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-- BAPTIST PRESS

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March 14, 1995

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Overseas growth evidence
of God's spirit moving

By Mark Kelly

Baptist Press
3/14/95

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The spirit of God is moving in the world and Southern Baptist foreign missionaries report remarkable progress in starting churches, discipling believers and training leaders in 1994.

Overseas Baptists affiliated with Foreign Mission Board missionaries started 2,162 new churches, continuing a surge of church starts that has more than doubled the number of overseas congregations since 1987.

Membership in those churches pressed close to the 4 million mark, discipleship training enrollment almost doubled and enrollment in residential Bible schools and seminaries increased 18.6 percent.

In fact, developments in several countries represented encouraging progress toward the Foreign Mission Board effort to give everyone in the world an opportunity to respond to the gospel.

-- Nigerian Baptists started 437 new churches in 1994, the largest annual number ever recorded in any country in Southern Baptist foreign missions history. That represents one-fifth of the 2,162 churches organized worldwide and illustrates Africa's responsiveness to the gospel. Almost half of 1994's new Baptist churches overseas were African congregations.

-- Southern Baptist missionaries in Mozambique witnessed an explosion of new churches as refugees from the country's newly ended civil war have returned home. Mozambicans who came to Christ through the ministry and witness of Southern Baptist relief workers in refugee camps have shared the gospel and started churches as they make their way back home. In Zambezia province, the number of churches doubled from 30 to 60 in one year and the number of believers grew from 10 to 5,000 since 1988.

-- Among unreached peoples in highly restricted areas of the world, the number of congregations to which Southern Baptists relate more than doubled, from 131 in 1993 to 299 in 1994. The number of new churches started by Southern Baptist work quadrupled, from 37 in 1993 to 144 in 1994.

In Cambodia, ravaged by decades of war, churches are "springing up all over the place," said a Southern Baptist relief worker. In February, leaders from 40 Baptist congregations met to organize the first-ever Baptist association in Cambodia. They plan to organize a national convention.

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-- Missionary Wade Akin's "pioneer evangelism" strategy in the central Brazilian state of Minas Gerais has resulted in a burst of church growth. The strategy trains lay people in personal evangelism with a goal of starting new churches. The strategy's success has led Brazilian Baptists to apply it nationwide, setting a goal of 3,500 new churches by A.D. 2000.

"The number of new churches being started is the most accurate reflection of effectiveness in being on mission with God," said Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin. "Each place a new congregation of believers is organized, a nucleus of witness and ministry is established that continues to extend the gospel beyond the work of the missionary and national evangelists.

"A growing, reproducing network of local churches, bearing witness to the saving grace of Jesus Christ within a culture and local language, represents the greatest potential for giving everyone in the world an opportunity to hear, understand and respond to the gospel."

Southern Baptists support about 4,100 missionaries in 132 countries (with work in 25 others) through contributions to the Cooperative Program unified giving plan and to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

The solid 7.1 percent increase in church starts continued a level of growth evident in 1993, when overseas Baptists broke the 2,000 new church mark for the first time.

After almost 40 years of 3 percent to 4 percent annual growth, Southern Baptists have moved into a range of 7 percent. The goal is 10 percent annual growth by A.D. 2000, said Jim Slack, the board's evangelism and church growth analyst. By comparison, 878 new churches were organized in 1987.

Membership in affiliated churches grew 4.9 percent to 3,918,915 during 1994. Enrollment in Bible-teaching ministries grew 6.3 percent to 2,371,215. Enthusiasm for those gains, however, is tempered by the fact that church membership grew by only 182,966.

But baptisms increased by a remarkable 15 percent in 1994. Southern Baptist missionaries reported 302,132 baptisms -- the first time annual baptisms have ever topped 300,000.

"Even though record growth was established in both these areas, when compared to baptisms, we can see the long-standing 'back door' problem still exists in most churches," Slack said. "Gains would be phenomenal if the 'back door' problem could be minimized."

Toward that end, Southern Baptist missionaries in two countries of Spanish South America have concluded two years of research on attrition in Baptist churches, Slack said. Their studies show many church members know what they should do as Christians but don't follow through. Strategies to help them live out their faith have been implemented in those countries, and the research is being expanded to other Southern Baptist fields.

One indicator of progress toward closing the "back door" is a dramatic increase in discipleship enrollment from 49,214 in 1993 to 95,407 in 1994. Although that new figure benefited in part from improved reporting procedures, it still reflects encouraging growth, Slack said.

The number of new missions -- an indicator of growth potential -- exceeded 25,000 for the second year in a row with 25,646. That represents only a 1.3 percent increase over 1993 but brings the number of churches and preaching points to 62,284 -- 82 percent of the Bold Mission Thrust goal for churches by A.D. 2000.

Leadership development reached a new high as the number of seminaries and Bible schools increased 11.5 percent to 252 and enrollment grew 18.6 percent to 17,282. However, enrollment in Theological Education by Extension (TEE) centers actually declined 1.6 percent to 15,563.

"The TEE decline is alarming because extension education almost always services the growing edges of the work, where most of the preaching points are located," Slack said. "If these potential new church starts can't get training for their leaders, many won't develop into churches."

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"Our basic task is evangelism that results in indigenous Baptist churches," Rankin said, "but without a parallel emphasis on training leadership, church growth would quickly diminish. To keep pace with what God is doing in evangelism and church growth, we must give high priority to theological education and training national leaders God is calling to lead the churches."

"The exciting increase in growth among the unreached and limited-access peoples and cities has brought about an immediate and urgent need for leadership," Slack added. "Not having had any churches in these places, discipleship and leadership training resources haven't been available. In many cases, no Bible has been published in these people's languages."

"Leadership development programs are being developed as quickly as possible in these places, but they're starting from scratch," he said. "A priority has to be placed on extension education to get new congregations off to a good start."

Southern Baptists are in the middle of a "decade of destiny," said Avery Willis, Foreign Mission Board senior vice president for overseas operations.

"These reports show we're in the middle of a decade of unprecedented growth," he said. "I believe it's our decade of destiny as Southern Baptists."

"More churches have been started overseas in the last seven years than in the Foreign Mission Board's first 143 years," Willis said. "God has prepared our harvest, and we're trying to keep up with him."

"The last five years of this century will answer the question of whether Southern Baptists will take the gospel to all peoples as God has been preparing us to do."

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(BP) photo (vertical) mailed 3/10/95 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet News Room.

**Holy Spirit essential
for preaching, Quicke says**

By Pat Cole

**Baptist Press
3/14/95**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Preaching without the Holy Spirit "can excite the mind and pass the hour, but it cannot change lives and transform society," according to a British Baptist seminary president.

"It can arouse gratitude from a listener, and it can answer questions from an inquirer, but it cannot give life," said Michael Quicke, principal of Spurgeon's Colleg in London during a March address at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "It can attract a crowd and build a church and develop a TV ministry, but it will not have lasting fruit."

Quicke delivered the E.Y. Mullins Lectures on Preaching at the Louisville, Ky., school, in connection with the seminary's 10th National Conference on Biblical Preaching, March 6-10.

Good preachers are much more than able communicators and effective word smiths, said Quicke.

"There's more to preaching than speaking," he noted. "There's more to God's Word than words. If we do not grasp this, we will be homiletical functionaries grounded in the basement when all the time the Lord wants us to take the elevator and rise up into his air and into his light."

Yet Quicke stressed reliance on the Holy Spirit is no reason for preachers to neglect preparation. "Preachers must always be willing to learn and learn more," he said. "The Holy Spirit does not object to hard work."

The Holy Spirit's role in preaching begins in the preparation stage, Quicke emphasized. "In the very first conscious moment of preparation, there must be this act of collaboration and if you leave it too late, it is too late."

God's call to preach the gospel is not based on "self-selection" or "natural gifting," said Quicke. Rather, God is responsible for the choosing and anointing of God's messengers, he said.

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"Many who are good with words are not called to preach, and so many who can occupy the pulpit with apparent flair are never attended by the power of the Holy Spirit's deep conviction," Quicke said.

Quicke warned against "self-starter spirituality" among preachers. He noted in his early ministry he thought he was responsible for establishing communication with God. "It was entirely the other way around," he said. "For when I come in order to prepare for him, I'm joining in as the Great Intercessor is already praying for me."

Dependence on the Holy Spirit allows preachers "to be our own persons," Quicke observed. "Paradoxically, the more I rely on him the freer I become to be me as I've heard the Word of God speak."

Quicke said the Holy Spirit inspires preachers to convey a message of love that extends beyond both the preacher's love of preaching and love of God. "We must love the people and love God's vision for the community," he said.

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**Speaker links moral decline
to loss of expository preaching** By Michael Duduit

**Baptist Press
3/14/95**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Bp)--The church faces a crisis of values and belief today because it has neglected expository preaching in recent years, according to Walter C. Kaiser of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

"There is a continuing crisis in that expository preaching has lain dormant and with it many advocates, practitioners or even demands from the pew during this critical century that could ill afford such a tragic loss," Kaiser asserted.

Kaiser, a professor of Old Testament and widely published author at the Massachusetts seminary, addressed the 10th National Conference on Biblical Preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., March 6-10. Expository preaching is essential if lay people are to learn how to study the Bible themselves, Kaiser said.

"There must be a return to preaching the whole counsel of God if we wish to halt the current fad and appetite for 'junk food,' artificial preservatives, unnatural substitutes and carcinogenic spiritual food being served Sunday after Sunday to languishing Christian congregations," he told the audience of pastors.

Kaiser identified expository sermons as those which derive from the biblical text both their shape and content. He said he believes an authentic expository sermon uses the full "teaching block" or unit of thought (normally a minimum of one paragraph of biblical text), rather than a few words or a single verse of the text. "A paragraph (or its equivalent) is the simplest, most concise statement of a single idea," he said, and if the sermon is to have any authority in this day and age, "it must have the divine authority claimed in the text as its warrant."

Arguing that much of the collapse of moral and spiritual values in contemporary society can be traced to the scarcity of biblical knowledge, Kaiser said "a consistent and systematic exposition of the Scriptures will help restore order, end the habits of a violent society and repair damaged relationships at every level of society."

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**Preaching professor cautions
against 'baptized psychology'**

**Baptist Press
3/14/95**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Today's preaching should be relevant to society but must avoid "pop psychology dipped in the Bible," noted a Southern Baptist preaching professor.

An understanding of contemporary society is necessary if pastors want to be theologians for their congregations, said Craig A. Loscalzo, Victor and Louise Lester Associate Professor of Christian Preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He spoke during the Louisville, Ky., school's 10th National Conference on Biblical Preaching, March 6-10.

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"You have to be able -- Sunday after Sunday after Sunday -- to theologically understand what's going on in the world and to be able to go to your congregations with a word from God," said Loscalzo. That word, he said, must help them "to theologically make sense out of their anxiety" which they experience living in the modern world.

Loscalzo emphasized every locale has its unique cultural expression and world view. "Take some time to evaluate what you're doing, evaluate the cultural issues going on in your church," Loscalzo urged. Preachers should then ask themselves if their preaching is "carrying the gospel in all of its richness" to their congregations, he added.

Rather than offer "five easy steps to whip up better sermons" or "how to's," Loscalzo encouraged his listeners to focus on their theology and the idiom of their congregations.

Loscalzo said his own thinking about the modern idiom has led him to new approaches to sermons, including a more narrative approach to his preaching. "Fortunately, our model for this is the gospels themselves," he said.

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Founding trustee's son to chair
Southeastern's board of visitors

By Dwayne Hastings

Baptist Press
3/14/95

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Members of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's new board of visitors gathered for their inaugural meeting March 13, with its chairman bearing a family heritage linked to the seminary.

The chairman, John Simms, is the son of a member of Southeastern's founding board of trustees in 1950, Robert M. Simms Sr.

"I am very much interested in theological education and, even more importantly, what we do with our theology -- insuring it is sound and correct," said Simms, visitors' chairman and a resident of Salem, Va. "My interest in theological education at Southeastern is particularly keen because I'm a native of Raleigh (N.C.) and have known Wake Forest for over 65 years."

The board, composed of supporters of the Wake Forest, N.C., school, is squarely pro-Southeastern. According to its bylaws, approved by the school's board of trustees last fall, the board of visitors is "to provide a means by which a broad range of friends of the seminary can assist in fulfilling its purpose of preparing God-called men and women for service."

It is not simply their work in the financial support of Southeastern that draws this group together: "These men and women have a heartfelt desire to pray for Southeastern and to stand in the gap as encouragers for the folks in the seminary community," said Bart Neal, Southeastern's vice president for external affairs. "They are the seminary's personal goodwill ambassadors."

Board member Clarence Johnson of Charlotte, N.C., wears that mantle comfortably: "I trust this board will be an encouragement to the faculty and administration. The board of visitors will be visible evidence that, while some may talk against the seminary, there are many people who appreciate the sacrifices of professors and administrators in their service at Southeastern."

While board members will be counted on for their ability to raise funds, Neal said it will not be their only responsibility: "We value their role in securing financial resources for the seminary; yet their commitment to share with others what God is doing on this campus is so very important to Southeastern's long-term vitality. The establishment of this board is no small accomplishment in the future of Southeastern."

There is a heritage of education on this campus that must be reclaimed, said Simms, a member of First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va. "Being a resident of Virginia, I am very much interested in what happens at Southeastern because many of its graduates come to Virginia as pastors. We need all the good, solidly educated, theologically sound pastors we can get in Virginia."

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The creation of a formal body of proponents is not a new concept among higher-level educational institutions. The arrangement takes advantage of group dynamics, said Johnson, explaining, "When people join together and get involved with others who support a certain cause, they begin to see the excitement and sense what is happening."

A member of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte, Johnson said this enhanced effect of individuals joining together in a common effort is true in all areas of life: "People will begin to do things instead of just talking about doing things."

The concept of the board of visitors has a precedent in U.S. history. Colleges in early America founded for the preparation of ministers, such as Harvard, had such a body of friends. The board's purpose then was to monitor by personal visits to the school's campus both the spiritual temperature and theological integrity of the colleges.

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People best resource for promoting church, he says

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
3/14/95

EULESS, Texas (BP)--Members of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, plan to visit 11,000 homes in their community this spring, passing out flyers and personally inviting residents to join them for worship on Easter Sunday.

"Christmas and Easter are typically high attendance Sundays," Mark Yoakum, minister of education at the church, said. "A lot of people come to church on those days who don't come at any other time of the year. We've just decided to make the most of it and try to make them aware of what our church has to offer."

Yoakum led a session on "How to Make Your Church and Sunday School Known in Your Community" during the National Sunday School Directors Seminar, May 10-11 at the Euless church. The seminar was sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"The best source for making your Sunday school known in your community is your people," Yoakum said. "We just need to help create the enthusiasm for sharing our story."

Yoakum discussed a variety of methods for creating awareness of a church and its programs, including:

-- Advertising in newspapers and on radio, television and billboards. "Just make sure you target your ads," he said. "For example, if you are trying to reach teen-agers and children, don't put an ad in the newspaper. They won't read it. And if you're trying to reach non-Christians, don't put it on the religion page. They'll never see it. Consider putting it on the sports page or in the lifestyle section."

-- Distributing to newcomers in the community "welcome bags" filled with candy, fruit, food items and information about the church. Newcomer mailing lists often can be obtained through the local Chamber of Commerce, Yoakum said.

-- Sending direct mailings to target audiences, such as a flyer about an upcoming divorce recovery seminar to the recently divorced or a promotional brochure about the church's "Mothers Day Out" program to families with preschoolers.

-- Offering Vacation Bible School and Backyard Bible Clubs. "This is an excellent way to reach children and their parents," Yoakum said. "You can get lots of prospects through VBS."

-- Having a "Friend Day" where members are encouraged to bring an unchurched friend to Sunday school. "Promote it for several weeks with the pastor, deacons and Sunday school teachers standing up in front of the church holding up cards with the names of friends they plan to invite," he said.

-- Sponsoring a city-wide crusade or revival.

-- Offering seasonal festivals, such as a "Pumpkin Patch" party instead of Halloween.

-- Showing special films or hosting Christian music concerts.

-- Off ring seminars on specific topics like marriage and finances.

-- Conducting door-to-door visitation and making phone calls to prospects.

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-- Hosting DiscipleNow r tr ats and other events for youth.
 -- Opening your church gymnasium and/or family life center for community use.
 "Just get your people involved in the process and have fun with it," Yoakum said. "People (in the community) will pick up on your enthusiasm."
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Motivate workers by encouragement,
 BSSB staffer tells church workers By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
 3/14/95

EULESS, Texas (BP)--"PMMFI."

According to Ken Marler, that's one acronym every Sunday school director should remember.

"It stands for, 'Please Make Me Feel Important.' If we want to help our folks succeed, we've got to help them feel good about themselves. And we've got to let them know we appreciate what they're doing," Marler, a growth consultant for the Baptist Sunday School Board's Bible teaching-reaching division, said. He led a session on "How to Motivate and Encourage Workers" at the National Sunday School Directors Seminar, May 10-11 at First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas.

Marler shared four other tips for motivating Bible study workers:

- 1) Involve everyone (Sunday school council, department directors, teachers) in setting goals.
- 2) Challenge everyone to achieve their top potential.
- 3) Help strengthen their self-image.
- 4) Spark their desire to take initiative by allowing and inspiring them to be creative.

For workers to perform effectively, Marler said they also must know what they are supposed to do, their scope of authority, the standards for a job well done, where they are falling short, to whom they are responsible and the rewards for good work.

But Sunday school directors really interested in motivating and encouraging their workers should start by taking a good, long look in the mirror, Marler said.

"Our attitude is so important. We need to make sure we are setting a good example," he said.

When he thinks about motivating church workers, Marler said he often remembers a "parl of wisdom" from successful college football coach Lou Holtz.

In his book "Grits, Guts and Genius," Holtz says: "Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do what you do."

"We all have the ability to get the job done in our church and influence our community for Jesus Christ, but we don't all have the right attitude and the motivation to follow through. That comes from within," Marler said.

Effective leaders, he said, are "servant leaders" who lead by example. They also create a sense of urgency about their work, paint a picture of how things can be, lift up small successes and communicate to workers that it's OK to fail.

Sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board, the Euless conference was one of seven National Sunday School Directors Seminars planned this year. Future seminar sites are San Antonio, Texas; Jackson, Miss.; Orlando, Fla.; Chicago; Panama City Beach, Fla.; and Louisville, Ky.

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Christian celebs' ghostwriters
 stirs writer to ask questions By Terry Mattingly

Baptist Press
 3/14/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Week after week, the best-seller lists are haunted.

Everyone knows that media stars, tycoons and athletes hire ghostwriters to crank out instant best sellers. Few people are shocked that politicians hire pros to produce sound bites and to pump up campaign-trail volumes about their core beliefs.

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What about all those inspirational best sellers? Behind the scenes, critics are raising ethical, and biblical, questions about writing practices in the \$3 billion market for Christian books.

Many see a growing dependence on ghosts, instead of the Holy Ghost.

All too often, readers are buying a kind of Milli-Vanilli theology, said writer Edward Plowman, whose decades of experience includes work as a media aide to evangelist Billy Graham.

"Few people want to name names, but everyone knows the ghosts are out there and that they're busier than ever," said Plowman, who is finishing a book called "Haunted Houses." "Most of the time, it all comes down to money. A book with a big minister's name on it will sell far more copies than one written by someone else. I mean, Johnny Researcher may be a great writer, but no one knows or cares who he is. Right?"

Thus, ghosts with hot book ideas often court superstars' publishers, offering to share or surrender credit. Do the math: half of the royalties on the sale of 500,000 books is more money than all of the royalties on 50,000.

Not all ghosts are created equal. Some receive credit on a book's cover -- either sharing a "with," "and" or "as told to" byline. Sometimes, the person who actually wrote most or all of a book may be given a mere tip of the hat in the "author's credits." Other ghosts sign legal agreements to stay invisible.

Obviously, said Plowman, many excellent preachers and teachers are not good writers and are helped by a "team approach." In many cases, shared bylines are perfectly acceptable.

"I think there is a valid ministry for collaborators," he said. "But we need to be honest with readers. What offends me is when people do everything they can to conceal the work that other writers are doing for them. This raises some very troubling questions -- especially for Christians."

How controversial is this subject? In the 1980s, Mel White was a legend among Christian ghosts, writing for Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Jim Bakker, W.A. Criswell and others. In 1993, White caused a media storm by announcing that he is a homosexual. Afterwards, he said, many evangelicals were more worried about what he would say about ghostwriting than they were about further revelations about his sex life.

It's probably impossible to know how many religious best sellers are written by ghosts, he said.

"The big celebrity types don't have time to read books, let alone write them. ... It was hard to get someone like Pat Robertson to even read his own book," said White. "The key is that these religious leaders are celebrities and, these days, being a celebrity is everything. ... The so-called authors know, and the publishers know, that most people who buy these things never read them. So in a way, it doesn't matter what's in them. It's all just wasted forests."

This trend hurts readers, said Plowman, because publishers often ignore worthy books as they dash to sign celebrities to "write" megabooks. Meanwhile, some of Christendom's most creative leaders are, with the help of quick-strike researchers, turning out shallow books about fads.

Try to imagine a writer such as C.S. Lewis turning to a ghost for help as he wrote "The Problem of Pain."

"Our greatest writers, like Lewis, struggled to write their books. They didn't dream up a few of the concepts and images and then turn things over to their hired hands. They wrestled with the very words on the page," said Plowman. "Today, people are not taking the time to become engaged with the big issues, in their books. We're all the poorer for that."

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Mattingly, who writes this weekly column for the Scripps Howard News Service, teaches communications at Milligan College in Tennessee. Used by permission of the author.

**New Christians propel
church's rural witness**

By Ken Walker

BELL CITY, Ky. (BP)--The first two people to walk forward on "Here's Hope" commitment day at Bell City (Ky.) Baptist Church are living proof you don't have to be a longtime Christian to tell about the Lord.

Ten-year-old Harold Brown and young adult Jamie Hughes became Christians just last summer. But they were the most active participants in the "Here's Hope" witnessing campaign, said bivocational pastor Bill Dodson.

"At last count Harold had already talked to 120 people," said Dodson, a contractor who lives in Murray, 16 miles from the small southwestern Kentucky community where the church is located. "We gave him a double supply of the Roman Road witnessing tracts. He's working the (elementary) school heavily."

The two young witnesses are among 11 church members who committed to participate in the 60 days of witnessing associated with the "Here's Hope" campaign organized by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Those 11 who committed represented one-third of the attendance on commitment day, a percentage that "pleasantly surprised" the pastor.

Dodson said evangelism is especially important in this community that is so small "the welcome and hurry back signs are on the same post." Any death or addition to the church makes a big impact in such a place, he said.

That's why there was such excitement about the six adults and five young people who committed to "Here's Hope."

"It's brought everyone's attention to the fact that reaching people is a priority," Dodson said. "We have to reach others because we're so few. Not many people move in, so everyone counts."

Although the church hasn't recorded any baptisms yet, the campaign has identified about half a dozen strong prospects.

"I keep encouraging members to keep showing people their tracts," Dodson said. "I think this is one of the best things the Home Mission Board has ever done. We ought to use what they've given us because it's good stuff."

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Study group chairman clarifies WMU status in recommendation," dated 3/10/95, please correct the last sentence in the 11th paragraph to read:

"The Home Mission Board allocated \$266,000 in 1995 for WMU out-of-pocket expenses in the promotion of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering."

Thanks,
Baptist Press

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