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Jim Henry among delegation  
on Clinton's Mideast trip

Baptist Press  
10/25/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry is a part of the United States delegation on President Bill Clinton's trip to the Middle East this week.

Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., left the night of Oct. 24 on the trip, which includes stops in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Israel and Kuwait. On Oct. 26, the president and his guests will attend a signing ceremony for a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan on the countries' mutual border.

In a prepared statement released through the First Baptist offices, Henry said he will attend not only the treaty signing but the president's speech to Jordan's Parliament and his address to Israel's Knesset.

Others among the 58-member delegation invited by the White House include representatives of the Catholic, Jewish and Muslim communities, Henry said. Other Baptist leaders on the trip include Charles Adams, a Detroit pastor and president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, and Otis Moss Jr., a Cleveland pastor, according to the White House.

The president and other members of the delegation are scheduled to return to the United States Oct. 28.

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University president endorses  
Alabama convention candidate

By Mark Baggett

Baptist Press  
10/25/94

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)--In an Oct. 6 memorandum to administration, staff, faculty and students, University of Mobil President Michael Magnoli endorsed a candidate for president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

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The candidate, Fred Lackey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Athens, and a member of the University of Mobile's board of regents, apparently will face Earl Potts, retired state convention executive secretary, for convention president during the Nov. 15-16 annual meeting in Mobile.

Magnoli's memorandum says the university hopes to avoid "being swept up in any anti-Christian higher education sentiment created by recent actions of the Samford University Board of Trustees," referring to the Sept. 13 decision by Samford's board to elect their own successors.

Magnoli was joined in his endorsement by two other University of Mobile officials, Sid Sample, assistant to the president for church relations, and Cecil R. Taylor, associate dean of religion.

In a letter dated Oct. 17 to numerous church leaders around the state, Sample and Taylor said, "Alabama Baptists need to elect a president who is sympathetic to Christian higher education. Fred Lackey is such a man."

But Samford's President Thomas Corts, in an Oct. 18 letter to Magnoli, expressed his "strong disagreement" with Magnoli's endorsement of Lackey, which Corts called unprecedented in Alabama Baptist history. Corts also criticized what he called Magnoli's "direct plea for funds" from the convention, and he dismissed the idea of any "anti-Christian higher education sentiment" as a result of the Samford actions.

"There is nothing anti-Christian about Alabama Baptists, and there is certainly no negative sentiment toward Christian higher education," Corts wrote.

"I regret that your memorandum illustrates the political extreme toward which our convention is speeding. Surely, it should not be the Alabama Baptist way of doing business to have prospective messengers awaiting their instructions."

Magnoli, in a statement to The Alabama Baptist newsjournal on Oct. 21, said the convention's meeting place at nearby Dauphin Way Baptist Church provided University of Mobile employees and students "with a great opportunity to observe and participate in the democratic process that is a crucial tenet of our Baptist heritage."

Magnoli also said he was not aware of any other announced candidate for the presidency when he wrote the memorandum, saying Lackey has a "broad perspective on the benefits of all three of Alabama's Baptist universities."

Magnoli said his support of Lackey was not political and not meant to discredit Samford: "We are deeply dismayed and troubled that some unscrupulous people may be using this internal memorandum to create discord between Samford University and the University of Mobile, or to further a moderate or conservative agenda while creating divisiveness within our convention. That was certainly not our intention when we distributed this internal correspondence. The three Alabama Baptist institutions of higher education have always worked together in a spirit of unity and harmony, and we are confident this positive relationship will not be undermined by those with impure motives."

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Iowa Baptists hike CP giving,  
launch state convention plans

Baptist Press  
10/25/94

DAVENPORT, Iowa (BP)--Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship messengers have hiked the percentage of their Cooperative Program budget for Southern Baptist causes by one-half percent and begun the process of becoming a state convention in 1995.

The two steps were among actions taken by 101 messengers from 40 churches during the fellowship's Oct. 20-21 annual meeting at Hillcrest Baptist Church, Davenport.

Messengers also elected a 12-member long-range planning committee for the years 1997-2001.

The Iowa fellowship's 1995 Cooperative Program budget of \$299,488 includes a 21.5 percent designation for Southern Baptist Convention national and international missions and ministries, up by a half-percent from 1994. The overall fellowship budget for 1995 was set at just under \$1.2 million.

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The fellowship's new convention committee presented a report, video and skit about plans to become a state convention in 1995. The fellowship was formed in 1965 at First Baptist Church, Winterset, as the Iowa Southern Baptist Association. "Our Time Has Come" will be the theme of the 1995 annual meeting, Oct. 20-21 at the Winterset church. Currently the fellowship encompasses 102 churches and missions.

Elected as fellowship president was Ed Gregory, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Cedar Rapids, and vice president, John Shaull, pastor of First Baptist, Winterset. Jonette Appleton, a member of First Baptist Church, Johnston, was re-elected recording secretary.

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Alabama board names attorney,  
committee to study Samford action By Mark Baggett

Baptist Press  
10/25/94

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--The Alabama Baptist state board of missions has voted to retain an attorney and appoint a committee to review Samford University trustees' action to become a self-perpetuating board.

Acting on a proposal submitted by Executive Secretary Troy Morrison, both the executive committee and then the state board voted in a special Oct. 13 meeting to hire James Guenther, longtime Southern Baptist Convention counsel of Nashville, Tenn., to study the legal implications of Samford's Sept. 13 action. Chriss Doss, the state convention's attorney, removed himself from the issue because he is director of the Center for the Study of Law and the Church, with offices at Cumberland School of Law on the Samford campus. Doss was not present at the meeting.

With only two dissenting votes, the state board also voted to authorize state convention President Dewey Corder to select a committee to study the matter. Corder, pastor of First Baptist Church, Trussville, said he would name no more than 10 people to the committee and try to have the committee in place quickly. Corder said he hoped the committee would meet and present a report to the state convention at the convention's annual meeting in Mobile Nov. 14-15.

Also at the mid-October sessions, Samford President Thomas Corts was given opportunity to address the two groups, strongly defending the Samford action, insisting the convention has never "owned" Samford University and the trustees had a legal right to change their charter.

Concerning the convention review committee, Corder said he would choose people who would have Alabama Baptist interests at heart but would not have "preconceived notions" about the issue.

At the state board's request, Corder will serve on the committee even when his term as president ends. Corder is completing his second term as convention president; his successor will be chosen at the convention meeting.

Corder later named six pastors and three laypersons to the committee, to be chaired by Ron Madison, pastor of First Baptist Church, Opelika.

The state board's actions were a measured response to the 31-2 decision by Samford trustees Sept. 13 to elect their own successors. Historically, the state convention elected Samford's board members, usually following the recommendations of the Committee on Boards and Nominations. Corts and members of the Samford board have said they feared the possibility of a political faction's stacking the board.

"It is my opinion that the trustees did not properly observe the bylaws of the Alabama Baptist State Convention when they took the action to amend their charter without convention approval," said Morrison at the Oct. 13 meeting. "This is the third situation in my four and one-half years of office in which I have had to stand before you and say to you I believe the bylaws were not properly observed." He was referring to recent state convention deliberations on the Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers and the University of Mobile's Nicaragua campus, in which charges were made that possible violations of convention bylaws had occurred.

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Morrison said the questions of convention control of the entities "seem to be a phenomenon experienced widely in the religious community of Baptists." He said the questions should be answered with the help of "good, sound, expert legal advice by an attorney who knows the law but who also knows the polity and policy of Baptists.

"As 'Alabamians' we live in a legal world. As 'Alabama Baptists' we also live in a moral world," he noted. "We are concerned about legal matters, but we are also concerned about our witness to a lost world. We don't want to do anything that hinders and hurts our witness."

Morrison recommended James Guenther serve as convention counsel on the issue. Asked why the convention would not hire an Alabama attorney, Morrison said Guenther "was the most knowledgeable person regarding the polity and policy of the Southern Baptist Convention and its legal relations to its entities." Morrison also produced letters from other state convention leaders and from SBC Executive Committee President Morris Chapman recommending Guenther, who will be able to associate Alabama attorneys on the issue if he chooses.

Morrison -- who said he had received hundreds of letters and phone calls on the issue, "almost all with different advice" -- asked the state board to follow the process of appointing a small group to deliberate the matter and present its findings. He said the process was not only practical but also biblical.

"This matter is far too great and too grave to be decided in a moment or in a state of extreme emotions," he said. "It should be addressed prayerfully, patiently, persistently and under the leadership and guidance of the Spirit of God."

In approving the two recommendations, the executive committee and the state board of missions avoided more drastic actions that could have affected Samford's funding, which amounts to \$4 million of Cooperative Program funds or 6 percent of the university's budget.

The board also failed to approve a motion by Ed Cruce, pastor of First Baptist Church, Ashville, which would have expressed the board's "strong disapproval of the actions of Samford University."

After state board members spoke for and against the motion, a motion was made to table the statement of disapproval. Board chairman Leon Ballard, pastor of York Baptist Church, called for a show of hands. He ruled the motion failed.

Joe Godfrey, pastor of Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, then moved the board "concur" with Morrison's statements of possible bylaw violations. But after a short discussion, Corder spoke against the motion, saying it might prejudice the committee's work. Again, Ballard ruled Godfrey's motion failed after a show of hands.

Cruce said he agreed with the original recommendations to hire an attorney and to appoint a committee, but he had hoped the board would express its feelings on the issue.

"I don't have any agenda," Cruce said. "I just felt the Samford action was a denial of trust. I think Brother Corder will appoint a fair committee. My only concern is that they not delay."

Morrison said he was pleased with the board's action. "This is the first step of the process," he said. "We must now begin a dialogue to find a resolution to these issues."

Corts also said he was pleased with the opportunity to speak to both the executive committee and to the approximately 120-member state board of missions, even though he said he didn't see the need for a "proliferation of lawyers" to resolve the issue. "These are my brothers and sisters in Christ. They were civil and gave us an opportunity to be understood," Corts said. "There has been a lot of emotional rhetoric floating around that does not in any way depict the intentions of the trustees in their meeting."

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Contending the convention has never "owned" Samford University and the trustees had a legal right to change their charter, Corts at one point produced a letter from former Howard College President Major Davis, an attorney who once served as attorney general of Alabama. In the June 10, 1943, letter, Davis said there had been confusion about who selected the Howard College trustees and whether they had to be Baptist church members. Davis suggested in the letter one trustee even belonged to a Methodist church.

"The extreme headlines that talk of Samford's 'severing' itself from the state convention contribute absolutely nothing to the understanding of this issue," Corts said. "The talk of severance is absolutely false. In 1841, when Howard College was incorporated by an act of the state legislature, the charter says nothing about the ownership by the state Baptist convention, nothing about trustees being members of the Baptist church, nothing even about the institution's Christian mission. The charter merely sets up 15 men as a board of trustees of Howard College."

When the state convention was incorporated in 1860, Corts said, there was no statement of the convention's ownership of Howard, although the original trustees decided in 1845 to allow the convention to elect the trustees. Corts said even this process has changed over the years. It wasn't until 1989, according to Corts, the Samford trustees included a "prior approval" clause in their charter (preventing Samford trustees from changing their charter without prior approval from the state convention), but Corts said the Sept. 13, 1994, action merely "exercised their legal right to take out that clause."

Responding to critics' charges he had made repeated assurances he would resign if Samford ever distanced itself from the state convention, Corts said, "My conscience would not tolerate this change if I thought it would separate or distance ourselves from the state convention. There is not one hint of a desire to be un-Baptist or un-Christian."

But he said Southern Baptists live in a "new day." "This is a different day," said Corts, who strongly criticized the firing of Russell Dilday as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"We don't like to talk about it, but today Baptists don't like the same things and the same people," Corts said. "The forms we have used in the past will not necessarily be effective in the future. These times are divisive and, based on our Southern Baptist experience, we would have our heads in the sand if we didn't think this could happen in Alabama."

Corts said there was no contact between Samford and Mississippi College before Mississippi College's board of trustees made a similar change one week later. He said Samford asked their attorneys to make as little change as possible and refused to make other changes, such as taking the state president and executive secretary off the board as ex-officio members.

Corts mentioned several "outstanding conservative Christian institutions" that have self-perpetuating boards, including Fuller Seminary in California. Corts said the present board of trustees was the same board that started the Beeson Divinity School.

"Many of you praise the Beeson School," he said, "but it was fashioned by this same board of trustees who dreamed the dream, found the money and made it a reality."

Corts said the state convention's \$4 million allocation to Samford was significant, although he said Samford could find a way to operate without those funds.

"But it is not the money that binds us to the state convention," he said. "It is heritage and tradition. Samford has had a blessed relationship with the state convention, and no one wants to repudiate that. That is why good and thoughtful people, whom you have elected, have renewed their desire to have a close relationship with Alabama Baptists."

"We have intentionally drawn our circle to include Alabama Baptists. You can draw a circle to keep us out, but if you exclude us, we'll go kicking and screaming against our will," Corts said.

Miss America's nightly routine  
entailed Bible reading, prayer      By Mark Baggett

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Daily Bible reading and prayer were the best preparation for her success, Heather Whitestone, the new Miss America, told an overflow crowd at Green Valley Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., in returning to Alabama for the first time since winning the title in September.

Whitestone, who is profoundly deaf, is a member of Green Valley and is active in the deaf ministry at the church's south campus. During the week back in Alabama, she received emotional receptions at her college home in Jacksonville State University and in Birmingham, and she crowned the new Miss Alabama, Amie Beth Dickinson, a 1994 graduate of Samford University.

Introducing Whitestone to a Sunday morning crowd of 1,200, Green Valley South's pastor, Chuck Carter, said Whitestone "captured the attention of a nation" by performing ballet to Sandi Patti's rendition of "Via Dolorosa."

"She shared the love of God in a magical moment that captured the attention of an entire nation by sharing her worship through dance," Carter said.

Whitestone credited hard work, a positive attitude and her education as keys to her title, but she said her devotionals at night were indispensable.

"I can't sleep without reading God's Word every night," she said. "I have to read, and when I don't read God's Word, I get so worried. He calmed me down. He taught me how to forgive people and how to love others. He comforted me and helped me to continue to grow stronger in Christ."

Whitestone spoke to the audience while an interpreter signed for her because, she said, it was difficult for her to speak and to sign at the same time. She joked that she once shared her testimony and said "Baptist" while the signer signed the word "dead." "So I don't want you to misunderstand me."

But she said she was not chosen Miss America because of her deafness. "The press asked me that question, and I told them no, I think I won because I have an education. It took me a while to know my dream, but I found that we all have a common dream, which is education. If you are well-educated, no one can take advantage of you or make you feel less important."

Throughout the weeks of preparation for both the Miss Alabama and for Miss America competitions, Whitestone said she found inspiration in Proverbs: "Do not love sleep lest you come to the poverty of the poor. Open your eyes and you will be satisfied with bread."

"I felt so good when I worked very hard," she said. "I danced five days a week, two hours a day. I sweated. I danced with a headache. I had two corns on my feet. It hurt. But I had to dance to praise the Lord. By the time I finished dancing, I felt no pain in my feet."

Citing Helen Keller as one of her models, Whitestone urged the congregation to overcome the obstacles of a negative attitude.

"My deafness can't stop me," she said, "but my attitude can stop me. I believe God gives us many great tests in our life to make sure we have faith in him. I see people looking for an excuse or for someone to blame. But it is a waste of time. I admire Jesus because he faced so many criticisms. But Jesus didn't yell at them or talk behind their back. He forgave them. That's hard for us to do, but he gave me hope."

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Baptists edging toward openness  
to local March for Jesus events

By Ken Walker

Baptist Press  
10/25/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--In a world where supporters of every conceivable cause make public appearances, Christians are standing up for their Lord -- with the relatively new March for Jesus phenomenon gaining a worldwide impact.

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The annual event attracts members from hundreds of denominations, carrying banners, singing songs and unifying behind Jesus. The 1995 observance, "Together for the Gospel," will be May 27, the Saturday before Memorial Day. Some Southern Baptists who have participated in the march believe more SBC members need to join the movement.

"It's a powerful event," said Renee Rodriguez, a member of First Baptist Church in Nashville, where 35,000 filled downtown streets last June. "You see there's so many other people from your community who gather to lift up Jesus. I get a sense of being overwhelmed. God must be honored by that."

"I'm not sure why more Southern Baptists don't join in," added First Baptist member Danny Ayala. "In an age where we're trying to cross denominational, racial and other barriers, we should be doing everything we can to achieve unity."

Their pastor, Dan Francis, agrees. Although scheduling conflicts prevented him from attending the past two years, he encourages participation because of the event's attempts to bring different denominations and races together.

"I would compare it to Promise Keepers," Francis said. "Denominations are not important in this and theology is not of importance. It's made us aware that we can break down barriers and exalt Christ ... together."

More than 1.5 million Americans from 550 cities in all 50 states joined the most recent march. Worldwide, an estimated 12 million people took to the streets carrying placards with messages like, "Jesus, we commit ourselves to follow You."

Only San Diego, Calif., with 37,000 marchers, surpassed the numbers who turned out in Nashville and Pittsburgh. About 30,000 marched in Atlanta and Austin, Texas, and 25,000 in Dallas and Houston. In Knoxville, Tenn., the 22,500 who marched represented 13 percent of the city's population of 173,000.

One of the leaders of the March for Jesus' International Office for the Americas said a diverse group of churches has taken a role in the annual observance. Kai Adler, director of operations, said organizers welcome more Southern Baptist participation.

He noted he was warmly received by SBC pastors during a trip to San Diego to seek their participation. More than 200 churches from various denominations participated in that city's 1994 march, figures typical of widespread cooperation in other areas.

"We want more Southern Baptist involvement," said the Austin-based official. "It's been exciting to see that part of the body involved in local steering committees. These committees are made up of pastors who oversee the march and they're to be a reflection of the body of Christ."

To show how fast the movement is spreading across the United States, it's only been two years since it had widespread support. Approximately 150 American cities saw marches in 1992, with the number expected to quadruple to 600 next year, according to Adler.

He said the benefits of denominations working together spill over into other areas. As a result of cooperating on the march, various pastors have decided to come together in other ways. "It creates a climate for evangelism and other kinds of ministry," he said.

That type of cooperation is the wave of the future, First Baptist's Francis believes. He said Southern Baptists should realize denominational affiliation is the fourth or fifth priority for those seeking a church home. Most want an experience with God more than a particular label, he said.

"As much as I believe what Southern Baptists are all about, and am a participant in the convention, denominational lines are being erased day by day," he said. "God's Spirit blows where it will blow and right now it's blowing both in and outside denominational structures."

Currently the interim director for Youth for Christ in Nashville, Rodriguez said when her family first marched in 1992, it was a "wonderful" experience. They made signs and their then-4-year-old daughter was so excited that afterward she talked about it for weeks.

Coming from an interdenominational background before marrying a Southern Baptist, she is more open to the march's praise songs and fervent worship -- forms that fall outside SBC traditions. However, she said that shouldn't scare people away.

"Our leaders need to say, 'It's OK to be there,'" she said. "People need to know that nobody is going to force them to do anything or make them feel uncomfortable."

Rodriguez added that one drawback for members getting involved is the convention's heavy program emphasis. If you're very active in your local church, she said, it takes "a lot of gumption" to seek out another event. Yet, she said those who take the time will find it a positive experience.

The march in the country music capital receives a lot of support from well-known performers like Ricky Skaggs and Naomi Judd, plus the rousing renditions of the African-American Music City Mass Choir. Ayala said the music and calls for racial unity have been the highlights for him and his wife, Cindy.

"This is one situation which is not political or denominational," he said. "We're just taking a stand for Jesus. We're telling (the public), 'While we're meeting on Sunday morning while you're still asleep, we're still willing to take a public stand.'"

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Walker is a free-lance writer in Louisville, Ky.

Baptists urged not to fear  
march's 'charismatic' roots

By Ken Walker

Baptist Press  
10/25/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Since the March for Jesus sprang up through the efforts of a group of charismatic Christians in London, some Southern Baptists may be a little leery of joining the event.

But Dan Francis, pastor of First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn. -- qualifying "tongue speakers" is probably a more accurate term than "charismatic," which refers to gifts of the Spirit -- said Southern Baptists who differ with other Christians over the issue of tongues shouldn't let that prevent them from marching.

"I only get uncomfortable when they start with the theology about speaking in tongues," he said. "But charismatics aren't doing that now, not like they were in the 1970s. This is an ecumenical event and I think we need to be involved in it."

The first march took place in London in May 1987. Ichthus Fellowship joined with Youth for a Mission and Pioneer Ministries to organize a prayer and praise march through the city's streets. To their surprise, more than 15,000 people turned out in spite of a pouring rain.

As they marched through the financial district, participants prayed God would expose the devil's schemes and stop inflation and greed. In the days following the march, insider trading and fraud were exposed, encouraging planners to set up a second march, which drew a crowd of 55,000.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher publicly spoke of her faith in Christ the evening after the second event. The third year marches were held in 45 cities across the British Isles, drawing 200,000 people and attention from national news media. Since then, it has spread throughout dozens of countries across the globe.

Despite the event's origins, Kai Adler, March for Jesus director of operations for North America, said charismatic ties have never been an issue for the American organizers. The first march in the United States included Baptists and other evangelicals, he said, and drawing from all Christ-centered denominations has always been their goal.

"We have a high regard for evangelicals," Adler said. "I grew up in an Assembly of God church but as soon as I went into ministry I began working with different denominations. My heart has always been in taking advantage of the strengths of the established church."

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In addition, some key figures in the march come from Baptist backgrounds, including U.S. coordinator Tom Pelton. (He now attends an evangelical Episcopalian church). Englishman Graham Kendrick, musician and composer who wrote a series of songs for the marches, grew up in a Baptist church. His father was a Baptist pastor before he retired.

Danny Ayala, a member of First Baptist in Nashville, said the charismatic Belmont Church gave one of the biggest publicity pushes to the march in Nashville. But he said that is no reason for Southern Baptists to shun involvement.

"I was disappointed that Baptist churches didn't do more," he said. "A lot of people use that (charismatic) label to say, 'We're not going to get involved.' I'm not sure why, other than a fear of others who worship differently.

"I think leaders of churches need to make it clear, (say) 'I'm going to be there, my family is going to be there and I challenge you to be involved.'"

His pastor agreed. Although only several dozen members of First Baptist in Nashville marched in each of the past two marches, Francis said people are eager to rejoin the next march because of what they discovered through their participation.

"Our folks feel like they're part of the Church, with a capital C," Francis said.

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March musician's work may span  
centuries, Baptist musicians say      By Ken Walker

Baptist Press  
10/25/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The enthusiastic praise and worship music that accompanies the March for Jesus is largely due to the efforts of English musician Graham Kendrick.

Kendrick, whose composition "Shine, Jesus, Shine" was included in the 1991 version of "The Baptist Hymnal," is a member of a charismatic church in London. But two Southern Baptists musicians who draw heavily on his music believe minor theological disagreements fade in comparison to the significance of Kendrick's work.

Wes Ramsay said he reviewed hundreds of songs last year in selecting tunes for the album "Open Our Eyes, Lord." He produced the recording for his wife, Carol McClure, a harpist and composer. Released last February in England and in late October in this country, the instrumental collection includes 14 songs. Half were written by Kendrick.

"His material kept coming to the top of the heap," said Ramsay, a member of Nashville's First Baptist Church. "He has a talent for conveying truth in a striking way. Although 'Shine, Jesus, Shine' is done in an uptempo way, if you sit down and read the lyrics, it's gorgeous. It's as good as anything that's been written."

Ramsay cited other examples of Kendrick's music he believes will survive for centuries, eventually ranking him with such great hymn writers as Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley. In "Servant King," the British musician beautifully conveys Jesus came as King of kings and Lord of lords, but also as a servant, he said. "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High" talks about Jesus coming to earth to show the way, dying on the cross and rising in triumph.

In the latter, a short, singable chorus, Kendrick encapsulates the entire gospel in five lines, Ramsay said. He said that is difficult to accomplish, yet the English composer does it well and does it consistently.

"What struck me was: When Kendrick is 'on,' when he puts the bat to the ball, it's as good as anything ever written," said the Nashville composer, who produced Cynthia Clawson's 1993 album, "Blessed Assurance." "You can't say that about much of the praise and worship music out there. It's shallow, repetitive and will be gone in five to 10 years."

Ironically, McClure, a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, terms herself a "liturgical" Southern Baptist. Yet, she calls Kendrick's music terrific because it can bridge gaps between charismatic and non-charismatic Christians.

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"H has the most developed theology I've seen coming out of a group of churches that don't care much about theology," she said. "If a church has thrown out Watts and Wesley, Kendrick offers them an alternative that's theologically sound."

However, those who like traditional hymns in their worship may still frown on the more demonstrative praise and worship choruses used in the March for Jesus. However, according to the March organization, the reason Kendrick wrote the songs is most church music lacked clarity and power for outdoor expression and used terminology unfamiliar to non-believers.

Regardless of one's opinion on forms of worship music, Kendrick is widely watched in Southern Baptist music circles. His prolific songwriting abilities were the subject of an interview published in the July '94 quarterly issue of The Church Musician, published by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"I guess I simply try to be creative and innovative, which takes me through a whole range of styles," he told interviewer Terry York of the board's church music department. "I've written one or two songs that are strongly in the traditional hymn style and I have others that do seem to span to the worship choruses."

In concluding the interview, York added these words of encouragement about the March for Jesus, "It's delightful to see it grow from these roots ... to the way it's blossomed now. I know that must be rewarding for you to see. We want to encourage you to continue to write because, obviously, the Lord's hand is on your ministry."

As far as Ramsay is concerned, Kendrick's charismatic leanings and the origins of the march pose no problems: "I'm not a charismatic and don't have a deep knowledge of the movement, but I have Christian friends who are charismatic. I don't debate them on that aspect of theology."

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**Baptists from several states  
help flooded southeast Texans**

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
10/25/94

DALLAS (BP)--Baptists from Oklahoma and Louisiana have joined Texas Baptists in providing food service and child care for flooded southeast Texans.

Tennessee Baptists also were on their way to Angleton, Texas, Oct. 25 where they were slated to begin preparing hot meals the next day.

Every regional Texas Baptist disaster relief unit except for remote El Paso has been called into service. Arkansas and Tennessee Baptists were standing by to provide additional child care if needed.

Baptists prepared about 64,000 meals in six days, not counting those served at shelters in churches, and provided care for 165 children during the first three days of temporary emergency child care.

The Texas Baptist disaster relief mobile unit and command post were set up at First Baptist Church, Dayton, Texas, about 40 miles northeast of Houston.

The mobile unit is an 18-wheel, tractor-trailer rig with a self-sufficient field kitchen. The command post is an RV equipped with HAM radios and other equipment to coordinate communication from remote disaster sites.

Volunteers served food directly from the mobile unit in addition to cooking meals delivered by 25 Red Cross emergency response vehicles. Workers can prepare up to 35,000 meals per day at a disaster site working from the field kitchen.

The Oklahoma Baptist mobile unit was set up at First Baptist Church, Tomball, Texas, north of Houston, and the Louisiana Baptist mobile unit was stationed at Kingswood Plaza Hospital in north Houston.

Regional disaster relief units from Smith and Wichita Falls Baptist associations were set up at Houston's South Park Baptist Church. The regional unit from Tarrant Baptist Association was stationed at Simonton Community Baptist Church, west of Houston.

Golden Triangle Baptist Association volunteers served their neighbors from the parking lot at First Baptist Church, Beaumont, Texas. They provided food directly from the unit and supplied meals for a half-dozen Red Cross ERVs.

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Volunteers working from the San Marcos Baptist Association disaster relief unit also were providing hot meals in the Beaumont area at Memorial Baptist Church.

At the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Baptists were providing free temporary emergency child care at FEMA centers four locations -- Conroe, Liberty, north Houston and south Houston.

Baptist temporary emergency child care has been approved as a licensed child care facility in disasters, allowing children to get a hot, balanced noon meal and providing parents time to file claims and clean up their homes or businesses. Trained volunteers use carefully developed instructional modules to help children cope with the trauma of disaster.

Southern Baptists work cooperatively with other private organizations through Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAID) which includes the Red Cross, Salvation Army and a number of other church groups.

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Historical Commission's Deweese  
resigns to accept publishing post By Kim Medley

Baptist Press  
10/25/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Charles W. Deweese, assistant executive director of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission, has resigned effective Dec. 31 after almost 21 years with the agency.

Deweese has been named director of Baptist publishing for Providence House Publishers, Franklin, Tenn., where he will develop the company's book publishing program with Southern Baptist churches. The firm specializes in the publication of histories and trade titles for local churches, institutions and individuals in several major denominations and will operate among Baptists as Baptist Custom Publishing. In his new capacity beginning Jan. 3, 1995, Deweese will direct the acquisition, editorial work, production, marketing and distribution of titles for Baptist-related authors.

"My debt to the local church runs deep," Deweese said, "and my new work provides an exciting new outlet to help churches and individuals publish high-quality histories and other writings which reflect the historic ideals of our Baptist heritage."

An employee of the Historical Commission since 1973, Deweese has served as managing editor of the commission's journal Baptist History and Heritage and associat editor of the Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Volume 4 and coordinated the planning and publication of the commission's four series of heritage pamphlets, the award-winning Resource Kit for Your Church's History and the newsletter Baptist Heritage Update. He has authored four books, "Community of Believers: Making Church Membership More Meaningful," "The Emerging Role of Deacons," "Prayer in Baptist Life" and "Baptist Church Covenants" and more than 130 articles, editorials, book reviews, curriculum units, and special studies. And he has been a visiting professor at Acadia Divinity School, Wolfville, Nova Scotia; adjunct professor at Belmont College; and instructor for Seminary Extension, Nashville, Tenn.

"One of my most important accomplishments as administrator of the Historical Commission was convincing Charles Deweese to join our staff," stated Lynn E. May Jr., commission executive-director. "As director of the commission's publishing program, Charles employed his expertise as Baptist historian, gifted writer and skilled editor in planning and coordinating the development of excellent products to enable Southern Baptists to know and understand their heritage. Our commission is deeply indebted to Charles for the numerous contributions he has made to the total ministry of the agency. I deeply regret to lose this close associate who has been such a highly competent and productive member of my staff."

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"Charles Deweese has contributed enormously to the work of the Historical Commission," said Slayden Yarbrough, commission trustee chairman and Dickinson Professor of Religion at Oklahoma Baptist University. "His talent, his education and discipline as a Baptist historian and his love for the commission and its staff enabled him to make such an important impact on the agency. He is an excellent organizer, a clear communicator and a staff member of genuine integrity. On behalf of all of the professional historians in our institutions and agencies across the Southern Baptist Convention, I want to express our admiration and respect for him as one of our distinguished colleagues."

A native of Asheville, N.C., Deweese earned an undergraduate degree from Mars Hill (N.C.) College and master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

He and his wife, Mary Jane, have two daughters, Dana, a sophomore at Baylor University, and Julie, a high school sophomore.

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Rwandan pedestrian killed  
in missionary auto mishap

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press  
10/25/94

KIGALI, Rwanda (BP)--A Rwandan woman was killed instantly Oct. 24 when she walked into the side of a vehicle driven by a Southern Baptist missionary in a rural area outside Kigali, Rwanda's capital.

Missionary Diane Randolph of Dallas was driving a double-cab pickup truck, loaded with Rwandans, in the rain to a church function when the incident occurred. She was not charged by police.

In rural areas of Rwanda, as in many other developing countries, streams of people often line both sides of roads as they travel by foot.

After the accident, witnesses along the road "recognized it was not (Randolph's) fault," said Clyde Berkley, a Foreign Mission Board administrator for eastern and southern Africa.

"Normally when someone is hit in Africa people don't react well to it," Berkley said. "The fact that people didn't accuse her or react with hostility is the Lord's protection" and an answer to much recent prayer for missionaries in Rwanda. Randolph was treated with kindness by onlookers at the scene and later by police, he added.

Randolph and her husband, Larry, administrator for the Southern Baptist missionaries working in Rwanda, recently returned to the civil war-ravaged nation to work with Baptists left in Kigali after the mass exodus of Rwandans into neighboring countries. She also coordinates Baptist women's work in Rwanda.

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Longenecker: Confessions provide  
'benchmarks' for Christian thought

By Mike Hooker

Baptist Press  
10/25/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--To explain the "Christ event" and to think and act as Christians, "we must direct attention to the early Christian confessional materials that appear in the writings of the New Testament," Richard N. Longenecker, distinguished professor of New Testament at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, said recently at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Longenecker, featured speaker during the seminary's annual Drumwright Lecture Series, said "confessions" were used by early Christians to express the essential content of their commitment to Jesus. From the confessions, New Testament writers proclaimed and contextualized the Christian gospel.

"The early Christian confessions established the norms and provide the benchmarks for authentic Christian thought in life," Longenecker said. "They should be viewed as functional statements of the earliest believer's basic convictions. In terms of Pauline theology today, the isolation of these early Christian confessional materials aids us in identifying the 'coherence factors' in the early Christian message."

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Longenecker said New Testament "confessions" are grouped into three categories: poetic materials or hymns such as Romans 11:33-36, Revelation 15:3-4 and Philippians 2:6-11; prosaic materials such as Romans 1:3-4; and single statement affirmations such as Galatians 3:13, Galatians 1:4 and 1 Corinthians 15:3b-5.

He listed nine major themes of confessions: God is initiator, sustainer and ultimate agent of redemption; Jesus is Israel's Messiah, the Christ; Jesus is identified as the Messiah; Jesus is God's obedient Son; Jesus is humanity's redemptive Lord; Jesus is true humanity; the cross is the focus of all redemptive work; all New Testament writers speak in terms of resurrection to newness of life; and new relationships are being established in that work.

Longenecker has written seven books and more than 50 articles in scholarly and professional journals. He served as senior editor of Christianity Today from 1989-91.

The Huber H. Drumwright Lectures Series was established by Minnette Williams Drumwright as a memorial to her late husband, who served as dean of the school of theology at Southwestern from 1973-80 and was named a distinguished alumnus of the seminary, posthumously, in 1982.

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Hooker is a newswriter in Southwestern's office of public relations.

EDITORS' NOTE: The following first-person story was written by J. William Geiger, staff chaplain at Baptist Memorial Hospital East in Memphis, Tenn., and a former Southern Baptist missionary to Chile for 27 years.

#### FIRST-PERSON

11-year-old Billy not too old  
for Buttons the Bear's comfort By J. William Geiger

Baptist Press  
10/25/94

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--I have made it a daily practice to pass through the corridors of our emergency department at least three times a day. The hospital, not being a trauma center, does not place it in the category of a "tension factory," but at the same time it maintains a busy pace throughout almost any given 24-hour period.

Concerned nurses, doctors and clerical staff blend their talents together to serve hurting humanity. That hurt may vary from a minor injury at the work place to the unexpected death of a loved one who has been wheeled through the emergency doors with a full cardiac arrest.

On this particular day, each cubicle was filled with urgent needs and numerous cots lined the hall waiting their turn according to urgency.

I spotted Billy's small frame lying on one of those cots almost in a fetal position. His big brown eyes spoke loudly of the pain he was so desperately trying to endure.

There was that inner battle going on in the frame of an 11-year-old boy trying to be brave, but at the same time enduring the pain of what the doctors had suspected -- acute appendicitis. Later it was discovered that it had probably been three days since his appendix ruptured and gangrene had spread throughout his body.

It seemed that talking was his only means of distracting himself from his pain, so he jabbered away without ceasing. Within a few minutes, I had an adequate precis of his life's history. He was living at the Baptist Children's Home. One brother was in a foster home and his only real family was a younger sister who was also living with him at the "home." He spoke proudly of his church and pastor and shared with me the experience of his baptism.

Like most 11-year-old boys, he loved ball and playing with his friends. He had a real obsession for comic books that seemed to allow him to escape from the real world. On later visits he was eager to share with me some of his imaginary friends.

Since pain was not a part of his daily vocabulary, he was really having a problem with what was going on inside of him.

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"I hurt," "I'm scared," "I want to go to a room," "What if they put me to sleep?" "Will I wake up?" "Will I see my friends again?" Although his childhood faith was very real, there seemed to be more than a child-like portion of insecurity. Later it was discovered he had been the victim of child abuse early in life; this helped explain the paradox of being very insecure, but at the same time more mature than his 11 years.

I asked if he would like to pray and he readily said yes. I leaned over the cot, cradled his right hand in my hands and prayed. "God, it's frightening to feel alone and to be in pain. Ease Billy's pain as he waits for the doctors to help him. And help him to remember, Lord, that you are always with us."

As I finished the prayer, I remembered "Buttons the Bear." Although I wasn't sure how a boy his age would respond, I decided to give it a try. (Buttons is a cuddly little bear that is presented to each child who comes to Baptist East for surgery. Buttons is accompanied by a small booklet that is designed to prepare a child for surgery.)

When I returned to the emergency department, Billy was still waiting for medical attention. I showed him the bear and he immediately reached out for Buttons and snuggled him in his arms. I asked Billy if he would like for me to read to him the story of Buttons.

I began to read. "Life isn't easy, God, is it? Sometimes I feel sick, and I get tired and sad, and I just feel like giving up.

"I don't like to be sick ... ." As I continued to read the story, he held on to Buttons as he absorbed every word.

Next I supplied Billy's name as the story continued: "Dear God, it's me, 'Billy,' I don't want to have surgery, and I'm sad, and when I see or think happy things I'm happy. Maybe if you'll help me, I'll think about some happy things, like my smart doctor who knows what's wrong with me and how to fix it."

It was about that place in the story that the emergency room nurse came up and Billy was taken away for urgent medical attention -- still holding on tightly to "Buttons." There were critical moments in the days that followed when it wasn't certain if Billy would make it or not. He did! But when you are a hurting 11-year-old boy and all alone, it is nice to be surrounded by loving people who care and especially to have a friend like Buttons to hold on to.

**(BP)**

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