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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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

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 71173,16

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**Assemblies pastor released
in Egypt; four others held**

**Baptist Press
12/27/94**

CAIRO, Egypt (BP)--An Assemblies of God pastor charged with trying to convert three Egyptian women to the Christian faith was released Dec. 19 after spending 37 days in prison.

Still, four other Coptic Christians arrested in October and November are being held in Egypt, according to the International Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity, a London-based institute which monitors Christianity in Islamic countries.

Assemblies of God pastor William Gayyid was arrested Nov. 11 shortly after three Muslim women entered his church in Cairo after a service and asked him to pray for them. He was released when the women told police he had not tried to convert them but then re-arrested half an hour later. Church leaders speculated he might have offended someone with political connections.

No details were available on why Gayyid finally was released, but church leaders expressed thanks to groups around the world who had prayed for his release.

"We hope that whoever may have been responsible for bringing false charges against this man of God will be dealt with under Egyptian law in an appropriate manner," one leader said in a released statement.

Still held by Egyptian authorities at the end of December were a Coptic priest, a church deacon and a church worker, plus a girl who converted from Islam, said Patrick Sookhdeo, director of the International Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity.

Sookhdeo said Nashwa Abd El-Azis, the girl who converted, was arrested Oct. 30 as she tried to board a plane. Boulos Samaan Abd El-Sayed, the Coptic priest who baptized her, was arrested Sunday, Nov. 6, at 6 a.m. and charged with scorning Islam, encouraging apostasy and forging official papers. Also arrested were Maher Farah, a Coptic deacon, and a church worker named Makram Kamal.

The priest at first was detained for 15 days, but the detention period later was extended to 45 days, Sookhdeo said. No further details were available. Sookhdeo urged Christians in the United States and Europe to register their strong disapproval of the arrests by telephone, fax messages and mail to Egyptian embassies.

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In the United States, the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt is located at 3521 International Court, N.W., Washington, DC 20008. The fax number is (202) 244-4319 or (202) 244-5131. The telephone number for the consular section is (202) 966-6342. Direct calls to Egypt's U.S. Ambassador Ahmed Maher El Sayed may be made to (202) 232-5400.

Sookhdeo said those corresponding should refer to case number 969/94, under supreme state security.

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**NOBTS presidential search
committee members named**

**Baptist Press
12/27/94**

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Edward D. Johnson, chairman of the trustees of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, has announced the appointment of the presidential search committee for the recommendation of a new president to replace the retiring Landrum P. Leavell II, 68.

In compliance with the seminary's constitution and bylaws, Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Ocala, Fla., appointed the following 11 members: Morris L. Anderson, chairman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pigeon Forge, Tenn.; Fred L. Lowery, vice chairman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Bossier City, La.; C. Glynn Rhinehart, secretary, a staff survey engineer for Chevron USA Inc. from River Ridge, La.; W. Keith Huffman, previous trustee chairman, director of missions for Shoal Creek Baptist Association, Neosho, Mo.; Johnson, current trustee chairman; Arnold A. Burk, a hospital pharmacist from Russellville, Ark.; William M. Hamm Jr., a retired mechanical contractor from Shreveport, La.; James E. Davison, owner of Davison Petroleum Products and Davison Transport, Ruston, La.; Jess Eddie Gandy, pastor of Westmoreland Baptist Church, Huntington, W.Va.; Stephen G. Forfer, student representative, from New Orleans; and Billy E. Simmons, faculty representative, professor of New Testament and Greek at New Orleans Seminary since 1976.

"I have appointed a very fair and balanced committee," Johnson stated. "We will have no agenda other than finding a godly, conservative president to lead this great seminary into the next century with the same zeal and commitment to evangelism and missions that has characterized New Orleans Seminary for the past 20 years.

"We have grateful appreciation for the leadership Dr. Leavell has given our seminary and look forward to that same kind of godly leadership from our next president."

Johnson said all recommendations should be sent in writing to Morris L. Anderson, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 98, Pigeon Forge, TN 37868-0098.

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**SBCNet, CompuServe kits
now free to Baptists**

**Baptist Press
12/27/94**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Beginning Jan. 1, 1995, Southern Baptist computer users can try SBCNet and CompuServe free of charge.

SBCNet, the denomination's data communications network, may be accessed by using a computer, modem and a membership kit distributed by the Baptist Sunday School Board. Kits, which provide access to services of both computer networks, previously were \$20 each. Kits contain software, account information, credit for a free month of CompuServe's basic services and a \$25 credit which may be used for up to three months of SBCNet services. They are available in DOS, Macintosh and Windows versions and may be ordered by calling 1-800-325-7749.

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David Haywood, SBCNet coordinator, said availability of free kits will continue for the foreseeable future in an effort to provide the wide range of on-line services to a greater number of church staff and church members who are computer users.

After the first month of totally free services, users would pay the CompuServe standard plan charge of \$8.95 plus any additional charges for extended services on CompuServe. After the \$25 credit has been used, the cost of SBCNet is a flat rate of \$7.95 monthly, plus CompuServe's standard plan charge of \$8.95 monthly.

SBCNet services include supplemental teaching helps for adult and youth Sunday school lessons in three curriculum series; Baptist Press, the official Southern Baptist news service; and nine other services aimed at both church staff and members. An additional 60 basic services are offered through CompuServe.

People who already are members of CompuServe may join SBCNet by simply typing "GO SBCNet" at any CompuServe prompt without ordering a kit.

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**TV ads offer churches
way to reach people**

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
12/27/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Churches that think television advertising is beyond their budgets may be missing out on an opportunity to reach people who might not read or respond to a print advertisement or direct mail flyer, according to an advertising planner at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"Everyone thinks TV advertising is too expensive. That's not necessarily the case, especially in local markets," said Woody Murray, who was vice president of Primm and Co., a Norfolk, Va., advertising agency, before joining the BSSB in 1991. His responsibilities included buying print and electronic advertising for clients in local, regional, national and some international markets.

While Murray acknowledges the value of print advertising, he dispels the myth that effective advertising in a newspaper or magazine is cheaper.

"When you're advertising in print, your budget is more important to the success of your ad," Murray said. The ad must compete with larger ads. And it must be located in a prominent place where many will see it.

On the other hand, "when you are on radio or television, you have the same opportunity" as the largest business in town to deliver your message in a 30- or 60-second format, he added.

Murray suggests church leaders struggling with limited budgets explore local or cable rates for ROS (run of station or run of schedule) advertising. For a low rate that is negotiable, a customer can buy a designated number of spots that allow the station to air them at times when they have not sold ads at higher rates. On radio stations, the rate may be called BTA (best time available).

"Buying broadcast media is like going to a used car lot," Murray said. "There are no set prices."

He acknowledged some people question the value of ROS advertising because the ads may run late at night or during daytime reruns.

The important question to ask and answer, Murray emphasized, is "who do you want to reach?"

"Your ROS ad may be running late at night next to a sex or psychic hot line program. A Christian message represents an opportunity to convince these people there's a better way to help" than what they are watching or listening to.

"I would like to see this denomination do more in broadcast promotion, devoting time and money to the unsaved," he said.

ROS television advertising rates vary widely with the size of the market, he noted. However, he said in a small market a 30-second ROS spot might cost as little as \$10 and anywhere from \$100 to several hundred dollars in a larger market.

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Time of year is an important consideration in ROS advertising, Murray said. In December, when the airwaves are filled with retail commercials for Christmas shoppers, is one of the poorest times. However, January is an excellent opportunity because many stations have unsold time.

"January is also cold weather in many places and audience levels are up while prices are down," he said.

Rates are lowest in the summer, due primarily to the fact audiences are smaller. However, Murray noted, young people are staying up later, watching television and listening to the radio.

He also noted local radio and television stations often will produce spots free of charge if a church agrees to advertise exclusively or primarily with that station.

"It's good to let them help you. They know what will work on their station," he said.

After deciding what group or groups the church wants to target with advertising, Murray urged churches to gather research to find out what radio or television stations are reaching those groups. Good information about station audiences is available at no charge.

"You can't afford to reach everybody," he emphasized. "Decide and focus on that group." Advertising is more effective if a smaller number of people see or hear an ad several times than if a more scattered approach is used and many people are exposed to only one ad.

Also, he suggested, for maximum impact schedule advertising in a compact time period. Run an ad several times over a period of several days. Then repeat the process.

Murray warns churches about investing money to produce radio or television ads only for public service announcements (free air time).

"Usually you have to adjust your message to fit the requirements" of the stations, he said, noting many markets don't allow references to Jesus in PSAs.

Because most stations get more PSA requests than they can fill, they make their choices based on what they believe is appropriate for their market, the best productions and messages that won't cause controversy.

"If you're relying on public service time to be your only form of promotion, it is pretty risky," Murray said.

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Christian country music
'uniting,' says founder

By Ferrell Foster

Baptist Press
12/27/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Country music, with its heartfelt lyrics and toe-tapping melodies, is booming. Now, the Christian music industry is following that lead, producing country songs about Christ and biblical values.

At the heart of the boom sits Gene Higgins, founder and president of the Christian Country Music Association, which recently held its second annual convention and awards show in Nashville, Tenn.

"There is something different in the air about this Christian country music," said Higgins, the son of a Southern Baptist preacher. "I sense it's a music ... where the 6-year-old kids as well as the 70 and 80-year-olds can sit in the same audience and get as much out of it.

"It's a uniting music, ... a family music," added Higgins, who is a member of Unity Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tenn. (He recently moved to Nashville and is looking for a new church home.)

Todd Chapman, who watches the Christian music scene from a more objective vantage point, also sees something different in Christian country.

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"It's very refreshing to see ... the spirit in what they're doing" in Christian country music, said Chapman, of CCM Communications, which publishes the industry trade journal The CCM Update. "It's almost like a mission movement. They really see this music as a style of music that can reach a lot of people."

Don Evans, program director for radio station KPBC in Dallas, said the music is "a little more ministry oriented" than other contemporary Christian music. "It's just soulful. The pure gospel message just goes right to the marrow of the bone."

There are between 40 and 100 "full-time" Christian country radio stations in the country, CCMA's Higgins said. And there may be more than 1,000 stations that play some CC music.

The number one mainstream country station in Nashville, WSIX, is one of the "part-time" stations. It has a four-hour Sunday morning program featuring Christian country.

"It's been very popular," said Mike Carpenter, WSIX account executive. "It's been welcomed in Nashville," and the station ranks number one or two "anywhere you look" during that time slot.

Since switching to the CC format 2 1/2 years ago, KPBC in Dallas has experienced a favorable response. In Evans' 19 years at the station, "this is the most popular" format, he said. "The churches got behind it," and "our business more than doubled in the first year."

Todd Payne, an executive with Cheyenne Records, said the country sound is "a little easier to get across to the church than say rock."

Chapman concurred. "God-centered ideas ... are much more acceptable within the country (music) culture," he said.

While that culture may be open to talk of God, mainstream country music has a reputation for going heavy on drinking, cheating and other sinning songs. But Payne thinks that, too, may be changing some.

"Country music is not about sleeping and cheating in the '90s," he said. "Country music in the '90s is about friendship and love. ... You're going to have your beer songs, but if you picked up the top ten, ... they're not as negative as before."

"Positive country" is a popular term right now. It refers to the kinds of songs that express traditional values. "It's country music with the trash taken out," said KPBC's Evans, whose station mixes Christian and positive country songs.

And while positive country may be growing, Christian country gives testimony to Jesus Christ.

"These songs have an obvious Christian message," said Mike Smith, a Southern Baptist who represents four Christian country artists.

Sometimes the listener "may have to search for the hidden message a little bit," said Cheyenne's Payne. "But our lyrics are blatantly Christian. ... I think that if you take those lyrics out of your songs you might as well be a (mainstream) country label."

And people are responding to the music, if the response to the Christian Country Music Association is any indication. More than 1,000 people attended the first CCMA convention and awards show in 1993, Higgins said. About 4,000 people attended the second.

"It's like something beyond me is pulling them toward this organization, and it's got to be God," the association president said.

Beginning in late January, The CCM Update will print a Christian country chart listing the top radio singles, said Chapman. That move "legitimizes the format," he added.

Christian country growth is tying into an "exploding marketplace" created by secular country music, said Smith, a member of Grassland Heights Baptist Church in Franklin, Tenn. "We're finding this huge market" of people who are making country their choice of music.

The Christian music industry may be rushing to get on board. "Now there are labels ... all over Nashville, Tenn., looking for Christian country artists," Higgins said.

"The future is getting better and better daily," said Cheyenne's Payne. "The radio stations are having more music to pick from." And, in the long run, that means better quality as more and more artists surface.

CCMA's Higgins has an eye on those up and coming artists. "At one time Conway Twitty was a youth director in a church," Higgins said. And Willie Nelson was a Sunday school teacher. "We have let some good soldiers get away. ... Now with Christian country, hopefully, the Willie Nelson's of the past and the Conway Twitty's will stay at home."

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EDITORS' NOTE: The CCMA was founded in 1992, and now has 700 members. CCMA professional memberships cost \$50 annually. Fan memberships are \$25. For more information, write to CCMA, P.O. Box 100584, Nashville, TN 37224.

Plumber sees new significance to
Lottie Moon Christmas Offering By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press
12/27/94

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--This Christmas season when Alton "Bizzie" Bene put money for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering into his envelope, he knew exactly where some of that money was going, and he only wished he had more to give.

Bene recently returned from Goma, Zaire, after a three-week-long stay at a Southern Baptist refuge camp for Rwandan children. A plumber at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary since 1989, Bene used his skills at the camp to set up an efficient fresh water system.

After cuddling children whose parents were hacked to death in their presence, children who were then mutilated and left to bleed to death alone in the jungle but lived and made it to the refuge camp, Bene has a very tender spot in his heart this year for children affected by the Rwandan civil war.

"I have four children of my own," he said. "It was just so tragic that those children had to go through those situations. I wish there was more I could have done."

Even though the conditions in which he and his other team members worked were both rugged and pathetic, "I would go back in a heartbeat if I could," Bene said.

"Our missionaries are on the front lines out there," he said in reference to Southern Baptist work with thousands of refugees from the Rwandan civil war crisis.

"My experience working first-hand with those missionaries showed me that our tithes and offerings, our Cooperative Program dollars, are being very well spent. Our Cooperative Program system really does work."

Refugees poured out of Rwanda and into neighboring Zaire this past spring to escape horrendous massacres from rival tribe members. Many Christians were killed for refusing to participate in the massacres. Southern Baptist missionaries working in Rwanda were evacuated then some went back to Zaire to help with the refugee crisis. Now at least 50 camps, some with as many as 500,000 people, have been established by the efforts of many different countries and agencies.

Southern Baptists have one camp specifically for children whose parents are either lost or dead. Rated "number one" by U.N. officials, this camp has had help from volunteer teams like Bene's, organized by the SBC Brotherhood Commission, for the past several months. Bene's team was the fourth to go, followed by two more teams.

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During his three-week stay, Bene used all of his plumbing skills to construct a water tower and shower for the missionary compound, using materials leftover from Israeli relief efforts. While he also was busy with a water purification system and basically keeping water coming into the compound, other team members finished construction of swing sets begun by team three. They also constructed six large tents to make schoolrooms.

"I was really impressed with the camp," Bene said. "It is very efficiently run. The children cared for in the Southern Baptist camp were running and playing and laughing, and soon they'll begin classes. But in the other camps we visited, the children weren't doing anything."

The missionaries have divided the children by age into groups of ten, each assigned to a tent with a "mother." Men are in charge of the teenage boys; teenage girls assist the older women with the young children. When Bene left, the camp had nearly 350 children.

Much of the food for the children comes from UNICEF. Children with major medical problems are taken to the French camp where the "Doctors Without Borders" treat them.

The SBC's Brotherhood Commission is continuing to collect clothes, shoes and toys to send to the children. Bene said the missionaries share whatever surplus they have with the other camps.

"This situation is going to take a lot of prayer and whatever else God brings to our attention for us to do," Bene said.

He personally became aware of what he could do when a member of his church, Gentilly Baptist in New Orleans, told him about it. "I told him if the Lord worked it out, I would go," Bene said. The next thing he knew, his church had raised all the funds he needed to make the trip.

"There is a lot of work left to be done," he said. "It is hard work, both emotionally and physically, but it is rewarding work. Our missionaries are 100-percent committed and you see it in their lives. I am really proud to be a Southern Baptist."

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(BP) photos available on request from NOBTS office of public relations.

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