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May 23, 1995

95-86

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Revival must precede authentic church growth, leaders say

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
5/23/95

DENVER (BP)--Revival is a crucial first step to church growth, according to speakers during a school of evangelism and church growth May 16-19.

"There is no authentic church growth or evangelism apart from a Holy Ghost movement in our churches. All authentic church growth is preceded by revival," said Rick Ferguson, pastor of Riverside Baptist Church, Denver, where the school was held.

Growth without revival can lead to more problems, Ferguson added. "Do you want your church to grow considering the shape she's in? You may just have a bigger mess on your hands."

Church growth should not be the ultimate goal, he noted. "It's easy to be more consumed with growing a big church than with Christ. Glorify God and let God grow his church."

Roland Lopez, pastor of Iglesia Baptista Emmanuel, McAllen, Texas, echoed Ferguson's point. "Churches are growing, but I'm not sure what they're growing into. Not everything that shines is gold."

Many churches are plagued with worldliness that causes pastors to preach what people want to hear rather than preach the need for repentance, Lopez said. "We have forgotten that there is a literal hell that burns. While hell burns, the church sleeps."

Evidence of revival that results in church growth is prayer, unity and obedience, said Darrell Robinson, Home Mission Board vice president for evangelism.

Prayer that characterizes revival is filled with brokenness of spirit, confession of sin and righting of wrongs, Robinson said. Unity is part of revival because "God's spirit cannot invade a church filled with dissension. We can't attack our brothers and lift up Jesus at the same time."

Obedience comes when Christians seek the Lord with all their hearts and commit to obey him at every turn, Robinson said. "As we obey, our heart becomes like his -- the heart of a servant."

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Obedience also results in evangelism, he added. "Jesus wants to reach people through every one of us."

A common temptation is to obey pride rather than Christ, said Steve Kilgore, pastor of Southside Baptist Church, Fort Collins, Colo.

"It was difficult for me to understand that I couldn't be super-pastor and super-dad," Kilgore said. Relief came when he realized the responsibility to grow his church "didn't rest on my shoulders, it was up to God."

The school was sponsored by the Home Mission Board, Colorado Baptist General Convention and Denver Baptist Association.

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Worship services build
bridge to lost world

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
5/23/95

DENVER (BP)--Growing churches use their worship services as bridges to lost people, said the pastor of a four-year-old congregation with 3,000 people attending four weekly services.

Ed Young Jr., pastor of the Fellowship of Las Colinas, Irving, Texas, used an acronym of the word worship to make his point during a school of evangelism and church growth May 16-19.

Young said outreach worship services are:

-- Welcoming. "See your service and your campus through the eyes of people coming for the first time." A welcoming atmosphere is created by parking lot attendants, greeters and ushers.

-- Organized. In the order of service, use words that non-Christians understand, such as opening prayer and closing prayer rather than invocation and benediction.

-- Relevant. Use current illustrations in sermons and suggest ways for people to apply the message. Young said pastors should give more application than information in sermons. They also should use object lessons because "we live in a visual society."

-- Sensitive to the lost. This does not mean compromising messages about sin and repentance, Young said. Rather he encouraged pastors to intentionally develop relationships with lost people and be sensitive to their presence in the congregation.

-- Hour. Worship services should last no more than an hour. People's attention span wanes after an hour, and the time limit forces leaders to include only essential elements in the service.

-- Inspirational. "The gospel is good news, it offers hope."

-- Promotional. Every time he starts a new sermon series, Young said his church sends direct mail pieces to all members and prospects to announce the series.

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Church's simple radio spots
get listeners' attention

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
5/23/95

DENVER (BP)--Writing church radio announcements that get listeners' attention requires simplicity and brevity, Tom Cheyney said during a school of evangelism and church growth May 16-19.

Cheyney, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Morgantown, W.Va., writes all the radio spots for his church which advertises on four local stations. To write for radio listeners, Cheyney said to:

-- Present simple word pictures.

-- Never confuse the listener with strange words. Eliminate words that are easily mispronounced.

-- Avoid puns. People aren't listening that closely.

-- Tell a story but don't produce a drama.

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- Use the church name at the beginning and end of the announcement.
- Be brief. Only use 75 words in a 30-second ad and 125 words in a 60-second ad.
- Keep sentences simple and straight-forward.
- Read the advertisement to a child and ask him what it was about. If he can't repeat the general idea, the ad is too complicated for radio.
- Be honest, truthful and specific.
- Repeat points that are not easily understood.
- Put the best shot at the end of the message.
- Never play games with listeners and don't send mixed messages.
- Write about only one theme at a time.
- Use rhythmic languages; words that flow.
- Never be flippant.

It is not necessary to list all the times of the church services in a radio ad, Cheyney said. Use only the time of the Sunday morning worship services. People will usually visit that service first, and they can learn times of other services during that visit.

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**Advertising sins
hurts church image**

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
5/23/95

DENVER (BP)--Churches frustrated with poor advertising results may be committing one of the seven sins of image promotion, said Tom Cheyney, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Morgantown, W.Va.

Cheyney outlined the seven sins during a school of evangelism and church growth sponsored by the Home Mission Board, Colorado Baptist General Convention and Denver Baptist Association. The sins are:

1. Bragging. A non-Christian probably doesn't care that the church led the state convention in baptisms, for example.
2. Talking to yourself. Advertising should address people who are not church members.
3. Preaching. Advertising is not the time to "slam people with the Bible." If the church's image is consistently positive, the church earns the right to be heard when it is necessary to address social evils, Cheyney added.
4. Being noisy. "Noise just to gain attention gives people a headache."
5. Being sloppy. Too many times advertising is done at the last minute, and it looks like it was done in a hurry. "Go for class, not mass."
6. Trying to be cute. Humor should be used sparingly because not everyone will understand it, Cheyney said. Preview all advertising with people who will be honest about its content.
7. Being dull or boring. Get the public's attention by using illustrations related to current events, Cheyney suggested.

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**Volunteer 'paid'
for witnessing**

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
5/23/95

DENVER (BP)--As a state director of evangelism, Roy Moody frequently participates in door-to-door witnessing. But he didn't get paid for his efforts until May 18.

Moody, who works for the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, participated in neighborhood surveys during a school of evangelism and church growth in Denver. Most responses were not positive, but one man who drove by as Moody walked along the street gave him a \$100 bill.

Moody said the man said he appreciated what Moody and the others were doing. Moody gave the money to a local church involved in the door-to-door effort.

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School participants reported 27 professions of faith from more than 1,000 visits. They presented the gospel nearly 200 times and discovered more than 330 prospects for local churches.

"I have been negligent about soul winning, and God has rekindled my fire," said one woman participant.

David Bunch, executive director-treasurer for the Colorado Baptist General Convention, said he hopes two churches will be started from the contacts made.

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Church planter's 'week or two'
stay concludes after 5 years

By Andy Arnold

Baptist Press
5/23/95

LUSBY, Md. (BP)--A few years ago, Baptist work in Southern Calvert County (Maryland) almost died. Southern Calvert Baptist Church was down to eight members who were seriously considering disbanding.

Bill Barkley, former director of missions for the Potomac Association, told the eight a church planter had just finished a year-long stint at Bayside Church in Northern Calvert. He told the floundering church they could have him for a week or two to help reorganize.

Earlier this month, George Secrist ended his 5 1/2-year "week or two" stay at Southern Calvert. During that campaign, average church attendance has grown from 8 to more than 160 on Sunday mornings. The church added a new wing to a building that was only a year old.

Secrist, a 28-year veteran layman in both the Prince George and Potomac associations, has ably served in a variety of positions. Secrist said he gives God all the glory.

"My role is as a church planter," Secrist said before leaving for Graydon, W.Va. "It is difficult for some people to understand, but I knew when I went there it was only until they got a full-time pastor."

The last year and a half has been a period of explosive growth for the congregation.

"One Sunday I didn't preach, I just gave the plan of salvation and 14 came forward to accept Christ," Secrist said. "I've never been a faith healer, but one day we prayed over a baby with a tumor. When doctors (later) took x-rays, the tumor has disappeared."

"It has been like a revival for the last year and a half," he added.

His service has not gone unnoticed. On April 28 the church administration department of the Baptist Sunday School Board named Secrist first runner up among small church pastors in the SBC in the Eastern United States.

"I have observed him for over 15 years in three different churches," said Richard Logsdon, the director of missions for the Potomac Association. "He was instrumental in their resurgence."

"All had just a handful of people and (were) very discouraged," he added. "Now all three are strong, growing congregations."

During his last service at Southern Calvert, Secrist preached the first 15 minutes of the sermon before passing the spiritual baton to the church's new pastor, Rick Hancock.

Now that it has achieved numerical growth, the young church is prepared to focus on spiritual growth, according to deacon Steve Salvas.

"Secrist is a definite reaper," Salvas said. "God placed him there for that purpose. George is an evangelist. His leaving is the opportunity for a discipler to help people grow."

Hancock "is a younger pastor gifted in teaching and discipleship," he added. "The new growth will be in Christian maturity."

The Secrist says they knew this day was coming for several years. One day when they were visiting a mission church in Graydon, Shirley looked over and saw her husband crying.

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"I thought, what's wrong with this man?" she said. "He told me, 'I really just knew the Lord had a use for me in this church'."

That was seven years ago. Since then the Secrists have been preparing for the day they would call Graydon home. They'll take a piece of Southern Maryland with them. Leonardstown (Md.) Baptist Church donated a baptistry to Graydon Baptist Church.

While he has stepped aside as president of Beltway Movers, George Secrist is anything but retired. He had a revival scheduled for his first full week in West Virginia.

"I've burned the candles at both ends for a long time," he said. "Now it's time to pull back some."

"We're off and running again, I guess," Shirley said. "We've met in a home, a three-car garage, a library, a community center. I kept telling myself 'Someday I'm going to be in a church with a nice organ and padded pews.'"

"But it was not meant to be," she joked.

Secrist leaves behind a Christ-honoring legacy. When Hurricane Hugo struck the coast of South Carolina in 1989, Secrist worked with his associational and state Brotherhood directors to organize a relief effort. He provided an 18-wheeler to transport the relief supplies and went with the truck to assist in the distribution.

He also aided in disaster relief after Hurricane Andrew.

His firm stored thousands of True Love Waits cards last summer before the cards were pegged into the mall. He has offered his professional service to churches and pastors. He was there for many when they needed a job.

In fact, one of the people he hired, was a college student named Rick Hancock.

"It's his compassion for people that pushes him," said Cliff Hartsfield, a deacon at Southern Calvert. "Genuine love is his nature."

Hartsfield first met Secrist 15 years ago -- through his father C.O. Hartsfield, pastor of Landover Hills (Md.) Baptist Church.

"Brother George has taught me, whatever you do, trust in the Lord and he will direct you," Hartsfield added. "At times the pulpit committee (Hartsfield chaired the search committee that brought Hancock) was confused and discouraged. Brother George always said, put it on his back and he'll carry you."

"I heard that all my life, but Brother George reinforced it."

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Golden Gate Seminary awards
84 degrees at commencement

By Cameron Crabtree

Baptist Press
5/23/95

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary awarded degrees to 84 students representing 18 states and 7 countries during spring commencement ceremonies May 19.

"'Servants of God -- anytime, anywhere' is the theme of this year's class," said senior class president Tim Barley.

Presenting the seminary with the class gift of a "reflection bench" for the Mill Valley campus, Barley said "even servants of God need to take the time to be still, to be quiet, and to know that he is God."

Golden Gate president William Crews later announced Barley was the 1995 recipient of the President's Award for Excellence in Leadership.

Commencement participants listened to testimonies from several graduates and watched a multi-media presentation of the "seminary family."

Delton Straub of Oregon dedicated his doctor of ministry project to his daughter, diagnosed with muscular dystrophy. He told fellow students of his personal struggles while crafting his project, titled "Equipping Parents of Handicapped Children for the Management of No-End Grief."

"What I wasn't counting on was the personal struggle I would go through, unable to write through the tears," he said. Straub said he had learned three things during his time at seminary:

-- God's plans will not be thwarted.

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- Life experiences are pathways for unique Christian ministry.
- Suffering and grief are universal.

Speaking of his daughter, Straub said he has learned to "watch for God" in her life, adding, "I look forward to the day in heaven when my daughter won't fall down anymore."

Julie Park told of her struggle to raise a family, run a business and join the academic community after being out of school for so many years.

"Studying for a new life in seminary has been an adventure -- an unforgettable memory," said Park. "I've had learning experiences inside and outside the classroom which will be indispensable to future ministry and for my personal spiritual growth."

Juan Guerrero, a former vice president at a Christian university in the Dominican Republic, urged fellow graduates to conduct their personal life and ministry "for the glory of God."

Guerrero said he appreciated Golden Gate for helping form his identity as a Baptist and for helping clarify his call "to be a transformational leader for the Hispanic community."

In his commencement charge, Crews urged graduates not to be so taken by what God is doing in other places. Rather, he insisted, "concentrate on what God wants to do uniquely with you in your place of service."

"I have lived a long time and have seen what God alone can do at times in my ministry," he said. "I've found that it usually comes as a surprise."

Saying Southern Baptists have a "fondness for imitation," he noted church leaders too often "get the idea that we can do what someone else has done and then obligate God to do what he did in other places."

Pointing to Matthew 5:6, he told graduates to "hunger and thirst" for the righteousness of God. "If you don't," he warned, "you will chase from fad to fad."

Crews, a former pastor offered three suggestions:

- "Recognize, encourage and cultivate 'God-hunger' in your own life and in the lives of those you serve. You can't get too much of God.
- "Don't spend your ministry being a copycat of every fad that appears on the ecclesiastical scene. Be one of a kind.
- "Grow your own understanding of the Holy Spirit and be open to what he wants to do in your life."

In a first-ever ceremony a week earlier, eight graduates from the seminary's southern California campus received their degrees.

The Brea campus began as a teaching point in 1973. Today, the 200-student commuter campus serves more than 550 Southern Baptist congregations in southern California.

Students enrolled at any of the seminary's regional campuses can complete all their degree coursework without having to attend the residential campus in Mill Valley.

Golden Gate is one of six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries and the only SBC agency in the West. It operates campuses in California, Oregon, and Arizona.

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Mission field changing
for career home missionary

By Dwayne Hastings

Baptist Press
5/23/95

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--A veteran home missionary will be leaving the streets of New Orleans, where she has "put her life on the line," for a lectern in a Wake Forest, N.C. classroom. Carolyn McClendon, a missionary with the Home Mission Board since 1981, has been called to teach at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

In making the announcement, Southeastern president Paige Patterson said McClendon was coming from a challenging ministry at the Baptist Friendship House, a community center near the French Quarter in New Orleans. She spent nearly 20 years at the inner city ministry, that offered programs for children, youth and senior adults including literacy programs, recreation and Bible studies as well as emergency assistance for families in need.

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"Not a day went by that she did not see people who were on the edge; this put her frequently in positions of danger. McClendon has a heartfelt burden for the decaying situation in our nation's cities. Her tremendous courage coupled with the zeal of her witness for Christ will make her a tremendous asset to the faculty," said Patterson May 22.

McClendon, who is the first woman appointed to the seminary's faculty under the current administration, will be an instructor in Christian Education. Holding the master of religious education degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, McClendon plans to complete her work on the doctor of education degree from the New Orleans seminary this fall.

She will bring a very special perspective to our Christian education courses, said L. Russ Bush, Southeastern's dean of the faculty. "Too often when we think of children's ministry we fail to go beyond the deacon's kids and the children of the folks already in the church. Her work in urban ministries in New Orleans gives her a much broader view of local church ministries. She will be an advocate for churches reaching out to children and their families in all types of settings."

"She knows that through social ministry you can win people to Christ," Patterson said. "You have the beautiful opportunity that Christianity provides in such ministries to give physical, emotional and spiritual help."

McClendon, whose mission work during the past 10 years included serving as literacy coordinator at Washington Correctional Institute, Angie, La., sees her move to the classroom at Southeastern as simply a continuation of her service as a missionary.

"My calling came from God not the Home Mission Board," McClendon said. "What I was doing at Baptist Friendship House was a calling from God. It was an appointment that God gave me. It is my desire to teach people how to work with people who are different from them."

"If you are going to meet the needs of people of the world you can't do it inside the four walls of the church. There are many people who will never darken the door of the church building. This is what Jesus teaches us: We must go where the people are; and it is not necessarily those who always smell good, look good or even agree with us that need to hear about Christ," she continued.

McClendon, who also works with the Regional AIDS Interfaith Network in New Orleans as a caregiver to AIDS patients and their families, is determined that her class presentations remain practical: "I don't want to be teaching something that stays inside the classroom or inside of a notebook that is closed and thrown away by the student at the end of the semester. The class material should cause them to reflect on who they are in the kingdom and what Jesus would have them to do."

The Mt. Hermon, La., native said Jesus Christ is the best social worker there ever was: "Social worker, preacher or whoever -- it's simply doing what Christ would do. God has given me a real ability to accept people, not necessarily to agree with them, but to accept them where they are. My love for people, my willingness to be on the cutting edge, to take a risk, drives my interest in social ministries. The bottom line for me is sharing the Gospel."

Bush noted McClendon, who was director of children's ministries at St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, from 1978-1980, is a proponent of a vibrant ministry to young people. "A person who goes into children's ministries can be one of the prime influences on the growth of a church and its ability to reach new families," Bush said.

"It's not the same world it was 20 years ago, so we sometimes have to get beyond the traditional. We need to show in our churches that children are important," McClendon said.

"There is a lot more to working with children than just knowing how to sing 'Father Abraham' or knowing how to tell a story," McClendon continued. "You've got to be real. To be a Christian is not something you can fake because you're going to run out if you are faking it. It's got to be real, it's got to be consistent and it's got to be daily, hour by hour, minute by minute."

Southeastern moves to expand news operation

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Bart Neal, vice president for external affairs at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, has named Greg Kingry as director of public relations in a move said to maximize the effectiveness of the seminary's public relations efforts.

Neal also named Dwayne Hastings news and information coordinator.

"We are committed to providing a consistent and balanced flow of information to Southern Baptists about their seminary," said Neal May 22. "God is at work in the lives of Southeastern students, faculty and alumni. This staff expansion will keep us positioned to effectively tell the ever-expanding Southeastern story."

Naming the Atlanta native as head of public relations at the Wake Forest, N.C., school, Neal noted Kingry has supervised publications design and production work since last fall as well as serving as director of news and information since June 1994. Kingry will be responsible for the overall management and planning functions within the school's public relations department.

Hastings has served as a news writer for Southeastern since 1994. He will assume the primary responsibilities for the news and information functions within the seminary's public relation's office.

The Orlando, Fla., native, who received the master of divinity degree from Southeastern this spring, has a bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn. While an undergraduate, Hastings worked in broadcast news in Nashville. Prior to enrolling at Southeastern in 1992, he was pastor to youth at First Baptist Church of Sweetwater, Longwood, Fla.

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Nobles ruled incompetent to stand trial; further treatment ordered

Baptist Press
5/23/95

By William H. Perkins Jr.

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Former Mississippi College president Lewis Nobles will be returned to a federal prison hospital for continued treatment after U.S. District Judge William H. Barbour Jr. ruled May 17 in Jackson that he is incompetent to stand trial on a 21-count indictment accusing him of taking donations intended for the Baptist-affiliated school in Clinton.

Barbour, apparently acting on evaluations he ordered while Nobles, 70, was treated for two months at the U.S. Medical Center for Federal Prisoners in Springfield, Mo., wrote, "The defendant is found incompetent to stand trial insofar as he suffers from a mental defect, in consequence of which he presently is unable to understand the nature and consequences of the proceeding against him and is unable to advise and consult with his attorneys and otherwise properly assist in the maintenance of his own defense."

Barbour also wrote that he was issuing his decision on the belief that further treatment may result in Nobles' improvement "to such a degree that he may be found competent to stand trial."

No time frame or scheduled treatment was released. Nobles could be placed in the Missouri facility or a similar hospital in Butner, N.C., said Al Jeannerett, chief deputy U.S. Marshall in Jackson.

Nobles has been held without bond in the Madison County Jail, which has a contract to house federal prisoners, since his return from the Missouri prison hospital on May 3. He is recovering from an apparent attempted suicide Jan. 26 when FBI agents with a fugitive warrant closed in on him at an upscale San Francisco hotel.

The warrant was issued by Barbour after Nobles failed to appear for a Jan. 26 pretrial hearing, scheduled prior to his Feb. 7 trial on charges he allegedly diverted to his personal use about \$1.7 million in donations intended for the college.

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After he did not show up for the hearing, FBI agents tracked his automobile to the Memphis International Airport, where he apparently had booked a flight to San Francisco.

Nobles collapsed as FBI agents searched his hotel room and was rushed to a San Francisco hospital where he underwent two emergency surgeries. He allegedly swallowed a poisonous substance when FBI agents knocked on the hotel room door.

While recuperating in the San Francisco hospital, Nobles suffered what his physician son-in-law, Ben Nash of Clinton, described in a recent court hearing as "metabolic encephalopathy," or changes in the structure of the brain.

Nobles was transferred to the Missouri prison hospital after doctors in San Francisco released him.

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HMB moving date
postponed two weeks

Baptist Press
5/23/95

ATLANTA (BP)--Construction delays have postponed the Home Mission Board's move to its new office building by two weeks.

The board will close its Midtown Atlanta offices Thursday evening, June 9, and re-open Monday morning June 12 in the new building in Alpharetta. Officials originally had planned to move Memorial Day weekend.

The agency's new address will be 4200 North Point Parkway, Alpharetta, Ga., 30202-4174.

After June 12, the board's phone number will be (404) 410-6000 until Sept. 1. Afterwards, the area code for Alpharetta will change from 404 to 770.

Telephone numbers for individuals and departments will also change and may be obtained from the switchboard operator. Toll-free numbers for the HMB prayer line, (800) 554-PRAY, volunteer information, (800) HMB-VOLS, and customer service, (800) 634-2462, will not change.

A dedication ceremony for the building is still scheduled for June 21 at 3 p.m. during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Atlanta.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "'95 SBC Book of Reports available electronically," dated 5/22/95, please replace the first sentence of the third paragraph, which begins "Messengers to the annual meeting ..." with the following:

Messengers to the annual meeting may purchase a copy for a nominal fee of \$5 at the time of registration, Mosley said.

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