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August 23, 1994

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7-year-old girl gives all
for Rwandan babies in need

By Marty Groll

Baptist Press
8/23/94

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP)--If a picture tells a thousand words, these thousand words were more than little Terri Clayton could bear.

The 7-year-old girl hopped out of her chair and ran away from the dinner table. Her mother, father and two brothers sat there waiting.

Shortly, Terri returned with three \$1 bills -- all of her money. "I don't want it anymore," she said. "Here, you take it."

She shoved it at her mother, who still held the latest copy of Missouri Baptists' state newspaper, Word and Way.

On the front page a large picture showed 18 babies lying on blankets on the floor of a makeshift orphanage in a Rwandan refugee camp near Goma, Zaire.

Beneath the photo was a Baptist Press story from the Foreign Mission Board about how Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers are feeding and offering medical care to children whose parents died as they settled into squalid camps.

The parents of the babies pictured most likely were buried by relief authorities in mass graves with other Rwandan corpses that fellow refugees had rolled into mats and left to decay.

"I'd been saying how sad it was that major league baseball players were striking because they wanted more money when they already had millions -- while there were people in the world who didn't even have enough to live on," said Terri's mother, Janie Clayton, in an interview from her Springfield, Mo., home.

"I said, 'In fact, look at this picture.'"

For a while, Mrs. Clayton; her husband, Terry, an elementary school principal; their two sons, Michael, 12, and John, 9; and Terri discussed the photo.

"Then my daughter took off from the table running. She came back with all her money," Mrs. Clayton said.

Mrs. Clayton explained she couldn't take her daughter's money. "That's yours," she said. "You keep it."

Terri ran back to her room. This time she didn't come back. Mrs. Clayton heard her crying.

"I want all my money to go help those babies," she told her mother, sobbing. "I want you to mail it tonight."

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Terri's \$3 is among many gifts received by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board for Rwandans. Terri wasn't the only one moved by the photo, which Word and Way editors bought from a syndicated wire service.

Fifty percent of the money received by the board's human needs office for Rwandan relief since publication of the Word and Way story has come from Missourians. As of Aug. 22, their donations totaled more than \$5,600 over a two-week period. That includes \$2,100 received Aug. 22.

And checks keep coming.

The Rwandan refugee crisis was triggered when Hutu people, fearful of rival Tutsis who took power in Rwanda, fled to neighboring countries. More than 1 million settled around Goma.

Southern Baptist doctors, nurses and water technicians recruited by the denomination's Brotherhood Commission are working in UNICEF camps now, in projects coordinated by Southern Baptist missionaries. But Baptists are building their own camp with its own clinic, expected to open in early September.

In addition to later teams of medical people, Baptist women from churches in Zaire will help staff this camp. Called "mommies," they will each care for a handful of children. Missionaries are planning for 500 children.

Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers from the Florida Baptist Convention also are working among Rwandan refugees in Tanzania.

Contributions designated for hunger and relief may be sent to the Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230, or the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104.

Like Terri, many Southern Baptists are learning that every dollar and every bit of concern counts in times of crisis. At first Terri didn't think her \$3 would make much difference.

"But I told her the Rwandan babies would be thankful for anything, that (her gift) would do a lot," Mrs. Clayton said.

"I told her, 'That's OK. That will make God very happy.'"

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(BP) photos (vertical photo of Terri Clayton, horizontal photo of Rwandan orphans -- the photo that inspired Terri) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines available on SBCNet News Room.

SBC study group compares
task to climbing mountain

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
8/23/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--"The work is like climbing a mountain, a formidable but not impossible task."

According to Mark Brister, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, La., that is what it is like to study the structure of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Brister is chairman of the seven member Program and Structure Study Committee which has spent the past year interviewing, studying and surveying the agencies and institutions of the nation's largest evangelical denomination.

Although the study is "well under way," Brister said, there is still much to be done.

"We must come back with a report from the mountain that will inspire Southern Baptists to look ahead."

Brister said the study is a team effort, "an excellent committee, a group of thinking evangelicals, open to God's leadership," includes discussions with all 19 SBC agencies and institutions.

The committee will report its findings to the SBC Executive Committee which commissioned the study last year. However, the study committee does not plan to report at the Executive Committee's regular meeting in Nashville in September nor are there definite plans as to when the report of the committee will be presented, Brister told Baptist Press Aug. 23.

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A number of denominational officials, not wanting to be identified, said the committee's report probably would be presented to the Executive Committee sometime before next year's annual SBC meeting in Atlanta because any structural changes in the SBC would take at least two years to be approved.

The study of SBC agency responsibilities, called "program statements," will entail "taking a hard look" at the SBC boards and commissions, said Fred Wolfe, chairman of the Executive Committee, in appointing the study committee last year. Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., said the study will examine "how we might be more cost-efficient with the ones we already have" and where various program statements need to be updated.

In addition to Brister, other committee members are Ronnie W. Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark.; attorney Rex M. Terry, member of First Baptist church, Fort Smith, Ark.; businessman William K. Hall, member of Capistrano Valley Baptist Church, San Clemente, Calif.; R. Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; Robert L. Sorrell, associate pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, suburban Memphis, Tenn.; and businessman Greg Horton, member of Temple Baptist Church, Simpsonville, S.C.

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Southern Seminary faculty group
bemoans Marshall resignation

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
8/23/94

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--An independent association of faculty members at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in a resolution adopted Aug. 22, said they are "outraged" over the "forced resignation" of professor Molly Marshall, describing it as "unjustified" and "untimely."

About 40 members of the Faculty Association at the Louisville, Ky., seminary voted on the six-paragraph resolution, said C. Anne Davis, association president and professor of church social work. All votes were affirmative, except three abstentions, Davis said.

Davis declined further comment on the resolution, saying she preferred for the association's stance to speak for itself.

The vote is not an official action of the seminary's 70-member faculty.

The seminary administration did not issue a formal response to the resolution.

Marshall, the first woman to teach theology at a Southern Baptist seminary, has resigned her 10-year, tenured position at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary effective Dec. 31. Her resignation had been sought by the administration, seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. acknowledged.

Marshall said she had been given an ultimatum and would not be able to get a fair hearing from the administration and trustees. Mohler, meanwhile, stated he had studied Marshall's theology in her writings and oral presentations and was prepared to recommend formal action for her dismissal for teaching outside the seminary's doctrinal Abstract of Principles. He did not publicly disclose his concerns about her theology.

The Faculty Association resolution noted "the unjustified and untimely forced resignation of our esteemed faculty colleague We have confidence in her as a teacher, scholar and minister who, for more than a decade, has taught in accordance with and not contrary to the Abstract of Principles of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. . . . We offer our concern for Dr. Marshall, her family, her current and former students and others who have come to value her wisdom and leadership in the Seminary community. We are deeply grieved over our loss."

The resolution's last three paragraphs noted:

"On March 3, 1992, the Faculty Ad Hoc Covenant Committee conveyed its concern to the Trustees of the Seminary in these words:

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"Only constructive actions will bring a new sense of security to the faculty, a relief to community stress, a refocusing of energies back to the educational task, an exercising of academic freedom within contractual responsibilities, an end to the process of individual resignations or premature retirements, and a rekindling of hope for the future."

"The coercion which has most recently resulted in Dr. Marshall's resignation is a sign that this hope remains unfulfilled. We are outraged by Dr. Marshall's forced resignation."

Meanwhile, two co-presidents of the seminary's Graduate Club and a third club member issued a statement that the club was calling for "a full investigation" into the circumstances culminating in Marshall's resignation.

The club said the seminary action "violated Dr. Marshall's right to due process, severely undermined the integrity of the school's tenure structure, and mocked the principle of academic freedom."

The club also declared, "Such blatant political maneuvering evidences a flip disregard for biblical principles and an appalling lack of human decency."

Listed in the statement were the club's co-presidents, Bruce Gentry and Joni Paterson, and member Jeffrey Vickery.

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EDITORS' NOTE: Please substitute the following story for one with the same headline in (BP) dated 8/22/94.

Southern administration requests,
receives Molly Marshall resignation

Baptist Press
8/23/94

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Molly T. Marshall, the first woman to teach theology at a Southern Baptist seminary, has resigned her position at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary effective Dec. 31.

Marshall's resignation had been sought by the administration at the Louisville, Ky., seminary, according to seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. The administration had received complaints from students and others who charged Marshall's teaching fell outside the parameters of the Abstract of Principles, the seminary's statement of faith, Mohler said.

Marshall, an associate professor of Christian theology, has drawn fire from conservatives in the Southern Baptist Convention throughout her decade of teaching. Yet Mohler said the current concerns were new and did not relate to previous criticisms of her. He said it would be inappropriate to publicly discuss the nature of the concerns about Marshall.

Marshall would have faced a formal dismissal process had she not resigned, Mohler said. That would have included a hearing before a panel composed of eight trustees and five faculty members. The panel's findings would have then been turned over to the full board of trustees for consideration.

Marshall, a tenured professor, and her supporters, however, contend her teaching was within the seminary's doctrinal guidelines.

In an interview with Baptist Press Aug. 22, Marshall said, "I was given an ultimatum by the vice president, David Dockery, in June -- but I must be very candid, David Dockery speaking on behalf of the president and the trustees -- that I could either resign or be fired in October.

"There have been no specific charges," she said. After the verbal ultimatum, she said she asked for "written charges, and I've received none."

"There is a process for dismissal at our institution," Marshall commented. "I became convinced that ... following that process to its conclusion would be a charade, given the intent of the administration and trustees. In other words, I believe the decision to terminate my employment here was made prior to any sustained inquiry into my theological views."

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Mohler, in a statement to Baptist Press, maintained, "I'm fully convinced that Professor Marshall could and would have received a fair hearing, and I believe history will record that in this case the seminary took the right action in the right manner."

Mohler said his decision to seek Marshall's resignation was "based upon a very thorough investigation which included a careful and intensive reading of her published works and transcripts of oral presentations. In order to honor our process, I conducted a thorough conversation with both Professor Marshall and Dean Dockery concerning a large range of issues of concern. Thereafter, I assigned subsequent conversations to the Dean of the School of Theology, which is the proper course of action, given our structure and process."

Mohler stated Marshall's gender was not a factor in his decision to ask for her resignation. "The gender of the professor has absolutely nothing to do with this issue," he said. "The issue is not the gender of the professor, but the substance of what the professor teaches or advocates."

While Mohler said he believes the New Testament forbids women from serving as pastors of churches, he said he does not believe that prohibition applies to seminary teaching.

Early in her career, critics charged she espoused universalism, a belief that God would grant eternal life to everybody. Trustees cleared her of the charge and in 1988 she was given tenure by seminary trustees.

In 1992, an address Marshall gave in Danville, Va., related to gender issues and the Christian faith became the subject of controversy. A Virginia layman leveled several charges at Marshall based in part on a newspaper account of the address. A trustee committee reviewed a tape of the speech and found that the layman's charges and the newspaper report were in error.

Despite the controversies, Marshall's theology classes were frequently filled to capacity. In 1993, she won the seminary's Findley B. and Louvenia Edge Award for Teaching Excellence.

"Professor Marshall is a marvelously gifted person and throughout this process there has never been any question of her giftedness or of her ability to relate to colleagues and students," Mohler said. "But the bottom line is this: For a Southern Baptist theological institution that is not enough. We voluntarily teach and serve here on the basis of the Abstract of Principles and other formal commitments. It is not enough that we believe ourselves to be within these commitments if it is the judgment of the president and the board of trustees that one is in violation."

In her final semester at Southern, Marshall will teach no master's level courses, but she will lead one doctoral level seminar. She will also continue to supervise her current doctoral students until they complete their studies.

She said her plans are uncertain at this point.

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Compiled by Art Toalston and Pat Cole.

New BSSB-FMB venture to involve
750 students in foreign missions

Baptist Press
8/23/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Up to 750 Southern Baptist college students from across the country will be involved in short-term mission projects overseas next year as part of a new initiative sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's National Student Ministry.

"Global Student Involvement" (GSI) will send teams of students and student leaders for two-week mission projects in Central Asia, Indochina, Southeast Asia, North Africa, Eastern Europe and several other locations around the world, according to National Student Ministry consultant Brad Gray, who is coordinating the project in cooperation with the Foreign Mission Board.

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"We already have 524 positions ready to fill and we're expecting to have as many as 750," he said, adding most of the projects will take place in "World A countries" -- locations the FMB has identified as being closed to a traditional missionary witness.

"We want college students to develop a heart for global missions, and to do that we have to expose them to the world," Gray said. "There's no better way to do that than through a firsthand missions experience."

While GSI is open to both student groups from churches and campuses, Gray said the new initiative was specifically designed to be "user-friendly for churches." Participants will follow a three-phase process, he said, including: 1) an eight-week orientation with cultural training and spiritual development; 2) the mission trip itself; and 3) a four- to five-week "debriefing" where students examine the impact the project had on their lives and how it might affect their future involvement in missions.

GSI projects are self-funded and most are scheduled for the summer months of 1995, Gray said. Home mission projects will be added to the initiative in 1996.

More information about GSI will be available beginning Sept. 15. Interested people should call Gray at the National Student Ministry office in Nashville at (615) 251-2777.

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Lewis stresses soul-winning
to new US-2 missionaries

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
8/23/94

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Christians must go out and sow the gospel with prayer if they are to be effective soul-winners, Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis said at a commissioning service for 36 US-2 Southern Baptist missionaries.

"If we go and sow and weep, we will reap with rejoicing," Lewis told missionaries, their family members and others attending a home missions conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

In his challenge, Lewis called soul-winning "the greatest subject in the world," stressing the need for all Christians to be witnesses for the Lord.

"We need to get on our feet, out of our seat, onto the street sharing Christ," he said. "What value is the cross if the story of the cross is not shared?"

Lewis noted the denomination's emphasis next year for Southern Baptists to share their faith daily for 60 days beginning Jan. 9. "If we can get our people to share their faith every day for 60 days, we believe they'll be committed to it for the rest of their lives."

Lewis added when he was a pastor he modeled witnessing to his congregation by making five visits a day, half of which were evangelistic.

"The sheep aren't going to go anywhere the shepherd is not going," he said. "I had a goal that every week there'd be somebody to walk the aisle that I had won to Christ during the week."

Lewis said he routinely asked deacons about their witnessing efforts. "We told our members the greatest thing you can do for anybody is help them come to know Jesus."

Witnessing also must be bathed in prayer, he said.

"We used to have mourners benches, but it seems we've gotten too sophisticated for that," Lewis said. "Not only that, we don't have many mourners any more."

"We're all on mission for the Lord," he said. "Successful witnessing is sharing Christ in the power of God's Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God."

The US-2 missionaries who were commissioned are from 18 states and Puerto Rico, and they will serve in 20 states and Puerto Rico. Among them are the first two nurses to serve as US-2 missionaries. US-2ers are college graduates who serve two years in home missions assignment.

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The two nurses are Melanie Boyet of Louisiana who will serve in the Techwood public housing community in Atlanta and Penne Gibbs of Oregon who will serve in Baltimore with the Shepherd's Clinic of Seventh Baptist Church, said Bill Graham, director of missionary personnel.

Also commissioned was Seilavong Doeung, who lived in a Cambodian refugee camp until he was 6, Graham said. Doeung's father became a Christian through the work of Foreign Mission Board workers in the camp, Graham said.

The US-2ers also will have a father-daughter connection, he noted. US-2er Karyl Buchanan, who was appointed to serve in Minneapolis, is the daughter of Utah mission pastor A.B. Buchanan, who will supervise another US-2er, Anjanette Franklin of Texas.

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Releases about the newly commissioned US-2ers have been sent to state Baptist newspapers in their home states and states where they are serving. A list of appointments will be posted in the SBCNet News Room.

S.C. Baptists get
what they pray for

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
8/23/94

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Joel Thrasher said he knew God answered prayer, but he and a group of South Carolina Baptists didn't expect it would be this soon.

Thrasher, missions ministries director for the Greenville Baptist Association, told those attending a home missions conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center he and others began praying three months ago for new ministry opportunities in the Greenville area.

"Then we started getting phone calls, and they've been coming rather quickly," he said. "Time and time again over the past two months, we've had people calling wanting to know about ways we can assist their programs and activities."

One call came from a prison pre-release "half-way" house, he said. "They called and wanted to know if we knew of someone who could come and lead a Bible study in that facility."

Others included:

-- Leaders of a new residence care center for the elderly looking for a volunteer chaplain.

-- Directors of a local community center in a government housing project asking workers to continue their summer program for kids as an after-school program in the fall.

-- A request for a church to host a day care for children of teen-age mothers so the women can continue their education.

"Just bang, bang, bang," said Thrasher, who has been in Greenville about 18 months. "It's kind of scary when you get what you pray for."

"It's also challenging to begin trying to seek out volunteers who can serve in these positions," he added, asking prayer from those attending the conference.

The experience has bolstered his faith, he said, grinning. "I sit at my desk and go, 'Yes, there is a God.'"

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High-tech medical communications
links Georgia, Russia hospitals By John D. Pierce

Baptist Press
8/23/94

ATLANTA (BP)--While cable television was carrying The Goodwill Games recently, the staff of Georgia Baptist Medical Center was engaged in a different, but related, televised event with St. Petersburg, Russia. But unlike the one-way viewing of athletic competition, medical center staffers were involved in a revolutionary interactive video conference July 25-Aug. 5.

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The two-week experiment with specialized telecommunications was the pinnacle in a two-year relationship between GBMC and Hospital 122 in St. Petersburg, formerly known as Leningrad. Corporate sponsors (United Medical Network, network MCI and Compression Labs, Inc.) provided technical assistance enabling the Russian hospital and GBMC to experience an unprecedented exchange of medical information through live, two-way audio and video.

Bruce Ramshaw, a Georgia Baptist surgeon who coordinated the historic event, seemed pleased. "It's gone pretty well. The biggest barrier is language. Once you get someone who can interpret well, there are no problems." It was necessary not only to enlist interpreters who could speak the two languages but could handle the medical terminology as well.

Russian physicians have eagerly joined the dialogue with the GBMC in order to upgrade their procedures. "The dissolution of the Soviet Union left entire nations with uniformly poor health services," Georgia Baptist Health Care Systems CEO David E. Harrell said.

He sees the collaborative teaching efforts between U.S. hospitals and those of the former Soviet Union as having a positive impact on the overall scope of health care delivery.

Ramshaw indicated 15 to 20 medical personnel from Georgia Baptist have visited St. Petersburg over the past two years. Likewise, some Russian physicians have come to Atlanta.

The teleconference came out of a desire to have more intensive training involving a greater number of health care workers in an exchange of information.

Faculty and students from the College of Nursing participated in presentations and dialogue Aug. 2 through the video connection. The Russian hospital is developing a nursing school based on Western-style training. Other telecommunication sessions dealt with trauma treatment, cardiac care, orthopedics, vascular surgery, gynecology and reconstructive surgery, among other subjects. The tele-medicine exchanges also allowed physicians to actually observe live surgical procedures from the operating rooms of the two medical facilities.

Georgia Baptist is a recognized leader in the area of laparoscopy, a minimally invasive surgical technique involving lasers. The use of cameras in the procedure makes it compatible with the telecommunication process. Georgia Baptist physicians had taught the procedure to some Russian doctors on previous visits. They were able to give additional consultation during a live gall bladder surgery communicated to Atlanta from the operating room in St. Petersburg. Ramshaw was complimentary of his Russian counterparts saying, "They have good technical skills."

The interactive video link has many uses for the medical community. John Cantwell of GBMC led the team to St. Petersburg which provided medical support to the Goodwill Games. The video connection to Atlanta allowed Cantwell access to colleagues at Georgia Baptist should he need a specialist who was not a part of the medical team assembled there. Cantwell and GBMC plan to provide similar services when the Olympics are held in Atlanta in 1996.

Those coordinating the two-week video conference see numerous benefits of having the advanced communication experiment located at the medical center.

Ramshaw suggested several possible uses for the interactive link -- across town and across the world. First, the communication system can assist in the teaching of laparoscopic surgery and other procedures without costly travel time. Secondly, a local network could be developed between medical specialists and general practitioners, allowing for better referrals.

Ramshaw also sees potential use of the equipment by the trauma unit. Georgia Baptist often receives patients from the emergency facilities of other hospitals. The video link would allow trauma personnel at Georgia Baptist to better evaluate the patients before making transfers.

"It could save inappropriate trauma transfers," Ramshaw said. "We could even listen to the heart and lungs and see X-rays. You can do anything but touch!"

GBMC has permanently installed the video conferencing equipment and has begun an aggressive five-year expansion project. Immediate plans include a monthly conference with the medical staff at Duke University and a tumor conference with a cancer center in Moscow.

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(BP) Brites
Compiled by Art Toalston

Baptist Press
8/23/94

Plumber helps plug up mom's despair

MILWAUKEE (BP)--Separated from her husband and responsible for a son who was beginning to act up, Monica Tanner also was facing a \$200 monthly shortfall between her "mediocre job" and the mortgage and bills. Then came a plumbing problem, and Marty Schutte arrived. The plumber and member of Milwaukee's Northwest Baptist Church listened to Tanner's litany of problems. "That night, underneath the sink, some water dripped on my head and I heard the Lord say, 'Marty, I'm at work here,'" Schutte recounted, so he began sharing his faith. "I thought, 'Lord, this plumbing job is going so good, I'm running out of time.' You wouldn't believe what happened then. We had leaks everywhere" -- an ample number to require Schutte's return the next day. Tanner said she began realizing "what was missing in my life" and started attending church. Schutte eventually led her to Christ over the telephone. Tanner said she still has problems: "There's nothing left over when I pay my bills. ... My son still acts up. He's 4 years old. What do you expect? The difference is that now I can give him the guidance he needs" -- and "I'm not doing it alone."

These new missionaries waited, persevered

BATESVILLE, Ark. (BP)--Keith and Jane Byrd, parents of two college-age children, had lots of patience with the Foreign Mission Board before being appointed as Southern Baptist missionaries to Belarus, one of the independent republics formerly of the Soviet Union. "I felt I was being called to missions," said Byrd, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Batesville, Ark. "But when I inquired at the mission board, they first told me I didn't have enough education. Then a little later when our son was born with health problems, they said he could not go. Later when he was pronounced healthy, he was too old. Then they told us by the time our kids left home, we would be too old." One key to opening doors, Byrd said, is that, for urgently needed missionary personnel, "Belarus was on the FMB's 'Ten Most Wanted List.'"

Author seeks to undergird grandparents

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. (BP)--Beyond their fixed incomes, lots of grandparents need help these days -- to cope with the problems of their children, says Irene Endicott, special consultant on grandparenting issues to the Baptist Sunday School Board and author of "Grandparenting by Grace," a new 12-week church study. More than 2 million grandparents "are raising their grandchildren as a result of the decades of the '60s, '70s and '80s when substance abuse, immorality and 'me first, you last and everyone owes me something' captured the interest of young parents," Endicott, a grandparent, told a senior adult conference at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas. "Grandparents are today sacrificing everything they can for these grandchildren, and marriages of 40 years are being strained because of the problems in their children's families. It's the responsibility of churches to minister to these needs."

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11-second pit stop nets need d appliances

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--Woody Cumbie arrived as pastor of Indianapolis' Northside Baptist Church the week of the Indianapolis 500, so he attended with some friends. As they walked through a race-related expo at the speedway, Cumbie noticed an amateur pit crew contest sponsored by Craftsman Tools. He and a friend recruited two passers-by -- and their speedy pit stop won the event. Cumbie, needing a washer and dryer, netted \$600 in gift certificates from Sears. "So God provided in 11.55 seconds a washer and a dryer!" said the new pastor.

Fitting in factored out her witness

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Miss America of 1990, Debbye Turner, as a high school student went to a youth rally because it advertised free pizza. She had been a Christian since age 7 but, she recounted to a Baptist youth rally in St. Louis, she put most of her efforts in school into gaining acceptance from everybody. "One of my best buddies who I hung out with at school every day was shocked to see me (at the rally). She said to me, 'Are you a Christian?' That night I rededicated my life to Jesus because I realized I had spent so much time trying to fit in, I was not living a Christian witness."

Church had big day with Independence Day

SAN DIEGO, Calif. (BP)--Next July 4, get on the bandwagon, and get it in your local parade. Members of Northstar Community Church in San Diego did, with an 1850s theme, "Prospecting for a Better Life." Women in the Southern Baptist congregation wore bonnets; men and youth carried picks, shovels and gold pans; children pulled wagons fashioned into covered wagons, each touting one of the church's ministries -- and 1,000 "gold nugget" bags were distributed, each with candy and a printed prospector's map giving directions to the worship site of the church. The results: awards for "Most Original" and "Best Community Spirit" and a couple dozen phone calls from parade-watchers asking about Northstar's ministries. "Special outreach events like a July 4 parade are tons of work," said pastor Phil Hester, "but they unite the membership in a common cause, involve new members in meaningful fellowship and work ... and sometimes bring an immediate harvest."

African hospital gave him urgency

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. (BP)--James "Butch" Tanner and his wife, Carole, were Southern Baptist missionaries in Zambia only a year; their career ended when their daughter contracted malaria. But among the lessons Tanner, now pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, West Lafayette, Ind., learned in Africa was urgency in spreading the gospel to young and old. "We lived near a hospital and 100 people died daily. A cemetery surrounded the seminary at which I taught and they buried 60 people every day," Tanner recounted. "Here, we view death as being for old people. There, it's for everybody."

Okla. women quickly blot out blooper

SAO PAULO, Brazil (BP)--Oops. After 177 Singing Church Women of Oklahoma presented the first concert in their musical tour of Brazil this summer, they were told the printed programs they gave the audience contained a word of "a crude sexual nature." They quickly spent hours marking out the word in the 5,000 programs they brought with them. "Only in the last 20 years or so has the word ... become offensive," a Brazilian pastor explained. "It is especially bad when used by women in a church setting." Turns out, the programs had been translated by a former missionary to Brazil.

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, TN 37234

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