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**Ken Hemphill inaugurated as
Southwestern's 7th president**

By Bob Murdaugh

**Baptist Press
5/2/95**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary will remain a "front-line bunker where students participate in contemporary spiritual battles," Kenneth S. Hemphill said at his May 1 inauguration as the seminary's seventh president.

Hemphill reaffirmed his commitment to nurturing seminary students' evangelistic passion while informing the mind.

If the seminary is to build Christian character into its students, they must be taught how to walk in dynamic relationship with their God, Hemphill said. "Preparation for ministry is incomplete without a heart that is fully prepared."

The Bible will remain "the seminary's textbook and plumb line by which all teaching is measured," Hemphill stated. The seminary family also will continually acknowledge their "absolute dependence on prayer."

Hemphill's comments were in response to the inaugural address by Nilson do Amaral Fanini, president-elect of the Baptist World Alliance. Fanini, president of the Brazilian Baptist Convention, leads one of the largest evangelical churches in South America, First Baptist Church of Niteroi with more than 5,000 members.

"God is the only person in the world who can accomplish all things alone, without the help of anyone," said Fanini, a Southwestern graduate. "He doesn't need your money, your car, your strength. He is the Almighty and thus can do whatever he alone chooses. But he permits us to work with him."

Hemphill reaffirmed Southwestern's "denominational anchor" in accepting Fanini's challenge to cooperative ministry.

Voicing Southwestern's commitment as a Southern Baptist institution, Hemphill said, "We are thankful for the support of our local churches. We desire to be accountable to Southern Baptists through our elected trustees. Our faculty is knowledgeable and supportive of Southern Baptist denominational life and will train our students to practice cooperative ministry as the Baptist way of winning the world to Christ."

Southwestern's work is foundational to the entire Southern Baptist mission, Hemphill said.

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"The training of effective, committed ministers is critical to the health of the local church, the mission enterprise and the work of all of our agencies and boards," he said. "The sun never sets on the work of the alumni of Southwestern."

In connection with the inauguration, the seminary also received two \$10,000 gifts from churches committed to cooperative ministry with Southwestern.

One of the gifts, presented April 30, was from Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth to benefit Southwestern's new Rebekah Naylor Chair of Practical Missions. The other was from First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va., for the seminary's new W.A. Criswell Chair of Expository Preaching and Evangelism. Hemphill is former pastor of the Norfolk church.

The gift from First Baptist, Norfolk, was presented to Hemphill at a pre-inaugural reception May 1 which followed a prayer gathering. Friends, family, faculty and staff and SBC leaders sought God's guidance for Southwestern Seminary, the Hemphill family, local churches, Baptist colleges and seminaries and all SBC agencies.

The day concluded with "An Evening of Celebration" featuring humorist Dennis Swanberg, special assistant to the president for seminary relations, as well as presentations by the seminary's various musical groups.

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(BP) photos available on SBCNet or through Southwestern's office of public relations.

Draper to Hemphill:
'keep us on target'

By Bob Murdaugh

Baptist Press
5/2/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's seventh president, Kenneth S. Hemphill, was challenged May 1 to continue the strong evangelistic passion and mission vision which has characterized the seminary.

The challenge was made during the inaugural charge and prayer delivered by Baptist Sunday School Board President James T. Draper Jr.

"Keep this institution 'lashed to the book,' as B.H. Carroll challenged L.R. Scarborough, and keep us focused on the theology of our fathers," Draper told Hemphill.

"The great crisis in American education today is leadership, and the great crisis of leadership is character," Draper commented. "You lead us on the strength of who you are. So, be who you are. You bring to this institution an illustrious uniqueness of your own."

A Southwestern graduate and former chairman of Southwestern's board of trustees, Draper described Hemphill as "a man of great physical stature and achievement, yet you possess a compassionate heart and the sweet spirit of Christ."

"You are a proven student of our age and culture and a faithful expositor of God's Word," Draper continued. "Your presence and Paula (Hemphill's wife) will refresh this institution like no one else can."

Hemphill was exhorted by Draper to "keep your eyes fixed on the Lord and keep your heart tender with his love."

"Never cease to pray with tears for the moving of God through this seminary family. Lead us boldly and with integrity, but always with humility and love."

Draper acknowledged that Southwestern is "on the edge of a new era and we need a leader of integrity, character, passion and vision to lead us into the 21st century."

"Always remind us that Southwestern is a means to an end," Draper told Hemphill in the company of Southwestern trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni and representatives of the five other Southern Baptist seminaries, Southern Baptist Convention boards and commissions and various other educational institutions throughout the United States.

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"The ultimate recipient of our energies is not administration, faculty or students," Draper said. "The ultimate consumer is the people and the churches. Keep us on target to train men and women to equip the saints for the work of the ministry."

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(BP) photos available on SBCNet and through Southwestern's office of public relations.

**Southern Baptist Historical Society
to vote on charter, bylaw changes By Brian Smith**

**Baptist Press
5/2/95**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Historical Society will consider making changes to its charter and bylaws at its annual meeting May 10 in Augusta, Ga. The proposed changes would allow the organization to operate as an autonomous agency, independent of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The society, which has 724 members, currently is an auxiliary of the Historical Commission. The Historical Commission is one of seven SBC agencies proposed for dissolution under the "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring plan proposed by the Program and Structure Study Committee of the SBC Executive Committee.

Lynn May, president of the Historical Commission, emphasized that the move is not an effort to keep the Historical Commission functioning, should messengers to consecutive SBC annual meetings approve the restructuring plan.

"There is language in the charter and the bylaws of the society that do identify the society as being related to the Historical Commission," May said. "If the commission ceases to exist, then we will need to take steps to revise our charter and take out references to the Historical Commission, because there will be no commission to relate to."

Adrian Lamkin, director of the Partee Center for Historical Studies at William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo., and 1990-91 president of the Southern Baptist Historical Society, agreed that changing the society's charter was not a "knee-jerk reaction" to the PSSC report.

"There is going to be a need for a change, just because the language says the society will be auxiliary to the Historical Commission, and if the Historical Commission is to dissolved, you must change that," Lamkin said.

But he also noted that the change represents more than a simple formality in wording.

"I'm afraid ... if (the Historical Commission) is dissolved, it is possible that the public viewing of Baptist history will be diminished," Lamkin remarked. "And that's where a renewed Southern Baptist Historical Society, through revisions in its constitution, can be much more open to letting people participate in sharing Baptist history and preserving it."

May said the society differs little from the Historical Commission in its scope and interests.

"It is a means of enlisting far more people than the 30 trustees of this agency and our staff as we have now of 10 people. It involves an effort to try to enlist Southern Baptists across the nation in realizing that history is important and it needs to be preserved and it needs to be studied, interpreted, understood and communicated.

"Our primary concern is that Southern Baptists don't push their history off in a corner and not give it adequate attention."

Under the proposed restructuring, the Historical Commission's archival duties would be assigned to a council of six seminary presidents. Its educational duties would fall to the Baptist Sunday School Board.

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Lamkin noted that "some people are concerned that if the Historical Commission is dissolved, the door could be opened for not only a revisionist view of history, but perhaps even a closing of some of the books for open investigation, such as records of the Peace Committee."

He said the Southern Baptist Historical Society, as an autonomous entity, could "help to balance some of that and could at least keep before people's eyes an open view of our history so that it is available for use."

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SBCNet expands to 3 forums;
adds new message, library areas By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
5/2/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptists' computer network, growing rapidly with both users and on-line services, has expanded from one forum to three, adding more message and library areas.

Beginning May 1, the 4,600 users of the network have found an expanded service, with two general ministry forums and a forum for state Baptist conventions.

Included in General Ministry Forum A are new message areas for evangelism ideas, theological issues and "The Lighter Side." These are in addition to existing areas of help and information, intercessory prayer, spiritual awakening, directors of missions, Brotherhood, youth ministry, minister's corner, adult ministry, student ministry, innovative ministry and music and worship.

Library areas in this forum include information and help, Baptist Press, news room, Bold Mission Prayer, publications, Home Mission Board, Southern Seminary, youth ministry, clip art, computer support, preschool/children, Facts & Trends, minister's corner, student ministry, adult ministry, innovative ministry, CompassionNet, Brotherhood, MissionsNet and Music and Worship.

General Ministry Forum B includes the addition of message areas for Southwestern, New Orleans and Southeastern Baptist Theological seminaries, multilingual and Christian Life Commission. Library areas are provided for each of these.

NOBTS Information Gateway, for example, includes weekly postings of the campus newspaper, Gatekeeper; the weekly chapel schedule; registration schedules and class offerings for the main campus, the North Georgia campus and the 12 extension center campuses; summer school offerings for the main campus and North Georgia campus; academic workshop schedules; retreat package information for church groups; the latest acquisitions to the John T. Christian Library; ministry positions available; and announcements of upcoming events. In the messages section, students and alumni may send in address/telephone updates and request information to be sent to them.

The state convention message and library areas are for Baptist conventions of Oklahoma and Minnesota-Wisconsin. Several other state conventions, including Alabama, Florida, Virginia, Colorado, Maryland/Delaware, New Mexico, South Carolina and Kentucky, are working toward joining the State Convention Forum in the near future, according to David Haywood, SBCNet coordinator.

Haywood said the move to three forums allows for the addition of more areas in each forum in the months ahead.

SBCNet may be accessed by using a computer, modem and a membership kit distributed free by the Sunday School Board. Kits, which provide access to services of CompuServe and SBCNet, contain software, account information and a monetary credit toward initial charges. They are available in DOS, Macintosh and Windows versions

The cost of SBCNet and CompuServe are at conomical, flat monthly rates. A modest charge is made for unlimited use of SBCNet. This feature enables users to read and download files and participate in on-line conferences without per-minute charges.

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The additional CompuServe charge provides SBCNet access and unlimited use of more than 120 basic services, including a limited time each month on the Internet. Thereafter, additional charges apply for additional time on the Internet and for extended services. Persons who are already members of CompuServe may join SBCNet by simply typing "GO SBCNet" at any CompuServe prompt

Among the CompuServe Basic Services available to SBCNet subscribers are news, sports and weather; the opportunity to read classified ads, support forums and the member directory; travel services; shopping services; games and entertainment; reference library; and Money Talks, including stock quotes and other financial services.

To order an SBCNet kit or to obtain additional information, call 1-800-325-7749.

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HMB volunteer specialist
to work with '96 Olympics

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
5/2/95

ATLANTA (BP)--A Southern Baptist has been named director of religious services for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games.

Home Mission Board volunteer specialist Elmer Goble, who directed Southern Baptist ministries during the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984, will coordinate religious support for athletes and staff.

In addition to scheduling religious services, Goble said he will be responsible for Bible studies, personal prayer rooms and religious literature distribution.

About 15,000 athletes and sports staff from 200 nations are expected for the event, July 19-Aug. 4. Most will be housed in the Olympic Village on the Georgia Institute of Technology's campus. Others, however, will be at eight sites near competition venues throughout the Southeast.

The Olympic Village religious center will be in Georgia Tech's Baptist Student Union building, but Goble noted that the International Olympic Committee requires equal access for the five recognized world religions: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism.

For the first time in Olympic history, chaplains will be assigned to work with the security staff as well, Goble said. HMB national chaplaincy consultant Lowell Lawson will coordinate that work.

Goble said he would like to see chaplains assigned to work with medical crews at the competition venues. He also said he hopes to offer chaplaincy support before the games begin for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games.

"We would really like to give the International Olympic Committee a process and procedure for providing religious chaplaincy services so that Sydney, Australia, (site of the 2000 Summer Olympics) and other cities will have something tangible to use," he said. Goble served as a chaplain for two World University Games, in 1982 and 1993.

Although the job with ACOG was offered as a salaried position, Goble instead will serve as a volunteer and continue working for the Home Mission Board.

A native of Morristown, N.J., Goble is a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas. He and wife, Jacque, have two children, Erin and Trevor.

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(BP) photo, mug shot photo sent to New England, Texas and Georgia.

Church's telecast throws
its net a little farther

By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press
5/2/95

SPRINGDALE, Ark. (BP)--The goal of Ronnie Floyd's media ministry is simple: In every message he delivers, people have an opportunity to respond to Christ.

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"The vast majority of so-called Christian programming doesn't give people that opportunity," said the preacher for "Invitation to Life," seen weekly on ACTS and FamilyNet of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark., described much of Christian programming as non-confrontational.

"Some preachers are so afraid of offending viewers that they don't offer them the plan of salvation," he said. "Early in my ministry I determined that if I was ever on television, I would give people the opportunity to be saved. I don't think providing that opportunity offends the majority of viewers. What I think offends them is a watered-down version of what the Bible says we must do to be saved."

Recently, Floyd said, a 95-year-old woman saw "Invitation to Life," called and gave her heart to Christ.

"She said she had wasted her life and was ready to commit suicide," he said. "She's representative of thousands upon thousands of senior citizens who are despondent because they don't feel as though they're needed."

"Many people say we're preaching to the choir on Christian television, reaching a lot of people over 60 and shut-ins who are even older. That's not true, but if it were, I'd have to say that millions of people over 60 haven't experienced the saving grace of Jesus Christ. And when it comes to proclaiming the Word of God, are we to ignore older people and concentrate only on the young?"

Each week "Invitation to Life" receives calls from people in practically every state, Floyd said.

"And those calls come from people of all ages and from every walk of life," he said. "Quite a few of our callers, young and old, profess faith in Christ as a result of our invitation to accept him as Lord and Savior. If asking people to accept Christ is confrontational, I guess our ministry is confrontational. But it's also very New Testament."

The pastor said that wherever he goes people come up and tell him they have watched "Invitation to Life."

"I've had many, many pastors tell me they are encouraged by the program," Floyd said. "They say that people have been saved as a result of the program and have come to their churches to make public professions of faith. They also appreciate our strong stand in proclaiming and defending the gospel, in not backing off. Being honest in our approach about what Jesus wants a lost person to do doesn't offend as some people think."

Floyd said one of the greatest decisions made by First Baptist Church of Springdale was to go on television.

"For us, it's missions," he said. "It enables us to reach behind closed doors with the message of Christ. And you'd be surprised by the number of young people, people of all ages, who are behind those doors and who are watching and listening."

"Recently a young girl called on three different occasions and my wife led her to Christ. She was an abused child and was afraid her mother and father would find out about her experience with Christ."

"That's just one of many such calls. There are millions of young people who, if they hear the gospel at all, will hear it on radio or television."

Floyd said that when hurting people write "Invitation to Life" or call the program's 800 number asking for help, they are assisted by volunteers from the church's Sunday school classes.

"We have 10 phones now," he said, "and have as many as 500 calls a week. When people call, one of the primary things our counselors are trained to do is to encourage the caller to seek out a Bible-believing church."

"Listening is also one of the most important things our phone counselors do. Hurting people with problems or troubles need a sympathetic ear. And they need to know that God loves them."

The pastor said that if one of his church members was not sold on a national TV ministry, being a telephone counselor would change his or her attitude.

"Involving our people in this way has given them a better overall perspective of ministry," he said.

In October the church will celebrate five years of television ministry, previously using radio exclusively before making the commitment to television.

More than three years ago the church launched its national TV ministry on ACTS and FamilyNet. For more than two years, Floyd has served as preacher for "Invitation to Life."

The church's worship service is carried locally by the ABC affiliate in nearby Fayetteville, which covers western Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma. Floyd, who has been at the church for almost nine years, said broadcasting in the area has been a factor in church growth.

"This area is experiencing excellent growth," he said, "but I attribute much of the growth of the church to exposure on television. When I came here we had a membership of 3,800. We now have more than 9,000 members.

"Being on television raises the visibility of the church and pastor. And people who visit for the first time often have become familiar with the church as a result of our broadcast. More important, I am always seeing people who came to know Christ as a result of our TV ministry.

"What we're doing with our media ministry is throwing the net a little farther."

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Ethics pointers offered
for church secretaries

Baptist Press
5/2/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The study of ethics tends to get a bad rap because it can be viewed as such a complicated issue, said Brooks Faulkner of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"But ethics is really not all that hard to understand even though there have been some complicated books written about it," Faulkner, manager of the church ministry section in the BSSB's pastor-staff leadership department, told church secretaries attending a national conference.

"All ethics really is, is doing what is good," Faulkner said during the National Conference for Southern Baptist Secretaries, April 26-28. "And the good thing to do is the right thing to do. Loving God with all your faculties and loving your neighbor like yourself -- that's what ethics is.

"We are not only responsible to God, ourselves and each other like the Bible says. We are accountable ethically to each other. 'Be ye kind' is the greatest ethical statement in the Bible, and it may be the missing ingredient for a lot of people."

Faulkner said another important element of ethics is obedience.

"Obedience is an essential and initial ingredient of being ethical. The more you challenge authority, the more you are being disobedient," he said.

However, Faulkner acknowledged that "when every day you have as many bosses as you have church members," it's tough to "be subject to all rulers and authorities."

He suggested the secretaries "find out who their boss is."

Faulkner offered the church secretaries a "model for dealing with ethics" which included seven elements:

1) Pay the rent. "You have to learn where your breaking point is, and you have to say 'no' to some things before you reach that point," Faulkner said. "Say, 'I can't get to this until ...' Tell that to them before you explode. That's paying the rent."

2) Don't put people down. "You've been at work 10 minutes, and already you're into five crises. Your first tendency is to ax somebody. It's amazing how easy it is to put people down when you get angry and overloaded with stress. But try to be peaceable and considerate and to show true humility toward all men."

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3) Treat people like grace is for everyone. "Grace is a meritorious gift, an unmerited favor. Treat people like that."

4) Be devoted to what is good. "Let the Holy Spirit be operative in your life. Trust me, as a Christian, you know what's good. Stay clear of sarcasm and cynicism."

5) Avoid foolish controversies. "Learn to say, 'I could be wrong, you could be right.' 'I may be wrong' is the hardest thing to say in the English language. 'I know I'm right' is the easiest. Getting into the middle of controversy might be exciting, but it's energy-sapping," Faulkner said.

6) Avoid factious and divisive people. "Some people take pleasure putting a chink in your armor. Stay away from them. There is no way you can change that type of person."

7) Pay attention to priorities. "There's a formula to putting first things first and paying attention. First, remember it's OK to make mistakes. Second, teach the people you're working for it's OK to make mistakes. And third, remember the things you did right as much as you remember the things you did wrong. Don't punish yourself by remembering your mistakes," Faulkner said. "It's unethical."

The church secretaries conference was sponsored by the Sunday School Board's pastor-staff leadership department.

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EDITORS' NOTE: The following five stories focus on responses by churches and individuals to the AIDS/HIV crisis.

Chaplains tell of facing
their AIDS-related fears

By Connie Davis

Baptist Press
5/2/95

HARRIMAN, Tenn. (BP)--When chaplains Dick Denson and Al Carden visited their first AIDS patient, they couldn't make themselves touch the person.

Fear is just one of the emotions which must be confronted by those wishing to minister to AIDS/HIV patients, according to Carden, of Mississippi Baptist Medical Center, Jackson, and Denson, director of pastoral care, Baptist Hospital of East Tennessee, Knoxville.

Why is AIDS such a difficult subject? asked Denson, who spoke with Carden to about 30 ministers and laypeople at an AIDS Awareness Conference at the Big Emory Baptist Association, Harriman, Tenn., one of two such conferences held this year by the Tennessee Baptist Convention's discipleship training department.

The disease reminds him of the stigma once endemic to cancer or the emotions he experienced while visiting leprosy victims in Vietnam during his service there as a chaplain, Denson said.

AIDS has a social stigma for the Christian that hepatitis, tuberculosis or other deadly contagious diseases don't have, he noted. AIDS "is a disease that divides. It exposes our weaknesses, prejudices, fears. It confronts us as ministers to go into uncharted places."

When he couldn't shake the hand of a soldier with AIDS who had come to him for help, Denson said he communicated something that "we don't want to communicate." The best thing to do is to be aware you might react that way and to acknowledge your reaction, he said.

Carden said AIDS patients realize some church members are holding them at arm's length.

He told of one AIDS patient he got to know through regularly attending an HIV support group who asked him to attend his funeral. The man said he didn't ask for himself but for the others who would be attending. The compassion Carden felt for the man was "a real milestone for me because he's gay. I think to minister to homosexuals with AIDS or HIV there's got to be a spirit of forgiveness before they will hear what you've got to say."

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Carden got to know another patient who was a former minister who had acquired the disease through heterosexual activity. The man had such low self-esteem he didn't want Carden to thank him for getting the chaplain involved in the support group. Despite the man's religious training, he asked Carden before his death if any forgiveness existed for him. Another victim told Carden he was glad when he was diagnosed with cancer -- it was a more acceptable disease to report to others. The grief of these people is very real, Carden said.

Through the support group, Carden reported he developed relationships, which are the key to his ministry to AIDS victims.

AIDS/HIV patients have many needs, Carden noted. In addition to the impact of the disease on relationships with family members and friends, the patients have other concerns. Most people who have tested positive for the HIV virus, the initial stage of the disease, will hide the information in order to retain employment and thus health insurance, Carden said.

When he or she can no longer work, the person with AIDS/HIV can apply for Supplemental Social Security. But one must wait two months to receive the first supplement, and that supplement will be about \$500 a month or less in Mississippi, Carden said. They also may receive Social Security disability disbursements if they have participated in the program.

And although that person gets Medicaid, it is limited to 12 doctor visits annually, 30 days of hospitalization a year and five prescriptions monthly, which is far less than a patient needs, said Carden.

Anyone can help an AIDS/HIV patient by offering a listening ear, Carden said, but a counselor must protect the confidentiality of the relationship, he warned. If any information which has been shared by the patient becomes a topic of conversation or a sermon illustration, the counselor is apt to be sued, because the anonymity of a person diagnosed with AIDS/HIV is protected under law, he said.

Another consideration for ministers is the possibility of contagion when visiting patients. Carden said he avoids wearing gloves but he tries to be aware of warnings on hospital doors and checks with nurses when he has questions. He doesn't touch a patient if he has a cut on his hand and he washes his hands after each visit, he said.

Carden suggested people isolate what they don't understand. He paralleled AIDS to the bubonic plague which killed 50 percent of the population of Europe in the 1300s. Christians of the time said it was the punishment of God, too, he noted.

Johnnie Hall, director of the state discipleship training department, agreed with Carden that AIDS/HIV isn't God's judgment on our country.

What God does expect, said Hall, is for Christians to minister and to do that based on good information instead of fear.

Amy Figg, chaplain at Baptist Hospital of East Tennessee, reported on her experiences serving on an HIV care team at the hospital. Although she has moved beyond anxiety, she said she continues to experience strong emotions as she cares for AIDS/HIV patients.

The disease is emotion-charged because it delineates people along moral lines, Figg said, and because it causes people to ponder mortality and sexuality, both of which are threatening.

As all these soul-shaking concerns are being considered by those affected by AIDS/HIV, Figg said, some questions may be asked which can result in a journey to faith.

When people ask questions beginning with why, it's a sign of a crisis of faith, she said, reminding, "AIDS has touched or will touch someone you know."

Church was ready to open arms
to AIDS-infected 18-month-old By Lonnie Wilkey

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Baptist churches are not immune to AIDS.

At least one Tennessee Baptist church has dealt firsthand with an AIDS baby in its Sunday morning preschool.

The church had the foresight to be ready and was able to minister in a loving way to the baby and his adoptive parents.

When 18-month-old Billy (not his real name) was first brought last year to First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., he already had full-blown AIDS, according to Rubynelle Dixon, the church's minister to children.

The toddler contracted the HIV virus at birth from his mother who was a drug user. He and his sister, who did not have the virus, were adopted by his parents who knew the baby had the deadly disease.

The baby's parents were not allowed to bring him to the church they attended. They learned of First Baptist through an outreach program in the church's recreation ministry and contacted Dixon to see if the church would allow them to bring the baby.

"We wouldn't keep anybody with AIDS from coming," Dixon said. "No matter what the background, you can't pick and choose who to minister to. Jesus didn't. We need to open our arms wide to people who need to be ministered to."

In regard to special precautions, "we didn't have to change a lot of stuff. We were already doing it," she said.

The church, through its childhood education committee, already had adopted procedures concerning communicable diseases. The list of procedures had the approval of both doctors and lawyers before it was presented to the church, Dixon said.

The objective as stated by the document is: "A clean, safe, and healthy learning environment for preschool children is a priority. Our objective is to help prevent the spreading of communicable diseases on church properties or locations associated with First Baptist Church, and to protect adult caregivers associated with First Baptist Church."

Included in the detailed list of instructions is the requirement to use disposable latex gloves when changing diapers, wiping noses or dealing with cuts or wounds, and a bleach-based solution approved by the National Center for Disease Control in Atlanta to clean toys and surfaces.

Despite the preparation, Dixon admitted she was scared when she knew Billy would be coming, citing a fear of the unknown. "We wanted to make sure the other babies were safe, while making sure he was comfortable and loved," she said.

Because his case worsened, he was isolated from the other children in all but one of the seven or eight times Billy was brought to the church. "We did it because we had the room and the volunteers," she said.

Dixon said she notified other parents who had small children in order to be "honest and upfront." She and a doctor visited the classrooms of those parents and informed them of the AIDS baby's presence. They were invited to ask questions and the doctor assured them that "what we were doing was safe and that we were taking the needed precautions." To her knowledge, no one kept their children out of the preschool because of Billy's presence, Dixon said.

Dixon assured Billy's parents the church would do "everything possible to love their baby." Volunteers held him and loved him. The fact he had AIDS didn't matter, she said.

Susie Edwards, one of the church's regular preschool workers, was one of those volunteers.

"He was the sweetest thing," Edwards recalled, noting the baby "was real easy to love."

Although Billy was her first contact with an AIDS baby, she said she did not think about the possibility of contracting the disease.

"You can be nervous about AIDS babies," Edwards said, "but you can't reject them. They didn't do anything wrong."

Dixon is grateful for the love shown by the volunteers. "Our people responded in a great way," she said.

Unfortunately, they had little time with the toddler as his illness worsened and he died before he reached his second birthday. Yet, "just a small arm of the church was able to reach out and make a difference" in the short life of the baby, she said.

Dixon encourages churches to have guidelines in place. "Billy's parents told us he had AIDS, but they didn't have to," she said. "You have to be cautious." The guidelines are practical and help in the prevention of germs or the spreading of any disease, not just AIDS, she said.

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A copy of the guidelines is available by writing Dixon at First Baptist Church, 108 Seventh Ave., South, Nashville, TN 37203-3989.

Physician recaps
AIDS statistics

By Connie Davis

Baptist Press
5/2/95

HARRIMAN, Tenn. (BP)--"Dan Quayle's comment about Murphy Brown doesn't seem so wrong now," said Kent Latham, referring to the former vice president's criticism of the TV sitcom character who had a child out of wedlock.

The only solution to AIDS/HIV is "basically modifying and changing the lifestyles of America," Latham, an internist at the Baptist Hospital of Roane County, Rockwood, Tenn., who has treated patients with acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which precedes the syndrome, during his current practice and while he served at the Baptist Hospital of East Tennessee, Knoxville.

From 9 to 11 million people in the world and 1 million in the United States are currently infected with the disease, said Latham, reviewing the epidemic during a Tennessee Baptist Convention-sponsored AIDS Awareness Conference in Harriman, Tenn. AIDS/HIV is the No. 1 cause of premature death among males, the fifth-leading cause of death among women and the second-leading cause among children ages 1-4, he noted. During the next decade, 5.5 million children will be orphaned by the disease.

It is a real dilemma for the health care worker, Latham continued. One in 500 will contract the disease. "If you were a surgeon, would you operate on someone who has AIDS?" he asked.

The number of heterosexuals diagnosed with the disease is increasing, Latham said. In 1991, 44,823 heterosexuals tested positive for AIDS/HIV, 24 percent of whom were traced to IV drug use and 21 percent to prenatal exposure.

These figures are available, said Latham, because health care workers don't have to acquire consent to test a patient for AIDS/HIV currently, "but the laws are developing to have to get consent," he added.

People should be aware tests for the disease aren't infallible, he reported. If someone gets a positive result, they should have another test to check for the chances for error, he said.

How can one get AIDS/HIV if not a health care worker? Transmission of the virus requires bodily fluid exchange and physicians are currently trying to identify the many parameters, he said.

Patients in a health care facility should be aware that blood obtained from anyone other than family or friends may be tainted with the virus even though it has been tested, he said. The cause for concern is that people may have the virus for several months without it being detected by current technology.

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Are sporting matches where participants are sweating and involved in bodily contact of concern? he asked. Yes, he said. Should children's toys be cleaned after use? Yes, he continued.

Can mosquitos carry the virus? Even if they can, for practical purposes, people shouldn't worry about that mode of exposure, Latham said. Are rubber gloves complete protection? No, he said, just as condoms aren't. Can the virus live outside the body? Physicians don't think so.

The factors which must be considered when trying to answer such questions, Latham said, are the health statuses of the two people involved, the level of disease in the one infected, the way one is infected and the number of contacts with the one infected.

When trying to disinfect something, Latham said, a disinfectant like bleach can be used distilled in parts of one to 10 of water, but the most important part of disinfecting is scrubbing, as is true for surgeons.

"It's a devastating disease, by its true and non-true character," Latham said.

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He became homosexual-free
via parents' love, Bible

By Ray Fink

Baptist Press
5/2/95

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)--Using his parents' love as an example, Mike Hawkins, of the Christian AIDS Network, said individuals need love and personal acceptance to break away from a homosexual lifestyle.

Hawkins' father, Marlin, is controller for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. His mother, Patsy, works part-time for the BGCO. They are members of Council Road Baptist Church, Bethany.

"My parents told me they could not accept my lifestyle, but they would never stop loving me," said Hawkins, a former homosexual who has AIDS said in an address at Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee. "A lot of people quoted 1 Corinthians 6:9 to me, trying to get me back on the right path, but that only made me want to stay (a homosexual) because it sounded like rejection. But they never read verse 11 to me.

"Verse 11 says I can be washed," Hawkins said. "It says I can be free."

Hawkins said he came to a point in his life where he believed he was born homosexual. As a pre-school child, his only playmates were girls and by the time he had started school, he could not relate to the games other boys were playing.

By the time his junior high and high school years had rolled around, he had already been labeled "queer." He said he wanted friendships with other boys, but every time he attempted to have one, he was ridiculed.

"I desperately wanted to have male friends," Hawkins said. "I wanted that so badly. I later mistook that as a homosexual longing. It wasn't so much a choice, but a trap I fell into that Satan had set."

Hawkins used the illustration of a washing machine that was sure it was a television until it looked at the instruction manual and found out differently.

"We have an instruction manual from our Creator, too. It's the Bible. I was not born that way ... so how do I get out of it?" asked Hawkins. "I couldn't do it. But then I realized I wasn't supposed to do it. I was supposed to release my life to God. I work with people who are struggling to get out of that lifestyle. God can change your heart and your life when you can't do it yourself. I stand before you today 100 percent homosexual-free by the grace of God."

Hawkins said it was the love of his parents that first inspired him to make a change.

"No matter how much I hurt them or deliberately made them cry, they were there for me," Hawkins said. "They told me they could not accept my lifestyle because of what God's Word says, but they would never stop loving me."

In December 1991, Hawkins was hospitalized with an AIDS-related disease. He and his parents, who had kept his homosexuality a secret, decided they would need the support of their friends.

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"As we began to tell people, instead of the rejection we had expected, and instead of people running away from us, people came running to us," Hawkins recounted. "The church was incredibly supportive. All those years we carried the burden alone, but when we needed Christians to be Christian, they were.

"And no one asked how this happened," he said. "When people you know have AIDS, don't ask them how they got it. That question sends the signal, 'depending on how you got the disease determines how I will respond to you.'"

Hawkins said he has occasionally had trouble dealing with the fact that he has AIDS.

"I would say to God, 'Why me? You knew beforehand that I was going to come out of this; why did you let me get this disease?'" Hawkins said. "But Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:7, that when I am weak, then I am strong. For me, AIDS doesn't stand for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It stands for Adventure In Divine Submission."

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Fink is a newswriter at Oklahoma Baptist University.

Pastor's guide helps churches
prepare for AIDS ministry

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MOUNT JULIET, Tenn. (BP)--When pastor Jim McAfee faced the issue of AIDS he was unprepared.

Some friends, who were visiting his family, asked to speak to him and his wife before bedtime.

McAfee, pastor of Mount Olivet Baptist Church, Mount Juliet, Tenn., said the friends told of having AIDS and would leave if his family didn't feel comfortable with them staying.

"It put us in the position of deciding whether to minister in the name of Jesus. In other words, put up or shut up or get out of business," said McAfee.

After helping that family, whose church had asked them to leave, and another family, McAfee has published a guide, "HIV/AIDS Ministry: A Church Manual," based on his experiences and research done for the M.Div. program at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. It can be ordered by contacting him at the church at (615) 444-2390.

Other resources include the following:

-- "Let's Talk About AIDS and Sex" by Southern Baptist evangelist Rodney Gage, Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman Press, available at Baptist Book Stores.

-- "AIDS, A Christian Response;" "AIDS, A Christian Student's Response;" Breakthrough Preschool Sunday School Work, which includes an appendix on preschool hygiene practices that can prevent the spread of communicable diseases; and "AIDS: Crisis for Church and Family," BSSB Convention Press, (615) 251-2643 or 1-800-458-2772.

-- A set of AIDS-related brochures available from the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, (615) 244-2495.

-- Numerous publications available from National AIDS Information Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 6003, Rockville, MD 20850, and from the Centers for Disease Control, National AIDS Clearinghouse at 1-800-458-5231.

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