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SBC Cooperative Program gifts
down for July, up for year

Baptist Press
8/2/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program gifts for July dropped 2.68 percent below the same month a year ago, but the totals for the year-to-date still are above the previous year by 2.02 percent, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

CP gifts for the month of July totaled \$11,708,855 compared to July of 1994 of \$12,030,817, a drop of \$321,962 or 2.68 percent. For the ten months of the SBC's fiscal year, the totals stand at \$121,023,134 compared to the same period a year ago of \$118,630,576, an increase of \$2,392,558 or 2.02 percent.

The SBC's fiscal year is from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30.

Designated gifts for July were up a whopping 32.55 percent over the month a year ago: \$5,624,435 compared to \$4,243,380 -- a \$1,381,055 increase. That leaves the year-to-date designated totals at \$127,328,164 compared to a year ago of \$123,452,486, an increase of \$3,875,677 or 3.14 percent.

The SBC's Program Allocation Budget requires \$11,378,310 each month. Thus July's gifts were 2.91 percent above the monthly budget requirement, or \$330,544. For the year-to-date, the CP gifts are 6.36 percent above the budget requirement, or \$7,240,026.

The SBC Cooperative Program total includes undesignated receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions and fellowships for distribution according to the 1994-95 Program Allocation Budget.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions, world hunger and other special gifts.

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State and regional conventions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining funds to the Executive Committee for national and international ministries. The percentage of distribution is at the discretion of each state or regional convention.

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(Editors' Note: In addition to the following, more stories from the Baptist World Alliance meeting can be found in the News Room, SBCNet.)

BWA council to study
Baptist distinctives

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
8/2/95

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (BP)--The Baptist World Alliance General Council agreed to study the "distinguishing marks of a Baptist body" and heard reports of God's work around the world during its July 31-Aug. 1 session.

Meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, before the 17th Baptist World Congress, council members also extended membership to five Baptist organizations.

Baptist World Alliance guidelines specify that members must be Baptist, while they give no definitions of what it means to be Baptist, said Reginald Harvey of the Baptist Missionary Society of England and chairman of the membership committee.

The vote means a committee will study the proposal and bring a recommendation to next year's General Council meeting, but "we don't want to be a creedal organization," said Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary.

In his opening remarks, Lotz said, "We're a home for every Baptist." Some beliefs Baptists have in common, Lotz noted, are freedom of religion, the Bible being the Word of God and baptism only for believers. Yet the diversity among Baptists means BWA members must display a "tolerance and unity from Jesus Christ. We need to learn from one another."

Highlights from reports from regional fellowships include:

-- Thanks from African Baptists for the response to the needs in Rwanda. Baptists in Zaire also "responded tremendously" to the human suffering in Rwanda, said Eleazar Ziherambere of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship.

"The harvest is plenty, but we need your prayers," Ziherambere said. As Africa is open to the gospel, people are also open to false religions, he said.

-- Edwin Lopez of the Asian Baptist Federation also reported "it is harvest time in Asia. Anywhere you go, people are coming to Christ." Some of the most notable growth is in Bangladesh where the number of Baptist churches has increased from 30 to 310 in about 10 years.

Lopez asked fellow Baptists to pray that God will open doors for the gospel to be openly shared in countries now closed to missionaries.

-- Azariah McKenzie of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship observed the perseverance of church members there despite economic disadvantages. "We have a history of not giving up where there are hardships," he said.

-- The report from the European Baptist Federation was highlighted by news from Sophia, Bulgaria. In 1992, the local government gave the Baptist Union of Bulgaria property for an orphanage and seminary. When the government threatened to take it back, Baptists from around the world sent letters in protest.

"The authorities were shocked and the (local) Baptists were amazed" at the worldwide attention, said the Bulgarian representative. "The victory belongs to you."

Karl-Heinz Walter of the European Baptist Federation noted in many European countries "employment is the exception; unemployment is the rule."

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-- During the Union of Baptists in Latin America report, leaders prayed for new BWA leaders from their area. Nilson Fanini from Brazil will be the new BWA president, succeeding Knud Wumpelmann of Denmark. Also, Daniel Carro will succeed Jose Misenna of Paraguay as regional secretary of the Union of Baptists in Latin America.

-- North America is "fast becoming a mission field," said Harold Bennett as he reported for the North American Baptist Fellowship.

The General Council voted to accept five new members: the Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda; the Baptist Union of North India; the Nepal Baptist Church Council; the Brotherhood of Independent Christians/Baptists of Ukraine; and the Union of Evangelical Christians/Baptists in Federated Yugoslavia.

The Baptist World Alliance member organizations represent 40,783,213 baptized believers belonging to 152,239 churches. Lotz noted that since only baptized believers -- not children or adherents -- are counted, the Baptist World Alliance actually represents a community of 100 million people.

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Resolutions advocate
justice, evangelism

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
8/2/95

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (BP)--The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance adopted six resolutions Aug. 1 on issues ranging from calls to justice to a recommitment to evangelism.

The resolution on justice laments wars and violence that "perpetuate such life-threatening conditions as hunger, poverty, preventable disease and racism."

The resolution calls for Baptists to:

-- actively oppose the violence of international conflict and ethnic/racial strife;

-- urge developed nations and their financial institutions to forgive debts and interest payments from the most impoverished nations;

-- support all attempts to eradicate overt and covert expressions of racism.

The resolution on evangelism challenges every Baptist church to establish at least one new congregation by the year 2000 and for more effort to be directed to reaching the 20 percent of the world's people who are not Christians. According to the resolution, less than one percent of Christian resources are directed to that group.

In other resolutions adopted during its meeting in Buenos Aires prior to the Baptist World Congress, the council addressed differences among Baptist groups while calling them to work for harmony within the global community; expressed appreciation for Argentine Baptists for facilitating the World Congress; paid tribute to Billy Graham for his unique contribution to world evangelism; and called for increased support of the Baptist World Aid program.

Baptist World Aid began 75 years ago to provide relief and development ministries. Last year Baptist World Aid provided funds for 27 projects, including an inner-city church in South Africa, an addition to a school building in Haiti, an intensive care unit at a Baptist Hospital in India and a tractor and other farm equipment in Ghana.

The Baptist World Aid budget for 1996 is \$183,452. The resolution asks "Baptist Christians to give at least one percent of their income to world development."

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Baptist Congress celebrates
unity through diversity

By Pam Parry

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (BP)--The president of Argentina told Baptists from across the globe that they, like his country, have a unity based on diversity at the opening session of the 17th Baptist World Congress.

President Carlos Menem led a delegation of dignitaries to the inaugural event, which drew 8,000 people even though the official registration is 5,500. The Aug. 1 opening session featured worship, a colorful roll call of nations and Argentine culture.

Menem told Congress attendees he came to the Baptist World Alliance meeting not only in his official capacity but also as "a man sensitive to religious values."

He said he made the commitment to attend months before he knew he would be re-elected in the country's May 14 election. Had he lost his re-election bid, Menem said, he would have attended as a private citizen to celebrate the hope found in Christ.

He, along with a host of others, welcomed Baptists from more than 100 nations to his country -- one which sports religious diversity. People of all faiths live together harmoniously because of the "divine message of tolerance," he said.

Through its laws and society, Argentina promotes freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, Menem said. The president said he "is absolutely convinced" no rights can exist "when the soul is not protected."

Other speakers echoed Menem's themes of unity and diversity, as well as the bedrock Baptist belief in religious liberty.

Juan Calcagni, president of Argentine Baptists, told the participants from six continents that hosting the congress was a dream come true. He also assured Menem they would pray that God would use him.

"We (Argentines) have a destiny of greatness and may God bless you," Calcagni said to his president.

He added he is grateful his country's constitution provides for religious freedom.

"We couldn't go without the freedom of religion that we have here in Argentina, which is part of our essence in the nation," Calcagni said.

Knud Wumpelmann, BWA president, said, "We are here, first of all, to celebrate the son of the King of Kings ... because we are convinced that he is the hope of the world."

Wumpelmann said many people in the world are in danger of losing life and hope.

"It is our sincere prayer that the hope which only Jesus can give may be more visible to many people in Buenos Aires during this congress."

Daniel Tinao, pastor of the Once Baptist Church in Buenos Aires, preached a sermon celebrating Christ as Lord of the nations.

"The God of all religions reveals himself supremely in Jesus Christ," Tinao said.

"The faith in Jesus Christ is not one more religion. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. We respect all religions and recognize all the good that each religion has and contributes."

Even more Baptists should give their lives to defend the right that everyone has to practice and spread religion, Tinao said. But the gospel is clear there is only one name by which people can be saved, he added.

Raul Scialabba, chairman of the local arrangements committee, said a great dream of Argentine Baptists became reality with the opening of the congress.

**Croatia, Serbia Baptists
lament war's implications**

By Sarah Zimmerman

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (BP)--While world news focused on strife in Bosnia, Baptists from Croatia and Serbia lamented not being able to see each other more often.

The Baptist World Alliance General Council recognized Baptist representatives from the warring countries during its July 31-Aug. 1 meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, prior to the opening of the Aug. 1-6 Baptist World Congress.

"We have longed to be somewhere where we can meet with one another," said Branko Lovrec, president of the Baptist Union of Croatia, as he put his arm around the shoulders of Dane Vidovic, a pastor in Belgrade, Serbia.

"We hope to meet in Hungary," Vidovic said, adding that it is not possible for Baptists from the former Yugoslavia to meet in their home countries.

Lovrec said Baptists distribute "tons of food as a testimony that we do not regard anyone as different." Some of the relief organizations have a reputation of being dishonest, Lovrec said, and part of the Baptists' testimony is conducting business honorably.

"We don't know about tomorrow, but we're not optimistic," Lovrec said as he noted that his two sons received draft notices the previous week.

The council also voted to extend membership to a second group of Baptists in Serbia. The Union of Baptist Churches in Serbia is already a BWA member. The new member, the Union of Evangelical Christians/Baptists in the Federated Yugoslavia, includes 12 churches with 540 members. Churches in the new union baptized 140 people last year, reported Reginald Harvey with the Baptist Missionary Society of England and chairman of the BWA membership committee.

Before voting to admit the new Serbia group, a General Council member asked if it was premature in light of the war taking place in the region.

"The outcome of this politically, none of us can gage," Harvey said. Extending membership to the new union "recognizes the reality of God's work" in the area, he added.

Dragisa Armus, general secretary for the union newly admitted to BWA, said people in the former Yugoslavia are more responsive to the gospel now. "People are in the air without their foundation," Armus said, causing them to look to God for answers.

Some of the people most responsive to the gospel now are refugees, said Vidovic. His church distributes food and other items to refugees twice a week, he said, and addresses the refugees' spiritual needs. Many Sundays, nearly half the congregation in his church are refugees, he said.

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**Baptist church employee arrested,
charged with killing 3, wounding 4** By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
8/2/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--A maintenance worker at Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas was charged with the execution-style murder of three children and the shooting of their mother and three others at an apartment complex a block from the church building.

And as area residents struggled to come to terms with the tragedy, the church opened its doors to offer counseling and ministry.

John Leslie Wheat, 51, was charged July 31 with three counts of capital murder and four counts of attempted capital murder.

Six-year-old Ashley Ochoa and her eight-year-old brother, Eddie, each died July 30 from gunshot wounds to the back of the head. Their 20-month-old sister, Lacey, died several hours later, and their mother, Angela Anderson, 28, remained in critical condition at Harris Methodist Hospital in Fort Worth.

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The shooting took place just a few minutes before worshippers gathered for Sunday school at Travis Avenue Baptist Church July 30.

Wheat allegedly began the shooting spree at the Les Jardin Apartments after Anderson accused him of molesting her children. He often cared for the youngsters while their mother worked the late night shift at a plastic factory on Fort Worth's south side.

The accused gunman was hired by the church as part-time security guard about a year ago and was transferred to the church's maintenance department about six months ago.

"We had absolutely no indication that he could be capable of anything like this," said Michael Dean, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church. "He was always very helpful, conscientious and very deliberate. He was a good employee for us."

Just one week before the shooting, Eddie and Ashley Ochoa had participated in a neighborhood day camp sponsored by the church. Eddie had made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ five days before he was killed.

"Eddie was real outgoing, vivacious and full of life," said Pam Reigle, minister to children at the church. "Ashley was a lot quieter, and she followed her brother like a shadow. During the day camp, she always had one of the teen-age helpers wanting to carry her around, she was so sweet."

Although the children were not members of the church, Reigle said their mother made sure they attended Vacation Bible School and the day camp.

"It must have been hard for her being a single parent, but they were both really happy children," Reigle said. "She tried to keep them in line, and you could tell she really cared about them."

In the wake of the shooting, Travis Avenue Baptist Church was expanding its neighborhood ministries to meet both immediate and long-term needs of community residents, according to Dean.

"We are building off of the relationships that we already have established in the neighborhood," he said. "There is a lot of grief, shock and fear."

Dean learned about the shooting on Sunday afternoon when he returned from vacation. Originally, he had planned to come home just long enough to pack his bags for a mission trip to Venezuela.

"Needless to say, I postponed that trip," he said. "I can do that another time. I needed to be close to home right now."

The shooting was a "double tragedy" for Travis Avenue, since both the accused gunman and several of his victims were involved in the life of the church, Dean said.

The situation offered the challenge of ministering not only to victims and their family members but also to the alleged perpetrator. Dean was scheduled to meet with Wheat in the jail on Tuesday evening, Aug. 1.

Dean also said he had visited with the family of Angela Jay, a Fort Worth police officer, who was seriously wounded in the shooting.

The church was working with the Victim Assistance Office of the Fort Worth Police Department to make its facilities available for neighborhood small group "debriefings."

Scott Floyd, a church member and assistant professor of psychology and counseling at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, was coordinating grief counseling and spiritual guidance that the church made available to people in the neighborhood.

The church also set up a fund at a local bank for Anderson's medical expenses and her children's funeral costs. Contributions can be made to the Anderson Family Fund, P.O. Box 1840, Fort Worth, Texas 76101.

"When something like this happens, particularly when it involves children, it cuts right to the heart of a neighborhood," Dean said.

"We've made the choice to stay in the heart of the city, and there are risks associated with that. But we are committed to continuing our ministry to this community."

**Former New Orleans president,
Leo Eddleman, dies in Kentucky**

MIDDLETOWN, Ky. (BP)--Henry Leo Eddleman, former president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, died July 28 at his home in Middletown, Ky. He was 84.

Eddleman was president of New Orleans Seminary from 1959 to his retirement in 1970.

The funeral was Aug. 1 in Louisville, Ky., with burial Aug. 2 in Morristown, Tenn.

Eddleman was born in Morgantown, Miss., the son of Richard A. and Lucille Power Eddleman. He graduated from Mississippi College in 1932. After receiving his master's degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., he was a missionary in Palestine for six years.

After fighting in Palestine erupted in 1941, he returned to the U.S. where he taught Old Testament and Hebrew at New Orleans Seminary.

He was pastor of Parkland Baptist Church, Louisville, from 1942 to 1952. He taught at Southern Seminary for two years and then from 1954 to 1959 he was president of Georgetown College, Georgetown, Ky.

Following his retirement in 1970 from New Orleans Seminary, Eddleman was an editor for the Baptist Sunday School Board. He was the author of 13 books and wrote numerous articles for denominational journals.

Eddleman is survived by his wife, Sarah Fox, a native of Morristown, Tenn.; a sister, Evelyn Quinn Hitt, Mobile, Ala.; and two daughters, Sarah Eddleman Duvall, Kediri, Indonesia and Evelyn Eddleman Gordinier, Louisville.

The family has requested memorial gifts be sent to the Kediri Baptist Hospital in care of Hurstbourne Baptist Church, Louisville, or to the charity of the donor's choice.

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**Missouri Baptist spearheads effort
toward listening-based Bible version**

By Brian Smith

**Baptist Press
8/2/95**

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP)--"In the beginning was the Word." This opening verse of John's gospel is easily understood, or is it? "The Word" refers to Jesus, of course. But how will someone who has no knowledge of Christianity, or who is hearing the verse for the first time, understand what "the Word" refers to?

Such questions were an important aspect in the process of producing the Contemporary English Version (CEV), a new Bible translation undertaken by the American Bible Society. The CEV New Testament appeared in 1991, and the complete Bible was released this June. More than 100 people worldwide -- translators, reviewers and consultants -- spent more than 10 years working on the translation.

The project was headed by Missourian Barclay Newman, ABS's senior translation officer. Newman is a member of First Baptist Church, Springfield and a former professor at William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo.

"'In the beginning was the Word' sounds all right, until you realize that for American speakers of English, a word is something spoken or written," Newman said. "You may have an idiom -- 'What's the word?' -- but we would never think of a word as being some pre-existing being."

John 1:1 in the CEV thus reads, "In the beginning was the one who is called the Word. The Word was with God and was truly God."

Newman said the idea was to help the reader who is not familiar with the biblical background. "Right away you realize that we are talking about a being of some sort that was pre-existent who was called 'the Word,' not just some kind of spoken entity or some kind of written entity."

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The most important aspect of any translation is remaining faithful to the meaning of the Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic text, Newman said. The CEV translators then went a step further.

"More people hear the scriptures read than read them for themselves, and we are trying to reach an audience who may not come into eye contact with the text," Newman explained. The translators wanted those who did read it for themselves to be able to do so easily. They took into account such factors as pronoun ambiguities, punctuation, tongue twisters and the number of consecutive unaccented syllables.

"What we are doing is trying to create something that you can read aloud without stumbling, that you can hear without misunderstanding and that you can listen to with appreciation and enjoyment because the style is lucid and lyrical."

Yet lucid and lyrical style has to be accomplished in economical and effortless use of language. Newman gave the example of Hebrew poetry.

"Hebrew poetry has sound, rhyme, rhythm and form," he noted. "All the translations I know of have tried in some measure to retain the form of the Hebrew text. But you cannot produce the sound, the rhyme and the rhythm, and yet many translations come out with this Hebrew form of repetition -- either negative or positive -- which is simply not contemporary American poetic form."

Another aspect of the project the CEV team paid close attention to was how the printed words would appear on the page. "Especially in poetry, what you see is what you're going to say and what others are going to hear. If the poetry lines are broken wrongly, you're going to stop at the end of a line and there will be a stress and a pause before you begin," Newman said.

As an example, he offered one popular translation's rendering of Psalm 18:19.

"There's nothing wrong with the translation, but the line ends, 'You brought me out to a broad,' and the next line is 'place.' If we had been translating that, we would have broken the line, 'He brought me out,' next line, 'to a broad place.'"

Among the translations that break the line after "broad" are the New King James Version, the Revised Standard Version and the New International Version, which renders the word as "spacious."

"We are the first translation that I know about in the history of Bible translation, that actually measured lines of poetry to aid the oral reader and the listener to the text," Newman said. "When you have a double column format, you have to count on that."

Newman first became interested in the biblical languages when he was a student at Union University in Jackson, Tenn. He later earned a bachelor of divinity degree and a doctor of philosophy degree in New Testament studies from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. in anticipation of a teaching ministry.

He taught religion and Greek at William Jewell College from 1960-1966. During his years in Liberty, the ABS asked him to write a Greek-English dictionary for Bible translators. The organization later asked him to be a translator consultant.

"I didn't know there was such a thing -- a person who would work with translators overseas trying to communicate the Word of God in a way that was natural to those people."

He and his wife Jean served in the Philippines and Indonesia, working with translators throughout Southeast Asia. Next year Newman will mark 30 years of full-time translation work with ABS. He also served on the translation team for the Good News (Today's English Version) Bible.

The CEV Bible was designed to be a mission-driven, outreach kind of text, Newman said, and response has been tremendous. Bible societies in Africa, Southeast Asia and Denmark have been using it as a model for their own translations. Also, the Australian Bible Society has published six different CEV New Testament formats.

"This is in Australia, where church attendance is way down and interest in the scriptures is way down, and they have found that this translation has caught on," Newman noted.

The CEV also has become the required lectionary text for Roman Catholic parochial schools and children's masses in the United States, Newman said. It currently is being printed by three Roman Catholic publishers.

"We were very careful to create a text that will be accurate in its first concern but that will have appeal to persons who hear it, so that they will be drawn to the text and be drawn to make a decision for Christ. That's our primary concern," he said. "We tried to make it as user-friendly as possible to reach people who cannot be reached by other (translations)."

Many of the principles of translation the CEV team used actually were developed by the King James Version translators, Newman said.

"Most people do not realize that when the first and earliest editions of the King James Bible were issued, there was a long section, between 20 and 30 pages depending on the size of the page, titled, 'From the translators to the reader,' in which they explained their principles of translation," Newman said.

"In the introduction to this text we point out what those principles were and how significant we think they were and that we were trying to capture the spirit of the King James translators, rather than to reproduce the form of what they did."

The principles include: "This is the Word of God, which we translate;" "We desire that the Scripture ... may be understood;" "Variety of translations is profitable;" and "Having and using as great helps as were needful."

Newman explained the KJV translators were pointing out "we may not know all of the details and we may differ in various translations on this detail or that detail, because we don't know exactly what words belong in the text and what the words that are there may in fact mean. But there are no places like that that affect the doctrine of salvation or any of our basic Christian doctrines."

He said this makes the experience of translation similar to the experience of living the Christian life.

"God does not always let us know all of the answers, but He does give us enough answers so that we know how to live the Christian life and we know how to respond to Christ and be saved."

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Passion Play overcomes opposition,
presents gospel message in Jamaica

Baptist Press
8/2/95

By Shari Schubert

ST. CHARLES, Mo. (BP)--David Sutton, playing the role of Jesus in the Passion Play produced by Mid Rivers Baptist Church in St. Charles, Mo., was used to hearing the jeers of the crowd as he stood before Pilate in the trial scene.

But this time the jeers weren't coming from members of the cast. They were coming from the audience and they were real.

Bringing the Easter story to life on a beach in Montego Bay, Jamaica, members of the cast said they encountered a kind of spiritual warfare they had never experienced during the annual performances of the music and drama production in their home church.

The Rastafarian cult is strong in Jamaica, Sutton explained, and members of the group were scattered throughout the audience of 25,000 people that gathered for the first of four performances of the Passion Play June 18-21.

Sharon Reed, who sang in the Passion Play choir, said she could hear cries of "Jah Rules!" amid the jeering and heckling. "You could just feel the spiritual tension."

In the midst of the shouts of "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" that were part of the play, Sutton heard someone from the audience yell, "Kill the white man!"

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Meanwhile , prostitutes and drug dealers worked the audience, along with vendors selling peanuts and oranges.

The merchandising, Passion Play director Kirk Herweck acknowledged, is just "part of their culture, but to us it was very distracting."

Heckling and distractions failed to suppress the Passion Play's gospel message. When the resurrection scene was played, featuring the song "Arise," the heckling stopped. Sutton, who could not see what was happening at the time, was told by other cast members that "you could see the Rastafarians just hightailing it out of there."

Despite those unnerving experiences in the first-night performance, the Jamaicans' response to the Passion Play was positive, said Herweck, minister of praise and worship for Mid Rivers church. "People stood for three and a half hours to see the show." More than 1,500 professions of faith and about 200 rededications were recorded on decision cards, he said, and it is unlikely that all decisions were recorded. "We have no idea what the overall impact was."

Reed recalled that on the final night of the performance, when soloist Janet Watkins began to sing "We Shall Behold Him," the audience of 30,000 could be heard singing along with her.

Cast members also got a positive response when they went into the community and to schools, where they did music, mime and puppet ministry. Sutton -- whose long hair and beard match the visual image many people have of Jesus -- frequently was addressed as "Jesus, mon." With that kind of recognition, he added, cast members had to be conscious of everything they said and did so that they would be consistent witnesses with their lives as well as with their acting roles. But it occurred to Sutton, "That's the same thing we're supposed to be here (in Missouri)."

In addition to the organized ministries, team members did street witnessing. Women from Mid River church made 20,000 beaded "salvation bracelets" for team members to distribute.

Reed, who will be a student at Missouri Baptist College in St. Louis this fall, said she believes the witnessing experiences in Jamaica will translate into a stronger witness in the communities surrounding Mid Rivers church. "People are so inhibited until they get out and do it," she explained. "It freed a lot of people up to share the gospel here at home."

Cast members said it was an eye-opening experience to visit a Third World country and see firsthand the poverty. Sutton, who was interviewed on a popular morning television show, was taken through the heart of Kingston, Jamaica's capital. He was shown areas where large numbers of families live in eight-by-eight-foot corrugated tin buildings.

The Montego Bay Passion Play performances involved a cast and crew of 170 members and friends of Mid Rivers church -- all of whom paid their own way to go on the mission trip -- plus about 50 Jamaican performers. The total cost of taking the production to Jamaica hit a quarter of a million dollars, Herweck said.

By comparison, Mid Rivers church has a total annual budget of about \$450,000 a year, Herweck noted. The church reported a resident membership of 563 last year.

Individuals and a number of local businesses donated money and equipment for the Jamaica project, as well as specialized services such as shipping, computer automation, lighting and sound. One local restaurant agreed to credit a percentage of sales to the project on orders from customers who mentioned the Passion Play; another restaurant had a "Jamaican night" and credited a percentage of sales toward the mission trip.

A set construction team, which traveled to Jamaica several days prior to the arrival of the full cast, shipped nearly 7,000 pounds of tools and equipment to use in the project.

Crew members were planning to do in one week the set construction they normally take three weeks to do. A delay in getting their gear released from customs cut their work time by another day and a half, Sutton recalled.

"We had great plans," he said, but the unforeseen difficulties forced the team into a position where they had to say, "'OK now, Lord, what do you have in mind for us?' It all worked out. God showed how He works through all situations."

The early crew worked all night Thursday prior to the performance and then was relieved by members of the larger group, who arrived by chartered plane on Friday. Many of that crew worked all night Saturday night to be ready for the Sunday evening performance.

Jamaicans, fascinated with equipment like the foam insulation sprayer that was used to create "rock" for the tomb, would come to the site and watch the crew for hours at a time, Sutton said.

Was it worth the time, effort and expense? Yes, Sutton said. "You can't put a price on people's salvation."

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Sixth graders have unique needs;
BSSB releasing special materials By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
8/2/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--When David Norvell entered sixth grade last year, he and most of his classmates looked like what they were -- children. But by the time spring rolled around, they were beginning to look and act like something totally different.

"They looked like teen-agers; it was amazing how fast they changed and how fast they wanted to change," David's father, Walter, said in a recent interview. "They were really different people."

The elder Norvell, director of the curriculum center at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, remembers hearing two comments from his son over and over during the year: "I want to be in the youth group" and "I want a youth study Bible for my birthday."

"There was this great yearning to move on; it just couldn't happen fast enough for him," Norvell said. "I guess those two things were kind of like rites of passage."

Well, things are "moving on" for David, who recently turned 12 and completed sixth grade. He's shaving; he's exploring new interests such as golf and in-line skating; and he's having a hard time making his changing voice work in the children's choir. His eagerness to move from childhood to adolescence is a normal part of being a "preteen," according to Judy Latham, a children's Sunday school curriculum editor at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"Sixth graders are really in a class by themselves," she explained. "They don't see themselves as children anymore, but they're not really ready for the youth group either. They're kind of stuck in the middle, but they definitely aren't standing still."

Latham, who teaches in a sixth grade Sunday school department at First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., said sixth graders also:

- have very short attention spans;
- are notoriously ego-centric;
- are at the onset of puberty, complete with raging hormones, rapidly developing bodies and volatile temperaments; and
- are usually experiencing the worst relationship they've ever had with their parents.

On the positive side, they are "very curious and open to learning new things in new ways. They like a challenge."

Norvell, a 19-year veteran of children and youth ministry, said he agrees sixth graders experience a time of unprecedented change.

"Their school environment is about to change if it hasn't already. Their bodies are changing fast. They are increasingly influenced by their peers. And status symbols such as clothes are becoming much more important to them.

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"From an educational point of view, they are just beginning the move from concrete thinking to operational (abstract) thinking. We, as teachers, can begin to help them incorporate symbols of the faith and understand the truths behind the Bible stories they've learned as children.

"They really start to question things, too, but that's good. There comes a time in life when we need to do that. Instead of fighting the system God has put in place, we (as teachers) need to learn to work with it."

That's exactly what the Sunday School Board is attempting to do with the release in September of Sunday school materials designed specifically for sixth graders. "Everything You Need to Know to Be a Teen-ager" -- part of the Life & Work Series curriculum -- will be released quarterly and is designed to help preteens bridge the gap between childhood and youth.

The board has been getting requests for sixth-grade Sunday school materials for several years, according to Latham.

"Children and youth workers were telling us that many sixth graders were becoming bored in Sunday school. And a lot of churches were struggling with where to put them," she said.

"Most sixth graders are not really ready for the abstract thinking common in youth Bible studies, and they can also be very intimidated by older youth who often don't want kids in their group. Moving them up to the youth group has not been successful for most churches."

In 1989 and 1990, the Sunday School Board put together a brochure with guidelines for meeting the needs of middle school children. A year later, extra ideas/helps for sixth-grade Sunday school teachers were included in the "Bible Searchers Teacher" quarterly. In the fall of 1993, the board began mailing out additional activities for sixth graders to supplement the Sunday school lesson.

"When the mailing list went over 700, we began to realize there was a substantial audience for sixth-grade materials," Latham said.

The prototype for "Everything You Need to Know to Be a Teen-ager" was developed in 1994 and field tested in 350 churches. Eighty percent of teachers and 90 percent of sixth graders using the materials said they preferred it over their current lessons.

"It's an honest effort to meet a recognized need," Latham said. The key difference between the new sixth-grade materials and children's Bible studies, she said, is "we're having them look at a Bible passage instead of a Bible story and helping them draw out truths for their daily lives. We're trying to move them to that way of learning because that's what youth do."

The lessons also are more "conversation oriented" than "activity oriented," Latham said. "There's a lot of case studies, role playing and discussion around questions like 'What would you do if ... ?' We want to help them start to think about situations they are going to come up against as teen-agers," Latham said.

The materials, which come packaged in a resource box, include:

- a leader's guide with teaching plans for three units (12 Sundays) plus one "Fifth Dimension Sunday" plan which focuses on fellowship, ministry and outreach;
- a preteen handbook for students;
- other resources such as posters, games, 3-D objects and a video which includes "real-life" segments about issues preteens face.

Volume 1 in the series focuses on the doctrine of God and the Trinity, becoming and living as a Christian and discovering and doing the will of God. Volume 2, set for release in December 1995, focuses on the doctrine of the Bible, asking for help and studying the Bible. Future volumes will focus on the doctrine of humanity, choosing media, how to pray, the doctrine of missions and ministry, evangelism, saying no' to alcohol and drugs, forming relationships and getting along with others.

"It's the most creative thing I've ever done," said Norvell, who wrote a unit in Volume 2 on the doctrine of the Bible. "I was excited to be a part of it."

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press. The cutline is available in the SBCNet News Room.

Procter & Gamble rumor
again; still not truth

By Lonnie Wilkey

Baptist Press
8/2/95

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP)--The old rumor linking Procter & Gamble to Satanism is once again making its rounds in Southern Baptist churches. And as before, there's no truth to it.

In recent days the Baptist and Reflector, newsjournal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, has received calls about a letter urging people not to purchase Procter & Gamble products because of the company's support of Satanism.

According to the latest rumor, the president of Procter & Gamble appeared on the Phil Donahue talk show in March and said he supported Satanism.

"None of this is true," according to P&G spokeswoman Elaine Matthews. "The president of P&G has never appeared on any talk show to discuss Satanism."

Matthews said the latest rumor is a variation of "the lie that was spread in 1981-82, 1984-85, and 1990."

To counter the rumor, Procter & Gamble has released an informational packet that includes letters from several religious leaders, including a representative of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Jerry Falwell, SBC President Jim Henry, and others. The letters note the rumor is untrue and discourage people from spreading it.

Henry, in his letter, said he feels Procter & Gamble has "successfully disproved the charges and went out of their way to assure the public these reckless statements were unwarranted." He noted those in the Christian community who bring the matter up "should be given a deaf ear."

The packet also contains a letter from Donahue himself. "The president of P&G has never appeared on Donahue, nor has any other P&G executive.

"Anyone who claims to have seen such a broadcast is either mistaken or lying. It never happened!"

Anyone spreading the petition or rumor needs to be aware the company has "successfully filed lawsuits over the years against a number of people who were intentionally spreading this lie, and will do so again if necessary," according to Matthews.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Calvinists note theological changes in SBC since founding in 1845," dated 7/31/95, please make the following changes:

In the 21st paragraph -- "4. The Expansionist or Progressivist Generation ..." the last name should be correctly spelled as Stewart Newman.

In the 26th paragraph, change "The Mixed Generation" to "The Contested Generation."

Thanks,
Baptist Press

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