

(BP)

-- BAPTIST PRESS
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 71173,316

January 18, 1995

95-9

JAPAN--Missionaries seek opportunities to minister after Japan quake.
ATLANTA--Navy chief seeks chaplains who cooperate without compromise.
TENNESSEE--Baptist college enrollment up for 13th consecutive year.
GEORGIA--Retired Catholic grocer now Baptist soul-winner.
GEORGIA--Former fire fighter still in life-saving business.
ATLANTA--Home mission study available in Spanish.
NEW ORLEANS--Forget practical goals; he looks for miracles.
OKLAHOMA CITY--Baseball strike's issues range from greed to kids' role models.

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee**

**Missionaries seek opportunities
to minister after Japan quake**

By Mark Kelly

**Baptist Press
1/18/95**

KOBE, Japan (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries are finding opportunities to minister in the aftermath of Japan's deadliest earthquake in 47 years.

The Jan. 17 earthquake rocked Awaji island, 20 miles from the major port city of Kobe in western Japan. The quake, which registered 7.2 on the Richter scale, shattered Kobe and caused significant damage in nearby Osaka.

In the hours immediately following the earthquake, missionaries Mike Brooks and Danny Hinson joined rescue crews digging survivors out of the rubble and taking them to hospitals, reported Tokyo-based missionary Linda Whitworth in a telephone interview.

Meanwhile, missionaries Ronald and Cynthia Reynolds translated for international relief teams at Kobe's Canadian Academy, a large school for children of missionaries and other foreigners, where up to 10,000 people have been evacuated from the devastated city center.

Missionaries also are exploring ways to assist as a massive relief effort gears up in the devastated city of 1.5 million located 280 miles west of Tokyo. Initial discussions have centered around water purification, medical assistance and possible establishment of a distribution center at Osaka for food, water and other supplies from military and relief organizations.

All missionaries of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board are safe and accounted for, Whitworth said. The Foreign Mission Board has 182 missionaries assigned to Japan and 14 families assigned to the Kobe-Osaka-Kyoto area affected by the quake. Earlier reports that an unidentified missionary suffered a broken leg proved untrue.

While mission properties sustained some damage, all were "still standing," Whitworth said.

All Japanese Baptist churches also are intact, although two reportedly sustained some damage, she said. Missionary Charles Barham, pastor of an English-language church in Kobe, reportedly was searching for missing church members whose homes had collapsed during the quake.

The fires that raged through Kobe for nearly 24 hours are now under control, but the death toll has climbed past 2,000 and a million homes are without electricity.

--more--

The Reynoldses, who were told it was unsafe to return to their home, reported they and the other people in the immediate area still lacked clean water Jan. 18.

Government officials estimate the cost of repairs between \$10 billion and \$20 billion. More than 700 buildings were destroyed, primarily in the city center. More than 600 aftershocks have rattled the city, and seismologists expect more shocks, some perhaps as strong as the original quake itself.

--30--

The following missionaries and family members are in the quake area:

- David and Jamea Crum, Mexico, Mo., and Springfield, Mo., respectively.
- Bob and Barbara Dilks, Warner Robins, Ga., and Monroeville, Ala., respectively.
- Barry and Tammy Walker, Jonesboro, Ark., and Riverside, Calif., respectively.
- Joni Hardy, San Antonio, Texas.
- Sara Moffett, Austin, Texas.
- Danny and Janice Hinson, Livingston, La., and Titusville, Fla., respectively.
- Mike and Janet Brooks, Atlanta and Decatur, Ga., respectively.
- Cindy Brown, Troy, Mo.
- Charles and Mary Barham, Longview, Texas, and Houston, respectively.
- Ron and Cynthia Reynolds, Ft. Pierce, Fla.
- Wesley Johnson, son of David and Robin Johnson, Renton, Wash., and Columbus, Miss., respectively.
- Mark Deckert, son of Wayne and Kay Deckert, Richmond, Calif., and Salinas, Calif., respectively.
- Bryna Kennedy, daughter of Thomas and Carol Kennedy, Haynesville, La., and Monroe, La., respectively.
- Scott Sherer and Mandy Sherer, children of Robert and Claudia Sherer, St. Louis, Mo.
- John and Nancy Norton, Birmingham, Ala., and Miami Springs, Fla., respectively.
- Hank and Linda Lee, Tunica, Miss., and Hazlehurst, Miss., respectively.
- Phillip and Ginger Hillery, Madison, N.J.
- Mary Swedenburg, Hueytown, Ala.

--30--

Navy chief seeks chaplains who cooperate without compromise

By Sarah Zimmerman

**Baptist Press
1/18/95**

ATLANTA (BP)--Despite religious plurality among military personnel, "We don't need generic chaplains," the Navy's chief of chaplains said.

While visiting the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's chaplaincy division Jan. 17, Rear Adm. Donald Muchow said chaplains must represent their faith with conviction and still meet the religious needs of people with other beliefs.

"It's cooperation without compromise. It's part of the richness," said Muchow, a member of the Missouri Synod Lutheran denomination.

Currently, 249 faith groups -- from evangelical Christian denominations to groups such as Mormons and Buddhists -- endorse chaplains for military service, Muchow said. After World War I, five faith groups endorsed military chaplains, and 17 years ago 100 faith groups endorsed chaplains.

While religious plurality increases, the number of personnel who adhere to no faith group also increases, Muchow said. He said he expects chaplains to be missionaries to those people.

One of Muchow's responsibilities is to recruit military chaplains, he said, and this year his goal is 100 new chaplains.

--more--

But the chaplains must come from a diversity of religious backgrounds, Muchow said. "We want the chaplain corps to reflect the face of the armed services."

For example, an aircraft carrier has a crew of about 6,000, including four chaplains, Muchow said. Ideally, the chaplains would include one woman, one Roman Catholic, one person from a Protestant liturgical denomination and one person from a free church or non-liturgical Protestant faith.

More women and more ethnic chaplains are needed, Muchow said, but the main three characteristics he looks for in chaplains are:

1) Spirituality -- "Men and women who act out of the heart of God."

2) Competent staff officers -- "People who know how to use the system to get needs of people met. People who can be a good shipmate even to those they disagree with."

3) Team builders -- "That's different from a team player. A team builder makes a difference, he makes things happen."

More information on chaplaincy service is available from Lew Dawson, associate to the director of the Home Mission Board's chaplaincy division, (404) 898-7423.

--30--

**Baptist college enrollment
up for 13th consecutive year**

By Tim Fields

**Baptist Press
1/18/95**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Enrollment at the 51 Southern Baptist-related colleges and universities showed an overall increase for the fall semester for the 13th consecutive year, according to figures released to the Southern Baptist Education Commission.

Statistics for the 1994 fall semester show 113,065 students attended the 51 Southern Baptist colleges and universities, a 2.4 percent increase over the 1993 total of 110,409 at the 51 institutions.

Schools included in the enrollment report are all members of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools. Not included in the total are enrollment figures from Wake Forest University and University of Richmond. Both schools failed to renew their membership in the association for 1995.

The enrollment figures include both full- and part-time students in college credit courses but do not include students enrolled in non-credit courses. Enrollment statistics were released to the commission by each school.

A compilation of the figures shows that 34 of the 51 colleges and universities had an increase in enrollment from fall 1993 to fall 1994.

Campbell University, Buies Creek, N.C., showed the largest numerical increase from fall 1993 to fall 1994 with 599 additional students, followed by Averett College, Danville, Va., 399. Wayland Baptist University, Plainview, Texas, and University of Mobile (Ala.) both had 390 additional students.

University of Mobile had the largest percentage increase with 17.4 percent, followed by Shorter College, Rome Ga., with 17.2 percent; Averett College, 16.5 percent; and North Greenville College, Tigerville, S.C., 16 percent. The University of Mobile's increase includes students in their Latin American branch campus in Marcos, Nicaragua.

"The fact that nearly three-fourths of the colleges and universities experienced growth in enrollment over the previous year demonstrates the continued confidence that Southern Baptists have in their colleges and universities," said Stephen P. Carleton, executive director of the Education Commission.

"The faculty members and administrators of these institutions have worked diligently to strengthen the academic programs, to reach non-traditional students, and to provide innovative programs and opportunities for students that often stretch around the globe while applying their Christian faith to their particular academic disciplines. Thirteen years of continual growth is a testimony to the hard work of professors, administrators, staff, trustees and students," Carleton said.

--more--

"The mission purpose of Southern Baptist-related educational institutions is to equally emphasize personal faith and professional competency, and their success in this task is evident," he said.

Baylor University, Waco, Texas, remains the largest Southern Baptist-related university in the nation with 12,240 students, followed by Mercer University, Macon, Ga., with 6,823 students and Campbell University with 6,646 students.

Some universities have reached or surpassed their established enrollment and are limiting the number of incoming students through admissions ceilings and/or higher standards.

Following are the 1994 fall enrollment figures and the percentage of increase or decrease from fall 1993 to fall 1994 (rounded to the nearest tenth of 1 percent) at the 51 Southern Baptist-related colleges and universities by state:

ALABAMA -- Judson College, 320, down 2.1 percent; University of Mobile, 1,876, up 10.9 percent; Samford University, 4,443, up 2.3 percent.

ARIZONA -- Grand Canyon University, 1,963, up 12.4 percent.

ARKANSAS -- Ouachita Baptist University, 1,371, up 5.8 percent; Williams Baptist College, 601, down 13 percent.

CALIFORNIA -- California Baptist College, 870, up 12.4 percent.

FLORIDA -- Florida Baptist Theological College, 497, down .2 percent; Palm Beach Atlantic College, 1,867, up 13.6 percent; Stetson University, 2,955, down 3.7 percent.

GEORGIA -- Brewton-Parker College, 2,205, up 11.7 percent; Mercer University, 6,729, up 6.0 percent; Shorter College, 1,243, up 43.7 percent; Truett-McConnell College, 2,063, up 9.9 percent.

KENTUCKY -- Campbellsville College, 1,157, up 11.1 percent; Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 132, down 13.2 percent; Cumberland College, 1,518, up 1.3 percent; Georgetown College, 1,382, down 6.4 percent.

LOUISIANA -- Louisiana College, 1,070, up 4.3 percent;

MISSISSIPPI -- Blue Mountain College, 390, down 1.5 percent; Mississippi College, 3,781, up 4 percent; William Carey College, 2,195, up 8 percent.

MISSOURI -- Hannibal-LaGrange College, 898, up .7 percent; Missouri Baptist College, 1,812, up 26.8 percent; Southwest Baptist University, 3,136, up 1.6 percent; William Jewell College, 1,785, down 5.1 percent;

NORTH CAROLINA -- Campbell University, 6,047, up 4.2 percent; Chowan College, 802, up 25.5 percent; Gardner-Webb University, 2,369, up 13.9 percent; Mars Hill College, 1,319, down 2.6 percent; Meredith College, 2,345, up 2.4 percent; Wingate College, 1,539, up 2.9 percent.

OKLAHOMA -- Oklahoma Baptist University, 2,432, up 7.6 percent.

SOUTH CAROLINA -- Anderson College, 1,131, down 3.5 percent; Charleston Southern University, 2,485, down .2 percent; Furman University, 3,179, down 2.8 percent; North Greenville College, 598, up 25.6 percent.

TENNESSEE -- Belmont University, 2,871, up .2 percent; Carson-Newman College, 2,126, up 5.1 percent; Union University, 2,339, up .1 percent.

TEXAS -- Baylor University, 12,194, up .1 percent; Dallas Baptist University, 2,803, up 3.4 percent; East Texas Baptist University, 1,253, up 4.1 percent; Hardin-Simmons University, 1,974, up 1.2 percent; Houston Baptist University, 2,203, up .1 percent; Howard Payne University, 1,455, up 12.5 percent; University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, 2,117, up 11.2 percent; Wayland Baptist University, 3,048, up 13.8 percent.

VIRGINIA -- Averett College, 2,024, up 21 percent; Bluefield College, 782, up 10.6 percent; Virginia Intermont College, 715, up 10.5 percent.

**Witness training yields
professions of faith**

By Sarah Zimmerman

TOLEDO, Ohio (BP)--Long before the Jan. 9 start of Southern Baptists' first simultaneous witnessing effort, East Toledo Baptist Church experienced the benefit of focusing on evangelism.

Matt Culbertson, assistant evangelism director for Ohio Southern Baptists, led a witnessing training seminar for the church's youth last fall. He explained Christians can witness by sharing their personal testimonies, and he instructed the youth to write about their conversions when they became Christians.

Two girls realized they could not write their testimonies because they were not Christians. They made professions of faith that day, then shared Christ with two friends who became Christians.

"We're already reaping great dividends from 'Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now,'" said pastor James Rich. "We couldn't ask for anything more positive."

"Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" is the theme of the effort for Christians to share their faith once a day for the 60 days between Jan. 9 and March 9. The personal evangelism thrust will be followed by simultaneous revivals.

Of 200 people attending East Toledo's worship service Jan. 8, about one-third agreed to participate in the personal witnessing plan, Rich said. Other people attending the service agreed to support the participants in prayer.

One member of the church staff had five opportunities to share Christ the day after agreeing to participate in "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now," Rich said.

One key to the success of "Here's Hope" will be accountability, Rich said. Participants are asked to form small groups with team leaders who call members weekly to encourage them.

--30--

**Retired Catholic grocer
now Baptist soul-winner**

By Dwayne Hastings

**Baptist Press
1/18/95**

FAYETTEVILLE, Ga. (BP)--Richard Dzio is living proof there is no retirement age when it comes to sharing the gospel. The 73-year-old Dzio -- now a staff member at New Hope Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ga. -- remains just as excited telling people about Jesus now as he was when he accepted the Lord 10 years ago.

His zeal for the Lord was so intense Dzio couldn't stay away from church and was soon hired as a maintenance man there.

Yet it wasn't long before pastor Ike Reighard realized Dzio was in the right place -- but with the wrong assignment.

"When Richie came to work on our maintenance staff, we noticed anytime someone came on church property Richie would begin witnessing to them," Reighard said. "I quickly saw he needed to be out of maintenance and into evangelism. We could find other maintenance people, but it's not as easy to find persons who have such a strong desire to share the gospel."

Retired after 43 years in the grocery profession in Lakewood, N.J., Dzio is now assistant outreach minister at New Hope, giving his full energies to the work.

A Roman Catholic most of his life, Dzio always felt something was missing: "I was more than just a pew warmer in the Catholic church; I was a pillar of that church. Yet I never learned the Bible. People would come to my door and want to talk to me about Jesus, but I felt my life was right with God."

He moved to Fayetteville with his wife soon after retirement to be near their daughter whose husband had just died. "I thought I had everything set when I retired. Our home was paid for; we were near our friends; I had a chance to pick up some part-time work. We gave up all that, leaving behind everything we knew and trusted, and came to a new environment."

--more--

A prospect card brought two deacons from New Hope to Dzio's door in December 1984 -- a visit that would eventually propel him to the realization he was hopelessly lost.

"I was sitting in my living room with my grandchildren," Dzio recounted, "and my attention was drawn to a little nativity scene we had on the shelf. I looked at that little Christ babe in the manger and, strange as it seems, I began to think how much he had done for me and how little I had done for him."

At almost that very moment a knock came on his door. It was the pair from New Hope who proceeded to share the plan of salvation. "It all began to come together. I realized what I needed to do," Dzio said. "I accepted Christ and my wife was saved the following day."

Dzio is not bashful about his faith, saying he takes any opportunity he can to share the gospel. "I was finished working at my job -- now God has a job for me right here. My heart is burdened for people because I was lost myself for so many years. The fact God saved me simply humbles me.

"I accepted the Lord when I was in my mid-60s. It was a great happening for me. From that moment on I began to do things I never would have done before, like knocking on doors and talking to strangers about spiritual things," Dzio said.

Reighard said Dzio was one of those unusual people who was so excited about his salvation experience he immediately went out and starting winning other people to the Lord. Noting it is a rare week when Dzio does not lead someone to the Lord, Reighard added, "Richie proves the fact that if you articulate your faith, you can win people to Christ no matter where you are, who you are or what age you are."

Dzio said he has heard most of the reasons for rejecting God's gift of salvation -- from his own mouth: "I find it easy to talk to people of all ages because I have been through most all ages. I knew about Christ, but went my own way. These people can't give me any excuses I haven't already used myself."

While Dzio is reluctant to talk numbers, he estimated 1994 brought 100 conversions from his witnessing. Yet his most difficult prospect since his own salvation was someone near to his heart -- his 50-year-old son.

"My son was a good boy who went to parochial school. After he married he drifted away from anything to do with God, developing a real hatred for anything to do with religion. His family and business life began to deteriorate," Dzio said.

With Dzio's wife diagnosed with terminal cancer, his son came to Georgia to visit his parents. A chance meeting at a grocery store with a member of New Hope Baptist brought an invitation to attend church which Dzio's son surprisingly accepted.

Reighard remarked Dzio's son had come down from his home in New Jersey to "find out what this crazy cult was doing to his father." Yet after the morning service Dzio noticed his son in a very contemplative mood.

"We drove home and pulling into the driveway he said to me, 'Dad, let's walk the dog.'" Dzio knew something serious was on his son's mind: "He hated the dog. He never walked him a day in his life. So we walked and talked and finally I asked him, 'Do you really want the Lord in your life?' He said yes and so right there, walking the dog, he prayed and accepted Christ."

Dzio said his son is a different man today. His wife and daughters accepted Christ and he is witnessing to people in his office. "The results are fantastic," Dzio added. "He might be my son, but what he got, he got from Christ. He didn't get it from me."

Dzio's reputation as a soul-winner at church has even spilled over into his neighborhood. People constantly give Dzio names of friends and relatives to visit. He said the thrill he received in accepting Christ as Savior is multiplied each time he sees another person won to the Lord.

"Sitting in church on Sunday morning, I sometimes look into the choir and see the different people I have spoken to and that the Holy Spirit has led to the Lord. It's those folks -- who are growing, becoming Sunday school teachers, deacons and church leaders -- that gives me the enthusiasm to go out and do more for Jesus," Dzio said.

"Everybody can witness for Christ. You don't have to complete a certain evangelism program or memorize a bunch of lines. And your age doesn't matter," stated Dzio matter-of-factly. "If somebody wants to know Christ, you just need to be available to share the good news with them."

--30--

Former fire fighter still
in life-saving business

By Dwayne Hastings

Baptist Press
1/18/95

FAYETTEVILLE, Ga. (BP)--A volunteer fireman in his hometown of Lakewood, N.J., Richard Dzio always has been keen on saving lives. Yet it was not until the Lord led him to Fayetteville, Ga., that he fully understood the techniques of eternal life saving.

Saved in his mid-60s, Dzio has been busy since then -- day and night -- as assistant outreach minister at New Hope Baptist Church, Fayetteville. "I found the Lord a lot later than most people, but I'm so very appreciative of the work God has done in my life," said Dzio, a retired grocer.

Dzio had heard the gospel presented many times before and each time convinced himself he didn't need what was being offered. He recalled the offers of salvation as being too difficult to understand, so Dzio makes his witnessing straightforward and to the point.

"I whittled it down so I just present the gospel as a matter of course. I change the presentation to fit the person I am sharing with, but I keep the central message the same -- Jesus is the answer. All a lost person has to know is how they can be saved."

Saying the Lord has convinced him not only to keep the message simple, but also to be available to people, Dzio said that means being available seven days a week, 24 hours a day and not just on the church's visitation night. And Dzio said while his witness may be rebuffed at times, he is persistent.

After six years of prayer and sharing, he tells of a young lady who accepted Christ late last year. "She was baptized New Year's Day with her daughter who had also come to the Lord," said Dzio, who noted just prior to her baptism, her husband, who had repeatedly said he was fine spiritually, surrendered to the Holy Spirit's urging and was baptized that evening along with his family.

Dzio, ever the soul-winner, did not even get to see the baptisms; he was out of the sanctuary counseling someone who had responded during the service.

The 73-year-old Dzio pursues lost people just as he once responded to fire alarms: "I always wanted to be on the cutting edge, the first one into the fire." Recalling one house fire where he was in the right place at the right time, Dzio raced into the burning structure in an attempt to save it.

"I passed the mother with her children out on the sidewalk and I remember the fear that was in their eyes. We knocked the fire down quickly and as I came out of the house I glanced at the mother's face. And what had been shock was now a look that said, 'Thank you.'" Pausing, Dzio said, "There came a day when I saw that look again. It graced the face of the first person I led to the Lord."

--30--

Home mission study
available in Spanish

By David Winfrey

ATLANTA (BP)--For the first time, the annual adult home mission study is available in Spanish this year.

The translation resulted from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's cooperation with Woman's Missionary Union, said Bob Sena, HMB assistant director of language church extension.

Woman's Missionary Union has been influential in promoting missions awareness among Hispanics and lobbying for educational materials in Spanish, he added.

The board's language church extension division estimates Southern Baptists had 3,487 Hispanic congregations in 1993, the latest statistics available. The missions study is the first from either the Home or Foreign Mission boards to be printed in a language other than English.

"Hispanic Baptist work has been around for 115 years," said Bob Sena, HMB assistant director of language church extension. "About 1,500 congregations are very much aware of Baptist polity and Baptist programs."

The board will produce Spanish translations of the study for two years before evaluating whether sales are adequate to continue, said David Porter, associate director of marketing for the Home Mission Board.

Sena said leaders will be working to educate leaders that the study is available. "I think by next year we're going to be shocked by how many studies Hispanic churches buy."

The 1995 study, titled "All Things to All People," profiles missionaries and pastors who are reaching the unchurched through holistic evangelism, which combines ministry and evangelism to meet people's needs while sharing the gospel.

The Spanish home mission study can be ordered from HMB Customer Services at 1-800-634-2462.

--30--

Forget practical goals;
he looks for miracles

By G. Lacy Thompson

Baptist Press
1/18/95

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--No one can accuse Fred Dyess of being tentative when it comes to ministry.

Shortly after the former Louisiana Baptist pastor became director of missions for the New Orleans area, he called a meeting of the associational missions committee.

He asked the committee to adopt a goal of starting 10 new works in the association every year for the next 10 years. It was something the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans never had done.

One committee member realized this. He asked Dyess the obvious question, "Can we do that?"

Dyess offered a reply: "No, we can't do that."

The man followed up with another obvious question. "Is this a practical goal?"

Dyess was honest. "No, it isn't a practical goal to start 10 new works a year."

The committee member followed the logical sequence. "Why then are you asking us to set this goal?" he asked.

"Because I want us to do something so big that only God can do it," Dyess said.

The committee did -- and God has been at work in helping New Orleans Baptists reach their goal ever since.

--more--

"God has been blessing the churches, missions and ministries in the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans," noted Dyess, honored last year as "Director of Missions of the Year" for metropolitan associations in the western United States by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"What has happened has been a miracle from God taking place in the Big Easy, noted for its partying lifestyle and where the murder rate continues to soar."

At the same time, however, the number of new works started by New Orleans Baptists is on the rise as well. Ten new works were started in both the 1991 and 1992 church years, the first two years of the 10-year emphasis. In 1993, 12 new works were started; in 1994, 16.

"That makes a total of 48 new works in four years and only God could have done this," Dyess emphasized.

In doing it, however, God chose to use a number of hard-working New Orleans Baptists, beginning with Dyess, who came to the area from the pastorate four years ago. At the time, the association totaled 63 churches and 36 missions. It now has 65 churches and more than 70 missions.

From the outset, his emphasis has fallen on evangelism and missions. Again and again, he has called on Baptists in the area to remain focused on needs around them and to set aside any division that might arise.

"God has helped me to stay focused, concentrating on what is really important rather than letting Satan get us sidetracked. ... Our pastors and lay leaders are encouraged to stay focused on missions and evangelism," he said.

The result has been tremendous unity of purpose, said Dyess, who time and again credits others for the successes that have been seen in New Orleans. "The unity on the part of the churches and workers has been a key factor in all this. That really would have to go at the top of the list. The Lord doesn't bless if you're divided. ...

"We have just had tremendous unity for evangelism and missions. If we didn't have that, it would kill what we're trying to do."

In addition, the association has been aided with the work of a wonderful staff, Dyess said. The MegaFocus Cities effort by the Home Mission Board has been a help. State convention workers have provided invaluable assistance. And the state denomination's VISION 2000 emphasis has focused much attention and resources on the New Orleans efforts. One of the major goals of the VISION 2000 plan is to strengthen the work in New Orleans.

The impact of all those factors is beginning to be seen. In the 1993 church year, for example, churches and missions in the association:

- baptized 1,889 people, the largest number of baptisms in 32 years and the second highest in associational history. The total was a 68 percent increase from 1990.

- reported a total of 31,598 resident members, the largest total in association history. The figure represents an increase of more than 2,200 (8 percent) in three years.

- reported 25,102 people enrolled in Sunday school, an increase of almost 4,000 (18 percent) from 1990.

The key to the upswing has been the church starts, Dyess said. "About 250 people per year are being saved and baptized as a result of the new works."

In addition, when churches began sponsoring missions and new works, God began to bless the mother congregations as well, Dyess said. "They've been reaching more people as a result as well," he noted.

Even with such progress, workers face a formidable task in New Orleans. The downsizing of the oil industry continues to play havoc in the area. In addition, Baptists represent only about 3 percent of the area population, Dyess noted. In a sense, Baptists still are working to carve out an identity in the metropolitan area.

But even that has begun to turn around. In recent months, the New Orleans Times-Picayune newspaper has featured articles on Baptist work, including one on the front page.

However, Dyess knows the success of New Orleans Baptists thus far is not enough. He also knows the 10-year goal cannot be met without help.

Dyess urges other Louisiana Baptist churches to consider mission and volunteer work trips to New Orleans. He also encourages them to consider serving as a co-sponsoring church for a new mission in the area.

And he cites the need for Louisiana Baptists to continue to give through the current Georgia Barrette Offering for State Missions, which channels a lot of money into the New Orleans area for new work.

And even when Baptists in the area reach the year 2000, which represents the end of the 10-year church-starting emphasis, there will be plenty of work to do, Dyess said. By continuing to average 10 new starts a year, however, the number of Louisiana Baptist congregations in New Orleans will have doubled by that time.

"Even that is just a start," Dyess said. "We haven't scratched the surface yet. It's been a miracle from the Lord what has been done. But we need a lot more miracles."

Come what may, do not expect Dyess to be tentative about setting his sights on more.

--30--

Baseball strike's issues range
from greed to kids' role models By Jerry Pierce

Baptist Press
1/18/95

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--David Winfrey and Mike Brumley are Southern Baptists who love the game of baseball.

To them it's a game -- nothing more.

The same goes for baseball enthusiasts Ray Yamaoka, David Smith and Curtis Peck.

"It's a little boys' game that men play," Brumley said.

However, when the topic turns to the Major League strike, Winfrey and Brumley have different perspectives.

Winfrey, a writer for the Home Mission Board, has held Atlanta Braves season tickets since moving to Georgia in 1992. "There's plenty of blame to go around," Winfrey said of the strike. "Either the owners are lousy businessmen or they are liars."

However, his patience with the players "has sort of worn thin," he said.

An All-Star catcher in 1964 with the Washington Senators, Brumley is more sympathetic to the striking players. His son, Mike Jr., is one of them -- an infielder for the Florida Marlins.

Now pastor of Chickasaw Trails Baptist Church near Davis, Okla., Brumley said the players are striking not only for themselves but for the athletes who will follow them.

Citing Baltimore's Cal Ripkin, who risks losing the chance to break Lou Gehrig's games-played streak if replacement players start the season, Brumley said: "It's hard to understand how a guy like that would strike. He's striking for Roger Clemens Jr. He's doing it for the guys who are rookies, for the guys who are coming up. He's not striking on his own behalf."

Peck, news editor-sports at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, said baseball's evolution from mere game to big business has dampened its charm.

"Perhaps the biggest message that I see being sent out is that the fans and the kids aren't really that important, that the business comes first," said Peck, a former Southern Baptist who now attends St. Louis' Central Presbyterian Church.

Gone are the days when a player stayed with the same club for an entire career, Peck said.

"Even if a player is highly favored, if he's making too much money, he's gone ... I think it tells kids in part, 'Don't get too attached to these guys.' The bottom line is the end-all."

Peck said greed is a message that comes across "loud and clear."

--more--

"Not just from the owners' standpoint, but from the players, too," he said.

Smith, a former sports writer with the Arkansas Gazette and a member of First Baptist Church, Little Rock, said the "greed factor" is very strong.

Many players are making "a million and a half a year" and expect to be paid that even during a mediocre season, he said.

"I understand that they want to make as much as they can. But it's not a good message to kids. Kids just want to play baseball."

However, Brumley said it's hypocritical to judge the players for trying to improve their situation.

"Would anybody not be willing to make the most that they possibly could?"

Brumley said he earned only \$15,000 during the 1964 season. Of the men with whom he played, he said very few are financially secure from baseball.

Many have worked menial jobs to survive, he said.

Yamaoka, also a Braves fan and a member of Monument Heights Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., said the players set poor examples for kids more by breaking contracts than by striking.

"To me, that sends a worse message and that has a longer negative impact on kids than the strike does," Yamaoka said.

"The fact that they want more money is not necessarily good, but I don't think that's the big message that comes across to children," he said. "They will eventually forget the strike."

Brumley said he believes players have a responsibility to be good role models, "beginning with the family first and then to the community."

However, he said the strike is the "American way" of working out differences without fighting.

He added: "I think influence comes more from the home and from peers than from owners and players."

Winfrey said the strike shows the owners' and players' unwillingness to "compromise or to work for the better interests of the game."

"I think (kids) are seeing the worst side and how greed can ruin something that's supposed to be fun," Winfrey said.

Peck said he believes society has given organized sports, and athletes, undeserved stature.

"We the media are the chief culprits, just starting, almost anymore, in grade school. These kids who are standout athletes are just lionized and acclaimed so that they come to expect it."

Smith agreed: "The way kids are raised these days, the most popular kids are the stars on the baseball or football teams instead of the kid who's the head of the Bible study class or the good students."

President Clinton's publicly voiced concern over the strike and former President Jimmy Carter's offer to intervene "are two graphic illustrations of how out of hand things have gotten," Peck said.

"The president, as far as I'm concerned, should be saying, 'You guys settle this. I've got better things to do.'"

Congress has introduced legislation in both houses that would remove baseball's anti-trust exemption and, on Jan. 11, Labor Secretary Robert Reich met with interim Commissioner Bud Selig and several owners to discuss the strike. Selig also met with several high-ranking congressmen.

"I don't think it's so important that government must step in," Yamaoka said. "On the other hand, because it does impact small business people, I don't know if there's an obligation on government's part to do something."

Yamaoka said small businesses that depend on baseball for their livelihood don't have a voice.

"Later on, when the game starts again, they're not going to have any more money or better benefits," he said. "Those are the people I feel sorry for."

Brumley said baseball isn't as fun for the players as it was when he played.

"We didn't take it as seriously as they do today. Of course, we didn't have lifetime security when we played like some of the players do now."

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, TN 37234

F
I
R
S
T

C
L
A
S
S

Southern Baptist Library
and Archives