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-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 27, 1995

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

**150th birthday party planned
for Southern Baptist Convention** By Martin King

Baptist Press
4/27/95

ATLANTA (BP)--They say the world is coming to Atlanta in June 1996 to observe the 100th anniversary of the modern Olympic games. Southern Baptists are coming to Atlanta in June 1995 to celebrate 150 years of sharing Christ with that world.

Celebration and inspiration are key words for the sesquicentennial convention, according to Marshall Walker who chairs the group planning the observance.

"We will celebrate the rich heritage of this marvelous people called Southern Baptists," Walker said. "But our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will inspire our people anew to the task of proclaiming the gospel to a lost world."

Both aspects are encompassed in the sesquicentennial theme, "Empowered for the Unfinished Task," according to Walker. "This theme statement will serve as a constant reminder that Southern Baptists have served mightily for 150 years, however, the tasks of missions and evangelism are yet unfinished."

Walker said the highlight of the birthday celebration will be Tuesday and Wednesday evening presentations. "Dramatic and musical pageantry the last two years have renewed interest in non-business sessions of the annual meeting. This year will continue that trend.

"Tuesday evening, June 20, we will focus on our history -- early struggles, significant accomplishments and the men and women whose dedication and commitment made the SBC a reality," Walker said. "We will tell the Southern Baptist story in one fast-moving hour of drama, music and inspiration featuring the sanctuary choir and orchestra of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, as well as the SBC Heritage Youth Choir."

Wednesday evening's program includes reports from the Brotherhood Commission, Woman's Missionary Union and the Home and Foreign Mission boards. "The reports will be followed by a one-hour pageant focused on the unfinished task which is missions," Walker said.

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"Wednesday night will feature dramatic depictions of the human needs across our nation and around the world as our missionaries give inspiring testimonies of meeting those needs every day." The adult choir and orchestra from Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., will provide music for the Wednesday evening program.

Walker said the planning group has worked with the Committee on Order of Business to provide brief historical theme interpretations during each convention business session.

"We are so very fortunate that some of the wonderful Southern Baptist statesmen past and present will be with us to address the great distinctives of our denomination," Walker said. Those scheduled during Tuesday sessions are Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee; Robert Naylor, president emeritus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; W.A. Criswell, senior pastor emeritus, First Baptist Church, Dallas; Herschell Hobbs, pastor emeritus, First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City; and James L. Sullivan, retired president, Baptist Sunday School Board.

Wednesday morning's historical vignette will be provided by Roy J. Fish, Southwestern Seminary evangelism professor, while Alma Hunt, former executive secretary of WMU, will speak Wednesday night. A layman from Simpsonville, S.C., Greg Horton, and Paige Patterson, president, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., are scheduled to speak Thursday morning.

The Sesquicentennial Committee and the Historical Commission will have a booth in the exhibit hall. Archival items from SBC agencies will be displayed including, the original minutes from the SBC's 1845 organizational meeting. Historical figures, real and dramatic, are also scheduled for appearances at the exhibit.

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Clip art of the Unfinished Task convention logo is available on SBCNet and from Marshall Walker at the BSSB.

Kate Campbell's true-life music
to precede dad's SBC sermon By Daniel L. Johnson

Baptist Press
4/27/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--There's a saying among music industry officials in Nashville, Tenn.: "It all starts with a song."

But in her music, Kate Campbell proves that statement false. The true-life experiences integrated into her country-folk songs shout: "It all really starts with the life behind the song."

Like her songs, her life is filled with stories of human pathos, humor, faith and hope. These stories are set within the confines of a Baptist preacher's family. "I do best when I write about what I know," Kate said. "I decided that it's OK to write about being a preacher's kid."

Indeed, her life is so interwoven with Baptist tradition and history that she is scheduled to sing before her father, Jim Henry, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, preaches his convention sermon on the opening day of the SBC annual meeting, June 20 in Atlanta's Georgia Dome.

Kate was born in New Orleans "while daddy was in seminary." After his graduation, Henry moved his family to Sledge, Miss., where he was pastor of Hollywood Baptist Church. Years later, in her song, "Mississippi and Me," Kate would write about her earliest childhood memories:

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"Daddy was a preacher in Sledge.
 We were living on gospel and beans.
 Every Sunday night Deacon Jones
 Would give a silver dollar to me.
 On the way home my poor mama
 Would pry it from my hand
 And say it fell from heaven."

Kate said her family's economic conditions improved when they moved to Nashville when she was 3 or 4 years old. Her father became pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church in 1965. Under Henry's ministry, the church's membership grew from about 100 to more than 4,000.

Today the church sits across the highway from Nashville's main tourist attraction, the Opryland theme park and hotel, where Kate's uncle is the hotel's manager. "When we moved, there was no Briley Parkway or Opryland," Kate said. "In fact, Daddy said the prayer at the opening of the Opryland park."

Kate began learning the rudiments of music at age 4 when her parents gave her a ukulele. Piano lessons began at age 6; then guitar lessons. While still in elementary school, she wrote her first song.

But musical training was not the only gift her parents gave her. She was well-grounded with a healthy dose of ethics. She said her family's life experiences during that time molded her attitudes on social issues, such as race relations. These attitudes are reflected in her first Compass Records recording, "Songs From the Levee." "My daddy was one of the first pastors in Nashville to have an open-door policy," Kate said. "He caught some flak for that in the '60s."

Henry, who has a degree in history, also passed his love for that subject to his daughter. She said her father was very aware of the social and historical significance of the time in which he was rearing his family. "My dad is very conscious of historical moments. That's what happened the time he took me to hear Jimmy Carter." Carter, a Southern Baptist, became president when Kate was in high school.

In 1977 when Kate was a junior in high school, Henry was called to become pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., where he currently serves. Kate sang in the high school jazz ensemble, played on the state championship basketball team and was the first female to be elected senior class president of her school, where she graduated in 1979.

While a college student at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., Kate studied history and music. She also was an active voice in Baptist student life, serving as a summer missionary to Lake Tahoe, Nev.; directing the campus ministry ensemble; and writing the theme songs for various BSU retreats she attended.

After graduating from Samford, Kate went to Auburn University in Alabama and earned a master's degree in history, studying under noted historian Wayne Flynt, who is also a Southern Baptist. The subject of her master's thesis was a study on the life of Charles Bell, a Southern Baptist pastor who advocated racial equality and justice in a racially torn South.

In 1984 Kate married Stan Campbell. The couple moved to San Francisco in 1985 where Stan attended Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. While Stan was studying books, Kate was shelving them, working at the seminary's library.

After Stan's graduation, he was called to be minister of youth at Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church in Riverside, Calif. While her husband served there, Kate became the dean of women at California Baptist College.

In 1988, Stan was called as pastor of Orlinda Baptist Church in Nashville. Kate helped her husband's ministry efforts by serving as music director of the congregation.

At this time, Kate began to pursue her career as a professional singer/songwriter and learning the craft of songwriting. To help supplement their income, she also taught history courses at Belmont University in Nashville.

In 1994, Kate's pursuit of her musical dream culminated in a record contract with Compass R cords and the release of "Songs from the Levee." She also was signed as a staff songwriter for Fame Publishing Company in Nashville.

This year has been a busy one for Kate and Stan, who now is a chaplain at a Nashville hospital and doubling as his wife's manager. They recently returned from a tour to Australia with country-folk legend Guy Clark. She also has toured extensively throughout the States, performing at church coffee houses and folk venues.

Although she is not marketed as a "Christian" artist, Kate said her faith is an important aspect of her story songs. "I believe music is a gift, and often reaches more people than the spoken word," she said. "So, my songs reflect my faith and life experiences. I am grateful that God provides me the opportunity to sing and write."

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Johnson is a free-lance journalist and singer/songwriter who lives in Nashville and currently sings bass for the Christian-country group The Fox Brothers. (BP) photo of Campbell available upon request from the BP central office in Nashville.

Oklahoma City mother believes
sons' deaths yielded witness

By Ken Walker

Baptist Press
4/27/95

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--She has appeared on such national television shows as "Today," "NBC Dateline" and "Larry King Live," often dissolving into tears. But after the funeral of her sons, Chase and Colton, Edye Smith radiated peace as she discussed the "why" of their death in the April 19 federal building bombing in Oklahoma City.

Her faith has given her tremendous strength, said the member of First Southern Baptist Church in suburban Del City. Her father, Alabama evangelist Richard Coss, preached the funeral April 25 at the church, where he was staff evangelist from 1976-87.

As she walked into the sanctuary, God revealed the reason to her for the April 19 tragedy: "Before all this happened, I always wanted the people in my office and my husband's family together in one place to hear my dad speak because a lot of them are lost.

"When we got there God told me, 'This is why.' I know that's why this happened, to my kids, anyway -- to make it all come together so all of them could hear about Jesus. There's no doubt in my mind. I think a lot of people got saved that day."

Preaching from Matthew, Mark, 2 Corinthians and Revelation, Coss talked about Jesus' relationship with children and concluded with a look at heaven. He also thanked the firefighters, medical teams and rescue workers for their help during the disaster.

"Jesus has been in the search and rescue business for a long time," Coss told the crowd of nearly 1,000. "Maybe he's found one of you today. The church has counselors in the hall. If you need counseling, prayer, healing or salvation, grab one of those guys and they'll pray for you."

Much of the service remains a blank in his daughter's mind, though she appreciated him calling it a "home-going party." In addition, one Scripture from his sermon stuck with her, Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for such is the kingdom of heaven' (KJV). She had never given that verse much thought before, but it brought her comfort.

So did the emphasis of the funeral. Instead of centering the whole thing around Chase and Colton, she said, her father used it as an occasion to share Christ. She also is grateful for the large turnout and church members who sent flowers and food and called often to tell her of their prayers.

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Although her membership is still at the Del City church, Edye said she hasn't attended there regularly in several years because of the distance from her home. Yet, she said she knows that wherever she goes she is part of the family of God.

"I think I'm having an easier time of this than everyone else because I know I'll see my boys again someday," said Edye, an Internal Revenue Service secretary whose office is five blocks from the bombed-out federal building. "I know they're better off now."

Growing up, Edye wasn't too active in children's missions or youth groups at the church because her family lived an hour away. In addition to serving at the church, her father then operated C-Bar-N (Christ Bars None) Ranch, a facility for troubled and abandoned boys ages 5 to 18.

Between activities at the ranch and twice-weekly church services, she quickly came to know Christ as her Savior. She is grateful for that personal relationship, saying it sustained her through a difficult week. When she heard earlier this year about the South Carolina mother charged with drowning her two sons, she didn't know how she could survive losing her children.

"I've had such peace it's been amazing," she reflected. "I'm at peace. I feel great. I'm sad and lonely, but I know my boys are better off. From 9 o'clock last Wednesday morning, I know they're all right. They've gone to be with Jesus. They're OK. We had to take care of this end of it."

She still looks at their pictures often and home videos, portions of which appeared on national TV the night of the funeral. They help keep alive her favorite memories of her boys, whom she said really loved each other and took care of each other. Individually, she remembers:

-- Chase, who would have turned 4 on June 3, sitting one day in his grandmother's Mercedes. After asking her if she liked her car, he asked if she liked his father's van -- which Tony Smith uses in his heating and air conditioning business. She said yes but he answered, "No, you don't, but when I grow up I'm going to drive a junky van just like my daddy."

-- Colton didn't talk much, but his healthy appetite earned him nicknames like "chunky monkey" and "fat rat" at his day care center. After the bombing, someone commented how Chase couldn't have lived being paralyzed because he loved to run around so much, but Colton would have been happy if you just kept feeding him. "I thought that was cute," she said.

Besides the outpouring of sympathy from her church and family, Edye said her co-workers at the IRS have been extremely supportive. They flooded her with flowers, cards and calls. Some donated their leave time so she could extend her period of recuperation.

Despite the enormous setback, she plans to move ahead with her move into a two-bedroom brick home (she and Tony Smith were divorced last December), which her sons saw the day before the bombing. She said it will mark a new beginning in life, though she will always remember the love and prayers she felt during the past week.

"I never would have imagined there would have been that many people there," Edye said of the more than 10,000 mourners who came to an April 23 memorial service at the state fairgrounds. "And to have President Clinton and Billy Graham there, like my mom said, 'You knew it wasn't just a political thing. They came because they cared.'"

"They came back in the room with us and took the time to talk to each person. They talked with us and hugged us and told us how sorry they were. And they really meant it."

Okla. City nurse finds solace
despite threats on her life

By Teresa Dickens

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--When Mariesa McNeill left for work April 20, she knew it would not be a normal day. She expected her workload to be heavier than usual, but never imagined it would include looking death -- her own -- in the face.

McNeill is a nurse in the pediatric intensive care unit of Children's Hospital of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City.

She had not been on duty April 19, the day a bomb blast created havoc at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building eight blocks east of the hospital. Since so many of the victims were children, McNeill's unit quickly reached capacity.

McNeill's workday began at 7 a.m. She was assigned to two patients, one of which was the 15-year-old girl pulled out of the rubble during the night following the blast. The other patient was not a bomb victim.

The morning was just as McNeill had anticipated -- hectic. She was busy getting acquainted with her patients and their families and carrying out her normal duties as an ICU nurse.

Then, at 9 a.m., the call came and time stood still. The hospital was under a bomb threat and had to be evacuated. But McNeill and her co-workers knew immediately the evacuation would not include them. Their patients were too critical to move, and the staff would not leave without them.

"Our patients were our first concern," McNeill recalled. "Whether or not the bomb threat was real, we could not leave, even if it meant our own lives."

While officials searched the building, McNeill, her co-workers, and family members who refused to leave, waited. An hour would elapse before the bomb threat would be canceled.

"It was an emotional time," she said. "We were faced with the realization that within five minutes we could not be alive."

"But I was not afraid," said the nurse, a member of Northwest Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. "A peace was there. I knew where I would be if I died."

Not until after the bomb threat had ended did McNeill learn that, like her, co-workers had called family members and asked them to pray.

"I called my mother and asked her to pray for us," she recounted. "She then called her friends and asked them to pray with her. That is why I had felt such a peace."

With the bomb threat past, McNeill and her co-workers hoped their schedule could return to some normalcy, for indeed, the unit was filled with critically ill children and worried family members.

And the unit was calm, but only briefly. Instead of being alone, this time they were overrun with people. (The unit is open so visitors are free to come and go.)

Television crews from CBS' "48 Hours" and "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and their spectators, along with local and national governmental leaders, turned the ICU into something more akin to an arena than a hospital.

"The crowds of people and distractions made it difficult to care for the patients," McNeill said. "It also was disturbing to the families, especially those whose children were not involved in the blast."

In the midst of the confusion with the television crews and onlookers, McNeill was drawn into a situation involving a group of visitors. Two of the visitors were intoxicated and threatening to become violent.

Hoping to defuse the situation, she cleared the room except for the two visitors and began talking calmly with them about their concerns.

"The whole time I was talking to them, I was aware that at any moment they could pull out a weapon and kill me," she said.

Within a few minutes, security arrived and escorted the visitors out of the unit. Once again, the threat of danger was suspended.

Soon after this incident, McNeill's 12-hour shift ended. As she left the hospital, she stopped by to visit with a Christian co-worker.

Recalling their discussion, she concluded, "It was a hard day, but I never doubted God's presence with me. I knew he would never leave me. That assurance will get you through any crisis."

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Police chaplain's job:
give a lot of hugs

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
4/27/95

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--In the aftermath of the federal building bombing in Oklahoma City, Phyllis Poe said she's giving a lot of hugs.

"It's my favorite job. I'd do it 24 hours a day if I had the strength."

Poe and her husband, Jack, are chaplains for the Oklahoma City Police Department. Mrs. Poe is a volunteer; Poe is paid by Capital Baptist Association. Poe also serves as senior chaplain for the Oklahoma Army National Guard.

Police officers and military personnel are typically stoic on the job, but Mrs. Poe said the carnage in this disaster has caused them to cry and accept hugs.

"We learned early to just stand next to them. We let them know they're alive and they're OK," Mrs. Poe said. One officer asked her to pray with him before he "went back down into the pit."

Immediately after the explosion, the Poes gave bottled water to rescue workers. Mrs. Poe organized food distribution volunteers at the police command post. In the midst of grief, "the love and support has been phenomenal," she said.

Mrs. Poe asked Southern Baptists to pray for chaplains and rescue workers. "Intercede for our minds, spirits and the energy to keep going."

Stress from such trauma can last a year or more and lead to alcoholism and spouse abuse, Mrs. Poe said. To intervene, the Poes will offer debriefing seminars to officers and their spouses.

The Poes are among at least 28 Southern Baptist chaplains working in the Oklahoma City disaster, said Lew Burnett, Home Mission Board director of military chaplaincy.

Lowell Lawson, national chaplaincy consultant, was sent to Oklahoma City as a "chaplain to the chaplains," Burnett said.

Many chaplains and rescue workers are also dealing with personal grief, Burnett said. Among them are Poe, with a friend who worked for the Secret Service and was killed in the explosion.

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Southern chapel service kindles
prayer, Bible reading, singing

By Ken Walker

Baptist Press
4/27/95

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Although students say the conflict over Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's social work school has overshadowed an emotionally charged April 13 chapel service, they express hope that lasting revival will come to the seminary.

"I felt a great move of the Spirit," commented Chuck Fanning, a social work major from Aurora, Mo., about the chapel program. "I was glad to be a part of it. This is what the Christian life is all about, relating ourselves to God. When that happens, we get reconciled to others."

Like other recent services where John Avant, pastor of Coggin Avenue Baptist Church, Brownwood, Texas, has spoken, dozens streamed to the altar when he finished.

Prayers, confessions and impromptu Scripture readings and singing continued for more than 90 minutes after Avant's description of a January revival at his church that spread across the nation.

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Deep sobbing echoed from the altar as many prayed in pairs and hugged each other. As the time of prayer continued, nearly a dozen students went to the microphone to confess sins, read Scriptures or encourage more people to pray.

"I haven't taken the Word seriously," said a first-year student from the adjoining Boyce Bible School. "As a youth minister, I haven't given the whole counsel of God."

A few minutes later, two male seminary students confessed they had been addicted to pornography.

"I thank God he has given me the ability to overcome," said one of the men, who was equally concerned about his broken relationship with Christ. "I have strived to rekindle my friendship with him, but I'm more often worried about the things of this life," the student confessed.

When Avant asked for others to pray for the man, a dozen people gathered around. The numbers quickly swelled to two dozen.

Not long after that, a woman from another denomination confessed inward bitterness toward Southern Baptists because of the school's political controversies.

"I let it grow into prejudice," she said. "I want us to be unified in the body of Christ. I ask your forgiveness."

"This had one of the deepest impacts on me because of the division," said Avant after others talked about sins of anger, resentment and lack of faith.

"To see (the chapel) nearly full and the response ... it was very deep. The spontaneous singing was different from other meetings, and students standing and reading Scripture hasn't happened before."

A week after the service, others echoed his comments.

"It made me recognize some actions in my life that wouldn't be pleasing in God's eyes," said Melissa Beckler, a first-year student from Gadsden, Ala. "I realized I needed to refocus my emphasis while in seminary: Revival is possible, but I think it has to start in the individual's life before it happens in the community."

"It was a very spiritual and emotional time," echoed Jill Craig of Frostburg, Md. An employee of the seminary's placement office, her husband, Bill, is a divinity student. "It dug deep and brought out a lot of feelings I had been hiding inside for a long time. I could tell the Holy Spirit was in this place and feel the love of God."

"For me it was the most moving experience since I've been in seminary," said Chip Jones, a second-year theology student from Lexington, Va. "It was a time of deep conviction, confession and renewal."

"I know a number of people who feel this is a springboard in our lives and hope it can be that in the life of the seminary. Reconciliation is only possible when people deal with their own relationship with God. It seems to me we spend so much time dealing with the externals that internals fall by the wayside."

Jones, who pastors a country church east of the city, also spoke of the "finger-pointing atmosphere" at the campus. Earlier that week, student and faculty supporters of the social work program rallied to express their dissatisfaction with the administration's conservative policies.

Fanning acknowledged applauding the long line of speakers at the rally, but indicated he had second thoughts about its politically-charged atmosphere.

"I talked to a friend (later) who told me, 'If we have to assassinate someone to win a victory, it's never worth it,'" Fanning said. "I heard a lot of anger and name-calling. Though there was a grain of truth in what was spoken, I wish there was another way to find reconciliation."

Nellie Bob, who came from Romania last year to enroll in the school of social work, said she believes that will occur as people submit themselves to God the same way they did in the service.

Bob, who assists with the chapel program, said she detected a difference as she was standing near the pulpit before the meeting began.

"People were different spiritually -- they were open to the Spirit of God," she said. "I'm still impressed by that chapel. I had a time when I felt that would never happen here. I felt the Lord was moving; he moved me. I've heard a lot of good things about it. I just hope it's not a hay fire."

The Romanian citizen expressed disappointment that the service ended so quickly. A friend at Wheaton College told her about a revival service going for nine hours. Others she has heard about lasted even longer.

Nevertheless, the Lord is doing a great work, she said. And, she said although she hopes for reconciliation with all her heart, Bob said it will only happen if people truly desire it.

In the meantime, she said there is much that students can learn from the campus controversies.

"Sometimes trouble needs to come to create character and patience. It's purifying, like gold in the fire. The Lord wants to do something here for both sides.

"People worship formally, which is not as it should be. We have to be models first. Although problems are hard for everyone, we have to learn from it and be open to God."

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Block, Blaising will
join Southern faculty

Baptist Press
4/27/95

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Biblical scholar Daniel Block and theologian Craig Blaising have been named to the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., effective Aug. 1.

Block has taught since 1983 at Bethel Theological Seminary, a Baptist General Conference school in St. Paul, Minn. Previously, he was on the faculty at Providence College and Theological Seminary in Otterburne, Manitoba, Canada, for 10 years. He will be professor of Old Testament interpretation at Southern.

Block holds the B.Ed. and B.A. degrees from the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, the M.A. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill., and the Ph.D. from the University of Liverpool in England.

Block is the author of three books, including a soon-to-be released commentary on Ezekiel published by Eerdmans in the New International Commentary series. He also is writing a commentary on Judges and Ruth for Broadman & Holman's New American Commentary series and has contributed numerous articles to scholarly journals.

Blaising will be professor of Christian theology at Southern. He has taught at Dallas Theological Seminary since 1980 and served as a visiting professor at Southern Seminary during the 1993-94 academic year.

Blaising earned the B.S. degree from the University of Texas, Austin, the Th.M. and Th.D. degrees from Dallas Seminary and the Ph.D. from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. He is the author of two books and several scholarly articles.

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Court hears Ohio arguments
on KKK cross at capitol

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
4/27/95

WASHINGTON (BP)--Does the establishment clause of the First Amendment prohibit the display of privately sponsored religious symbols on the public property of a state capitol building?

The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments April 26 in such a case involving the display of a 10-foot cross in front of the Ohio statehouse in Columbus.

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The legal trail to the high court began when the Ku Klux Klan applied for a permit to place a cross alongside a Christmas tree and a Jewish menorah, a candelabrum used to celebrate Hanukkah. The Klan proposed the inclusion of a sign clarifying the government did not support the display. The state agency, Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board, refused to grant a permit.

A federal court overruled the board, declaring the capitol property a public forum which had been used for demonstrations and other unattended displays. A reasonable observer would not perceive the state endorses religion by allowing the display, the court said. The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the display did not violate the establishment clause.

After the court rulings, the Klan erected the cross with a disclaimer of state support, but vandals destroyed it after only a day. A council of churches received permission to place several crosses where the Klan's cross had been.

Both the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs support the right of a private group to display a cross on the capitol grounds, but neither filed a brief in the case, their lawyers said.

In the arguments April 26, some of the justices intensely questioned the state's argument, with at least one harshly criticizing it.

Ohio Assistant Attorney General Michael Renner agreed the square was a public forum. When asked by associate justice Antonin Scalia if the state would have a prohibition against the Libertarian Party, Renner said there was "no proscription in the Constitution" against the Libertarian Party, unlike religion, he implied.

The state made a distinction between a menorah and a cross, Renner acknowledged, based on the high court's 1989 ruling in County of Allegheny v. ACLU. In that opinion, now-retired justice Harry Blackmun wrote a menorah has a secular, as well as religious, aspect. In a lower court in this case, however, a rabbi testified a menorah is a religious, not a seasonal, symbol, Chief Justice William Rehnquist said.

Renner encouraged the court to apply the reasonable observer test and find a "message as powerful as the cross" in front of a government building would fail such a test. He also said a reasonable observer would think a menorah is state-sponsored.

Did he think a "reasonable observer can read?" associate justice Sandra Day O'Connor asked in reference to the sign disavowing government support. "I think your argument is so far-fetched" it is not applicable to reality, she told Renner. His is a "remarkable argument" in light of what the Supreme Court has said in the past on religious cases, she said.

Benson Wolman, lawyer for the KKK, said "religious speech should be treated like other speech."

More than once, Wolman said it would not be appropriate for the state to close down the forum totally. Ohio "cannot terminate the public forum," he said. Government buildings "are traditional locations for speech."

Associate justice Clarence Thomas, the lone African American on the court, questioned Wolman, who is Jewish, about the message of the Klan's cross. Wolman, former director of the Ohio Civil Liberties Union, said the cross was both a religious and political symbol to the KKK. If the Klan marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington with a cross, would it be communicating a religious or political message? Thomas asked. He thought mostly a political message, Wolman said.

"So we are shoe-horning a political case in a free exercise case," Thomas said. Wolman agreed.

After the arguments, Wolman said there was "value in protecting (the KKK's) rights ... (S)peech, even abhorrent speech, is a safety valve."

Capitol Square Review v. Pinette is "about free religious speech, not hate speech," Steve McFarland of Christian Legal Society said afterward. "The state objected to the cross, not the Klan. If the government can ban the cross today ... it will be the Star of David tomorrow."

If a cross is allowed on the capitol grounds, a reasonable observer will get the message the "state of Ohio still believes in freedom of speech," McFarland said.

Steve Green of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, however, said "people will get the impression that the government is endorsing religion."

CLS, American Center for Law and Justice, Liberty Council and Knights of Columbus filed friend-of-the-court briefs supporting the display of the cross. Americans United, People for the American Way, American Jewish Committee, Americans for Religious Liberty and American Humanist Association were among those filing briefs supporting the state.

Christian Life Commission General Counsel Michael Whitehead agreed with the appeals court opinion in calling it "amazing that the state would argue that the Constitution requires that religious speech be 'sanitized' in order to appear in public.

He said, however, the CLC chose not to join in a brief because of the KKK's involvement.

"The Klan has a right to free speech, no matter how offensive their message, but they do not have a right to our support in their lawsuit," he said. "The legal arguments we support were being adequately presented by CLS and others. The CLC made the judgment not to file a brief. The CLC repudiates any message of racism and finds especially offensive the entanglement of racism with religious symbols."

Brent Walker, the Baptist Joint Committee's general counsel, said his organization does not believe the display was a violation of the establishment clause. Reasons such as the staff's workload, not the KKK's involvement, prevented the BJC from joining a brief, he said.

The court's opinion is expected before its term ends in late June.

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Unusual interracial church
growing in western Kentucky

By Melanie Childers

Baptist Press
4/27/95

HOPKINSVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Ministry is more than a black-or-white issue for an interracial church in Hopkinsville, Ky.

Pennyrile Mission, an all-white congregation sponsored by Second Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, almost didn't survive changes in the racial composition of its neighborhood.

But since September, when pastor Enoch Nyakoon was called to restart the congregation, more than 40 people have made professions of faith in Jesus Christ. Attendance in Sunday school has reached nearly 60.

With a multiethnic congregation of African Americans, Caucasians and Africans, the church combines all three traditions to share the message of love and reconciliation, Nyakoon said.

However, such a rare beacon of interracial worship came with a price, the pastor was quick to add. "I have received telephone threats; people called me up when I baptized two whites and four blacks. They began to call me names."

Caucasians and African Americans do not have a history of cooperation in Hopkinsville, Nyakoon said. "They do not mix. The race gap between blacks and whites is one of the biggest in the United States."

The church's history affirms change is rarely easy but often necessary.

Fifteen years ago, the new work started as a Sunday school class in a community building at a government-assisted housing complex in Hopkinsville.

The work -- in a predominantly Caucasian neighborhood -- grew to include worship and other activities.

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Through the sponsorship of Second Baptist Church, Pennyrile Mission purchased its own building and hired its own pastor. Soon, however, a reversal of housing trends in the area resulted in many whites moving out and African Americans moving in, explained Kent Workman, pastor of the sponsoring church. The neighborhood surrounding Pennyrile became predominantly African American.

As a result, the mission lost its effectiveness in the community, Workman recounted. "We were not reaching the project. We were busing in Caucasians from other parts of town."

Leaders considered shutting down the mission after the pastor resigned and the ministry dropped to about 10 people. But consultation with Kentucky Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Home Mission Board representatives led to the decision to bring in an African American or African pastor to lead a new congregation.

"That's when I first met Enoch," Workman said.

A native of Liberia, West Africa, Enoch Nyakoon and his wife moved to Louisville to pursue theological education. Since earning the master of divinity and master of theology degrees, Nyakoon has taught Greek and served in a number of ministerial and evangelism capacities in the United States.

Nyakoon credits missionaries in Liberia with helping him develop a relationship with Jesus Christ. Because of civil unrest there now, he cannot return home.

One of the first things Nyakoon did as pastor of the congregation was suggest changing the name from Pennyrile Mission to Means Avenue Baptist Church.

"Many black people don't understand the concept of 'mission,'" Nyakoon explained. "To them, it sounds like food giveaways" instead of a church.

Second Baptist Church agreed to the change, facilitating the leap over the first hurdle in altering the church's image in the community.

"We began with five people," Nyakoon said. Now the church averages 55-60 in worship. About 65 percent are black.

In addition, Impact Ministries, a service providing food and clothing each week through Christian County Baptist Association, distributes from Means Avenue's facilities.

The mission's growth has been beneficial for both congregations, Workman said. "It's been a big step for us. ... It's been a blessing as our people have grown through this experience."

Although great strides have been made, prejudice and misunderstanding still thwart the ministry, Nyakoon said.

"Some have a negative perspective of the church; they think it's a white church," he said. "But maybe one day they will realize we are not here to have a white church or a black church, but to have a church of Jesus Christ."

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**Howell sets retirement date
from Texas River Ministry**

By Ken Camp

**Baptist Press
4/27/95**

DALLAS (BP)--Elmin K. Howell Jr., who has coordinated Texas Baptist missions outreach along the Rio Grande since 1968, will retire May 31, 1996 as director of River Ministry.

Howell, 65, announced his retirement plans during the River Ministry spring missions study tour, a biennial trek along the Rio Grande conducted primarily for representatives of Woman's Missionary Union of Texas' executive board.

"As River Ministry prepares to move into the 21st century, it's a good time for someone else to assume the leadership," Howell said.

"It's not an easy decision to make. My wife and I are both in good health. At my retirement date, I will have completed 28 years with River Ministry, and these have been the most enjoyable years of my life. If I had my 'druthers,' I'd stay on.

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"But after praying and thinking about this a long time, Betty and I have decided it's time to move on. That doesn't mean we're walking away from the river. We plan to continue participating in ministry in some capacity. But there are other things that we want to do, and it's time to slow down and do them."

Howell -- a former public school teacher, coach and recreation director for Nashville (Tenn.) Baptist Association -- joined the Baptist General Convention of Texas executive board staff May 15, 1968, as "Rio Grande Mission Thrust coordinator."

His job was to facilitate volunteer missions projects along the Texas/Mexico border, a state missions emphasis that captured the attention of Texas Baptists when Hurricane Beulah swept along the Rio Grande on Sept. 20, 1967.

"We're looking for a layman just crazy enough to think it can be done," T.A. Patterson, then-BGCT executive secretary, told Howell. The program would have to be funded through the Mary Hill Davis Offering for State Missions since no Cooperative Program money was allocated for it, he said. The emphasis was expected to last two or three years.

More than a quarter-century later, River Ministry is now included in the Texas Baptist Cooperative Program budget, but its cutting-edge ministry projects continue to receive funding through the Mary Hill Davis Offering for State Missions.

River Ministry volunteers work in 67 health care clinics along the Rio Grande, and the program undergirds five children's homes along the northern border of Mexico, with a sixth child care facility in Ojinaga slated to open later this year. More than 600 churches have been started along the Texas/Mexico border since River Ministry was launched.

"None of it could have been done without the volunteers and field staff who have invested so much of their lives in River Ministry," Howell said.

"It has been a joy working not only with them, but also with Texas Woman's Missionary Union, the directors of missions along the border and the leaders of the National Baptist Convention of Mexico.

"In particular, it has been a privilege to work with the local pastors along the Rio Grande. They are the people on the cutting edge who get the job done."

Howell is a native of Kerens, Texas, and a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas, and George Peabody College, Nashville. He and his wife, Betty, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary in February. They have two children and three grandsons.

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