

# (BP)

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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 8, 1995

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
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BSSB trustees receive  
positive financial report

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
2/8/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--After a 1993-94 loss of \$8.2 million, the Baptist Sunday School Board has experienced a successful first quarter ahead of budgeted income, trustees learned during their Feb. 6-7 meeting, where they approved a new upper management structure designed to improve budget management.

Citing resources such as Sunday school literature, "Experiencing God" and "The Mind of Christ," President James T. Draper Jr. said the board must "provide materials to point individuals to the only food that satisfies spiritual hunger for eternity." Meeting the needs of individuals and churches through development of these kinds of materials, along with stronger financial controls, has contributed to a positive report, he indicated.

Actual revenue of \$59,073,000, was \$687,000 above the revised budget of \$58,386,000 for the first quarter, which began in October 1994. Expenses of \$56,707,000 were \$2,215,000 below budget. Funds provided from operations (FPO), which is revenue after costs and expenses, stood at \$1,575,000, compared with a budgeted negative \$1,349,000.

Trustees approved a revised 1994-95 operating budget of \$243,403,073, and FPO of \$100,000 or .04 percent of total revenue. They also approved a revised fixed asset budget of \$9,314,010.

Trustees approved, effective immediately, a newly created position of executive vice president and chief operating officer and elected Ted Warren, vice president for business and finance, to the post. He will continue serving as interim vice president of the renamed finance and business services group until a vice president is elected to the position.

In his new role, Warren supervises all vice presidents and the executive director of corporate affairs and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the board.

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In a related matter, trustees also authorized dividing trade publishing (Broadman & Holman Publishers) and retail markets (Baptist Book Stores and direct marketing), with each reporting to a vice president. Chuck Wilson, who has been responsible for both areas, was elected vice president of the trade publishing group. Mark Scott, director of the retail division, is serving as interim vice president for retail markets until a vice president is elected.

Draper announced Nov. 18 of last year he would recommend the structure and personnel changes to trustees at their February meeting but said he was implementing them on an interim basis at that time, pending trustee approval. He said he was creating the position and taking other steps to improve budget management in light of 1993-94 financial results.

Corrective actions are in progress as the board works toward an improved financial position for the years ahead, Warren reported to trustees.

Among actions implemented for the current fiscal year are:

- reworking the 94-95 budget, with realistic, conservative goals, expense reductions and a commitment to effective management.

- monthly and quarterly accountability meetings.

- cost control and reductions, using component work groups, establishing authority levels, emphasizing purchasing policies and procedures and using a communication plan.

- financial and operating information with improved accuracy, supplemental reports and short-term fixes.

- selection of a new systems vendor.

Gerald Shields, information systems department director, presented information on implementing the Vista Publishing System as the recommended solution to current board systems, many which are more than 20 years old and "nonresponsive and incapable of supporting a changing business environment."

The project, which will replace 25 existing mainframe business systems, will include adding an interactive voice response system enabling churches and individuals to place orders and check on the status of orders by telephone. Requiring 480 employee months of labor and approximately \$4.5 million in cost over two budget years, Shields said the system, expected to be operational by July 1, 1996, will save conservatively \$2.3 million annually.

Draper listed challenges he sees for the board.

First, the board must "get our financial house in order, giving our best efforts to operate on a cash, break-even basis." Referencing the positive financial report, he added, "we understand that one quarter does not a year make. We are committed to continued efforts."

Also, the board must fine-tune the organization and structure for best results. Draper said he and Warren now make decisions about board operations after input from the executive management group which includes the vice presidents and executive director for corporate affairs.

To effectively serve churches, he said, "we must provide the very best in resources to assist in Great Commission ministry."

In another matter, a charter amendment that will result in the downsizing of the board of trustees from its current 93 members to about 58 members by the year 2000 was approved. The amendment also must be approved by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee later this month and by messengers to the 1995 Southern Baptist Convention in June in Atlanta. Downsizing will be accomplished by attrition with all current trustees allowed to complete their terms of service.

Currently, states with 20,000 members are eligible to have one trustee of the BSSB and one additional trustee for each 250,000 members. As amended, the requirement for additional trustees would be increased to 500,000 members.

"This is in keeping with actions being taken by other agencies of the convention," Draper told trustees. "Part of the benefit is financial. More importantly, a smaller board enables each trustee to give more input and exercise more influence."

Trustees also reduced the board's executive committee from 21 members to seven, including the three trustee officers and chairmen of four standing program committees.

Trustees also authorized the board's office of corporate affairs to develop a comprehensive plan to raise capital dollars for Glorieta and Ridgecrest conference centers in New Mexico and North Carolina, respectively. The plan is expected to be completed by June for trustee consideration. Approval of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee also would be required to conduct the campaign to improve facilities at Glorieta and Ridgecrest.

In other actions, trustees:

-- approved a 4 percent conference center rate increase for 1997-98.

-- responded to a referral motion from the Southern Baptist Convention by recommending a liaison relationship between the board's pastor-staff leadership department and the Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools and authorizing Draper to establish a Christian School Task Force at his discretion.

Kirk Humphreys, layman from Oklahoma City, was re-elected to a second one-year term as trustee chairman. Gary MacManamy, pastor of Country Estates Baptist Church, Midwest City, Okla., was elected vice chairman and chairman of the board's executive committee. Elected recording secretary was Danny Strickland, pastor of Parkway Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.

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Henry sees 'solidifying'  
among Southern Baptists

Baptist Press  
2/8/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) -- Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry told Baptist Sunday School Board trustees during their semiannual meeting Feb. 6-7 he senses "a solidifying and settling in a good way among Southern Baptists.

"'We're moving ahead' is the sense I get from people. It doesn't mean we are out of the woods, but the rank and file appreciate what is taking place," he observed.

Henry urged continued dialogue among Southern Baptists.

"Let's keep talking and praying. Let's keep the door open. I think we can see our best years in front of us.

"There is a tremendous respect for the SBC from outside the convention," Henry continued. "Sometimes it is grudging, but a lot of the time it is gratifying. When I go where other evangelical groups are represented, I realize the SBC is greatly appreciated by the evangelical church and even beyond. There is a respect for who we are."

In another area, he noted "the future of denominations is a cultural challenge. We have to work hard at keeping an appreciation (among others) for the denominational entity."

Henry told trustees he has "not had one letter of complaint that I know of" about the Sunday School Board or the leadership of its president, James T. Draper Jr.

Despite the BSSB's financial losses in the previous fiscal year, he said he believes the lack of negative mail indicates "Southern Baptists trust in the leadership. Thank you for the way you carry out your business."

As president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Henry is an ex-officio member of all denominational agency governing boards. He has attended both Sunday School Board trustee meetings during his year as president of the convention.

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Missionaries, Panamanian Baptists  
support Nicholsons in son's death

Baptist Press  
2/8/95

By Mary E. Speidel

CORONADO, Panama (BP)--They held hands and prayed.

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That's how friends and family spent much of the night Jan. 28 in the Coronado, Panama, home of Southern Baptist missionaries Glenn and Pauline Nicholson.

There wasn't much else anyone could do until daybreak. Then rescuers would resume the search for the Nicholsons' 14-year-old son, Andrew. About noon on Jan. 28 a swarm of African killer bees had driven him over a cliff in Panama's Chame Mountains. Andrew, who was allergic to bees, hadn't been found yet.

In the Nicholsons' family room that night, fellow Baptists hoped for a miracle.

"Lord, we don't know where Andrew is," prayed a Panamanian Baptist teen-ager and friend of Andrew's, "but if he's cold, give him warmth. If he's hot, give him coolness."

The teen-ager and his family were among the first Panamanians to arrive at the Nicholsons' home that night as word of the accident spread. Other Panamanian Baptists came and went throughout the night. They offered prayers and encouragement.

"They came by the house all night long. It was incredible. One family after another came," Southern Baptist missionary Brenda Bayer, from Clinton, Ark., said in a telephone interview. Bayer stayed that night with Mrs. Nicholson, from Cherry Valley, Ark., and son, Nathan, 16, at the family's home.

Meanwhile, Glenn Nicholson, from Forrest City, Ark., spent the night at a mountain campsite with some missionaries from Andrew's school, Escuela Hogar Misionera, operated by the New Tribes Mission for missionary children.

They kept a fire going, hoping Andrew would see its light if he were still alive. A friend of Andrew's, New Tribes missionary kid Andrew Scoble, 16, also had been injured in the attack. He sustained several hundred bee stings while the boys were climbing together, but Scoble was able to flee to safety.

From a slope nearby, Nathan Nicholson and some other children from the New Tribes school witnessed the accident and were deeply affected by it. "They heard the screams and saw Andrew fall," Bayer said.

Later rescuers from the U.S. military searched until nightfall for the teen-ager. Their efforts were hindered by hundreds of bees that swarmed their helicopter, forcing them to retreat and return with bee suits. Missionaries and the Panamanian Red Cross also helped with the search.

While they looked for Andrew, Bayer and Southern Baptist missionary Betty Jo Hensley, from Greenville, N.C., stayed with Mrs. Nicholson at a lower point on the mountain. Their husbands, missionaries John Bayer, from Clinton, Ark., and Bob Hensley, from Asheville, N.C., joined Glenn Nicholson closer to the accident scene.

"It wasn't real to any of us. The possible outcome was something we didn't want to think about," said Mrs. Bayer. "We stayed in prayer the whole time."

As soon as they heard about the accident, the Bayers and Hensleys traveled to the mountain from Panama City, about an hour and a half by car. There they were joined by Southern Baptist International Service Corps volunteers Mary and Bob Forbes, who operate a Panamanian Baptist camp in the area. Later other missionaries showed up to offer support.

Throughout the ordeal, New Tribes missionaries at the nearby school provided practical help, Mrs. Forbes said. They fixed sandwiches for Southern Baptist missionaries and offered a place to rest at the school. They also helped with search efforts.

"They did everything for us that could have been done," said Mrs. Forbes.

The next morning the Forbeses, from Centerville, Ga., and other missionaries returned to the mountain to wait with the Nicholsons while U.S. military special forces resumed the search.

Rescuers found Andrew's body about 7:30 a.m., but it took them until noon to recover it because of the bees and steep, rocky terrain. An autopsy revealed he died of bee stings, rather than the fall of more than 100 feet.

Mrs. Forbes, whose 17-year-old grandson died in early January, recalled offering words of encouragement to Mrs. Nicholson:

"I said, 'I know you feel like your heart will burst, that you don't know how you'll go on living. But the Lord will take you through this. You won't ever get over it, but you'll learn to live with it as best you can.'"

Meanwhile, other missionaries helped the family with logistics. John Bayer functioned as a funeral director, helping with arrangements and accompanying the family to Arkansas for the Feb. 3 funeral, also attended by several other Foreign Mission Board personnel.

Missionaries and Panamanian Baptists also gave the family personal gifts of money for travel and other expenses. So did some Arkansas Baptist churches, according to family members.

The day before the funeral, Southern Baptist missionary Mary Mangrum, from Nashville, Tenn., read a tribute to Andrew at the Panamanian Baptist Convention's annual meeting. Participants paused to pray for the family.

Since then, "We're praying God will continue to hold them in his arms and strengthen and encourage them," said Mrs. Bayer of the Nicholsons.

Back in Panama, the Nicholsons' colleagues are working through their own grief as well.

"It was such a traumatic death," said Mrs. Bayer. "It certainly makes us question things because we're human. But we know the Lord will take this and somehow bring some good from it."

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EDITORS' NOTE: In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial gifts be sent to the Panama Baptist Mission, through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, designated for books and computers for Andrew Nicholson's school. The Foreign Mission Board address is P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230-0767.

(BP) PHOTO (mugshot of Andrew Nicholson) mailed to state Baptist newspapers Feb. 7 by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet News Room.

Baptists should return to roots,  
say SBC Calvinists in journal      By Keith Hinson

Baptist Press  
2/8/95

CAPE CORAL, Fla. (BP)--Southern Baptists should return to their Calvinistic roots, according to writers in the current issue of a publication being mailed to Southern Baptist pastors, seminary professors and missionaries.

"Call it what you will -- Calvinism, reformed theology, the doctrines of grace -- these truths are nothing less than historic Southern Baptist orthodoxy," wrote Thomas K. Ascol, editor of The Founders Journal and pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Cape Coral, Fla.

Published by the Southern Baptist Founders Conference, a loose-knit network of Calvinists, the journal advocates a return by the SBC to such doctrines as election, predestination, the sovereignty of God and the inability of man to repent and exercise faith unless God first regenerates him.

Abandonment of these doctrines has led to several problems for Southern Baptists, according to writers in the quarterly journal, which was published to coincide with this year's 150th anniversary of the founding of the SBC.

Numerical growth alone in the SBC does not prove spiritual health, Ascol said. "Spiritual life and vitality cannot be measured simply by large numbers and growing organizations," Ascol wrote. "Otherwise, we would be compelled to give a clean bill of health to the Mormons, Moonies, and Jehovah's Witnesses, all of whom have experienced phenomenal growth over the last two decades."

One reason for the SBC's apparent growth is a high percentage of non-resident and inactive members, Ascol said. "Only half of our 15 million members ... contributed financially or attended at least one service last year," he said.

The reason churches have so many inactive and non-resident members is because many church members are not really Christians, Ascol said.

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He traces the influx of non-Christians to "modern evangelistic technique ... geared toward getting a sinner to agree with some facts and recite a prayer. Once this occurs, it is assumed he is saved. Those who go through these steps are commonly judged ready for baptism and church membership."

But Ascol believes the first-century church saw the issue more clearly. "These dropouts were categorized on the basis of what they demonstrated themselves to be -- false converts," Ascol wrote. "The Apostle John explains, 'They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.'"

Since so many church members are not really Christians, Ascol said, churches have become infected with moral relativism. "When unregenerate people find refuge in church membership, they inevitably dilute the body's corporate commitment to holiness," Ascol wrote.

Much of the journal is devoted to a historical study of early Southern Baptist leaders who were Calvinists.

One article -- "The Rise and Demise of Calvinism Among Southern Baptists" -- was written by Tom Nettles, a former professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis, Tenn.

"Southern Baptist beginnings were self-consciously and vigorously Calvinistic," wrote Nettles, who is now associate professor of church history at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Ill.

"The changes that have come (since then) could with clear justification be called 'theological apostasy' ... (and) have not contributed to our health but have spawned a climate of theological disunity, rampant absenteeism, a circus mentality in much evangelism, and a justified distress concerning the spirituality of Christians," Nettles wrote.

Nettles traces the decline of Calvinism in the SBC to the influence of E.Y. Mullins, who was president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., from 1899 to 1928.

Mullins' approach to theology was more man-centered than God-centered, wrote Nettles, "and eventually eroded any meaningful emphasis on God's sovereignty."

According to Nettles, Mullins wrote that theological creeds are "barriers to the free development of personality in religion."

"In spite of tipping his hat to their usefulness, Mullins' warnings about the possible killing effects of creeds ... tended to neutralize their advantages as instruments of education, definition, and discipline," Nettles wrote.

Mullins believed that "truth must be assimilated experientially ... not imposed by authority of any kind, whether pope or church or Bible," said Nettles.

Theological decline in the SBC also continued later into the 20th century, according to an article by Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.

"In the three decades following World War II, Baptist bureaucrats and denominational elites gradually led the SBC toward alignment with mainline Protestant concerns," wrote George, formerly a professor at SBTS. "For example, as amazing as it seems now, the SBC Christian Life Commission during these years was an ardent supporter of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights.

"Without some kind of conservative resurgence, Southern Baptists would doubtless have followed the same path of spiritual decline and theological erosion evident in so many of the mainline denominations," George said.

George's prescription for Southern Baptists is to "lay claim to the doctrinal legacy of the Reformation. ... Despite a persistent Arminian strain within Baptist life, for much of our history most Baptists adhered faithfully to the doctrines of grace." (Arminianism is a theology that opposes many key doctrines of Calvinism.)

One writer pointed Southern Baptists to SBTS' Abstract of Principles, which contains Calvinistic language and also serves as the journal's "theological framework."

"Sincere and earnest Southern Baptists who wish to understand the true substance of our theological heritage need look no further than the Abstract of Principles for a clear outline of the doctrines once most certainly held among us," wrote R. Albert Mohler Jr., who is president of SBTS.

"Let there be no doubt that in the years to come Southern Seminary will be unashamedly and unhesitatingly committed to these same doctrinal convictions as set forth in this incomparable document," Mohler said.

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Calvinism often misunderstood,  
according to journal writers

By Keith Hinson

Baptist Press  
2/8/95

CAPE CORAL, Fla. (BP)--Don't misunderstand us, say a group of Southern Baptist Calvinists in the current issue of a quarterly publication being mailed to Southern Baptist pastors, seminary professors, and missionaries.

For one thing, Calvinists are not necessarily anti-missionary, according to The Founders Journal, which is published by a loose network of Calvinists known as the Southern Baptist Founders Conference.

"The great warriors (of early Baptist history) in the work of evangelism and missions ... were mostly Calvinists and their evangelistic efforts were grounded in the doctrinal foundation of Calvinism," wrote Ernest C. Reisinger, a retired pastor living in Cape Coral, Fla., and associate editor of the journal.

Published to coincide with this year's 150th anniversary of the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention, the journal advocates a return to the "doctrines of grace" -- often called Calvinism.

The doctrines include such ideas as election, predestination, the sovereignty of God and the inability of man to repent or exercise faith unless God first regenerates him.

"There is no question that many Calvinists are not as evangelistic as they should be," Reisinger wrote, "but this is not because of Calvinism but because of a cold and indifferent heart.

"Many Arminians are not evangelistic but it is not because of their Arminianism. Again, it is because of a cold and indifferent heart," said Reisinger. (Arminianism is a theology that opposes many key doctrines of Calvinism.)

Tom Ascol, the journal's editor, credits Calvinism with early Southern Baptist progress. "This is the theology which gave rise to the formation and early development of the great missionary and evangelistic enterprise which we know as the Southern Baptist Convention," wrote Ascol, who is pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Cape Coral.

But one writer cautioned against the anti-missionary effects of extreme Calvinism. Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., said it is "imperative for Reformed Southern Baptists to guard against the real dangers of hyper-Calvinism, ... which denies that the offer of the gospel is to be extended to all peoples everywhere."

Ascol said the Founders Conference is primarily interested in doctrinal reformation, not in convention politics. "We have absolutely no political agenda," he wrote. "Our concerns are spiritual and doctrinal, agreeing with a growing chorus of voices which recognizes the need for theological renewal within the SBC."

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Reisinger responded to what he sees as a frequent criticism of the doctrines of grace. "Calvinism does not make God unjust," Reisinger wrote. "His blessing of a great number of unworthy sinners with salvation is no injustice to the rest of the unworthy sinners. If a governor pardons one convict, is it injustice to the rest?"

Some opponents of Calvinism criticize its doctrine of "irresistible grace," claiming it makes man passive in salvation. "No! No! The very opposite takes place!" wrote Reisinger. "God's sovereign grace does not annihilate man's powers, rather it overcomes his powerlessness. ... It regenerates and recreates man in his entirety and in renewing him by grace, causes him to love and consecrate himself to God most freely."

Calvinists do assert that regeneration precedes repentance and faith, not vice versa. "Regeneration, or the new birth, precedes by virtue of moral necessity the graces of repentance and faith," said Tom Nettles, a former professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis, Tenn.

Nettles, who is professor of church history at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Ill., quoted Richard Furman, a 19th-century Baptist Calvinist: "The renovation of the sinner is the work of God. A man cannot change his own heart."

According to Reisinger: "We do not support the erroneous idea that God has done all He can, and is now standing idly by to see what sovereign sinners are going to do with an impotent, pathetic Jesus. No! God saves sinners -- salvation is of the Lord."

In a section titled "Words of Caution," Reisinger advised, "It is not wise to try to learn what a Calvinist is from those who are not Calvinists."

One roadblock to recovering the doctrines of grace is a dislike for doctrinal preaching, Reisinger said.

"A deep-seated prejudice exists in many parts of the church against the systematic exposition of the doctrines of the Bible," Reisinger wrote. "It probably falls within the experience of every pastor to see the gathering frown, the averted shoulder, and the drooping head, as soon as certain doctrines are announced as the theme for discussion. ...

"However, that professing Christians should engage in this unholy crusade against doctrinal religion, and that even ministers of the gospel should sigh over the earnest proclamation of its truths ... is certainly a most afflictive and atrocious scandal," Reisinger said.

"It is not wise to make derogatory remarks about what is in the Bible whether you understand it or not," he said.

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NBA teammate leads player  
to prayer for saving faith

Baptist Press  
2/8/95

ATLANTA (BP)--Basketball was good for Craig Ehlo, even when he was cut from the Houston Rockets

Ehlo grew up in Lubbock, Texas, and was only 5'9" as a sophomore in high school. But Craig grew to be 6'5" by his senior year, went on to Washington State, grew to 6'7" and set a school record for assists in PAC-10 conference games.

"College life provided a complete freedom with no family guidelines," Ehlo recalled. "I no longer took time for God."

That changed after playing for the Houston Rockets. The team released him in 1986.

"I prayed and hoped that God would have something better for my wife and me," he said.

Ten weeks passed and Ehlo got a call from the Cleveland Cavaliers. Mark Price was hurt and the team needed a replacement for the season.

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"When I got to Cleveland, I thought he (Price) wouldn't like me," Ehlo recounted. "I mean, he was in the hospital injured, and they brought me in to take his place. In a sense, we were competing for that spot on the team. But with Mark it wasn't that way at all.

"I must admit, even though I had a church background, I was a little nervous being around Mark at first. He had a reputation in the league for being real serious about his faith. I felt he might try to preach to me or push his faith on me, but he didn't. As a matter of fact, he didn't say anything about spiritual matters for a long time. We just became friends."

Both won spots on the Cavaliers the following year. And Price and his wife lived in the same apartment complex.

The two families ate together one evening after training camp, and for Ehlo it became a spiritual milestone.

"We were just enjoying the conversation with them," Ehlo said, "and then in a real natural way Mark said to us: 'I really like you and care about you and wonder where you are with the Lord.'

"During that evening, we heard how to get to heaven through faith in Christ," Ehlo said. "Mark asked: 'Craig, if you died before you got home tonight, would you go to heaven?' I told him, 'Well, according to what you shared with me, no.'

"So we all prayed together and I invited Christ to come into my life."

Ehlo went on to spend seven seasons with the Cavaliers. He now plays for the Atlanta Hawks and attends Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga.

"It's been seven years since I accepted Christ and I'm still growing and learning in team chapel meetings, in church through worship and with Christian friends," Ehlo said. "I still feel like a baby Christian, but my understanding of growing in Christ is greater today. I really want to set a good example for my kids. God has blessed us with two children, Erica and Austin. I want us to have a Christ centered family."

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Adapted from an interview in The Christian Index, Georgia Baptist newsjournal.

Ministers' wives to hear  
children's ministry speaker

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press  
2/8/95

ATLANTA (BP)--The 1995 Southern Baptist Ministers' Wives Conference will focus on ministry to children during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta. Diana Garland, author of "Precious in His Sight: Welcoming All Our Children," will be the featured speaker at the 40th annual luncheon meeting.

Garland, dean of the Carver School of Church Social Work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been involved with family therapy and social work since 1971.

A professor of social work at Southern Seminary since 1983, she was named director of the Louisville, Ky., school's Gheens Center for Christian Family Ministry in 1990. She has completed both a master's and a doctor of philosophy degree in clinical psychology and social work at the University of Louisville. In 1994 she received the National Volunteer Service Award from Volunteers of America. Among other responsibilities, she currently serves on the advisory committee of the Children's Defense Fund. The author of 14 books and numerous articles on church social work, children, marriage and family life, Garland is also the mother of a son and daughter.

The luncheon will be at noon Tuesday, June 20, at the Hyatt Regency (convention hotel), 263 Peachtree St., according to Alice Marshall of Louisville, Ky., president of the SBC Ministers' Wives.

Husbands are welcome to attend the luncheon. All who attend will receive a complimentary copy of Garland's book.

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Tickets ordered by May 20 are \$18 per person and may be obtained by sending a check and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the group's recording secretary, Anita Snell, 4308 Heaven Trees Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32207. After May 20, tickets will be \$20 per person and may be purchased at the Southern Baptist Convention near the messenger registration site through Monday night, June 19.

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Baptist Book Stores  
cite bests for 1994

Baptist Press  
2/8/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Like other consumers, users of Christian products vote for their favorite items by taking them home.

Baptist Book Stores and Lifeway Christian Stores have announced the most popular products among their customers for 1994.

Mark Scott, director of the 62-store national chain owned and operated by the Baptist Sunday School Board, told the agency's trustees Feb. 7 that, among books, customers most often purchased "Experiencing God," pupil edition. The volume sold 187,000 copies.

In other categories, persons selected most often: Bibles -- "Experiencing God Study Bible," 3,447 copies since its release in August 1994; music -- "The Baptist Hymnal," 51,580 copies; gifts -- T-shirts, 47,082; and church supplies -- disposable communion cups, 5,719,000.

Perhaps the most important "best" was Scott's announcement that the stores had "the best first quarter ever," October-December 1994, with record sales of \$25.4 million, an increase of 15 percent over the same quarter a year ago and with the same number of stores.

Remodelings, relocations and a customer service training program are among improvements he cited that led to the record quarter.

He said 58 of the 62 stores had "some measure of sales growth" in the past year. December sales were \$10.5 million, 21 percent above sales for the same period in 1993 and a contrast to flat national retail sales for December. Baptist Book Stores and Lifeway Christian Stores provide a monthly list of best-selling hardback and paperback books through the "News Room" library of SBCNet, Southern Baptists' computer network.

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WMU initiates new  
toll-free number

By Teresa Dickens

Baptist Press  
2/8/95

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Woman's Missionary Union customers can now call a toll-free number to place an order, check on an existing order, inquire about an invoice or just ask a question. The new number, 1-800-WMU(968)-7301, came on line in January.

"The number is purely a customer service feature," said Karen Flowers, publishing services director for WMU. "We wanted to make it easier for our customers to call us.

"General staff cannot be contacted via the number," Flowers noted. "Someone wanting to talk to an age-level specialist, for example, should still call our regular number," (205) 991-8100.

Callers to the 800 number with touch-tone service are able to activate a detailed menu, explained Karen Kemp, marketing services director. The menu offers several options for customers, including questions about an invoice, renewing a subscription, placing or changing an order and changing an address, among others.

While the toll-free number is automated, Kemp said callers with rotary telephone equipment can still use the service by remaining on the line until an operator answers.

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Along with the new 800 number, WMU also has a new customer service mailing address. It is: WMU Customer Service, P.O. Box 830711, Birmingham, AL 35283-0711.

Customers also may fax orders to Birmingham. The number is (205) 995-4840.

Customers placing an order must provide payment at the time of the request. WMU accepts VISA, MasterCard and Baptist Sunday School Board (Book Store) accounts as payment over the phone.

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Southern pays tribute  
to alumnus W.A. Criswell

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press  
2/8/95

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--W.A. Criswell's alma mater paid tribute to the legendary Baptist pastor Feb. 7 by presenting him the institution's highest honor.

Criswell, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, received the E. Y. Mullins Denominational Service Award from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., during a chapel service. Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. called Criswell the seminary's "most famous living alumnus."

During 50 years of ministry at First Baptist, Dallas, Criswell "established that pulpit as a bulwark of evangelical biblical exposition that is both scholarly and passionate," Mohler said. Criswell, he said, is "uniquely qualified" for the award named in honor of the seminary's fourth president, who served from 1899 until his death in 1928.

Criswell said he has fond memories of the seminary, where he received the Th.M. degree in 1934 and the Ph.D. degree in 1937. He noted that he and his wife were married on the school's campus on Valentine's Day 60 years ago.

During his sermon, Criswell encouraged the seminarians to be enthusiastic about their ministries. Criswell said the word "enthusiasm" is derived from a Greek phrase meaning "in God."

"Enthusiasm is nothing other than God in you," he said. Criswell told of an incident during his seminary pastorate, when frustration helped fuel his enthusiasm for ministry. Criswell wanted his Mount Washington, Ky., congregation to set a high attendance day goal of 100 in Sunday school. Church members, he said, were reluctant since their record attendance had been 60. He held a church conference and asked those who would do nothing to help reach an attendance of 100 to raise their hands. Everyone raised their hand, he said.

"I was young then and it made me mad," Criswell recounted. He then launched into a door-to-door campaign by himself. "I went up and down every lane, every highway and every road in that part of Bullitt County," he said. On high attendance day, 365 people came for Sunday school, he reported.

Criswell said no church had reached an attendance of 2,000 in Sunday school at the time he went to First Baptist, Dallas. First Baptist's Sunday school attendance, he said, hit 2,000 and grew incrementally to 8,000. He added that Sunday school attendance at First Baptist occasionally has been as high as 12,000.

"All just doing as God says in his book, out there knocking at the door, testifying repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," Criswell said.

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Seek Christ, ultimate 'role model,'  
Challengers told at annual rally By Steve Barber

Baptist Press  
2/8/95

GATLINBURG, Tenn. (BP)--More than 800 youth and their leaders were urged to seek Jesus Christ as their ultimate role model and to act on his call to service at the eighth annual Challengers rally Feb. 3-5 in Gatlinburg, Tenn.

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In line with this year's rally theme, "Stand Firm," based on 1 Corinthians 15:58, Jim Foster of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board asked, "Who is going to be the one you admire? Who allows you to be steadfast? Who causes you to be unmovable?"

"If you can respond, 'Anyone other than Jesus,' then you have missed the mark," Foster said. "We must keep our eyes on the Lord, we must know his standards and we must meditate on him and his work."

The greatest tragedy for Christians today, he added, is that "we are not perceived to be much different from the others around us."

"We are seen as reflectors, not changers of our society. And we need to be changers."

While the youth were instructed in "being changers" at conferences with titles ranging from "Am I Called?" to "Starting a Christian Club on Campus," speakers throughout the weekend stressed the need for volunteers to serve in Challengers' first-ever overseas missions project in Kenya next summer.

"Between July 15 and Aug. 4, the Southern Baptist mission in Kenya has asked for you, Challengers and Baptist Men, to bring a team of people to help us roof 30 churches," said John Witte, furloughing missionary to Kenya. "We hope that God will speak a word to you about that tonight, and that if he does, that you'll find a way with his power to raise the money so you can come. I promise you it will change your life."

Some 45 youth and 15 adult leaders are needed for the project, which begins within days of the conclusion of Operation Kenya, a Southern Baptist effort to involve 1,500 volunteers in a goal of 100,000 decisions for Christ and 100 church starts in Nairobi and the surrounding area.

The rally once again featured a "hands-on" mission project directed by M.B. Howard, national coordinator of construction volunteers throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. This year, youth crafted bunk beds for use at the Smoky Mountain Resort Ministries facility nearby, operated by the Home Mission Board.

This year's rally attendance of 820 was an all-time record.

The Brotherhood Commission's Challengers program seeks to develop support for and involvement in Southern Baptist missions, as well as build Christian character, among the 26,000 young men participating throughout the convention.

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Children's Bible Contest  
to be launched this year

Baptist Press  
2/8/95

ATLANTA (BP)--An effort to help children express the life of Christ has found boosters in a mix of respected personalities from the worlds of humanitarian aid, media, sports and ministry.

The "Children's Bible Contest" will accept articles, artwork and dramatic presentations from children worldwide. Journalist and contest chairman Carey Kinsolving plans to write a newspaper column that draws from the entries. The contest's grand prize winner and parent/guardian will travel around the globe on an adventure sponsored by leading missionary agencies, Kinsolving said.

Judges for the Children's Bible Contest include Elizabeth Dole of the American Red Cross, pollster George Gallup Jr., Tom Landry, Charles Overby of the Gannett-affiliated Freedom Forum foundation, Washington-based journalist Wes Pippert and retired Army Chief of Chaplains Major Gen. Matthew A. Zimmerman. "Children have a unique and amusing way of communicating the profound truth of God's work, and I know I will enjoy reading the essays," Elizabeth Dole wrote in a letter to Kinsolving.

Kinsolving said the idea for the contest came to him after asking children in two Washington Sunday school classes to write down three Bible-related questions. "I rediscovered what Art Linkletter has known for years, 'Kids say the darndest things.' Their humor, insight and innocence pierce our self-sufficiency and remind us that we must come to God as children to receive his grace."

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Although his news stories have appeared in The Washington Post and other major newspapers via The New York Times wire service, Kinsolving has given priority to starting a newspaper column focusing on how children experience God.

"I know that newspaper editors are not interested in printing sermons, but a column where kids express how they experience the Lord will at least get a reading," Kinsolving said. "Editors are now looking for new ways to connect with families because many newspapers are losing circulation."

Kinsolving's immediate goal is to get contest entry forms to as many children as possible before the contest's June 15 deadline.

Individual entry forms may be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Children's Bible Contest, c/o SIM International, P.O. Box 7900, Charlotte, NC 28241-8819.

Children, 12 and under, from all countries are invited to enter the contest. Art entries are open to children from all language groups, however, any accompanying text must be submitted in English. There are no entry fees, however children must obtain the consent of a parent or guardian on an official entry form.

Radio station managers, business people, ministers and others interested in sponsoring the Children's Bible Contest in their areas may be obtained by writing to Kinsolving at 947 Delmar Ave., S.E., Atlanta, GA 30316.

Sponsor information and entry forms are also available through the GraceNet computer bulletin board at 404-979-8240 or via Internet FTP or Gopher at Gracenet.com in the Children's Bible Contest directory.

In addition to a global missions trip, the grand prize winner also will be featured in a planned network-quality video for kids about missionaries.

Tentative schedule for the five-week global trip begins in mid-December with a dinner in Washington hosted by Good News Jail & Prison Ministry for the ambassadors of the countries on the itinerary. Then, it's on to a youth camp in Bolivia (SIM International), a mission outpost in Zaire (Every Child Ministries), a work aiding orphans in Zimbabwe (TEAM), the Doulos ship in India (Operation Mobilization) and a mission training school in the Fiji Islands (Ambassadors for Christ). Kinsolving has placed trip arrangements under the oversight of Pioneers, an Orlando-based mission agency.

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Zig Ziglar, George Barna join  
'Christian Single' board

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Zig Ziglar and George Barna are among 11 professionals who recently joined an editorial advisory board for "Christian Single" magazine, according to the editor of the Southern Baptist periodical for single adults.

"The board members we have selected will provide counsel on news and feature stories in their field of expertise," said Stephen Felts, editor of the monthly magazine produced by the Baptist Sunday School Board. "While they will serve in an advisory capacity, they will also write an occasional story."

Ziglar, a motivational speaker and chairman of Zig Ziglar Corporation, Dallas, and Barna, president of Barna Research Group Ltd., Glendale, Calif., represent the fields of business and career and lifestyle trends, respectively, Felts said.

Other advisory board areas represented include legal issues, relationships, psychology, medical, social issues, arts and entertainment, finances, women's issues and science, Felts said.

The advisory board was established in January 1995 in an effort to offer Christian Single readers up-to-date information, Felts said.

"This network of professionals will keep the magazine on the cutting edge, helping it deal with in-depth issues relevant to the lives of today's singles."

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Circulation has grown 15 percent to 72,000 since the magazine was redesigned two years ago, said Felts, who took over the helm of the periodical about that time.

However, the changes are not complete, he added. "We are evolving on a regular basis to modify and meet the needs of our single readers."

One way Christian Single is attempting to meet the need of its readers is by offering articles related to current trends in society, Felts said.

The May 1995 issue will include a feature about astronomy, addressing its implications with a Christian perspective. Hugh Ross, president of Reason to Believe Ministries, Pasadena, Calif., and the magazine's advisory board representative for science, is writing the article, Felts said.

Other members of the advisory board are John Whitehead, president of The Rutherford Institute, Washington, D.C., legal issues; Neil Clark Warren, president of Associated Psychological Services, Los Angeles, relationships; Henry Cloud, co-director of Minirth-Meier New Life Clinics West, Los Angeles, psychology; David Stevens, CEO for Christian Medical & Dental Society, Dallas, medical; Lynn Gannett, associate professor of Christian Education, Dallas Theological Seminary, social issues; Phil Boatwright, publisher of "The Movie Reporter," Los Angeles, arts and entertainment; Austin Pryor, president of Pryor & Associates and publisher of "Sound Mind Investing," Louisville, Ky., finances; and Deborah Tyler, president of Renaissance Ministries, Morristown, Tenn., women's issues.

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