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Rankin to pastors, WMU directors:
Pray for reversal of CBF decision By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
8/28/95

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin has urged pastors and Woman's Missionary Union directors in local churches to pray that the national WMU organization will reverse its decision to produce missions education supplements for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

WMU announced July 12 it would produce "missions education supplements" for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an organization of Baptist moderates opposed to the Southern Baptist Convention's conservative leadership.

Rankin, in an Aug. 25 letter to nearly 40,000 Southern Baptist churches, wrote to pastors and WMU directors: "We ask that you pray with us that the decision of the WMU National Board to deviate from its historic role of exclusive support of HMB and FMB missionaries will be reversed and this special relationship, which has existed for 107 years, not be abandoned."

To receive the CBF supplements, churches will have to specifically order them, according to WMU. The supplements, to be available early next year, will be designed to accompany WMU's coed missions education materials. WMU said only information on Foreign and Home Mission board-appointed missionaries will appear in its key magazines, the new Missions Mosaic along with Dimension, Accent, Aware, Discovery, GA World, Share and Start.

Dellanna O'Brien, WMU's executive director, was unavailable for comment Aug. 28 concerning Rankin's letter.

Rankin, in his letter, noted:

"At a time of unprecedented growth, evangelistic harvest and unlimited opportunities overseas, when the Foreign Mission Board is experiencing record numbers of missionaries under appointment, we have been disappointed that the Woman's Missionary Union National Board has chosen to depart from its historic relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention of exclusive support to SBC mission agencies. We are grateful for your faithful support of the Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board as the channels of Southern Baptist mission involvement and support. We are writing to communicate our concerns about this development and express confidence in your continuing partnership.

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"We are strong advocates of partnership and networking with other SBC entities and Great Commission Christians," Rankin continued, "but such relationships are based on a commitment to mutual cooperation. It would be counter-productive to endorse and promote any organization which would divert funding and undercut support for the Southern Baptist Convention and our mission agencies. We feel the decision of the WMU National Board to provide promotion and publicity for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship undermines a cooperative spirit among the agencies. This is especially confusing for our more than 4,000 missionaries serving with the FMB who have assumed WMU's unqualified support."

Addressing the SBC-wide restructuring approved during the convention's sesquicentennial June 20-22 in Atlanta, Rankin wrote:

"The Southern Baptist Convention responded sympathetically and in support of the WMU's appeal to be included as a respected auxiliary in the 'Covenant for a New Century' and affirmed them as a valued partner in missions education and promotion. We find it disconcerting that the WMU National Board would then take a position to promote a divisive mission program rather than using its widespread organizational network to influence Southern Baptists to unify in support of the convention's mission programs."

In his concluding paragraph, Rankin wrote: "One of the unique strengths of Southern Baptist missions advance has been the effective, unified support of the Woman's Missionary Union, serving the local church in missions education, prayer support and promotion of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. If we are to continue fulfilling the Great Commission and reaching our world for Christ, it is vital that this supportive partnership continue." He then concluded his letter with the appeal for the WMU decision to be reversed.

WMU's decision to produce the new materials follows expanded organizational emphases adopted by its executive board in January 1993, one of which states WMU will "produce resources for Southern Baptist groups involved in missions at their request." The board reaffirmed that direction during its June 17 meeting in Atlanta.

In comments to Baptist Press concerning the writing of a letter directly to pastors and WMU directors in local churches, Rankin said, "I have spoken with Dellanna on several occasions and we've had delegations from our board meet with national staff three times since their new program statement was adopted, but we feel our concerns have been ignored. We are confident that we still have the loyal support of the WMU in the local churches who continue to identify Southern Baptist missions with the work of the Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board."

Rankin also said, "It is disturbing that a decision would be made reflecting divided loyalty at a time when the WMU has set a goal to raise \$100 million for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in 1995. The amount is desperately needed due to the record number of missionaries being appointed and the challenging opportunities all over the world. We cannot understand why they would not want Southern Baptists to rally to full, unified support of the FMB when God is moving in such phenomenal ways through our missions programs."

O'Brien, at the time of WMU's July 12 announcement of its plans to produce CBF supplements, said: "We are aware that our decision to produce materials in cooperation with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship will concern some Southern Baptists. But we hope and pray that all Southern Baptists will see this decision as the fulfillment of our commitment to meet the needs of local Southern Baptist churches."

**Prostitute finds Christ,
new job in Kenya crusade**

By Norman Miller

MANAWA, Wis. (BP)--Sabinah once sold her body for the pleasure of men, but now she distributes Bibles and Christian literature for the spiritual nurture of people in the mountain villages north of Nairobi, Kenya.

Marcia and Dennis Hansen are Southern Baptist home missionaries from Manawa, Wis., where Hansen directs missions for the Bay Lakes Baptist Association. They met Sabinah while witnessing door-to-door in Kenyan villages June 13-26. The Hansens were volunteers for the Greater Nairobi Evangelistic Crusade, a six-week effort by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and Kenyan Baptists to share the gospel in Nairobi and its outlying villages.

Working out of Thika, 20 miles north of Nairobi, the Hansens traveled an hour by van to reach the small towns of Kengari and Miara, both located in an area which has had no Southern Baptist missionary in 20 years.

Mrs. Hansen was witnessing in Kengari to Susan, a prostitute and a friend of Sabinah's, when Sabinah entered Susan's apartment. After listening to the claims of Christ, Sabinah asked, "I am seeing a married man. Will I have to close my door to him if I accept Christ?"

Sabinah listened to Mrs. Hansen describe the difference Christ could make in her life and discovered she wouldn't know that difference until she accepted him. "We told her she'd have to stop prostitution," Mrs. Hansen said.

Susan and Sabinah said they needed time to think about their decisions. When the Hansens returned two days later, Susan wasn't ready to accept Christ. But Sabinah "accepted Christ with tears rolling down her face," Mrs. Hansen said. "It was a wonderful time."

A few minutes later, the Hansens left Sabinah to witness in the next apartment. As they were witnessing, Sabinah stepped through her door. "She look d like a model. She was dressed neatly, her hair was fixed, and she had on a little bit of lipstick. She was absolutely beautiful. Her eyes were sparkling and her face was radiant.

"I'm with Jesus now," she told the Hansens.

Sabinah not only became Mrs. Hansen's interpreter, but she learned how to share Christianity and led a girl to accept Christ.

Concerned about a new job, Sabinah asked Mrs. Hansen for some money to start a business. After praying about it for two days, Mrs. Hansen heard that the Kenyan Baptist Press, a publishing firm, wanted salespeople to service the mountain villages in the area where Sabinah lived.

Mrs. Hansen helped deliver and mark the books for sale. She also helped Sabinah determine how many shillings to keep for purchasing more books. "By the time we left, she had hired two employees. It was an absolutely wondrous thing to have happen in two weeks' time."

Since her return to the United States, Mrs. Hansen doesn't think of Sabinah as much as she does those, such as Susan, who delayed decisions to accept Christ

"They weren't opposed to the gospel," she said. "It was just the first time many of them had heard it, and we weren't there long enough to go back and check on them."

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**Church start has
pastor on the run**

By David Winfrey

**Baptist Press
8/28/95**

MONROE, Wash. (BP)--It's 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, and Lester Turner is a pastor on the go.

After preaching at the early service of First Baptist Church of Monroe, Wash., Turner lets other members handle the invitation so he can hurry eight miles south to Duvall, where they are sponsoring a new church.

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"Are you ready to run?" he asks, walking out the door toward his car. This hectic schedule requires driving to Duvall, preaching at the new church and returning just in time to preach at Monroe's 11 a.m. service.

While driving to Duvall, he explains how the Monroe church got in such a unique situation. "Duvall had been on the hearts of the people here for a long time."

Monroe and Duvall are old farming towns that have become booming bedroom communities to metropolitan Seattle. They are a half-hour drive from Seattle except during rush hour when it takes an hour, Turner says. "When I got here one year ago, there was 4,000 population (in Monroe); now there are 6,000."

Members at Monroe started a Bible study in the basement of Duvall's Catholic church but only attracted one person. They prayed about the Duvall work and decided God was calling them to start a congregation, he says. "By Wednesday, we had a place and the money pledged," he says. "It was all lined up in three days' time."

Arriving in Duvall, Turner drives behind the storefronts on Main Street and pulls behind Pioneer Community Church's meeting place -- a saddle shop between a bookstore and the town library.

A deacon in Monroe who rides horses linked the shopkeeper with the church, Turner says. "She made us a deal on the rent that is unbelievable," he adds. "She said that God had given her the business and now she's able to use the business to serve God."

The first Sunday, six people came. A week later, attendance doubled. While many churches have pictures of Jesus or biblical scenes, this meeting place has John Wayne and local horse riders. Amid the smell of leather, visitors sit on folding chairs and sing hymns accompanied by music from a portable stereo.

During the service, Turner offers a short lesson on church growth. "The way it grows is by people telling others that there's a church meeting here."

Driving back to Monroe, he notes growth likely will be slow. The Northwest is one of the least-churched regions in the country, according to the Glenmary Research Center, which tracks church membership. "When you say you're going to start a church, it doesn't impress a lot of people," Turner says. "We're out here on faith and love offerings."

Before entering the Monroe church, he puts on his jacket and a wireless mike. The microphone has a range of 12 blocks and Turner has threatened to begin preaching from the car if the Duvall service runs too late.

He said he hopes the Duvall congregation has a lay preacher within six months so the Monroe church can go to Gold Bar, nine miles away and start another work. "You're never too small or too big. You just do what God tells you to do."

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(BP) photo (horizontal) of Lester Turner and Pioneer Community Church mailed to state Baptist newspapers 8/22/95 by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines available on SBCNet News Room.

**Korean prayer life:
early and often**

By David Winfrey

**Baptist Press
8/28/95**

TACOMA, Wash. (BP)--Chun Kyu Sin prays more before 8 a.m. than most people pray all day.

She and about 100 other members of First Baptist Church, Tacoma, Wash., gather before sunrise weekdays and Saturdays for a prayer service that pastor Chang Sun Moon credits with the congregation's steady growth.

"We love to pray together in unison," says Moon, the church's pastor since 1980. "This is really the power plant for our ministry."

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Some members arrive as early as 4:30 a.m. Others like Sin (pronounced "shin") start at 6 a.m. with a short service of hymns, message and directed prayer before personal prayer begins. At 6:30 a.m., the lights are dimmed, members take off their shoes, some lay down on mats and each begins praying.

Practically all pray out loud. Many weep openly. Voices mingle in the darkness for an almost eerie melody, punctuated with wails of "Ha-na-nim" (God), "Ju-yo" (Lord) and "A-bo-gee" (Father).

Sin, 67, has been coming to the church service since 1987. With hands outstretched, she reaches toward heaven for the blessings she requests, regularly breaking into song.

She prays for the spiritual growth of her seven children, four of whom are still in Korea. Sin also prays for the church's growth, the ministerial staff and the weekly cell group she leads.

Moon has seen the benefits of hers and others' prayers. In his 15 years at the Tacoma congregation, First Baptist has grown from 100 to 1,150, and members recently embarked on a building program for a 1,200-seat auditorium.

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(BP) photo (vertical) of Chun Kyu Sin mailed to state Baptist newspapers 8/22/95 by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Outlines available on SBCNet News Room.

First-time author-illustrators

aim to make dream come true

By William H. Perkins Jr.

Baptist Press

8/28/95

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Richard Polzin is living his own "Field of Dreams."

The popular movie depicted an Iowa corn farmer, portrayed by Kevin Costner, who remained steadfast in following his dream despite career and financial disruptions, family doubters and being called foolhardy by friends.

Polzin, 44, is on the verge of accomplishing his dream with the publication of "Worthy is the Child," a collection of 32 children's stories he wrote and illustrated with the help of his wife, Sharon.

Polzin said God inspired him to start the project in 1991 after he searched in vain for what he felt was appropriate reading material for his young children -- Justin and Anna Laura, now both 9, and Zachary, now 5.

The Polzin family attends First Baptist Church, Jackson, where the elder Polzin serves as deacon.

"We wanted to be the best parents we could be. We wanted good Christian and secular literature for them, but we weren't satisfied with the commercial literature we were finding.

"Some of the material was so abstract that you'd have to hold a Ph.D. to understand it," he said.

Polzin was also concerned about the non-Christian ideas contained in many of the available books, such as animistic and "New Age" concepts.

"Because of our multi-media society, today's children act out adult situations prior to developing a value system that will properly guide their behavior.

Values must be taught and reinforced by trustworthy adults; otherwise, a child will establish his sense of worth and value on the street, through television or through other children," he said.

Frustrated by contemporary literature, Richard and Sharon began to make up their own bedtime children's stories that always ended with a moral lesson.

"The kids loved the stories and it seemed that the more we did it, the better we got at it. We discovered the simpler messages were the most powerful," Polzin said.

It wasn't long before Polzin felt God moving him to write a children's book that would teach young minds important lessons through such bedtime stories, he recounted.

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"All my life, I've heard people say they were 'called by the Lord.' I never felt that until we started this book in 1991, and I still feel the Lord's call today," he said.

Polzin's enthusiasm grew as the concept began to take shape. "I honestly thought, 'How am I going to sort through all the offers to publish this book?'" he said.

He crash-landed into reality when he and Sharon went to New York City to discuss the book with a large publishing house.

"They told me the stories were great, but the moral messages were too strong. They wanted me to tone down the moral parts," he said.

The Polzins returned to Jackson disappointed but undeterred, and began making plans to complete the book and publish it themselves.

Along the way, Richard gave up his job managing a multi-million dollar insurance agency; they sold their custom-built dream house; and the children were switched from private to public schools.

Some of their friends weren't supportive, and family members voiced concerns about how the Polzins would survive without conventional employment and benefits.

The family's income for the last four years has depended on managing rental property they own around Jackson, Richard said.

"The rental property has been a gift from God," he said.

Some of that rental property was sold to finance printing expenses, and the completed books were delivered a few weeks ago from the New Jersey printer.

Will "Worthy is the Child" be a success for the Polzins? Richard said he's turned that part of the project over to God as well.

"We're marketing the book in as many unique ways as possible, to family groups, interested corporations and civic groups. We even have a toll-free telephone number -- 1-800-9WORTHY," he said.

Financial success and worldly acclaim have never been the Polzins' goals, however.

"Children are worthy of our time, love and respect. We want to reach children and help create a bond between each parent and child.

"If that relationship isn't built, we'll never reach those children for Jesus Christ. We just want to plant the seed," Richard said.

More than in the movie, that's a dream worth following.

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Worship ends a little early
when members get choked up By William H. Perkins Jr.

Baptist Press
8/28/95

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Worship services have been cancelled for a lot of good reasons over the years: Flooded sanctuary. No heat. Gas explosion in the basement. Mace attack.

Mace attack? No, not the feared weapon from the Middle Ages, but the modern kind that comes packaged as a searing chemical spray.

The 11 a.m. worship service Aug. 20 at Woodville Heights Church in Jackson, Miss., was moving along pretty much as planned.

That is, until an 8-year-old boy sitting with his mother near the back of the sanctuary discovered a small container of the spray his mom keeps on her key ring for defensive purposes.

So pretend you're an 8-year-old boy and you just found this neat-looking aerosol can right next to you on the pew. What would you do?

Yep. He sprayed it. In just a couple of seconds the air conditioning system, running full blast in the midday August heat, had spread the fumes throughout the room.

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"I was five minutes into the message when I saw the mother walk out of the sanctuary with her son. Then others began to cough and leave, and I remember thinking, 'There seem to be a lot of allergies out there this morning,'" said pastor Wayne Kimbrough.

People on the entire right side of the sanctuary were wheezing when Kimbrough noticed a frantic usher at the rear of the room trying to get his attention.

"He was running his finger across his throat in one of those 'cut it off!' motions, so I decided we'd better have a prayer and dismiss," Kimbrough said.

The message that Sunday was on the subject of stewardship, leaving the pastor to ponder just how far people will go to get out of a sermon on money.

"The boy's mother called me on Sunday afternoon; she was most apologetic. It had all cleared out by the evening service," Kimbrough explained.

The ushers were taking one additional precaution for the evening service, however.

"They were telling folks as they came in, 'Please check your Mace at the door,'" Kimbrough said.

HOUSE MAIL

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