinence until marriage. In subsequent months, 27 other U.S. denominations and organizations have endorsed the campaign and international interest has increased its visibility.

Throughout the morning of July 29, approximately 1,000 Southern Baptist teen-agers worked under the direction of the youth department of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission to fill the equivalent of several city blocks of the mall's grassy area with signed sexual abstinence pledge cards from the nation's teens and college students.

At day's end, more than 210,000 cards had been received at the mall. Some churches which participated in the campaign missed the deadline to ship cards for the display or chose to use them in other ways, celebration organizers said.

President Bill Clinton met with a representative group of 150 youth and 10 adults from both the Southern Baptist and Youth for Christ groups for a 25-minute briefing at the White House early in the afternoon. Included among those to participate was Richard Ross, campaign spokesperson from the Sunday School Board.

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Ross said Clinton "took notice of the white ribbons worn by several Southern Baptist teenagers and used that as an occasion to say the crisis related to teen-age sexuality cannot be solved by government programs."

"He said his administration can make a limited contribution," Ross continued, "by such actions as changing welfare policies to discourage having babies out of wedlock, strengthening child support rules to cause biological fathers to take responsibility for their offspring and to make the process for adopting children born out of wedlock easier."

Ross said Clinton reminded the young people that such government actions have only limited effect and that the true answer to the crisis is "for individual teenagers to choose not to have sex out of their own internal sense of morality."

He said the president's schedule did not permit time for responses or questions from the youth.

On hand at the mall to lend their support, answer news media questions or to perform at an evening concert were contemporary Christian artists, including the Newsboys, Geoff Moore and the Distance, Steven Curtis Chapman, Petra, Lisa Bevil and DeGarmo & Key.

At a morning news conference using the massive pledge-card display as a backdrop, Ross characterized the campaign as "a positive challenge to teenagers to make a promise to be sexually abstinent from this day forward until their wedding day."

Dave Sherrer of Youth for Christ said the success of the campaign demonstrates "God raises up movements; people raise up organizations."

Christian artists who spoke to the media included Chapman, who said he believes "there is hope for this generation by letting God make the rules in their lives."

Moore added his belief that "we all feel very humbled and small compared to what this (campaign) has become. True Love Waits is about raising standards and having young people take a stand not only for abstinence but also for truth."

Entertainer Lakitha Garth, spokesperson for Athletes for Abstinence, said she hears youth asking why abstinence is not presented more often as an option when messages about the use of condoms are prevalent.

"There is no condom that can protect you from a broken heart and a shattered dream," she declared.

Josh McDowell, a writer and speaker, urged behavior among youth that demonstrates the same character in private that they display in public.

Blasting federal officials and educational programs he said favor safe-sex messages over those of higher moral options, McDowell insisted "character is consistent. While the government and educators may have given up on them, our kids are not animals. They are created in the image of God."

Teen-ager Susan Fitzgerald, a member of Tulip Grove Baptist Church in Hermitage, Tenn., was among the first youth group to make public in 1993 their intentions to remain chaste until marriage.

In addressing the news conference, she said her desire is "to do with my life what God wants me to do. When I made this decision, I decided I want to be in a relationship with someone who has the same values."

Keith Hartsell, a youth from Springfield, Va., said he believes God's plan for sexual purity is designed "to keep us safe ... so we can enjoy sex within marriage."

Washington, D.C., teen Monica McIntyre, a member of the Third Street Church of God, said the campaign has helped her know "I am not the only one. If others see this, it may reinforce their beliefs."

Prior to the evening concert, youth gathered on all sides of the displayed pledge cards for silent prayer. Smaller groups ranging from six to 40 teens with their adult leaders prayed in groups on the outer edges of the mall.

Concurrent with the Washington festivities were similar celebrations involving more youth in Kampala, Uganda, in Africa and Ottawa, Ontario, in Canada.

Local, national and international news media reporters covering the July 29 rally added to more than a year of intense print and broadcast media coverage.

More than 500 media outlets with a combined listening, viewing and reading audience in the hundreds of millions have reported on the campaign during the past year for audiences in the United States, Canada, England, Australia, China, Brazil, Argentina, Sweden, Colombia, Venezuela, South Korea, France, Northern Ireland and several African countries.

The Washington rally followed a June display in Orlando, Fla., of more than 102,000 abstinence cards from Southern Baptist youth. The cards, signed in their hometowns and churches, came after Bible studies, music, Christian sex education resources and other materials had been used to present the biblical view of sex within marriage.

The pledge cards read: "Believing that true love waits, I make a commitment to God, myself, my family, those I date, my future mate and my future children to be sexually pure until the day I enter a covenant marriage relationship."

For Southern Baptists, the national celebration does not mark the end of the campaign as much as a transition to a ongoing emphasis. The Sunday School Board is developing a True Love Waits planning kit for churches interested in educating youth and college students about the biblical view of sexuality. Available Oct. 1, the kit will include Bible study materials, a drama, music, ideas for church services/celebrations, and information to order supplemental materials such as the Christian Sex Education Resources published by the BSSB, the True Love Waits album and commitment rings, among others.

Messengers to the 137th annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando voted June 15 to make the campaign's message an annual emphasis. February will be designated as "True Love Waits" month on the denominational calendar and the Sunday School Board will provide guidance materials to help churches carry out a yearly abstinence education program.

A display of covenant cards signed by young people from around the world is planned for Aug. 1-6, 1995, during the Baptist World Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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A file of quotes by states from youth participating in the display of covenants on the National Mall in Washington was posted in the SBCNet newsroom July 29. Photos will be sent from Washington to state Baptist newspapers and are available electronically through PressLink. Baptist Press stories also are available through PressLink.

Responses to 'True Love Waits'
vary among public policy makers By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
8/1/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--"True Love Waits" met with varying responses from policy makers and advocates as the year-long sexual abstinence campaign culminated in a celebration July 29 on the National Mall.

Some members of Congress praised the campaign, while the Clinton administration's response proved more subdued. Meanwhile, public-policy advocates debated the effectiveness of "True Love Waits."

More than 211,000 sexual abstinence commitment cards signed by teen-agers were displayed in the grassy expanse a few blocks in front of the U.S. Capitol, and about 25,000 teens attended the day's events, sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board and Youth for Christ.

In the afternoon, President Clinton spoke for about 25 minutes to 150 teens and 10 adults representing both "True Love Waits" and D.C. '94, an evangelism conference sponsored by Youth for Christ.

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While the president discussed his administration's accomplishments during the week, he also called attention to the white ribbons worn by some teens involved in "True Love Waits," said Richard Ross, campaign spokesman for the Sunday School Board.

The president "used that to introduce the thought that government has a limited ability to affect teen-agers' sexual behavior and that the only hope for overcoming the teen sex crisis is for teen-agers to make personal choices to delay sex based on a personal sense of morality," said Ross, who attended the briefing with nine adult representatives of Youth for Christ.

"He expanded the concept of personal morality to say that in many arenas of life government external policies and control cannot prevent the destruction of society, only an internal sense of rightness and wrongness," Ross said.

As examples of things government can do, Ross said, Clinton cited "his work for liberalizing adoption policies ... welfare reform that would make having children out of wedlock less attractive economically and strengthening child-support laws that would cause biological fathers to take a greater sense of responsibility for their offspring."

The president's schedule did not permit time for statements or questions from the youth, Ross said. Clinton also made no direct reference to that night's "True Love Waits" rally, Ross said.

Phone calls by Baptist Press seeking comments on the meeting were not returned by a White House spokesperson.

Two members of Congress lauded the True Love Waits participants, but criticized the Clinton administration's policies.

"The national rise in teen pregnancies is indeed symptomatic of a deeper problem in our national culture," said Sen. Dan Coats, R.-Ind., in a written statement, "but the thousands of teens who are assembled here today embody hope for the future and the possibility for change. Their message will be heard."

Coats called unfortunate the Clinton administration's deletion of all funding for Title XX, the only federal program promoting teen-age sexual abstinence, in its 1995 budget request. The administration proposed establishment of the Office of Adolescent Health to address a variety of teen problems. Abstinence would be a part of this program, administration officials said, but to what extent was not revealed.

The House of Representatives, however, restored the Title XX program at \$6.7 million next year. A Senate committee has approved the program at the same rate, but it remains to be voted on by the full Senate.

The teen-agers "who are here for True Love Waits have found a unique way to convey the strength of the abstinence program to America," Coats said. "I stand by them as they raise their voices in our larger cultural discussion. Let us hope the administration is listening."

While praising the teen-agers involved in "True Love Waits," Rep. Frank Wolf, R.-Va., decried the "safe-sex" message espoused by Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders.

It is a "mistake to sell our young people short" by assuming they will give in to sexual temptation, Wolf said. Maintaining "silence about abstinence could translate into disease and death."

Elders espouses condom distribution to teens and age-based sex education beginning in kindergarten.

Donna Shalala, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and Elders declined a request for a meeting with Ross and Youth for Christ officials because of scheduling conflicts, a YFC spokesperson said. Shalala and Elders were both out of town the day of the rally, said spokespersons in their offices.

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Shalala has said many times "abstinence is the safest and surest way of preventing unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease," said Victor Zonana, a spokesperson for the secretary. "But, to be frank, she has also said that if young adults, for whatever reason, participate in intercourse, they should protect themselves and their partners by using latex condoms consistently and correctly."

Meanwhile, a pro-sex education organization derided the "True Love Waits" effort.

"The 'virginity trend' is an adult-hopeful myth," said Debra Haffner, executive director of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, in a written statement. "Providing young people with interpersonal skills to postpone sexual intercourse in the context of comprehensive sexuality education is effective. Pledge cards and slogans are not."

SIECUS said programs which teach only abstinence have not proven effective.

"Twenty years of experience has demonstrated that the 'safe-sex' approach doesn't work," said James A. Smith, director of government relations for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "The federal government's Title X program has spent hundreds of millions of dollars, and teen-age pregnancy rates have skyrocketed over that period of time.

"It is not in SIECUS' best interest for abstinence programs to succeed, because they promote 'safe sex' and are enriched by government programs which promote 'safe sex,'" Smith said. "So it shouldn't be surprising that they would be opposed to the concept of 'True Love Waits.'"

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Sexual purity pledges
catch world interest

By Nancye Willis

Baptist Press
8/1/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--Sexual purity -- an idea at least as old as the Ten Commandments -- has garnered new interest in light of modern-day problems of teen-age pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease.

Since news of "True Love Waits," a sexual-abstinence program for Christian teens, hit the front pages in 1993, the attention of local, national and international media has been focused on the subject.

Perhaps nowhere has this been more clearly evidenced than at the July 29 rally in Washington, D.C.

More than 500 media outlets with a combined listening, viewing and reading audience in the hundreds of millions have reported on the campaign during the past year. And the rally was covered by media representatives from a variety of locations and for many reasons.

Radio, television and print media persons all descended on the mall to observe and to interview participants.

According to Newsweek's Susan Miller, the movement, which had its origins at a Southern Baptist church near Nashville, Tenn., also represents a larger trend. Her publication's editors consider it a sign of a cultural trend -- an interest in a return to abstinence that has a variety of motivations.

"It's not unusual for us to cover such an event," she said, "in an effort to feel for those trends and to develop an awareness of the community."

Jessica Gainous, 16, who covered the event for the youth section of the Richmond, Va., Times-Dispatch, said the paper expressed an interest in the national celebration after she, a member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Richmond, shared her own story of covenanting to remain sexually pure.

Gainous said making the decision to commit to sexual abstinence does not represent a difficult decision: "It's just the way I was raised. A sexual relationships is too painful for t ens."

Committing to postpone sexual activity until after marriage "shows other teen-agers that there is a support system," she added.

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Konrad Eg , a journalist who interviewed a number of teens for the German press, called the rally "an exotic event" for th European audience. Ege, who concentrates on a religious beat, said the problems of teen-age sex have not been tracked as closely in Germany, but he doesn't rule out the possibility that his reports and others might raise the level of interest.

"The organizers have done a very good job with this event," he said.

TV crews from Germany and Italy recorded footage, and representatives of newspapers, publications and radio and TV networks gathered to record the "Stake-out" (an all-day effort by Southern Baptist teens to display the more than 210,000 signed pledge cards along Washington's National Mall), the prayer vigil and the concerts.

CBN sent a representative; so did local TV stations from Washington and several states. Norway was represented. Scripps-Howard News Service, American Family Radio and a number of religious programmers sent reporters who joined dozens of colleagues from the United States and around the world.

CNN's cameras were there to record the comments of speakers and participants. While the network's Bruce Morton stopped short of calling the rally an unusual event from his perspective, he commented that it will take its place among the numerous protests and past demonstrations on the National Mall.

"The Mall has been seen as the nation's stage," he said, and the True Love Waits campaign has had its hour. As to whether it heralds the start of a new trend, "we'll just have to wait and see."

The campaign was begun by the Baptist Sunday School Board of Nashville, Tenn., and has been endorsed by 27 other denominations and organizations.

Audiences in the United States, Canada, England, Australia, China, Brazil, Argentina, Sweden, Colombia, Venezuela, South Korea, France, Northern Ireland and several African countries have read accounts and heard and seen electronic reports.

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Volleyball instructor serves up
life's lessons at Centrifuge

By Keith Beene

Baptist Press
8/1/94

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--The hustle and bustle of Detroit's Motor City is a long way from the serenity found among the trees covering the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina. But Clayton Barnes said he believes the lessons he learned growing up in Detroit work just as well for the youth attending Centrifuge at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Barnes, a junior at the University of Louisville in Kentucky, served as the volleyball and fitness instructor for the Centrifuge camps held throughout the summer at Ridgecrest. Centrifuge is a summer camp for youth in grades seven through 12. The week-long camp is sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board and is held at six stationary camps throughout the nation as well as at various satellite sites in the northern and western United States.

Barnes, an African American, uses examples from personal crises he faced in adolescence to show youth that God can work in their lives. Growing up in the suburbs outside Detroit, Barnes went through more than just the usual growing pains faced by other teen-agers. It took two traumatic events to make him look to God for guidance.

One night during his junior year in high school, Barnes was driving home from a party with a carload of friends when he was shot in the shoulder from an unknown assailant. The bullet penetrated the driver-side window, hit him in the lower neck and settled about two inches from his spine.

"It was near Memorial Day and I was getting ready to march in the band. I was really upset. I was head of the drum line and everything," he said. "The doctor said I was really lucky; another two inches and I wouldn't be here."

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While getting shot was traumatic enough, Barnes' struggle with sickle cell anemia, a hereditary blood disease, made the shooting incident even more dangerous.

Sickle cell anemia presently affects 50,000 African Americans and is not curable. The disease is not life-threatening, and with the proper treatment, most victims can lead normal lives. However, a painful sickle cell "crisis" can occur when the victim's cells malfunction.

According to Barnes, this usually happens after stressful or strenuous activity and can cause excruciating pain that usually affects the joints.

"Most of the time it gets me in my back," Barnes said. "I can tell if it is going to be a really bad one if it goes to my knees, elbows or shoulders."

The disease had not caused Barnes any real problems until after he graduated from high school. Shortly after graduation, Barnes said he suffered his first major sickle cell crisis.

"It was terrible. It hurt so bad I could not walk. Here I am 17 years old, sitting in my bed just bawling because I couldn't move," he said. That summer Barnes was in the hospital a month and half.

The crisis occurred again in the fall shortly after he became a student at the University of Louisville.

"We're at a BSU state convention and on the way back home I started having this terrible sickle cell crisis."

Barnes said he was reluctant to go to the hospital because of his earlier experience. He tried to wait it out, but he said the pain was too much to endure. When Barnes finally visited the doctor, he was told he needed his gall bladder and appendix removed.

"This is when I am really starting to realize what is going on in my life. I'm 19 years old and they're taking organs out of my body," he said. "So this is when I really started to focus on Christ and where my life was going; I was really lost. I had Christ, but I did not know what he meant."

In the months following the surgery, Barnes turned to Christian friends for help and guidance. One friend, David Buckner, especially helped Barnes deal with his pain and confusion.

"He is my accountability guy. We are best friends and he just holds me accountable for everything I do," Barnes said. "He has been a really great witness to me. It was when I started hanging around with David that I started understanding what my life is for."

Barnes began using his life crises to try and help others, especially youth, turn to God before they are faced with difficulties or negative peer pressures.

In 1991, Barnes worked as a summer missionary in an inner-city church in Des Moines, Iowa, and the next year he was a member of a state missions team in Kentucky. Barnes then applied for a staff position with Centrifuge.

A sports administration major in college, Barnes said he is a sportsaholic, thus his position at Centrifuge. The exhausting and sometimes hectic schedule of the youth camp seems not to have affected Barnes' health. He said he feels it is a blessing from God that he was chosen to serve in this position.

While he is passing along lessons, he said he is also learning them. Barnes said his summer experience with Centrifuge has helped him gain a deeper appreciation for God's presence in the simpler things in life.

"A lot of people can come up here and see God in these mountains and streams. I usually see God in other ways -- in athletes or through a person, that is where I see God," he said. "(This summer) has helped me to see God in the simple pleasures of life."

**Growing Churches to have
new editor, journal format**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--"Growing Churches," a Baptist Sunday School Board-produced magazine designed to help pastors, church staff and other church leaders understand church growth and apply strategies for growth, will have a new editor and a new format beginning in January 1995.

Mike Miller, director of the board's leadership, ministry and worship division, will become editor of the publication as a part of the assessment and reorganization of programs in the division. Previously, the magazine was produced in the former church growth-Sunday school division. The creation of the leadership, ministry and worship division in 1994 led to placing the publication in th new division.

"Growing Churches" will continue to be a quarterly publication, Miller said, with changes in format and art resulting in a 48-page, self-cover periodical with the feel of a professional journal rather than its current glossy appearance. Changes will be based on survey input from church staff persons, Sunday School Board trustees and formal research.

"Content will be guided by theological and church growth issues," Miller said, "rather than a program-driven approach. Articles will be broader than methodologies and programs and will represent the board's church growth group."

Targeted to church staff persons in medium- to large-size congregations, the magazine will exclude advertising and will offer an interactive format in exploring issues. A forum for subscribers' responses by fax messages will be among new features. Additionally, the publication will relate to resources available on SBCNet, the Southern Baptist data communications network.

An advisory board of church growth-related consultants in the board's church growth group will work with Miller in development of content to address contemporary church growth issues.

"Growing Churches" is available through the Sunday School Board's dated church literature order form or through the toll-free order number, 1-800-458-2772.

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**Gregory enters 2nd marriage,
according to book publisher**

Baptist Press
8/1/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Joel Gregory, former pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, and Sherry Elaine Lemon were married July 30, according to a news release from The Summit Group of Fort Worth, Texas, publisher of Gregory's upcoming book, "Too Great a Temptation: The Seductive Power of America's Super Church."

The private ceremony, attended by 80 guests, marked the second marriage for Gregory, 46, and Lemon, 41, the news release stated.

Gregory, who was divorced from his wife of 26 years, Linda, last December, abruptly resigned at First Baptist in Dallas in 1992 in conflict over the transition from longtime senior pastor W.A. Criswell.

The news release stated that two sons from Gregory's first marriage live with their mother and Gregory and his former wife "are amicable." She has an unlisted telephone number in Fort Worth and could not be reached by Baptist Press for comment.

Gregory is employed selling funeral services and cemetery plots in Fort Worth, the news release stated, while his new wife, who had three children in her first marriag , manages a physician's office in Fort Worth.

The news release stated the Gregory family and Mrs. Lemon and her family, members of Travis Avenue Baptist Church where Gregory earlier had been pastor, had been friends the past seven years. The news release stated Mrs. Lemon "suffered divorce" from "economic stress" aft r a time of unemployment weathered by her former husband.

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The news release said Gregory and his new wife "are unavailable for comment. They are relaxing for 10 days on an undisclosed island." All calls were to be directed to The Summit Group's senior publicist, John Hawkins.

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CORRECTIONS: In (BP) story titled "Southwestern trustees elect Hemphill to succeed Dilday," dated 7/29/94, please make two corrections:

In the fourth paragraph, please change 1982 to 1992 in the first sentence.

In the 25th paragraph, please add a word to the quoted first sentence: "I really feel it would be magnanimous on the part of those who voted to fire Dilday if they"

EDITORS' NOTE: The update on Baptist work in Cuba to accompany the story titled "Former missionaries visit Cuba for first time in 25 years," dated 7/29/94, will be available Aug. 2.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

(BP)

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