

# (BP)

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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 70420,119  
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232, CompuServe 70420,119  
NASHVILLE Linda Lawson, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300, CompuServe 70420,119  
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151, CompuServe 70420,119  
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223, CompuServe 70420,119

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95-27

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Don't abandon Somalia,  
Baptist worker urges

Baptist Press  
2/16/95

MOGADISHU, Somalia (BP)--The specter of civil war once again looms over Somalia as international relief agencies and United Nations troops abandon their two-year-old effort to restore hope to a nation desolated by famine and clan warfare.

One relief worker who has helped in Somalia for several years fears the last state of Somalia may be worse than the first. But he hopes relief groups will be able to return to their work in a couple of months.

"The world has made up its mind that Somalia is a lost cause," said the worker, who is a Southern Baptist but asked not to be identified for security reasons.

"They see CNN reports and conclude the situation is hopeless. But the world's agenda is not the agenda of God's people. We are hoping to be back in the country by April. Now is the time to redouble our efforts."

No progress has been made toward a political solution to clan rivalries, which are expected to erupt once again into open warfare when a U.S.-led international force completes the evacuation of U.N. troops and civilian relief workers by the end of February. Civil war in the African country led to a devastating famine in 1992 that claimed an estimated 300,000 lives.

Horrifying images of starving children prompted a multibillion-dollar international effort to restore order to the country. But the stubborn refusal of Somali warlords to cooperate with the peace process has exhausted the patience of world leaders and the generosity of relief donors.

Even though it was intervention by Western countries, considered "Christian" by Islam, that yanked Somalia back from the edge of self-destruction, the only inroads into the country's culture during the past two years have been made by Islamic militants.

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Massive infusions of Arab oil wealth -- almost all of which came after the famine crisis had been averted -- have built schools and provided food for the country's desperate masses. Most Somali women have begun wearing the trademark Muslim veil. At least one Muslim warlord has instituted Islamic law in his area of Mogadishu to prop up his power against rival warlords who have paraded their Muslim fundamentalism.

The evacuation of foreign troops and relief workers will leave civilians at the mercy of the warlords, said the relief worker. Militant Muslims are stepping into the vacuum.

Relief agencies that have abandoned Mogadishu for now are working with Somali refugees in three neighboring countries and that ministry will continue, the worker said. Refugee numbers may increase dramatically in the next few weeks if fighting forces more civilians to flee the country.

The 1992 civil war created opportunities for residents of the overwhelmingly Muslim country to respond to the claims of the gospel. At least two Christian relief groups had been working in Somalia more than 30 years prior to the collapse of the nation. But at the height of the crisis, several other Christian groups responded. In the process of feeding and providing medical care they offered an incarnational Christian witness.

Individual Christians, working with secular aid organizations and U.N. military forces, also made contact with average Somalis -- many of whom had never met a Christian face-to-face.

Yet the nation now has fewer Christians than before the war, the relief worker said. As donor support dried up, all the relief groups had to withdraw, often breaking contact between Christian workers and Somali converts. Many Somali Christians fled the turmoil, along with tens of thousands of their Muslim countrymen.

At least four members of the small groups of Somali Christians were killed in 1994 -- apparently for their faith in Christ.

For the moment, Islamic extremists appear to be the only outsiders willing to keep pouring resources into the country, the worker said.

The coming months will demonstrate whether believers want to reaffirm their commitment to hungry Somali bodies and hearts.

Southern Baptists and other Christians from all over the world gave more than \$1.5 million to Somali relief through the Foreign Mission Board during the early stages of the relief effort. Special relief gifts averaged \$10,000 per month -- until U.S. troops were killed by Somali gunmen and dragged through the streets of Mogadishu in front of television cameras. Recent contributions hover at the \$100 per month level.

Southern Baptists who feel the time has not yet passed to assist Somalia and continue incarnational witness can learn how to pray for Somalia and help financially by calling the Foreign Mission Board at 1-800-866-FMB1.

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FMB sends 'valentine,'  
adopts 7 basic principles

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press  
2/16/95

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees sent a "valentine" to the world Feb. 14 as they appointed 44 new missionaries to join more than 4,000 others taking the love of Jesus Christ to millions of people around the world.

They also approved seven basic principles to undergird the board's missions program during their Feb. 13-15 meeting on the campus of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin, who came home from the mission field in June 1993 to head the 150-year-old missions agency, challenged those appointed in the Valentine's Day service to make known the "mystery" of Jesus Christ on their far-flung mission fields.

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"When we lived in Thailand, we would often observe Buddhist funerals in our own community," Rankin said, "and see the monks as they would encircle the casket, chanting over and over again: 'Dead, never to arise; gone, never to return; asleep, never to awaken.'"

"To them the gospel was a mystery," said Rankin. "God has called you to make known that mystery, to reveal the precious truth of the gospel."

The appointment service, the first held on the campus of a Southern Baptist seminary, highlighted enthusiastic student reaction during the three-day meeting. During the appointment service and seminary chapel services at least 51 people responded to invitations to commit to missions.

Meanwhile, trustees conducted business, including unanimous adoption of the seven principles after some revision from the floor. That included strengthening the second principle to emphasize belief in the reality of hell.

Rankin noted that the principles and previously approved vision and mission statements grew out of a yearlong process of fine-tuning input from trustees, missionaries and staff.

He urged their ratification to go along with the vision and mission statements in setting "the direction for this board as we move into the 21st century."

The principles declare:

"1. Our basic commitment is obedience to the lordship of Jesus Christ and God's infallible Word.

"2. Our basic belief is that Jesus Christ is God's only provision for salvation and that people without personal faith in him are lost and will spend eternity in Hell.

"3. Our basic means of understanding and fulfilling God's mission is prayer.

"4. Our basic purpose is to provide all people an opportunity to hear, understand and respond to the gospel in their own cultural context.

"5. Our basic task is evangelism through proclamation, discipling, equipping and ministry that results in indigenous Baptist churches.

"6. Our basic strategy is to send and support gifted, God-called missionaries who, with mutual respect, accountability and cooperation, carry out the Great Commission in an incarnational witness.

"7. Our basic role is to lead and facilitate the international missionary involvement of Southern Baptists in partnership with overseas Baptists and other Christians who are fulfilling the Great Commission."

Responding to a motion from the floor after approval of the principles, trustees voted unanimously that they be given the opportunity to sign the principles to signify their full agreement with them.

Trustees also pondered, without any action, whether missionaries and top-level FMB staff should be asked to sign the document.

The previously approved vision statement declares: "We will lead Southern Baptists to be on mission with God to bring all the peoples of the world to saving faith in Jesus Christ."

The mission statement says: "The mission of the Foreign Mission Board, SBC, is to lead Southern Baptists in international missions efforts to evangelize the lost, disciple believers, develop churches and minister to people in need. Leading Southern Baptists is done by mobilizing prayer support, appointing missionaries, enlisting volunteers, channeling financial support and communicating how God is working overseas."

In other business, trustees passed actions to safeguard against conflict of interest by trustees, staff and their relatives and to outline wording to be used in reporting termination or resignation of missionaries who depart under less-than-satisfactory conditions.

The conflict of interest policy declares that the board "shall refrain from conducting business with any business enterprise in which a trustee, employee or relative of either (spouses, parents, children, siblings and in-laws) has direct or substantial interest."

Exceptions would be granted only with the full knowledge of the trustees and if 1) the commodity or service is unavailable from any other source or 2) if it is available on a more favorable basis from the trustee, employee or relative, based on competitive bids.

Missionaries who are terminated or resign for severe problems related to performance or lifestyle will have the notation in their records: "failure to perform duties in keeping with the expectations for missionaries" or "failure to maintain a lifestyle in keeping with the expectations for missionaries."

Trustees also learned that overseas baptisms exceeded 300,000 for the first time in board history last year, and that 1994's record-breaking appointment year has risen from 534 (reported earlier) to 545. Eleven more two-year workers were added after the previous report in early December.

The 545 total breaks 1993's record of 498. It includes 255 career and associate missionary appointments -- the highest in seven years -- and a record 290 two-year International Service Corps workers and journeymen. The two-year worker total tops the 1993 record of 275. The board's record for career and associate appointments was set in 1985 with 304.

In chapel addresses and in his report to trustees, Rankin urged Southern Baptists to approach their world missions task as if Christ would come again before the completion of their lives.

No one knows the time that will happen, he said, but "it could be that God is giving us the privilege of being that last generation of witnesses to see an evangelized world, to see the kingdom of God ushered in."

If that's the case, Rankin told the seminary students, they must follow the example of the Apostle Paul to 1) carry a burden to reach the whole world regardless of the cost, 2) submit themselves in weakness and humility before God and 3) totally focus their lives on Jesus Christ.

The biblical Great Commission is sufficient authority to go out to a lost world but not sufficient motivation, Rankin said: It's not the authority of an external command that motivates, but the impulse of the internal presence of Jesus Christ.

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Chele Caughron contributed to this story.

EDITORS' NOTE: A horizontal graphic and vertical photo supporting this story were mailed to state Baptist newspapers Jan. 13 by the Richmond (foreign) bureau of Baptist Press. A CORRECTED GRAPHIC is being mailed today. Please discard the original, which contains errors in the illustration and cutline.

Overseas baptisms top  
300,000 for first time

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press  
2/16/95

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Baptisms related to Southern Baptist foreign mission work worldwide totaled 302,132 in 1994 -- the first time annual baptisms have ever topped 300,000.

That total also marks a tripling of the annual harvest since 1980, the first year baptisms surpassed 100,000 in churches related to Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries. Baptisms topped 200,000 for the first time in 1987.

Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin put the 300,000-baptism milestone into evangelistic perspective:

"It probably represents well over 1 million professions of faith," he said. "Only a portion (of new converts) follow through immediately in baptism. We don't report professions of faith or try to compile them officially, but it indicates the level of evangelism being done and the level of response."

The 1994 baptism total is the fourth record year in a row, and shows a 15 percent increase over 1993's count.

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It also represents actual growth compared to the previous year, without substantial additions from countries newly added to the count, according to FMB evangelism and church growth consultant Jim Slack, who compiled the 1994 statistical report.

"We are well past any 'clean-up' growth that we talked about in the past," Slack said. "1993 was mixed because we still had some former Soviet areas that were reporting for the first time and getting into the count. But this time it's strictly what has been produced on the ground. When your baptisms are not just churches reporting that never before have, this is new growth, and very strong."

Yet perhaps most significant of all, a still-small but steadily growing number of conversions and baptisms are occurring in places and peoples once considered entirely off-limits to the Christian gospel.

The Cooperative Services International arm of the Foreign Mission Board, which quietly ministers among the peoples of "World A" -- the unevangelized world locked from "traditional" missions behind political, religious and cultural barriers -- reported 3,809 baptisms.

That total may seem tiny, but it's a 500-percent jump over the 1993 total. And it includes the first known baptisms recorded in modern times among several people groups.

Other significant growth reports emerged from hard mission fields still open to missionaries -- but beset by war, suffering or hostile opposition to Christians from opposing religions such as Islam.

"It really highlights the whole focus of being on mission with God," said Rankin. "In God's providence and power these things are happening. It defies explanation in terms of socio-religious or cultural obstacles, but it represents joining God in what he's doing."

When FMB mission planners developed strategies for World A in recent years, "it was without any real anticipation of immediate results," Rankin admitted. "We just knew we had to find some way to impact them with the gospel, but we didn't know what might come of it. To see the results when the gospel is made known is a surprise to everyone."

H quoted mission area director Bill Phillips, who coordinates mission work on some of the most difficult, Muslim-dominated fields of west Africa:

"We no longer talk about responsive and unresponsive fields. Wherever the gospel is made known, people respond. Our challenge is to find the ways to impact people with the gospel."

The traditional "big seven" countries where Baptists are strong -- Brazil, Nigeria, Kenya, South Korea, the Philippines, India, Mexico -- appear once again in the top 25 list of countries for baptisms. Brazil tops the list with 69,373. Nigeria comes in second with 38,340, followed by Kenya with 20,042 and South Korea with 17,810.

But some new faces also appear: Ukraine finished sixth with 9,798 baptisms, with Russia right behind at 9,759.

A "partner country" -- where mission realities dictate that the country can't even be named in print -- reported 6,199 baptisms, nearly breaking into the top 10.

Even some of the perennial harvest fields like Nigeria, India and the Philippines face growing pressure from religious opposition and turmoil. Nigeria, where political strife threatens everyone and northern Muslims violently persecute Christians, still finished near the top in baptisms.

"We're reaching a lot of new countries and new areas in Eastern Europe and among World A people groups, but where we've served for over 100 years, we're seeing accelerated harvest," Rankin said.

Even more revealing are average baptisms per church and church member-to-baptism ratios in some smaller or "hard" mission fields where raw baptism totals are lower. The eight affiliated Baptist churches in Israel, for example, members, baptized 81 converts. That's 10 per church, or about one per eight members.

"That's phenomenal," said Slack. The member-to-baptism ratio among Southern Baptists in the United States, by comparison, is 40 to 1.

Struggling Ethiopia's 587 baptisms in 1994 represented one for every 2.2 church members -- indisputably the best such ratio in the Baptist world. Mozambique, considered by many the poorest country in the world, witnessed 1,321 baptisms -- 73 per church, or one for every eight members.

Slack: "Those combinations are just astounding."

Each conversion or baptism tells a story -- of death and resurrection, of a new life, of Christ's redeeming love. Here are a few from 1994:

-- Last summer Baptists in Belarus (formerly a part of the Soviet Union) decided to go to a city recreation area with a big lake to baptize eight new believers. When they got out there, they found about 2,000 other people relaxing around the lake.

The Baptists went ahead with a short service; Foreign Mission Board missionary Larry Pritchett preached. Nearly 150 people professed faith in Christ on the spot. When the baptisms of the eight began, some of the thousand or so people who had gathered around to watch started walking into the water with their clothes on, asking to be baptized too.

That "just doesn't happen" in Belarus, which still lacks many freedoms now known in Russia, said Pritchard. He had no way to explain it -- except that "God's hand was upon them that day."

-- On July 4, Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers in Mali, west Africa, celebrated their American holiday together, then went to the village of Sitikoto -- far up a narrow, rocky path winding around a mountainside. After seven years of hearing God's Word, the villagers had become responsive and many had accepted Christ.

As the group sat under a tree by a campfire singing praises to God, they watched their number increase as the villagers joined them. When the rain stopped the entire village assembled for the baptism. The group shed tears of joy as they watched 77 villagers baptized, each with a testimony to the changing power of Christ's love.

-- In the Kondh Hills of India's Orissa state, agricultural ministries combine with intensive training of young leaders and a pioneer radio program in the tribal Kui language. Thousands of people gather in more than 200 "listener groups" twice a week to listen together to the radio broadcast. More than 10,000 of them were Hindus -- at least in the beginning. More than 2,000 of them have become believers in Jesus Christ, and several hundred of them had been baptized by the end of the year.

-- A former Muslim woman in northern Africa was baptized secretly early last year. But even that act demonstrated extreme bravery. To acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Son of God, even among a handful of other Christian believers, was to risk death among her people. She became one of an estimated five Christians among the 1 million members of her people group -- where the gospel is being preached for the first time in a thousand years.

-- On "the very day" Southern Baptists and other Christians around the world were praying for a particularly resistant Muslim people group, Christians baptized the first known converts -- ever -- among that group.

"They attribute it almost solely to focused prayer," said Lewis Myers of the Foreign Mission Board. "Because in the Muslim environment, people might express some interest in Christ or even say, 'I believe in him.' But the decisive issue for them is baptism. That's the break point with one's traditional religion, culture, even family."

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FMB appointees challenged  
to reveal gospel's 'mystery'

By Chele Caughron

Baptist Press  
2/16/95

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin charged 44 missionary appointees Feb. 14 to make known the "mystery" of the gospel of Jesus Christ to millions of people around the world.

Rankin addressed the appointees in Binkley Chapel at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary -- the first board appointment service ever held at a Southern Baptist seminary.

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"When we (Rankin and his wife, Bobbye) lived in Thailand, we would often observe the Buddhist funerals in our community," Rankin said, "and see the monks as they would encircle the casket, chanting over and over again:

"'Dead, never to arise; gone, never to return; asleep, never to awaken.'

"My heart cried out. If they had only known; but to them the gospel (of the saving power of Jesus Christ) was a mystery," Rankin told the appointees. "And God has called you to make known that mystery, to reveal the precious truth of the gospel."

Forty-seven people responded to Rankin's invitation at the close of the service to surrender their lives to missions -- an unusually high number for an appointment service. At least 51 had responded by the end of the three-day meeting of Foreign Mission Board trustees, which also featured seminary chapel sermons by Rankin and former missionary, Jimmy Hooten, now of the FMB staff.

The appointment service, attended by more than 1,500 people, was held at Southeastern at the invitation of the seminary's president, Paige Patterson, a former Foreign Mission Board trustee.

Each of the 44 appointees testified to God's working in their lives.

Many said their interest in the mission field first was sparked when they studied the world's needs in the Southern Baptist missions education programs, Girls In Action and Royal Ambassadors. Some said they were teaching others about missions when they heard God call them to serve. A few said they were praying for God to send someone into his fields when God told them they were to go.

"God called me. He called me to go and make disciples, to go to people who have never heard," said John Carter, assigned to Mozambique. "Sometimes people say to me, 'How can you go to a place that's so full of disease and sickness? Aren't you afraid?' How can you stay there?"

"I would say to you that I would rather go to the deepest part of Africa, to the bush where those things are, than to stay here and one day have to say to my Lord why I didn't go," said Carter, of Chesapeake, Va.

The 44 individuals appointed bring the total number of missionaries to 4,108 serving in 131 countries and assisting in 22 others. That includes 3,518 career and associate mission personnel and 590 serving two-year terms.

Since 1969, the 150-year-old Foreign Mission Board periodically has held missionary appointment services away from its headquarters in Richmond, Va. Trustees voted in April 1994 to hold even more services in other locations to help communicate missions to a wider range of Southern Baptists.

Southeastern is the first seminary to host an appointment service in the board's history, said Nellie Walters, the board's assistant recording secretary.

"This is an historic event for the Foreign Mission Board and for Southeastern seminary," said Robert Oxford, the board's second vice chairman, who presided at the appointment service. "But most important, it's an historic event for these candidates."

The appointment service at Southeastern, as well as Southeastern's new master of divinity with church planting degree, is evidence of the FMB's strengthened partnership with the six Southern Baptist seminaries, said Keith Eitel, professor of Christian missions and director of Southeastern's Center for Great Commission Studies.

"I think it's symbolic of the fact that the Foreign Mission Board is trying to work in partnership with all the seminaries," Eitel said.

Southeastern's new degree is a four-year program that provides for two years of on-campus study at Southeastern, two years of field service and continued study overseas through the Foreign Mission Board's International Service Corps.

The Foreign Mission Board has scheduled four more missionary appointment services this year.

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Caughron is a Southeastern Seminary newswriter.

NEWS ADVISORY: Concerning the 2/7/95 (BP) story, "Asian Baptists report response among unevangelized peoples," concern has been voiced by one of the individuals quoted in the story, Kent Parks, paragraph 25. Parks is asking editors not to print his name, his designation as a "missionary," or the people group with whom he works, the Sundanese. Parks states: "All of these designations, if printed in articles, most likely will be picked up clipping services which supply foreign embassies. Such an event could literally put my presence in this country in jeopardy. I can tell you stories of other missionaries who have had to leave countries because of the publication of similar articles. Further, any use of the term 'missionary' in context with the country 'Indonesia' only brings to light something the government considers illegal -- i.e. no missionary is allowed in Indonesia, only theological teachers, or those of us under other types of visas. The focus on the Sundanese might bring government attention which might not only jeopardize our ministry but the presence of other mission organizations as well. It could also lead to increased persecution of the few Sundanese believers who are seeking to follow our Lord. Further, the illustration was used by a friend of mine (not me) to share the Truth with the young man who believed." Parks asks that if that paragraph in the article is used, it be revised to refer to "an unreached people group" in Asia.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

Professor withdraws from NAC;  
dean agrees to write commentary By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
2/16/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Carey Newman, assistant professor of New Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., has informed Broadman & Holman Publishers of his decision to withdraw from a writing assignment for the New American Commentary.

David Dockery, vice president for academic affairs and dean of the school of theology at the Louisville, Ky., seminary, has agreed to replace Newman as author of the New Testament volume on Ephesians at the request of the commentary's New Testament editors. Dockery is former general editor of the commentary.

Newman, who agreed in 1990 to write the volume for release in 1996, notified Baptist Sunday School Board President James T. Draper Jr.; Ray Clendenen, general editor of the commentary; and Dockery, who is associate editor for New Testament of the commentary, of his decision on Feb. 10.

In withdrawing from the assignment, Newman cited "ever-growing politicizing of the series" and his belief that "issues other than consensus building and conversing with other evangelicals have come to the fore."

"Since 1992 I have monitored closely the way in which the series fits into the larger, SBC context and the way in which the series is perceived both in and outside SBC circles," Newman wrote.

He maintained his theology has not changed since the earlier agreement, and he told Baptist Press the mutual withdrawal earlier this year of a Joshua volume manuscript by Stephen Wyrick of the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, Texas, was not directly related to his decision.

Dockery said he agreed to write the volume by the due date of Jan. 1, 1996, because of his strong support for the commentary and his recent completion of book manuscript for the 1997 Winter Bible Study on Ephesians for Convention Press, another of the Sunday School Board's publishing imprints.

"This is a way to expand what I have already done, to use materials I was not able to use in that particular book and still help us get the commentary volume out in time for the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention," he explained.

In a Feb. 13 letter to the commentary's editors, Dockery said he believes "the original vision, goals, purposes and editorial policies that have existed for the project since its inception are still in place," adding his confidence that "the commentary will achieve the purposes for which we have prayed and worked over the last several years."

Charles Wilson, vice president for trade publishing at the Sunday School Board, which owns Broadman & Holman, expressed regret at Newman's resignation.

"We cannot control perception, but the reality is that the purpose of the NAC has not changed," he said. "That purpose is to produce volumes that will guide Bible students into the truths of God's Word.

"Some inaccurate news coverage about the Joshua volume may have created the perception of politicizing of the series. Despite claims to the contrary, our decision had nothing to do with politics, interpretation of historical dates or discussions of other critical issues. The manuscript was not consistent with the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy and was not written for the agreed-upon target audience.

"The standards by which manuscripts are judged have not changed for the commentary," Wilson continued. "Those have always been the Baptist Faith and Message Statement, the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, good scholarship, good writing style and relevance to our target audience."

Draper said, "Dr. Newman's concerns, though not founded on fact, are real to him, and we must accept his decision. We will continue to work within the guidelines we all accepted for the NAC, and I am confident God will bless our efforts."

Since its beginning in 1987, 15 volumes of the NAC have been published, with a 16th volume on Kings due for release in late February, Wilson said. In all, 42 volumes of the commentary, including an index, are planned, with the final volume expected to be released in the year 2000.

More than 150,000 copies have been purchased, and three volumes -- Acts, Luke and Proverbs-Ecclesiastes-Song of Solomon -- have been nominees for the Gold Medallion Book Awards, sponsored by Evangelical Christian Publishers Association.

Wilson said the commentary has received "outstanding reviews from American, Canadian, British and German biblical scholars, including not only Baptists, but also Presbyterians, Methodists and Catholics, among others."

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Seminarian finds ministry  
and meaning in silence

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press  
2/16/95

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Even before she could utter a single word, Beryl Bruffey began mastering her language of ministry.

A hearing child born to deaf parents, Bruffey began putting together signs by the time she was eight months old. "As babies try out their voice, I tried out my fingers," she says.

Bruffey is now at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., pursuing a master's degree in church social work. She wants to practice church social work among the deaf community, pointing deaf people toward emotional, relational and spiritual wholeness.

In a sense, Bruffey is following in the footsteps of her parents. Bruffey's father, Clifford Bruffey, served for many years as Baptist chaplain at Gallaudet University in Washington, the only liberal arts college in the nation for deaf people. He and his wife, Ruth Ann, worked as Southern Baptist home missionaries at Gallaudet until retiring Dec. 31.

Beryl Bruffey grew up with students from the university constantly visiting her home. "Mom and Dad became surrogate parents for so many and you begin to see that there is such a need for communication," she says. Since 95 percent of deaf children have hearing parents, many of the students viewed the Bruffeys as people who could empathize with their situation. For many years, Clifford Bruffey was the only deaf chaplain at Gallaudet.

"They loved all people," Bruffey says of her parents. "There was no prejudice, no judgement." She remembers her mother's face exuding intense compassion as a deaf student would tell the story of being disowned by family members. She also recalls her father's calm spiritual insight as he shared Bible passages with distressed collegians.

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Never did Bruffey's parents hide their deafness. Like other good parents, they supported their three children by attending PTA meetings and school sporting events. "When we were on the basketball court or soccer field, my parents would sign and we would sign back," says Bruffey. "Not once was I embarrassed that my parents couldn't hear; that's the strength they instilled in us. Never once growing up did I think of my parents as different or incapable of raising us."

Bruffey began assisting with deaf ministry early in her life. "I grew up interpreting for the deaf," she says. "I was a voice for my dad. We were the Bruffey team. His sermons were in sign and I would voice all that was said for the hearing community. Most of his speaking engagements were to hearing people to heighten their awareness of deaf needs."

For most of her life, Bruffey has been a voice of service and advocacy for the deaf community. "I'm there to be a voice for the deaf, a channel that allows them to go into a hearing world and get equal opportunities."

The seminary's Carver School of Church Social Work last spring recognized her advocacy on behalf of deaf people by presenting her the Michael H. Emory Scholarship for the Pursuit of Social Justice.

While in seminary, Bruffey has been a member of Louisville Christian Deaf Church, a Southern Baptist congregation. This year, however, she began attending another church as part of a social work field placement.

At the Louisville deaf church, Bruffey interpreted for hearing members (mostly spouses and children of deaf members). "An important spiritual need for deaf people is the need for family," she says. "We come to church as a Christian family, but for them it is different. There is no other place where they have such freedom to communicate."

Bruffey is unsure what precise course her ministry will take after graduation. "I pray about that every day," she says. However, Bruffey's interest in strengthening deaf families may lead her to work in a denominational agency. There is a need, she says, for family ministry curriculum written specifically for deaf couples and their children.

Parents of deaf children also need help to learn how to parent deaf children and master sign language, she says. "They need to see (sign language) as something positive and wonderful."

Wherever she serves, Bruffey wants her ministry with deaf people to be one of empowerment. That may include job assistance, parental training or spiritual counsel, says Bruffey. "We must enable people, as Dean (Diana) Garland says, 'to be servants.' If you can help people, spiritually, mentally and physically, you enable people to go back into the community and be servants for Christ."

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(BP) photo available upon request from Southern Seminary.

Christians need to stay aware  
of technology, layman maintains By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press  
2/16/95

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Don't be a Flat Earth Society of Evangelicals, the president of Grand Canyon University recently told students at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Bill R. Williams, a mathematician and educator, delivered the seminary's 1995 Tharp Lectures, a series of sermons on "The Preacher from the Layman's Viewpoint," presented annually by a prominent Christian layman.

Williams has been president at Grand Canyon University since 1978. The Phoenix, Ariz., school, one of 51 Southern Baptist-related colleges and universities, is one of only two schools in the United States to have a hookup with the IBM Watson Center research computer, one of the world's largest computers. Cornell University is the only other school to have access to this "super computer."

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"It is our responsibility to look down the road as far as we can," Williams said. Christians must be sensitive to God in prayer, "to let the Holy Spirit enlighten us, to move us forward (in expressing) the gospel in today's context."

This ability to communicate the gospel will require an awareness of new vocabulary and concepts, Williams said. Achieving that awareness "will take a tremendous amount of work," but the effort is essential "if we are going to be as effective as we can be," he said.

Williams told students they have the important task of preaching the gospel through every avenue of expression possible, and today's technology, he said, is opening up new avenues constantly.

"We've never been at such a wonderful point in history in terms of opportunities to present the gospel," said Williams, who has a doctorate in mathematics from Arizona State University.

"Science and mathematics influence everything around us," he said. "How we look at our physical world at any given time gives us the conceptualization to extend through word and thought how we speak and relate to those things beyond the finite and the physical. We can only do it through analogy, and those analogies come out of our physical world."

"Chaos" will be the guide word for the 21st century, Williams said. All areas -- including technology, business, education, leadership, biology, psychology and even the weather -- face the chaos theory restructuring how everything is understood, he said. "We are experiencing an upheaval of our knowledge base second to none in history."

Citing examples of ideas that have transformed how the world is understood, Williams talked about scientific upheavals in the past three centuries that had major impacts at the time but now are more fully understood: Sir Isaac Newton's invention of differential calculus, the scientific method and Albert Einstein's works on relativity.

"Those concepts are now fading," Williams said, "not in the sense of being wrong, but in the sense of being incomplete." Therefore, people in the secular community are constantly reading and attending seminars to stay up-to-date with ideas.

Unfortunately, "some preachers have kept the Newtonian kind of nomenclature in their presentation of the gospel," Williams said. "We need to move on to the new types of conceptualization and nomenclature. ... We need to stay aware."

"You who have the privilege of proclaiming the gospel have a wonderful calling of God," he said.

But along with that privilege and calling, preachers have "an incredible responsibility (not to let) any dimension of opportunity step by you," he said.

"Don't leave unbuilt any bridge by which we might be able to proclaim the gospel," said Williams, who said he feels his abilities in mathematics are a gift from God. He told students that God's gift of knowledge comes with a responsibility to stay aware of new developments in each field. To help him stay current, he teaches a mathematics class each semester at his university; he also has done post-doctoral work in mathematics at Utah State University.

As the world enters the 21st century, preachers need to take advantage of all opportunities to investigate possibilities, keep up with the latest scientific technologies and terminologies, and stay aware of the impact of discoveries.

"When we talk to this generation of young people about things when we grew up, such as living in a rural area on a farm, ... they don't know what we're talking about," said Williams, who grew up on a farm in Phoenix, Ariz.

"But if you talk to them about computer games, ... about creating out of a quantum fluctuation, some type of an infinite parallel universe, they'll start sparkling."

"But how many of us are going to be able to talk to them in those dimensions?" he asked.

Christians need to have that conversational ability, Williams said, "because the secular world does and they are doing it. ... We have to be aware or we will lose the next generation. ... The secular world is taking advantage of these times in an incredible way.

"We need to be sensitive enough to step forward into these domains and say we're going to let every domain of learning be used for the proclamation of the gospel.

"Don't sit idly by not knowing how to react to those things," Williams said.

"I'm not an alarmist, ... but I believe God has given us the opportunity to do good beyond all description in the proclaiming of his word, but we do have to be alert and responsive to the moment."

Williams told students about the Flat Earth Society, an organization of about 3,000 active members who claim the earth is not round and all scientific research is generated by various agencies to deceive people.

"We don't need an evangelical Flat Earth Society," Williams said. "It worries me that Christianity as a whole will be like a Flat Earth Society because we're not taking opportunities to be progressive and keep up."

Christians can talk about "the finite and the infinite and not do double-speak," he said, "and God is giving us more and more tools today to help us.

"Only faith is the final director of everything we know in this universe and everything we know by analogy about eternity," Williams said. "We have the privilege of either saying the gospel like it could never be said before or stepping back away from it and letting it go by, and we can be the Flat Earth Society of Evangelicals, changing the world very little.

"Don't do that. This institution and every one of our Baptist institutions and any group that proclaims the name of Jesus should step up to these times and let these times proclaim the name of Jesus like never before."

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(BP) photo available upon request from New Orleans Seminary's office of public relations.

Brotherhood Commission  
adds library to SBCNet

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission has added an on-line library to SBCNet, joining the Home and Foreign Mission boards, Woman's Missionary Union and the Sunday School Board in providing information to the 3,625 computer users who are members of the network.

The library is designed to provide timely dissemination about Brotherhood Commission programs, projects, activities and personnel, according to Tim Yarbrough, editor of Adults In Missions materials and Brotherhood SBCNet coordinator.

Disaster relief coordination and information, as well as volunteer recruitment, will be provided in addition to program updates, Yarbrough said.

Other recently added on-line services are state Baptist newspapers for Illinois, New Mexico and Oklahoma, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

SBCNet, the denomination's data communications network, may be accessed by using a computer, modem and a membership kit distributed by the Sunday School Board. Kits, which provide access to services of both computer networks, are available at no charge and 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.

Cost of SBCNet is a flat rate of \$7.95 monthly, plus CompuServe's standard plan charge of \$9.95 monthly.

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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 10 other services aimed at both church staff persons and church members. More than 100 additional basic services are offered through CompuServe.

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

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Volunteers witness challenge  
of feeding Haiti's hungry

By Tim Nicholas

Baptist Press  
2/16/95

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (BP)--"A trip to Haiti will cure a lot of self-pity," reported Talmadge Smith, a member of a team of 13 Baptist volunteers who made such a trip.

The trip was to Haiti's capital city of Port-au-Prince to participate in a feeding program affiliated with the Baptist Convention of Haiti and Foreign Mission Board missionaries. The project is part of a Haiti relief effort sponsored by the FMB and the Brotherhood Commission.

The feeding program consisted of purchasing staples on the open market in large quantities, with volunteer crews repackaging them for delivery to the churches for distribution to their communities. The family packs included about two pounds each of flour, rice and pinto beans, plus a half gallon of cooking oil and a gospel tract in Creole, which is spoken by people on the street.

These people are not starving -- at least not in the simplest sense of the word. But of the 7 million population, it is estimated that more than 5 million are chronically malnourished.

While it may not kill right away, malnourished mothers have smaller, less developed children, and people don't live as long -- people in Haiti only have a life expectancy of 55 years.

On top of this is the fact life is hard. People walk everywhere with tremendous burdens. Men hitch themselves to oversized carts, pulling loads that would challenge an ox. It's said that such men only survive five years after beginning such work.

More than a million of the people live in Port-au-Prince -- nose to elbow. It seems each one has about a square yard of space along a street re-selling something. It could be gum packets or frying some kind of meat or even selling ice bought minutes before. They have to sell fast with temperatures in February at 95 degrees.

Sure, the people won't freeze, but the mosquitoes have plenty of victims at night, while the flies torment throughout the day. Goats running up and down the streets alongside the open sewers kick up constant dust storms. People drive like maniacs, passing on crowded two-lane streets as pedestrians and vendors dodge death. U.S. military vehicles parade through town with automatic weapons at the ready. Soon they will be replaced by United Nations peacekeepers, but the people don't even seem to notice.

The recent embargo which prevented commerce with the rest of the world seems only to have aggravated the problems in Haiti. Trying to force a change in government, the embargo kept the common folk from food.

Slash-and-burn farming techniques, coupled with less than 36 inches of annual rainfall, have caused Haiti to be labeled by the United Nations, according to FMB missionary Mark Rutledge, as "an ecological disaster area" and "unsalvageable."

"You can't have a heart and not be moved," said Virginia volunteer Rodney Johnson. John Henry, of Florence, Miss., added, "We feel needed, helping them do what they can't do for themselves."

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The Haitian Baptist convention decided to help the people immediately after the embargo was lifted by providing the high-protein food. Each Baptist church provided lists of families in their neighborhoods, with the food first going to one-parent families, the aged and infirm. At first each family would get six packages. Then the churches decided the food could go farther if they only distributed three packages.

The program began in November. By early February, the recipient list had reached about 10,000 families of 40,000 individuals. Church leaders were reporting the people had never been more receptive to the gospel as a result of the food distribution project.

The distribution is slated to continue through March. At that point other projects will come on line, including water well repair and medical clinics. The volunteer projects complement what Southern Baptist missionaries have been doing in water well drilling and agricultural work -- including experimental farming and goat herd improvement.

"It's a labor of love," said Harry Campbell, who, with his wife Nancy, coordinate the volunteer teams. Campbell reiterated what Southern Baptist hunger fund promoters have been saying for years. Every penny donated for world hunger relief goes to specific world hunger relief projects.

Volunteers took time to help with delivery of the food packs -- to nearby churches and to churches miles off the nearest paved road. One delivery was made to a little community at the head of what you might call a mountain trout stream. Verdant vegetation was sprouting for about 100 yards on each side of the water. Beyond that the land returned to its browns and grays, sparsely planted if at all.

Running about in that village in the cleft of a mountain range with the corn stored in the trees to protect it from insects was a tike wearing a Mississippi State University tee shirt. The name Christy was printed on the back.

Felix McElhane of Coldwater, Miss., made a run to a distant village. "Every time we'd slow down, someone would be rubbing their stomach with their hand out. I don't believe any of them have ever been fully fed."

"From their body language and the looks they give, the people are appreciative," said Campbell. Many would pose for pictures of the distribution. In fact, most Haitians would respond pleasantly to a wave and a "Bonjour," even to the rarely seen white faces in the trucks.

The white faces included Bobby and Dixie Kennedy of Wesson, Miss., who gave the trip to one another for Christmas. Half of the Mississippians' expenses were borne by the Mississippi Disaster Relief program administered by the Brotherhood department of the convention board.

If going to Haiti "doesn't melt your heart and make you grateful for what you've got, something's wrong with you," Bobby said.

Volunteer Jim White of Jackson, Miss., a retired pilot, said, "I'm 74 years old. If I'd started this long ago, think of what I could have done." He added, "It's not only what we can do for these people -- it enriches our lives."

Mississippi team leader, Steve Griffin, pastor of Bogue Chitto Baptist Church near McComb, had an opportunity to preach in one of the churches. Said Griffin, "I shared hope in Haiti, and that hope is Jesus Christ. Our team did it in the way Jesus expects by reaching out and meeting the physical needs with the love and compassion of Jesus thereby opening the door to minister to their spiritual needs."

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Lewis Drummond resting  
after cancer surgery

Baptist Press  
2/16/95

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Lewis A. Drummond, former president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, was reported resting well following surgery to remove a malignant tumor in his colon.

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He underwent surgery Feb. 14 at Duke Medical Center, Durham, N.C. His wife, Betty, is with him.

Drummond had cancer treatment and surgery about five years ago, according to his office at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala., where he has been Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth since 1992. Drummond was president at Southeastern, in Wake Forest, N.C., from 1988-92 and previously was an evangelism professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

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RTVC names Dillard  
as senior consultant

By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press  
2/16/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Doug Dillard has been named a senior consultant for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

Dillard had since 1991 been vice president of external relations for the RTVC.

"Though Doug could have retired this year," said Jack Johnson, president of the RTVC, "we've asked him to stay on as a consultant to help us in the area of denominational relations. He has some unique abilities and is well-known throughout the Southern Baptist Convention."

Johnson said Dillard would also retain his responsibilities as executive editor of "BEAM International," the commission's quarterly magazine.

Dillard, who created the cartoon character "Bro. Blotz" in 1961, has for almost 27 years been editorial cartoonist for the Baptist Standard, the weekly newsmagazine of Texas Baptists. At conventions and other meetings over the years he has given away more than 40,000 personalized cartoons.

Dillard said he sees his new role as being a goodwill ambassador, speaking and entertaining on behalf of the RTVC, and serving as an RTVC liaison to SBC agencies and institutions.

In 1993 Dillard received the Texas Baptist Communications Award, presented annually by the Baptist General Convention of Texas to "a person who has made significant contributions to the religious life of Texas through the communications media."

One of Dillard's editorial cartoons received a Freedom's Foundation honor certificate. More than 1,000 of his originals have been placed in the archives of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, as documents of church history studies and as commentary on contemporary ethics. He also has illustrated four books and two award-winning filmstrips.

A graduate of Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Dillard began his ministry in a traditional way as a country pastor, youth evangelist and religious educator. In 1965 he pioneered in developing the field of church public relations by establishing his own company, which was called Ministry of Ideas. His company published "The Vary Idea," an idea digest in church public relations and promotion.

As president of Mayes International in the late 1970s, he was author and editor of Campus Crusade's billion-dollar fund-raising program. While with Mayes, he directed operations for six national and international campaigns.

Dillard was consultant for the Key 16 national prayer program on Inauguration Day 1980, when more than a million prayer meetings, involving almost every Christian body, were conducted nationwide.

He did public relations for 20th Century Fox's promotion of Johnny Cash's "Gospel Road" and for astronaut Jim Irwin's "High Flight" foundation. He also did public relations for evangelist Freddy Gage's crusades and "Pulpit in the Shadows" drug rehabilitation halfway house in Houston and for evangelist James Robison's crusades and TV ministry.

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He was on the faculty of the SBC Sunday School Board's first public relations workshop. This led to a series of conferences sponsored by the board's church administration department for the purpose of teaching public relations to church leaders from Florida to California.

A native of Temple, Texas, Dillard helped found a mission church when he was 16 years old and was pastor of his first full-time church when 17. During his college and seminary years he was involved in 127 youth revivals as either preacher or singer. As missions chair for the Baptist Student Union at Baylor, he helped double the university's BSU mission points -- from 26 to 52.

Dillard has been named to "Who's Who in Public Relations" and "Who's Who in the Southwest." He is a former member of the Public Relations Society of America and former president of Texas Baptist Public Relations Association.

He can be contacted at his home office: 2314 North Shiloh Road, Garland, TX 75044, telephone (214) 495-6728.

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Zambia judge orders parties  
to work out differences

By Mark Kelly

Baptist Press  
2/16/95

LUSAKA, Zambia (BP)--A judge has ordered Southern Baptist missionaries and Zambian Baptist leaders to resolve their two-year-old dispute over missionary work permits on their own.

The dispute, which was scheduled for trial in mid-November and has been postponed several times, is an internal church matter and should never have been brought to court, the judge told representatives of the two sides in a February hearing in his chambers.

After hearing statements from missionary and convention leaders and asking several questions, the judge ordered the parties to try again to resolve their dispute amicably. He also directed that temporary work permits be issued until a final resolution is reached, according to missionary Bonita Wilson, acting administrator of the Southern Baptist mission organization in Zambia.

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

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

The mission organization protested the decision and filed a lawsuit after other appeals failed. A court hearing began Nov. 11 to decide the dispute. The judge, however, delayed the case until December, then extended the postponement to Jan. 26 and again to Feb. 8.

The order to issue temporary work permits means six missionary families whose permits have expired will be able to stay for now, Wilson said.

If negotiations fail to produce an agreement, the judge said he will consider another request for a hearing.

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

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

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

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Stone Brothers new focus:  
ministry of encouragement

By Brian Smith

Baptist Press  
2/16/95

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--Rick, Randy and Rodney Stone began singing together when they were ages 5, 4 and 3 in the church where their father was the minister of music and their mother was church pianist.

"We had good role models, and it was just kind of born in us," said Rick, during the recently reunited trio's visit to the Missouri Baptist Evangelism Conference.

Rick began playing trumpet in the fourth grade, and Randy and Rodney followed soon after, and the brothers grew up performing as a trio in churches across the Southern Baptist Convention, known for a rich blend of vocal harmonies punctuated by the bright heraldry of their trumpets.

But in 1980 they went their separate ways.

Randy served as youth and music minister for Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn., until 1983, when he joined younger brother Rodney in California. Rodney had gone west in 1980 to pursue his dream of a career in television and film production in Los Angeles.

While in Los Angeles, Rodney worked with Warner Brothers and other production companies. But in December 1994, "it was like a light shone through the darkness that I was to walk away from all of that and go full time with the Stone Brothers."

That decision was a tough one, he said, since he had a family and had realized his dream of a successful production career.

"To have everything I had ever dreamed of happening, and have God say, 'Leave it,' that was a different faith than I had ever known of." He now lives in Osage Beach.

Randy, meanwhile, left Hollywood in 1987 for Ocala, Fla., where he and his wife have had a full-time music evangelism ministry.

Oldest brother Rick attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, where he received a master's degree in religious education in 1983. He then accepted music ministry positions in First Baptist Church, Tampa, Fla., in 1983 and First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla., in 1985. Since 1991, he has lived in Huntsville, Ala., and has led choral workshops and revivals.

Now that the Stone Brothers are back as a trio, they feel they have a special ministry of encouragement.

"Our focus is the home -- to encourage fathers to be men of conviction and integrity and men of the Word, and moms to be the heartbeat of love in the home," Rick said.

A big part of the brothers' ministry of encouragement is directed to church staff. "We have never seen so many discouraged full-time ministers in the local church," Rick noted. "It's scary to realize the unrest of ministers."

The Stones want ministers to realize it is OK to let people know they are hurting, Rick said. "Ministers need to be natural, be themselves and be transparent," he said. "The world is not looking for a man who is a great preacher. The world is looking for a preacher that is a good man."

Randy said another facet of their service is to ministers' children. "They need to know they are not just a chip off the old block, but God has a work for them. It would revolutionize our country if preachers' kids and ministers of musics' kids -- and we are three of them, we know -- would get sold out to the Lord."

The trumpets, of course, remain. "People love the trumpet, it's a universal instrument -- biblical," Rick noted.

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