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NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

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SBC counsel reviews procedure
for vote on PSSC proposal

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
6/6/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Messengers to the 1995 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Atlanta will vote on the Program and Structure Study Committee's full recommendation and, if approved, then will take the first vote on changing SBC bylaw 15.

James P. Guenther, SBC legal counsel based in Nashville, Tenn., told Baptist Press the adoption of the PSSC report "would require a majority vote in one convention." An amendment which specifies changes in SBC bylaw 15 then will be recommended by the Executive Committee and will require adoption by two successive annual conventions.

"If the Convention adopts the report, the Convention will have expressed its desire to implement that report's recommendations," Guenther said.

Among other things, the PSSC report would reduce the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12.

According to Guenther, convention messengers will first be asked to vote on the entire proposal. If messengers, in a majority vote, approve the restructuring proposal, an amendment to change the necessary bylaw will be offered immediately. Amending bylaw 15 would require a majority vote in both the 1995 convention in Atlanta and the 1996 meeting in New Orleans.

Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee, said the SBC counsel asked that the recommendation specifically amending bylaw 15 be made following the adoption of the full report.

"This specific recommendation will be made on the advice of counsel for the purpose of providing precise language for legal applications in the implementation," Chapman said. This is the recommendation which requires a majority vote by two successive conventions, he said.

Since the PSSC recommendation calls for the discontinuance of the Education Commission, Historical Commission, Southern Baptist Foundation and Stewardship Commission as entities of the SBC and name changes for the Foreign Mission Board and Christian Life Commission, those changes would require amending bylaw 15.

Also, recommendations concerning the merger of the Home Mission Board, the Radio and Television Commission and the Brotherhood Commission into a new entity, the North American Mission Board, would require amending bylaw 15.

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Guenther said the PSSC recommendation will be presented during the recommendations of the Executive Committee's report Tuesday morning of the June 20-22 SBC meeting in Atlanta. It will read as follows:

"That the Southern Baptist Convention adopt the 'Covenant for a New Century' report as an expression of the Convention's commitment to conform the structure and ministries of the SBC to the vision set forth in the report; and

"That the Executive Committee of the SBC bring to this and subsequent sessions of the SBC specific recommendations that will permit a timely implementation of the 'Covenant for a New Century' report; and

"That all trustees elected by the SBC be called upon to embrace the 'Covenant for a New Century' as the vision for each agency of the Convention, that the SBC may witness with boldness, unity, and clarity of mission as we confront a new century with the eternal truth of the Gospel."

Guenther said if the convention adopts the PSSC motion, the Executive Committee will then offer the following motion. The motion would be to amend bylaw 15 to delete the caption and present paragraphs 1 (a) and 1 (c), and to substitute the following:

"15. Entities and Auxiliary of the Convention

(1) The entities of the Convention are as follows:

(a) General Boards: The International Mission Board of the SBC, Richmond, Va.; The North American Mission board of the SBC, Inc., Atlanta; The Sunday School Board of the SBC, Nashville, Tenn.; Annuity Board of the SBC, Dallas.

(c) Commission: The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC."

Paragraph (2) of bylaw 15 names Woman's Missionary Union as the auxiliary of the Convention.

"That paragraph will remain unchanged," Guenther said.

The amendment to bylaw 15 would be the only implementation motion offered by the Executive Committee in 1995, Guenther said. The same motion would be brought again at the 1996 annual meeting. Adoption in these two successive annual sessions will cause bylaw 15 to be amended.

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FMB drops trademark application
for Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

By Teresa Dickens & Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board administrators have dropped an effort to trademark the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

The decision was communicated to national leaders of the Woman's Missionary Union at a June 5 meeting in Birmingham, Ala., by Don Kammerdiener, FMB executive vice president, and David Button, FMB vice president for public relations and development. The trademark application had drawn opposition from WMU leaders and others.

Kammerdiener said the decision was made the previous week in a telephone conversation with FMB President Jerry Rankin, who is visiting missionaries in Asia.

"The relationship between the WMU and the FMB is far more valuable than control of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering trademark," Kammerdiener said in a joint press statement released by both organizations.

WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien, one of four WMU leaders at the Birmingham meeting, agreed.

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"This decision has helped to affirm the historic role of the WMU in its support for the offering," O'Brien said in the statement. "This has been an emotional issue for our membership. I believe the decision will help put this issue behind us and contribute to a closer relationship between these two missions partners."

Kammerdiener added the board would not block any attempt by WMU to secure a trademark on its own. But he suggested "that it may be in the interest of both parties to drop the matter altogether."

"We're grateful for the freedom that the FMB has given WMU to apply for a trademark for the LMCO, but we have no immediate plans for doing so," O'Brien told Baptist Press. "For one thing, we haven't had time to consider pros and cons of such an action. And we certainly would not act without a directive from our executive board."

In the Birmingham meeting, WMU and FMB leaders also made several other Lottie Moon-related decisions.

They affirmed two basic Lottie Moon Christmas Offering principles: 1) "...the liberty of every church (in the Southern Baptist Convention) to give to whatever it wants" and 2) "... that all moneys contributed to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering should rightfully go to the support of missionaries appointed by the Foreign Mission Board." The offering raises nearly half of the FMB's annual budget.

FMB leaders said they initiated the trademark application "after concerns arose regarding unauthorized use and distribution" of the offering named for famed 19th century missionary Lottie Moon. Some churches have reportedly raised funds in the offering's name and then sent some of the receipts to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship or to independent non-SBC missionaries.

The Birmingham participants also agreed 1) to further consultation between the FMB and WMU and 2) that WMU's New Hope publishing arm will publish a new biography of Lottie Moon, written by Rankin. O'Brien will write the foreword for the book, which also will feature photography by Don Rutledge, FMB senior photographer. Kammerdiener also invited WMU leaders to meet with FMB trustees during their October meeting in Richmond.

The disagreement between WMU and the FMB over the trademark issue began May 13 when the Virginia WMU's executive board said they had learned the FMB had applied 10 months earlier for a trademark on the Lottie Moon offering. They asked O'Brien in the WMU national office to investigate the situation.

WMU leaders in Birmingham said they were "surprised and disappointed" to learn of the action.

Rankin responded on May 18, saying the board had put the application on hold until the board could consult with WMU leaders. He also expressed regret for the oversight of not consulting with WMU leaders and for the "insensitivity to their historic identification with the Offering" Rankin said the FMB had "no intention of offending or neglecting" WMU.

O'Brien, in turn, said she was "pleased with the action" and added:

"When a Christian brother asks for forgiveness, you give it. The details will have to be worked out later. This is the first step toward a fuller understanding of this unfortunate incident."

The trademark disagreement occurred at a time some Southern Baptists feel SBC leadership is attempting to minimize WMU's role as it goes through a restructuring process.

Rankin has insisted, however, nothing will change in the historic partnership between the women's auxiliary and the Foreign Mission Board.

**Disasters could require
record volunteer effort**

By David Winfrey

ATLANTA (BP)--Hurricane Allison wasn't too bad, but Southern Baptist volunteers can't rest yet.

Recent floods and tornados, combined with a predicted heavy hurricane season could require a record effort from Southern Baptist volunteer relief crews, their national coordinators said.

"All indications are that this year will be the highest or one of the top years in terms of disasters," said Mike Bailey, Home Mission Board disaster relief coordinator.

That could put a strain on the volunteer crews that coordinate emergency feeding and rebuilding efforts, he said. "We really are going to have a tremendous number of requests this summer."

Mickey Caison, disaster relief coordinator for the Brotherhood Commission, agreed.

"We've already used hundreds of volunteers," he said. "If the happenings already are any indicator, it's going to be a very busy summer."

Such predictions come at the advent of hurricane season, which also is expected to be especially busy this year, says Frank Lepore, spokesman for the National Hurricane Center.

Hurricane predictions cannot estimate whether they will hit land or populated areas, but Lepore noted, "All it takes is one Andrew (the 1992 hurricane causing record damage in Miami), particularly if you're living in harm's way."

The first hurricane of the season, Allison, was rated only a category one storm, with winds reaching a top speed of 70 mph, according to the center.

Southern Baptists already have responded this year to storms in Texas; flooding in Missouri, Tennessee and New Orleans; tornados in Massachusetts, Kentucky and Illinois; and the Oklahoma City federal building bombing, Caison said.

Both the Home Mission Board and Brotherhood Commission respond to requests from states during such disasters. According to an agreement between the two agencies, the Brotherhood Commission assists with initial response, such as emergency feeding and clearing debris. The Home Mission Board coordinates volunteer work crews to help rebuild homes and churches.

Recruiting volunteers becomes more difficult after media attention is no longer focused on an area still reeling from a disaster, Bailey said.

"You have a tendency to think, 'Well, that area's taken care of,'" he said. "In reality, the long-term rebuilding of an area takes more resources -- time, money and volunteers -- than the initial emergency phase."

Rebuilding efforts continue in south Georgia, where approximately 900 homes still need work after flooding last June. Also, Alabama Baptists recently asked for volunteer help with 200 homes damaged by tornados last month.

"We are also trying to request help for earthquake-damaged churches in California," he said. "It's just hard to get volunteers to go that far."

Bailey said he's considering asking churches with construction teams if they could sponsor a second team this summer.

"We could use 100 volunteers a week easy," he said. "We'd have legitimate needs for them to address just in the active disasters we're currently working."

More information about volunteer opportunities is available from state Baptist volunteer coordinators or the HMB volunteer staff at 1-800-HMB-VOLS.

**Hail storm thrusts church
into new community effort**

By David Winfrey

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Volunteers are needed to help roof houses in Fort Worth, Texas, after a severe hail storm damaged thousands of homes May 5.

"Our real need right now is manpower," said Gary Miller, pastor of Sagamore Hill Baptist Church, who is organizing the effort. "We're getting materials donated."

That church is on the east side of Forth Worth, where some of the worst damage occurred, Miller said. Softball-sized hail fell and 75 mph winds downed large trees, according to meteorological assistant Krista Villarreal.

The church campus sustained 510 broken windows, as well as damage to roofs and air conditioning units on the roofs, Miller said.

"We began to realize that if we were hit this hard as a church, then these little homes around us must have really been hammered," he said. "We have knocked on the doors in a six-square-mile area, and are continuing to discover home after home after home that needs a roof or needs window repairs."

Many homeowners in the community have no insurance, he added. "Many of these people are at poverty-level income. They're elderly. They've let their insurance lapse because of their medical bills."

The church has recruited volunteer work crews through mid-June and is looking for more help, Miller said. With help from Texas Baptist Men, about 30 area churches have been represented on the work crews. "We have initiated something that we call Mission Fort Worth, and we're going to do this all summer long.

"We know conservatively of 100 houses that are in need of roofs," he said, adding he expects that number to rise. "We have roofed 12 homes, and that's just in one weekend. It doesn't take long to realize we need to widen the circle of the people involved."

The church is asking people to adopt a house for \$2,000. That will pay for the roofing materials, debris clean-up afterwards and some interior work, he said. So far, the church has raised \$50,000 toward the effort.

Local businesses also are participating. At a time when building materials are at a premium, Miller said one supplier said he wanted to pray with his accountant before selling the group 560 sheets of plywood.

Afterward, "He said, 'Not only will we sell it to you. We'll sell it to you at our cost.' And then he said, 'Our company would also like to split that cost with you.'" Miller estimates they got the plywood at one-third its regular price.

"We've been looking for a miracle a minute for this thing to work. And we're beginning to see things that are an encouragement to us."

Bobby Cox, church and community ministries director of Tarrant Baptist Association in Fort Worth, praised the congregation's efforts to take ministry to their community in a time of need.

"They have gone seven extra miles in helping people who have no financial resources whatsoever."

Miller said ministry began shortly after the storm. Members took the leftover plastic and plywood they used at the church buildings to nearby houses in the neighborhood.

Buoyed by members' positive comments to helping the community, Miller went to church Sunday dressed in work clothes. He preached an abbreviated message and invited members to return after lunch to continue helping in the community.

"We had about 150 volunteers show up," he said. "That really was a remarkable number because many of our people live in the same area. Their homes are in the same kind of shape."

Sunday evening worship services were canceled in May in order to go out and survey neighbors' need for assistance. Sunday evening worship services have resumed but were moved up a half-hour to continue the effort afterward. "As we've been knocking on these doors we've found that not only are there physical problems, but there's spiritual needs."

Miller noted one weekend he helped a 59-year-old man re-roof his home. The man told Miller he moved to Fort Worth 21 years ago to help build a church.

"We were nailing his roof down and he said, 'You know what goes around comes around. Now a church is helping me build my house back.'"

For more information about assisting the church in volunteer work, call the church office at (817) 536-2801 or call the Home Mission Board at 1-800-HMB-VOLS

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Baptist children adopt
Okla. City fire station

By Stacey Hamby

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6/6/95

BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP)--Fourth- and fifth-graders in Tami Gore's discipleship training class at First Baptist Church, Bolivar, Mo., were among the thousands of Americans who wanted to do something to help Oklahomans after the bombing that rocked the nation April 19.

The class members decided to color a 4- by 8-foot mural and send it to rescuers in Oklahoma City. Recently, a firefighter responded to the class' efforts.

About 14 children helped make the mural, which pictures rolling green hills with flowers and trees and a cross in the middle with a sunset behind it. It says across the top, "America's children are very thankful for your unending help."

"Since there were lots of deaths, we thought it was neat to put a cross on it because Jesus died on the cross," said Kendra Toler, a fourth grader in Gore's class.

The class made the mural April 23, the Sunday morning following the blast. Gore said she and the class spent some time talking about what had happened and what they could do to help.

"We just wanted to do something for them to make their day better," said Malorie Wommack, a fourth-grader in the class.

Cpl. Steve York, a firefighter at Station 31 in Oklahoma City, responded to the Bolivar children's mural with a three-page handwritten letter.

"I addressed the envelope in care of the fire chief of Oklahoma City," Gore said. "I was really surprised it got there in all the chaos."

York said in his letter that thousands of letters and cards from children all over the country had been arriving at the bomb site and were passed out to rescuers as they left their shifts. The Bolivar children's mural was in the packet York received.

"When we return to the station before we have to go back to the bomb site, we read the letters and cards," York wrote in his May 1 letter. "Some are from children who are just learning to write, but they all in some way bring smiles to our faces. When I unfolded the mural that you all have sent us, we all gathered around to look and it brought smiles to our faces and hearts.

"There are 30 firefighters at this station, 10 on each shift. Each and every one of us will see the mural that you sent because we hung it high on the wall of the front room of our fire station. Each time we get ready to leave to go to work at the bomb site and each time we return we can look up at the mural and smile. We can smile because no matter how bad it is when we have to dig for bodies, we have the love, support and hope from the children of Bolivar, Missouri."

York also wrote that he eventually will fold up the mural and keep it. He also sent a picture of the mural hanging in the station and a picture of himself in his rescue gear at the bomb site.

"I thought it was neat to see it hanging up in there," Wommack said. "It's a privilege for us."

After reading York's letter in class, the children decided they wanted to begin "Operation Hope."

"They wanted to adopt this fire station and Steve York because he took time to write back to us," Gore said.

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The class will draw more pictures, write letters, send homemade cookies and other "care package" items to Station 31.

"It'll be kind of like a pen-pal sort of thing," Toler said.

Gore said the whole situation has been a learning experience for the class.

"I think they were all surprised that something so small could make so many people feel better," Gore said.

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Hamby is a writer with the Bolivar, Mo., Herald-Free Press.

Prof holds to the faith
in UFO, time travel novel

By Ken Walker

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Space aliens, UFOs, time travel and "angels of light" don't sound like staples of Christian fiction. But "The Fallen" isn't the normal entry in this ever-expanding corner of the book market.

"I wanted to write a believable explanation, within a Christian world view, of the popular phenomenon of UFOs," said Robert Don Hughes, professor of communications and mass media at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. "I think the high degree of interest in angels and 'kind aliens' are related.

"I think people are searching for someone who can explain everything, a being who can take care of them in this ambiguous world. Rather than pointing people to communing with their guardian angel, I would rather point them to communing with their Bible and with God."

A well-written, compelling story, "The Fallen" was released in January by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman & Holman Publishers. While it sold a modest 6,000 copies in four months, Hughes said word-of-mouth recommendations have been excellent.

That method launched the popularity of Frank Peretti, whose spiritual warfare novels of the late 1980s remain on best-seller lists. They served as a springboard for Christian fiction, which according to industry sources has since increased its market share tenfold.

"The Fallen" is the account of seminary professor Jack Brennan, who is kidnapped by aliens as he walks through the forest near his home. He winds up battling these strange creatures as he navigates his way through time, including historical periods ranging back to the ancient Druids.

His life is threatened on numerous occasions. Scripture and guardian angels represent his two primary weapons against a collection of weird foes.

Hughes, who is pastor of a country church east of Louisville, said his interests in history, science fiction and biblical research all played a role in crafting "The Fallen."

So did one of his previous books for Broadman & Holman, "Satan's Whispers." Released in 1992, it has sold more than 100,000 copies. Written as a dialogue between himself and Satan, it explores temptation by reviewing a series of 13 lies commonly used by the enemy.

"It had an impact on my perception of evil and the interface between good and evil," he said. "While I believe in angels, I don't believe in an angel around every corner. I believe in human agents -- that what God does in the world, he does through us. As much as people talk about angels, actually what we tend to see is humans empowered by the Holy Spirit."

Although some believe his book represents a pioneering style of Christian writing, Hughes labels C.S. Lewis' "Out of the Silent Planet" as the first Christian science fiction. Part of a trilogy published years ago, it was followed by occasional efforts which didn't sell too well, he said.

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Until a decade ago, most published Christian fiction was all gory. Many such works also had a "preachiness" that turned off readers, Hughes said, until Peretti's novels. Hughes said he believes book buyers are open to more Christian science fiction if the stories are well-written and believable.

"As long as it's interesting people will read it. It's a way of talking to the world in the days to come. We (Christians) spend so much time talking to ourselves. If people will sit down, read science fiction and talk about gods and fairies and creation, why can't they read something that comes out of a Christian world view?"

Not only does his work grow out of his Christian viewpoint, Hughes is also a very talented writer, say two media-savvy observers from Richmond, Va. Anita Wolfe, a communications graduate of Regent University, and Becky Wentworth, traffic manager for WKHK radio, both read the novel in a few days.

"You can't take it lightly," said Wolfe, a free-lance writer who is working on several children's books. "There are a lot of concepts you have to think about. I think he's taken a lot of research, information and experienced certain things, and put them together to come up with one answer to what's going on in the world today."

"One thing about his message is that it's never too late; there's hope for everyone," added Wentworth, host of a weekly auto racing show. "I feel that we're in the end times and the more souls who can be won to the Lord, the better.

"The whole story is very timely," Wentworth said. "I feel he really knows his Scripture and he doesn't go out of bounds in the least. He sticks to the message and his faith. With the groundswell of interest in angels, what he's saying is a whole lot closer to the truth than what these other books are saying."

Wolfe agreed "The Fallen" is theologically sound. Despite Peretti's popularity, "he rubbed against my Baptist background." She said she feels that author gives too much weight to demonic powers in his narratives.

"Science fiction can be a good tool if handled properly," she said. "There's a fine line between science fiction and reality, but it can be viable if it's mixed with research and a biblical basis."

While he appreciates the compliments for his writing about angels, Hughes didn't write the book in an attempt to counteract any misleading information on the market. He said he simply wanted to write an entertaining, interesting story that would present a Christian viewpoint.

In the process, he said he hopes it will make Christian science fiction enthusiasts feel better about this hobby. Invited regularly to speak at science fiction conventions, the professor is often surrounded afterward by Christians delighted to discover a fellow believer in their midst.

"I'm planting seeds but also in some ways am encouraging people who don't see how they can relate what's being preached to their interest in science fiction. I can help them say, 'I can like science fiction and also love Jesus Christ.'"

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Praxis teams head out
for summer ministry

By Debbie Moore

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Coming this month to an unchurched people group near you -- a Praxis team!

Every summer for the past 15 years, students from the six Southern Baptist seminaries have headed out for a 10-week adventure called Praxis. Taken from the ancient Greek word for practice, Praxis is a Home Mission Board program giving seminary students an opportunity to experience the challenges and joys of church planting in a supervised environment.

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This year 21 Baptist state conventions and Canada have placed 64 students, including 18 from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; 14 from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; 12 from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; 10 from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.; six from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.; and four from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

"Locations (for Praxis teams) are chosen on a priority basis," said Pamela Mungo, director of project development with the HMB's new church extension division. Baptist state conventions sent prioritized requests to the Home Mission Board earlier this year. Representatives from the states interviewed seminary students at their campuses in the spring, trying to find the right people to meet their priority needs, Mungo said.

Both seminary student families and singles will be working in targeted areas in Alaska, Arkansas, California, Canada, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

A training session was held in May at New Orleans Seminary, bringing all seminary team members together for an overview of their assignments. Team members also were given crash courses on such topics as working with different age groups and interfaith witnessing.

Praxis teams have been matched up with a sponsoring church which will be responsible for providing housing and transportation throughout the summer. All living expenses plus a \$150 per week stipend are paid by the HMB from moneys given to the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

A limit of about 40 teams is set every year because of available finances. This year the HMB was able to send out 39 teams, including three students from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn., and three from Florida Baptist Theological College in Graceville, Fla.

Some teams have been assigned to unchurched areas while other teams are targeting unchurched people groups, Mungo said. "Some areas already have established churches, but they've found a need for a different church to be started in their area to meet the needs of a group that is not being reached by a church in the area."

In their efforts to begin new churches, students will do neighborhood surveys, begin Bible study groups, conduct Vacation Bible Schools and Backyard Bible Clubs, lead worship services and, above all, form relationships to lead others to Christ.

Many seminary students who participate in Praxis end up as career church starters after graduation. Praxis, Mungo said, is a "real training ground for future church planters."

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From chemist to church planter,
the makings of a Praxis team member

Baptist Press
6/6/95

By Debbie Moore

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Richard Dunnam had been a chemist in his home state of Texas for 15 years when he heard that still, small voice of God calling him into Christian ministry.

"I thought I had my life all planned out," Dunnam said, "and then one day I heard God say, 'You need to listen to me, son, then your life will really get exciting.'"

So last summer he moved his family to Louisiana -- as far east as any of them had ever been -- where he began master of divinity studies at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

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This summer he's taking his family out of the South for the first time in their lives as they travel to northwestern Illinois to serve 10 weeks as a church planter team called Praxis.

Praxis, a joint effort of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and individual Baptist state conventions, gives seminary students an opportunity to experience church planting in a supervised environment.

During his first year of seminary training, Dunnam felt the Lord leading him to prepare for bivocational work, "especially church starting in an evangelistic-type setting," he said. Then he heard about the HMB's Praxis ministry during a seminary chapel service, as well as from a friend. He had some big news to talk over with his family. His wife, Natalie, and children, Shane, 14, and Sarah, 10, took the news well.

"We're in this as a family," Dunnam said. "I'm really thankful to the Lord for that."

"I never imagined when we came to seminary last August that we would be going on something like Praxis the very next summer!" his wife said. God has been working in the lives of her family all this year, she said, so "I know our family will grow spiritually by seeing God at work through each of us this summer."

Dunnam and his family have been assigned to Carthage, Ill., a town of 2,600. Their sponsoring church, Calvary Baptist in Galesburg, is about 60 miles away. The pastor, Lewis Wood, has a house and a list of prospects waiting for them.

Carthage is a predominantly agricultural area with related businesses. "I'm a little nervous because of our Texas drawl," Dunnam said. "We're told to expect a good bit of teasing." But he hopes his many years in agricultural Texas areas will give him a connecting point with the people in Carthage as he and his family try to build relationships in order to start a Bible study which will hopefully develop into a church for that area.

"We may be somewhat shunned, but we'll learn to love as Jesus loved, unconditionally," he said.

The Dunnams have heard and read about revivals going on in Illinois this year and are hoping they can be a continuing part in that spirit.

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2 small-church pastors
honored for work by BSSB

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6/6/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Donald Shannon of Healy, Alaska, and John Gallegos of La Belle, Fla., have been cited as "Outstanding Small-Church Pastors" for 1995, according to John Adams, consultant in the Baptist Sunday School Board's pastor-staff leadership department.

Criteria for the award, which recognizes "noteworthy and meritorious achievement in pastoral ministry or denominational service," include above-average tenure in the association or church, leadership in specific areas of growth, development of proclamation skills, pastoral ministries and involvement in the local association or the denomination.

Shannon, pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church, Healy, is bivocational, working also as a school teacher at Tri-Valley High School in Healy. He has been pastor of the church 10 years, starting when it was a mission. Subsequently, the congregation has purchased property, constructed a building, constituted as a church and supports other missions.

Healy is a community of approximately 600 people, located 112 miles from Fairbanks. Shannon has used Bible studies during the week at church, in homes and at Mount McKinley National Park to reach people.

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David Baldwin, director of missions for the Tanana Valley Baptist Association in Fairbanks, nominated Shannon and observed he "uses the talents of his people, started a community choir, has led the church to have family camping and fishing trips for outreach and family emphasis. All five churches in the community are holding a True Love Waits teen-age sexual abstinence rally because of the example of Morning Star and its pastor."

He said Shannon is "always willing to help in spite of distance in our association."

Shannon is on the Alaska Baptist Convention executive board, chairperson of the program committee for the convention and has been chairperson of the missions committee.

The church has an average of 60 in worship each week.

Gallegos, pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista of La Belle, also is a field foreman in the agriculture industry.

He has been pastor of the church 15 years, exceeding an average five-year tenure for pastors in the association.

Hawk Grammer, director of Missions for the Big Lake Baptist Association in Clewiston, nominated Gallegos and said the church's predominantly migrant worker membership makes growth difficult to measure, but Gallegos is "hard-working and tenacious" in ministry.

"John preaches to scores of migrant workers while they're in his ministry setting for short periods of time each year," he said. "Most of these persons have never heard the gospel before. Migrant workers usually come to this agricultural community with very little in the way of adequate clothing and other necessities. John Gallegos has led his church to provide clothing and meals to meet these needs."

Average worship attendance for the church is 78.

As a part of their recognition, the two pastors and their spouses will receive all-expense paid trips to Bible Preaching-Leadership Conferences at the Sunday School Board's national conference centers this summer. Gallegos will be at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, July 8-14, and Shannon will be at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, Aug. 5-11. Each pastor will be invited to speak during a worship service at the conference center.

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