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NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

(BP)

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522, CompuServe 70420,250
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232, CompuServe 70420,115
NASHVILLE Linda Lawson, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300, CompuServe 70420,57
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151, CompuServe 70420,72
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223, CompuServe 71173,316

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CLC gives Congress input
on school prayer amendment

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
12/12/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission is lending a hand to incoming Speaker Newt Gingrich's announced plans for the House of Representatives to vote on a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution by July 4, 1995, to permit voluntary school prayer.

Three CLC leaders, Executive Director Richard Land, James Smith, government relations director, and Michael Whitehead, general counsel, met Dec. 7 with Rep. Ernest Istook, R-Okla., who has designated by Gingrich to draft a suitable proposal.

Istook is holding several such meetings to discuss proper constitutional wording, his press secretary, Steve Jones, said. For now, it is too early to predict when the proposed amendment will be ready for a vote, Jones said.

Gingrich's activism for school prayer -- undergirded by Republican control of both houses of Congress for the first time since the 1950s -- has rekindled the controversial issue, which dates back to much-debated 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court rulings striking down government-sponsored prayer and Bible reading in public schools.

According to Whitehead, the first draft of a proposed amendment by Istook states:

"Nothing in this constitution shall be construed to prohibit individual or group prayer in public schools or other public institutions. No person shall be required by the United States or by any State to participate in prayer. Neither the United States nor any State shall compose the words of any prayer to be said in public schools."

According to Land, "Such an amendment would prohibit the government from sponsoring religion as was done prior to 1963, but would also forbid the government and the court system from censoring or segregating voluntary student religious expression from the public school milieu."

Extended commentary on the school prayer issue by Land and Whitehead will appear in upcoming issues of the CLC publication Salt and Light. Both men advocate a school prayer amendment, with Land stating his belief that most Southern Baptists favor a "carefully crafted prayer amendment."

Says Whitehead, "The very issue before the people is whether there is a fundamental right of a dissenter to stop other private citizens from engaging in prayer or other religious expression, simply because it occurs in a public school setting. We do not believe that such a fundamental right does or should exist."

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On the other side, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Southern Baptist Convention's religious liberty agency until replaced by the CLC several years ago, issued a formal statement Nov. 22 opposing any amendment to the U.S. Constitution to permit voluntary school prayer.

Moreover, an interfaith coalition -- including the BJC -- has been assembled to oppose any such amendment. The coalition sent a letter to President Clinton Nov. 18 stating its categorical opposition, according to news reports.

Land contends a constitutional amendment is needed, recounting, "A reporter's recent question furnishes the answer: 'Won't any attempted solution passed by Congress just end up back in the courts?' I told him he had just raised the best argument for a constitutional, rather than a legislative, remedy. ... The prayer amendment becomes part of the Constitution, which, by definition, makes it 'constitutional.'

"Most Southern Baptists who now embrace the right kind of constitutional prayer amendment have done so because they have lost confidence in the nation's court system as being able or willing to protect student's free exercise rights without such an amendment," Land said.

Citing concerns expressed by then-Supreme Court Justices Arthur Goldberg and Potter Stewart, Land noted: "The past three decades have produced an aggressive secularizing neutrality (by government) which has been hostile to, and has discriminated against, the religious free exercise of students. Most Americans agree that this secularizing of American society has gone too far."

Land also quoted from a December 1991 Time magazine cover story, "One Nation Under God: Has the separation of Church and state gone too far?"

"For God to be kept out of the classroom or out of America's public debate by nervous school administrators or over-cautious politicians serves no one's interest," Time wrote. "That restriction prevents people from drawing on the country's rich and diverse religious heritage for guidance, and it degrades the nation's moral discourse by placing a whole realm of theological reasoning out of bounds. The price of that sort of quarantine, at a time of moral dislocation, is -- and has been -- far too high. The courts need to find a better balance between separation and accommodation, and Americans need to respect the new religious freedom they would gain as a result."

The Baptist Joint Committee, in its Nov. 22 statement, contended, "At best, an amendment is unnecessary; at worst, it would threaten religious freedom."

The BJC then listed four points to amplify its stance:

-- "Students already have the right to pray in public schools. Students can pray privately anytime they choose -- in the classroom, the lunchroom or the playground. They can pray orally in a group, as long as it is not disruptive. Religious clubs under the Equal Access Act abound and provide a constitutionally permissible opportunity for devotional Bible reading as well as prayer. True moments of silence, neutrally administered, provide another occasion for prayer.

-- "It is always dangerous to fiddle with the Constitution, particularly the First Amendment. For over two centuries the religion clauses in the First Amendment have stood as twin pillars ensuring religious liberty. The proposed amendment would do great harm to this freedom. There is little doubt that the amendment's proponents want to return state-sponsored prayer to the classroom. To send out of the classroom children whose consciences would be violated does not solve the problem. It only highlights the prayer's coercive effect and says that those who do not worship the 'god of the classroom' are outsiders and second-class citizens. Our schools belong to everyone, not just those who profess a particular creed.

-- "The proposed amendment is off base because it: (1) 'politicizes' prayer by polarizing the debate and allowing a holy act of religious worship to be kicked around like a political football; (2) 'governmentalizes' prayer, placing in the hands of governmental officials sacred tasks belonging properly to individual believers and congregations; (3) 'secularizes' prayer, calling upon school officials -- many of whom may not have any religious expertise or conviction -- to participate in religious worship; and (4) 'trivializes' prayer by reducing it to a brief and hollow ritual.

-- "We are not opposed to prayer. It is precisely because we believe so fervently in prayer that we do not want government to meddle in it. Prayer should be lifted to the houses of worship, family, and to the students themselves."

Whitehead, meanwhile, in his analyses in the CLC publication Salt counters various BJC arguments:

-- "The proposal does not mandate prayer in schools, but permits it, if local boards choose. It expressly prohibits government requiring, composing or leading the prayer.

-- "It is framed only in terms of limitation on government, and primarily on federal government. The U.S. Constitution would no longer be an excuse for schools or judges to prohibit prayer by private citizens. Local school boards may still decide not to permit classroom prayer, based on state constitutions or local considerations, but they could not pass the buck to James Madison and the framers of the First Amendment.

-- "It does not purport to reverse the 1962-63 decisions of the Supreme Court banning government-mandated prayer and Bible-reading. Most Americans, including Southern Baptists, do not want government officials dictating religious exercises. We support this view of separation of church and state. On the other hand, the vast majority of Americans, including Southern Baptists, want liberty for their students to pray. An April 1994 Wirthlin poll shows over 78 percent support. Most people don't want the 'wall of separation' used as a barrier to student prayer in the classroom, lunchroom, gym or commencement hall. They reject any notion of the 'wall' which equates separation of church and state with separation of religious speech from public life.

-- "It is not a 'moment of silence' amendment. We already have the right to remain silent. That is in the Fifth Amendment. This proposal would protect the right of prayer and religious expression, out loud, so long as it was not materially disruptive of the school program. This amendment certainly would permit some local school boards to adopt a 'moment of silence' policy, while others might go further. But a 'moment of silence' amendment would not be worth the labor."

In a Nov. 21 statement, Whitehead took issue with the "tinkering with the Constitution." "That is an especially odd cry for Baptists," he said. "Early Virginia Baptists like John Leland opposed ratification of the Constitution unless it contained a bill of rights including a provision to protect religious freedom expressly. James Madison had believed that a Bill of Rights was unnecessary, but he acquiesced to Leland and others.

"The Constitutional document is not sacred," Whitehead continued. "It is the principle of religious liberty that is so important. How dare Baptists shrink from 'tinkering with the words' of the Constitution, while government officials tinker with the religious freedom rights of students and others. It is the tinkering with rights that should offend and be feared, not the altering of the document to make expressly clear that government cannot prescribe or prohibit student prayer or religious expression."

Whitehead acknowledged the proposed amendment drafted by Istook "needs to be clarified so as to expressly protect prayers and other religious expression by students, which we have been assured is Rep. Istook's intent."

It also should be expanded, Whitehead said, "to protect student religious freedom. By the inclusion of words 'student initiated and led prayer and other religious expression,' the proposed amendment would give clearer protection to a broad range of free speech rights which include religious speech by students in and outside the classroom."

The school prayer debate can be a healthy process, Whitehead contended. "We would trust the American people to express their will through their representatives, as the bill must be first approved by two-thirds of each house of Congress, and then by three-fourths of the state legislatures. The public debate about the issues of student religious liberty, and whether local boards may find ways to accommodate student religious expression, will be good for religion and for education. We support the right of the people to debate and to vote on these issues."

Whitehead acknowledged voluntary school prayer will not be a cure-all for society's ills, but noted: "... prayer is good 'first aid' for what public schools need. American can do a lot after we have prayed, but we cannot do more until we have prayed. An acknowledgement that God is Creator, and that students are moral creatures with the capacity to choose right and wrong, is a critical first ingredient for restoring public morality."

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Turmoil jeopardizes future
of Rwanda mission work

By Mark Kelly

Baptist Press
12/12/94

KIGALI, Rwanda (BP)--Continuing strife and the prospect of renewed violence is forcing Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to Rwanda to take on new ministries in other countries -- leaving the future of mission work there in grave doubt.

Four years of ethnic bloodshed have killed hundreds of thousands of Rwandans and caused as many as 1 million more to flee the African nation.

Continuing turmoil in the country makes missionary work impossible, according to James Westmoreland of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Travel is extremely dangerous because roads are honeycombed with land mines. In addition, most Rwandan Baptist pastors and more than half of the church members have fled the country. Many others have been killed.

Also, Rwandans in refugee camps in Zaire are not returning to their country in large numbers. Rumors are circulating that soldiers and militiamen driven from Rwanda in July are regrouping and planning to invade the country.

As a result, most Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to the country have decided to transfer to other missions, said Westmoreland, the board's associate area director for eastern and southern Africa.

"Everything is in such disarray the missionaries can't do anything," he said. "I don't think there's much of a future for the work there until things settle down."

Missionaries Larry and Dianne Randolph of Jasper, Ala., and Dallas, respectively, re-entered the country in October to assess the situation. They found missionary properties and Baptist churches in good shape, but the extreme instability of the country makes it impossible to live and work there. They're expected to leave the country by the end of the year and consider transferring to another country in eastern or southern Africa.

Missionaries Vernon and Sandi Sivage of Midland and Wheeler, Texas, respectively, already have transferred to Uganda. Missionaries David and Janet Hooten of Knoxville, Tenn., are on furlough and expected to transfer to Tanzania when they return to Africa next August.

Journeyman Marty Felts of Abilene, Texas, has been looking after missionary property in Rwanda and assisting in the children's camp in Goma, Zaire, where Rwanda missionaries Stan and Marlene Lee of Fort Worth, Texas, are working. The work at Goma is expected to be shut down in May.

Missionaries Katrina Knox of Columbia, Tenn., and Martha Colwell of Athens, Ga., also are on furlough. Knox is considering other assignments, but Colwell reportedly still hopes to return to Rwanda.

A new missionary couple originally headed for Rwanda -- Tim and Cathy Cummins of Georgetown, Texas, and Atlanta, respectively -- are working in Nairobi, Kenya, while seeking another assignment. Another couple, Billy and Dana Blankenship of Weatherford, Texas, are still in language school in France.

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Zambian judge delays trial
on missionary work permits

By Mark Kelly

LUSAKA, Zambia (BP)--A judge has postponed a trial that will decide the fate of Southern Baptist mission efforts in Zambia.

The court case, which began in mid-November, concerns the refusal of Zambian immigration officials to renew work permits or issue new ones to Southern Baptist missionaries in the African country without the approval of the Baptist Convention of Zambia.

The convention's executive committee asked for authority to approve all work permit renewals for missionaries, although the Southern Baptist mission organization is an older and legally separate entity. The government immigration office agreed.

The Baptist mission protested the decision, and filed a lawsuit after other appeals failed. A court hearing began Nov. 11 to decide the dispute. The judge, however, delayed the case until December, then extended the postponement to Jan. 26.

The conflict, which began two years ago, is taking its toll on missionaries and churches.

"There's a lot of stress on missionaries, especially the ones on temporary extensions of their work permits," said missionary Bonita Wilson, acting administrator of the Southern Baptist mission organization. "Several have to get renewals every 60 days. It's also hard on the families with children. Some of them are having to live day by day, not knowing if they're going to be here or have to leave."

Relationships between Baptist churches and their national convention also are suffering, Wilson said.

About three-fourths of Zambian Baptist churches are withholding contributions to the Zambian cooperative missions program in protest of the convention executive committee's effort to control missionary work permits, she said.

No missionaries have had to leave the country so far. However, if the judge decides the case in favor of the Zambian Baptist leadership, six missionary families would have to leave immediately, Wilson said.

The most extreme potential outcome: All 47 missionaries assigned to Zambia would have to leave the country and all mission property -- including cars, houses and institutions -- would be turned over to the convention.

The U.S. Embassy in Zambia holds that the Zambia Baptist Mission -- a society legally registered with the government for 35 years -- should be treated like any other such society by the Zambia immigration office. That means another group should not be allowed control of work permits.

The situation is confused by the fact that some Zambian denominations govern their affairs through synods, which exercise authority over all church work. Southern Baptist missionaries and the churches with which they work, however, hold to a free-church tradition that emphasizes autonomy and cooperation.

Until 1992, the relationship between the missionaries and the convention was a model of cooperation for other countries. A joint council planned and coordinated Baptist work in the country. The missionaries also had begun a phased turnover of institutions and church property, to be completed in the year 2000.

Zambian Baptists also were reporting record numbers of new churches and people becoming Christians.

Southern Baptists should pray not only for a decision that will allow missionaries to remain in the country, but also for reconciliation between missionaries and Zambian Baptist leaders, said John Faulkner, administrator for Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board work in eastern and southern Africa.

"The conflict has strained relations. Everyone has been so hurt by this," Faulkner said. "Southern Baptists should pray for reconciliation."

**He shares Christmas joy
while driving a taxi**

By Debbie Moore

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The Christmas season is a wonderful time of year for Don MacKay. As business picks up for him, so do the ministry opportunities, opportunities which literally come with an open door.

Working his way through seminary as a Yellow Cab taxi driver, MacKay said he has found "an abundance of opportunities to witness and minister to people. You just have to be alert to them."

He fondly remembers a recent situation when a woman called from a church for a ride home.

"She had four little children. They weren't members of the church; they were attending some sort of Christmas event that the church had sponsored for underprivileged children.

"As we loaded up the trunk with all the packages, she was very emotional. She couldn't believe that people would do this for her. She was very thankful, but sort of stunned."

On the drive home, MacKay, a talkative person by nature, chatted with the woman and her children. Ever grateful for the peace he now has in his life, he always talks openly with his customers about his faith in God, an especially easy thing to do around Christmas time. The mother picked up on what MacKay was saying, giving him one of those golden moments to share his faith.

"You're a Christian," the woman said. "Why would people do this?" "Christmas is more than Santa Claus," MacKay told her. "It's a time to celebrate the greatest gift of all, God's gift of eternal life."

As the family left the cab when they reached their home, MacKay handed them some tracts, as is his custom. While the woman and her children did not make any commitments to God at that time because of the situation, MacKay is confident he planted a seed.

"I'll never be a big famous preacher and I don't have aspirations for any of that," MacKay said. "But I know God can use me, and I want him to use me.

"If nothing else, I want to give them a smile, hand them a tract and tell them God loves them.

"God can use folks like me to help people see through all the stuff the world puts in front of them, to look beyond all that and see that God is real."

MacKay is confident on this point because 12 years ago he came to a place in his own life when he finally realized that God and God's Word are real.

Raised in a Roman Catholic home in Lubbock, Texas, "I always considered myself religious," he said, although he stopped attending church when his mother didn't force him anymore when he was a teen-ager. But after several years of conviction and then his mother's critical cancer surgery and her near-death experience, he came to a turning point in his life.

As he waited fitfully during the surgery, he walked down to the hospital chapel. Memories of church experiences and Bible phrases floated through his mind as he begged God to heal his mother.

Then a thought suddenly occurred to him: "Before God will do what I want him to do, I have to do what he wants me to do."

There alone in the quiet darkness of the chapel, "I just prayed and asked God to forgive me. Then the fear I had felt for years was gone, and a voice in the back of my head said, 'She'll be all right.'"

MacKay's turning point occurred at 8:20 a.m., the same time his mother rallied during the surgery, the doctor told him later that morning. MacKay's mother lived six more years and he was able to lead her to Christ before her death.

A few years later MacKay started feeling an uneasiness in his heart when he heard sermons about missions.

"I told God, 'You don't need me. There are too many other people who could help you. Besides, my wife and I both already have good jobs!'"

Not able to escape that burden on his heart, he finally made the decision in 1988 to go into full-time Christian service.

Even though he had never been to college, "I felt God wanted me to preach," he said. Now he knew he needed to further his education, "but it just never worked out to get into college," MacKay said.

After serving a while together with his pastor, he became the full-time pastor of Holly Ridge Baptist Church, Rayville, La., where he served for two years.

Then he received a call in 1991 from the pastor of Memorial Baptist Church, Chinle, Ariz., whose congregation wanted to start a mission church on a Navajo Indian reservation in their town. MacKay accepted the challenge and was a pastor in Chinle for two and a half years.

But as he gained pastoral experience, he became aware that his lack of seminary education was holding him back from broader ministry opportunities. He had seen 187 people come to know Christ during his brief ministry in Chinle, he had baptized 80, the mission church had outgrown its facility, "and I didn't know where to take it, what to do beyond that point. I had reached my limit."

He decided that he had to go to seminary, "and I knew that God would work it out this time."

Six months later "God opened every door and removed all the obstacles previously in the way," he said, and he and his wife, Bobbi, and their children Allyson, Erin and Austin were in an apartment at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, with all the bills paid.

"I had another job when I first came to seminary and I made good money, but I never had any time to study," MacKay said. "I came to seminary to learn and that's what I was determined to do."

Soon afterward he found the taxi cab job, which has provided not only the money he needed to support his family, but also time to study, as well as ministry opportunities.

"I can study while sitting and waiting, then folks get in the cab and see books and ask, 'Are you a student? Where do you go to school?' They open the door themselves for me to witness to them.

"We just talk. I like to talk. And every now and then I get folks who really need someone to talk with."

Recently a young woman who had just had a fight with her boyfriend asked MacKay to take her to the airport.

"I knew she was upset and I handed her a tract. 'Is this really true?' she asked me. I assured her that it was and explained it all to her. She prayed with me, but didn't accept Christ then. I asked her if she knew of a church in her neighborhood, and she said there was one. I told her to go talk to the pastor. That was planting a seed that someone else will have the joy of reaping."

Besides speaking about God's love, MacKay believes it is very important to live and act that way, and one of the most important things to MacKay about being a Christian is keeping his word.

"Some taxi drivers will make people get out when they discover they don't have any money or they want to go just a short distance or they want to go to a part of town the driver doesn't like. But to me it doesn't matter. If I've promised someone a ride, I'm going to do it.

"It honors God when you keep your word, when you do what you said you were going to do."

When he has time, MacKay also stops to help motorists in distress, to give them a jump or to help them change a flat.

"Rules state that taxi drivers can charge up to \$10 for a jump, but I've never charged," MacKay said. "I'm just doing something to honor the Lord.

"It honors the Lord to help people who need help. People are so appreciative of the help and that just gives me one more opportunity to share God's love."

Although four taxi drivers have been killed this year in New Orleans, "I've never felt that I've been in a dangerous situation," MacKay said. "I just can't worry about that. I use common sense. There are parts of the city that I try to avoid and I definitely don't go to certain parts of the city looking for people who need a ride."

A drunken man recently got into MacKay's cab and threatened to beat him up. "I finally pulled the car over to the side of the road and just stared at him.

"What are you looking at?" he asked. I told him that I was looking at someone that Jesus died for. He settled down immediately and I drove him home in peace."

MacKay begins each day saying, "Lord, you're just going to have to see me through this day."

"I know I could die at any moment no matter what I'm doing. And if that's the case, then God will get some glory from it if something happens.

"I let the Lord drive the cab. I'm behind the wheel, but the Lord's driving the cab."

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Christmas spirit shared
with fellow seminarian

By Debbie Moore

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--'Twas the day of registration
And all through the halls
All the students were stirring
Yet took time to pause ...

Such was the situation at the end of the first week of December as students waited in line to register for second semester classes at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Finally it was Eribert Jean-Francois's turn. A baccalaureate student from Haiti, he quickly discovered, much to his dismay, he was nearly \$100 short of what he needed to pay off his account.

Word traveled quickly back through the crowd of NOBTS baccalaureate students who anxiously were waiting to pay off their own school bills.

Within 10 minutes, students had prayed, talked, opened their wallets and raised all the money Jean-Francois needed to bring his account to zero.

"Thank you, my fellow students," Jean-Francois said softly in his mellifluous French accent. "I really appreciate your help. May God bless you."

At Christmastime, when seminary students need money for not only school bills but also family gifts, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the trip back home, not to mention their utility bills and groceries, these students spontaneously demonstrated their faith that God will provide. All classmates of Jean-Francois, they wanted to do whatever they could to see their friend in class with them when school starts again in January.

"God calls us to help each other out," said one student. "He gives to me and there is no way I can't give to others."

"I believe," said another student, "that God has blessed me so that I can give to others. If I'm not able to bless others, I feel God can't bless me."

One student said one Sunday someone in his church gave him something he had been praying for, a van. As he expressed his feelings concerning his own gratitude, as well as the situation that morning with Jean-Francois, several other students nodded their heads:

"The Lord has blessed me so much that I feel I just have to do something to bless others."

"We're all on the same team," another student stated simply.

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Christian motorcyclists
touch 'another world'

By Dave Parker

ENID, Okla. (BP)--The roar of motorcycle engines reverberates throughout the town. Thousands of bikers are in town for a national biker rally. Patches for "Hell's Angels" and other outlaw gangs abound.

At the campground gate taking money is a biker dressed in leather gear and wearing the patch, or "colors," of his club.

There is something different, though, about this biker. Instead of scowling, he has a smile on his face and greets the bikers as they come through. The woman standing beside him is wearing much more clothing than other biker women.

The biker's colors are also different. Instead of a skull and crossbones or other signs of death, these colors have a picture of a book with a cross on it and praying hands. The legend reads, "Riding for the Son" and "Christian Motorcyclists Association."

The Christian Motorcyclists Association was formed by an Arkansas Baptist preacher, Herb Shreve. Shreve was having problems with his teen-aged son, Herbie, and wanted to find a way to bridge the generation gap. So, he asked Herbie what he could do to help.

Herbie said he wanted to ride a motorcycle. So, Herb bought two motorcycles and began riding with Herbie.

While riding and meeting other bikers, the Shreves saw a need for ministry and the CMA was born.

Today, there are more than 40,000 members of the CMA in more than 300 chapters across the United States, Canada and around the world. One of those members is Rick Milam, bivocational pastor of Olivet Baptist Church, Enid, Okla., and chaplain for Northwest Oklahoma Witness (NOW) Riders based in Enid.

Milam said the CMA's goal is evangelism to people who are out of the mainstream.

"We try to take Christ to non-Christian bikers, whether they are outlaw bikers or recreational bikers," he said. "We minister to people who were either burned in churches or just fell through the cracks because of divorce or other problems.

"I have seen a real redemptive work through CMA."

One advantage of ministering on motorcycles is the amount of contact with other people, Milam said.

"In the Bible days, almost everybody walked," he said. "Therefore, they came into contact with people who had needs. Now, it's almost an oddity to see people walking.

"When you're on a motorcycle, it's another world. People literally come up to you and start conversations. They want to know what the patch means, about your motorcycle and other things."

One hot day Milam said he was refueling his motorcycle as a man walked by with a scowl on his face.

"As he saw the patch, he came over and said, 'It's good to see Christians riding motorcycles for a change,'" he recalled.

Another time, some members of "Satan's Disciples" came into the store where Milam works full time.

"I told them I ride a motorcycle, too, and one of the bikers said, 'Normally, those Christians won't have anything to do with us,'" Milam said.

One of the problems at big motorcycle rallies comes in handling money. Many of the outlaw gangs don't trust each other or their own gang members, so they allow the CMA to run the gate. CMA members also hand out cups of water with Scripture verses printed on the side.

At one rally, Milam told how the CMA got the "Shin Kicking Saints" nickname:

While CMA members were witnessing to bikers, an obviously intoxicated man stumbled over and asked for a drink of water. As he sat down, a scantily clad woman walked by. His eyes were following her when, without thinking, the CMA member kicked him in the shin.

The following year, the man returned, but acted uncomfortable being witnessed to and left. The following year he returned and CMA members witnessed to him. The next year the man returned with a Bible in his hand, telling them he had been saved.

Milam said although he would not recommend kicking the shins of outlaw bikers, in this instance that technique worked.

One big advantage of the CMA, he said, is it keeps preachers in touch with lost people.

"One of the biggest complaints I hear from preachers is the longer you're in the ministry as a full-time preacher, the fewer lost people you're around," he said. "We are supposed to minister to the lost. Being involved in this (CMA) opens the field up."

Milam has been at Olivet four years. Before accepting the call there, he told the church of his involvement in the CMA and his intention to remain active. The church agreed, so he continued his ministry through the CMA.

Other local CMA members include his uncle and his father, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hunter, Okla.

Many local groups, including those in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, have a ministry to outlaw gangs, especially at bike shows, but Milam said NOW Riders mainly ministers to recreational bikers, people who just ride for fun.

NOW Riders also ministers to families and has an annual fund-raiser for the Women's Crisis Center. It also participates in area parades and celebrations.

"We do have people in our group who go to Oklahoma City and Tulsa, to help out when needed," he noted.

There are seven CMA chapters in Oklahoma.

National evangelist for the CMA is Wayne Henderson, a retired Baptist minister from Little Rock, Ark.

In addition to Henderson the national CMA has five regional evangelists, a secular evangelist and a youth evangelist.

Every year the CMA holds its annual "Run for the Son" fund-raiser. In it, members get sponsorship to ride 100 miles, raising \$500,000 nationwide. Of that, 40 percent is used to fund the CMA, 40 percent is used to buy Bibles for countries closed to missionaries and 20 percent is used to buy motorcycles or other transportation for missionaries around the world.

The CMA also distributes tracts geared towards bikers, he said.

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Laymen find mission field
at Southeastern's campus

By Dwayne Hastings

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--It had long been Charles Chrisman's dream to travel on a mission trip. At age 73, Chrisman, a member of Griffin Baptist Church, Lakeland, Fla., believed there was little he could do in mission service. Yet a small notice in his association's newsletter this past September convinced him otherwise.

Chrisman was one of six men who traveled from Lakeland to Wake Forest, N.C., and wore out 10 brushes and 24 rollers in spreading 145 gallons of paint on four town house buildings at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary this fall.

Chrisman said this was his first mission trip ever, admitting, "I drove up here with the painters, but I'm a smearer myself.

"At my age, I just wanted to get into something where I was really able to help. I knew I couldn't travel to some foreign country and build churches, but this is a trip I thought I could make," he said.

The venture was arranged by Carl Freeman, a member of Scott Lake Baptist in Lakeland, who noted the condition of the particular married student housing buildings in August as he assisted his daughter and son-in-law in their move to the seminary.

"I saw the structure was beginning to look like it could use some paint," Freeman said. "So I told my son-in-law he should get with some of the other students and spend a few weekends getting this building painted."

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The entire trip back home, Freeman wrestled with the thought he should be the one to spearhead the effort to have the building repainted. "I kept telling God I live 700 hundred miles away in Florida, I can't do it. But he kept saying, 'Yes, you can.'"

When Freeman recalled his church had traveled to Puerto Rico to paint a Christian school there, he said there were no more excuses. "If we can go to the Caribbean and paint a school, why can't we do the same at our own seminary?"

Freeman noted even though the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program helps to underwrite the operation of the seminaries, churches need to join to help the convention's schools in a broader way.

"If we can go overseas to build churches and the like, we need to look at home and see what we can do," he said. "I'm not kicking foreign missions, but we need to do more things like this that will help out the work of our convention."

Churches from across the South Florida Baptist Association in Polk County contributed to the effort. Freeman said the group traveled in Bethel Baptist's van and another Lakeland, Fla., church, Northside Baptist, had agreed to reimburse them for the vehicle's gasoline expenses.

Richard Hunt of Bethel Baptist said while he was already tired when he pulled himself behind the van's steering wheel to begin the drive north, he couldn't resist the opportunity for mission work.

"My wife and I work with senior adults and we had just returned from a bus tour. We got in late Saturday and dug right back out to come up here. Since I retired, I've felt the Lord didn't want me just sitting around."

Chrisman, looking up from painting a door casing, said, "We believe the Lord wants his work handled. If I can do something to save the seminary money, they can put that into something else to advance the cause of Christ."

Larry Booth, also of Bethel Baptist, agreed, saying, "We want to do our part to care for his material things so that future students here will also have adequate housing. It's apparent that everyone at Southeastern is working towards one end and that is to glorify Christ. I'm pleased to be just a little bit a part of what is happening at this seminary."

The paint crew attracted the attention of adults and children alike at the McDowell housing site. First-year student Burton Welch and his wife, Suzette, joined the Floridians in their work.

Welch, who lives in one of the town houses being repainted, said, "I always wanted to go on a mission trip, but never took the time. I suppose I'm sort of making up for what I should have been doing."

SEBTS senior Mark Rushing's family, prompted by 7-year-old Matthew and 5-year-old sister Tiffany, spent several hours in the kitchen preparing their own special-recipe baked goods for the painters. The youngsters' mother, Debbie, said she feared the children in the complex would really be disappointed when the painters leave.

Freeman indicated his interest in the seminary had been piqued by the visit. "I am really impressed by what is going on here. If I was 10 years younger, I'd enroll in Southeastern myself."

Even before he left the campus, Freeman was making plans to show the video tape of the trip in the next associational meeting in an effort to generate interest and funds for a return trip in the spring of 1995.

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