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SBC Cooperative Program tops
previous fiscal year's record

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
10/3/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention ended the 1994-95 fiscal year with a record \$145,739,489 in Cooperative Program gifts, surpassing by nearly \$3 million the record given last year, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

For the SBC's fiscal year, Oct. 1 through Sept. 30, the \$145.7 million total for 1994-95 is 2.01 percent, or \$2,872,706, above last year's record gifts of \$142,866,782.

"Southern Baptists again have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission," an elated Chapman said. "Back-to-back years of record CP giving are answers to prayer! This report shows that Southern Baptists will not be distracted from their determination to support our missionaries around the world and our seminary students preparing to go throughout the world.

"God has blessed this convention with millions of people who believe in working together to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. This is cause for great rejoicing and for profound thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ."

In addition, designated gifts for the year rose to \$132,830,194, also a record, compared to last year's \$127,828,517 -- an astounding \$5,001,677 increase or 3.91 percent.

For the month of September: CP gifts totaled \$12,879,687 compared to the same month a year of \$13,311,727, a 3.25 decrease, while designated gifts for the month were \$2,500,095 compared to last year of \$2,148,602, a 16.36 percent increase.

The 1994-95 total also is more than \$9 million above the SBC's program allocation budget of \$136,539,730 -- \$9,199,759 or 6.74 percent.

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Since the year-end totals surpassed the basic budget, the overage was distributed in a special SBC-approved method: 37 percent or \$3,150,095 to the Foreign Mission Board; 31.5 percent or \$2,681,837 for a capital needs budget benefiting the Home Mission Board, the SBC's six seminaries and the Radio and Television Commission; and the remaining 31.5 percent of the overage, called "program advance," distributed according to the regular program allocation budget percentages to all the SBC entities.

When the final totals are given, the two mission boards of the SBC will receive more than \$230 million from Southern Baptists during 1994-95, "to spread the gospel to all the world," Chapman said. The FMB received more than \$163 million during the year, including \$68 million from the basic budget and more than \$90 million in designated gifts. The HMB received more than \$67 million, including \$26 million from the basic budget and more than \$40 million in designated gifts.

The SBC Cooperative Program total includes receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions and fellowships for distribution according to the program allocation budget approved by the SBC.

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.

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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Baptist conflict in India
addressed by BWA team

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press
10/3/95

WASHINGTON (BP)--With the help of a Baptist World Alliance reconciliation team, 55 Kuki and Naga Baptist leaders came together in Manipur in the Indian state of Nagaland Sept. 16-17 and agreed to condemn violence and to work for an end to the shooting and looting that has plagued their land and Baptist work there.

They also agreed to exchange pulpits on Nov. 26 and asked Baptists around the world to pray for peace in Manipur on that day.

In a statement issued after these historic meetings, the Kuki and Naga leaders resolved "to condemn all kinds of violence at all levels and solve all disputes and difficulties through negotiations and non-violence."

They also agreed to "encourage their church leaders in particular, and the public in general" in a spirit of confession, forgiveness, reconciliation and reconstruction and hold reconciliation workshops for church and youth leaders.

"Our prayers are answered; there is a new spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation," says Roger Fredrickson, of the United States, a former BWA vice president who, with Knud Wumpelmann, of Denmark, BWA immediate past president, formed the reconciliation team.

On Sunday, Sept. 17, Fredrickson preached in a Naga church while Wumpelmann preached in a Kuki church.

"Our hope and prayer," said Wumpelmann, "was to encourage both groups that they might get new hope for a better future for both Kukis and Nagas who are suffering, as well as a new attitude to each other."

Shamed and grieved by the fight between Baptists in this part of northeast India, the BWA responded to cries for help from both Kukis and Nagas.

"Such a meeting would not have been possible without help from outside," said S.K. Hokey, general secretary of the Manipur Baptist Convention.

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The chief minister of Manipur also helped by granting entry permit visas to the Baptist leaders.

Wumpelmann and Fredrickson joined with L.J. Sangma, general secretary of the Council of Baptists of North East India, who had also worked for reconciliation and for an end to the gruesome killings among Baptists over land disputes and political insurgency.

"Now the hard part begins," said Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary. "I do hope the exchange of pastors will be the beginning of a great movement of reconciliation, forgiveness and love in Manipur. It will not be an easy task, but with the help of the holy Spirit we can bring reconciliation."

Lotz, in an earlier report on the situation, had told the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, meeting in Nashville Sept. 18: "There's probably no other stronger group of Baptists in the world than in northeast India. And yet we have a tribal war between the Kukis and the Naga tribes. Right now Dr. Knud Wumpelmann and Dr. Roger Fredrickson are there on a reconciliation mission.

"Buses are being thrown over ravines. Women are being raped and bayoneted. Babies are being killed. Hundreds of villages are being destroyed," Lotz said. "They have all of the Christian background, but yet tribalism and ethnocentrism is a tragedy that has come."

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Art Toalston contributed to this story.

**Evangelist who lost 2 grandsons
reflects on Okla. City bombing**

By Ken Walker

**Baptist Press
10/3/95**

GULF SHORES, Ala. (BP)--Nearly six months after his two grandsons died in the Oklahoma City bombing, a Southern Baptist evangelist said he is amazed at the lack of anger he feels towards the suspects.

Richard Coss said he holds no animosity for Timothy McVeigh or Terry Nichols, who are scheduled to stand trial in Lawton, Okla., next May. His grandsons, Chase and Colton Smith, ages 3 and 2, were among the 169 victims of the April 19 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City.

Before his salvation 26 years ago, Coss had his own scrapes with the law and said he was probably filled with more hate than the two men accused of the crime.

"Not that I'm not human," said Coss, whose ministry is based in Gulf Shores, Ala. "In my carnal mind I've had Timothy McVeigh in my gun sights. The carnal self says, 'Get even -- blow that dude away.' I've had convicts (in his prison ministry) tell me to just say the word and they'll get them.

"That was only a passing thought in the beginning. I don't have any anger toward (McVeigh). But for the grace of God, where would I be today? I can look at him and almost see myself years ago. He needs the Lord. I've got a peace about the whole thing. I'll get to see my grandsons in eternity."

He said the only regret he has is that it will take so long for the trial to unfold. It will open up new wounds and cause more heartache for residents, he said.

Formerly on staff at a suburban Oklahoma City's First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Coss returned to the state Sept. 30 to preach the first message of a revival at the state penitentiary in McAlester. He is conducting revivals at Okchamali Baptist Church in Connerville Oct. 1-4 then returns to Oklahoma City for a revival at Glorieta Baptist Church Oct. 8-11

The latter two are Native American congregations. He said Indians and prison inmates are among the most responsive to the messages he preaches on Christ's grace, sacrifice, and heaven and hell.

"It seems that needy people have a need for the Lord and recognize it," Coss said. "Native Americans are a needy people; so are prison inmates. They respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ."

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The Alabama resident said he often uses last spring's tragedy for sermon illustrations, particularly in the areas of bitterness, anger and hate. He counsels listeners that they can't allow bitterness to turn to anger or hatred. "When that happens we're no better than they are and then they control our lives."

Coss said he also urges outreach to street people and those lacking the kind of training and family background that helps mold productive citizens. Too many churches are comfortable in their own little cliques, he said, when others on the streets are dying without Christ.

While he sees some spurts of revival occurring around the country, the evangelist said he doesn't believe the nation will see a sweeping change coming to the United States. The job of Christians is to reach people like McVeigh and Nichols, he said, who are looking for a cause to support and reasons to live.

He said this compassion and tenderness towards the suspects, as well as others mired in drug abuse, alcoholism and other problems, is one of the gifts the Lord has increased in his life since the last spring.

"My gift is grace," he said. "I am loving people more. God has given me a tender heart. If people smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol, that's the Holy Spirit's business; it's between them and God. I just love on them, try to become friends and let them know I'm available."

Coss also has seen good come out of tragedy in two primary ways. The first is the Sept. 23 remarriage of his daughter, Edye Smith, and her husband, Tony. Not long before the wedding, she underwent a tubal ligation to allow her to bear more children in the future.

Coss said the procedure has an 85 percent chance of success and he is looking forward to having grandchildren again. When someone asked Edye if she wanted to have two more sons, she replied, "No, I'd like to have eight," he chuckled.

But regardless of what happens, he is delighted his daughter and son-in-law have reunited after their divorce last December.

"It was a direct answer to prayer," he said. "It's kind of hard for Dad to be counselor to daughter, but I tried to do what I could and prayed that they come together. After the loss of the boys, they realized they still needed each other. They didn't jump into it. It was kind of a long courtship before they decided to get back together."

The donation of the doctor's time, hospital and medical costs and plane fare to Texas for the operation show the other blessing, he said: Oklahoma has pulled together. What happened to Edye and Tony is just one small example he observed of the state and nation's outpouring of love and concern for survivors.

Oklahoma's crime rate has dropped 15 percent since last spring, Coss said, a statistic commonly noted by psychiatrists and psychologists in the aftermath of various disasters.

"Even criminals realize there's a greater need to help people than rip them off. The criminal element pulls together, to some extent. This has brought Oklahoma together, brought a lot of people to church and caused revivals. It's been pretty interesting what has happened since April 19."

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Charles Stanley reaffirmed
by First Baptist, Atlanta

By Martin King

Baptist Press
10/3/95

ATLANTA (BP)--First Baptist Church in Atlanta overwhelmingly reaffirmed Charles Stanley as senior pastor during a special business meeting Oct. 1. The special meeting resulted from a petition of eight of the 14,000 FBC members who claim Stanley, whose wife, Anna, has filed for divorce, should step down as pastor.

During a similarly called special meeting in August, Stanley relinquished administrative duties of the church he has led 26 years to focus more time on his marriage. He continues to preach and teach.

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Stanley received several standing ovations from the 2,500 members in attendance. He said God confirmed his call to First Baptist during a personal three-week retreat in the mountains of North Carolina last month.

"I prayed that God would show me what to do, and I will live or die by this statement -- 'You keep doing what I called you to do until I call you to do something different,'" Stanley said.

"If God wants to move me, he can do it. Somebody has decided I've not been listening to God. But when he tells me to step aside, I am ready and willing at any given moment. I will not be in disobedience to God. I have to live by what I believe God is telling me."

Stanley told the congregation in August he would resign if his wife divorces him. A jury trial is set for late November on her divorce suit although he says he continues to pray and work toward reconciliation.

During the Oct. 1 meeting, which was moderated by Jimmy Draper, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn., the congregation appointed several national figures to a special committee to study qualifications of pastors and deacons in relation to separation and divorce. In addition to two church staff members, the committee is composed of evangelical preacher/author Stephen Olford; Dwight "Ike" Reighard, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ga.; and Nelson Price, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga. The committee is charged with reporting its findings as well as a recommended position for the church to adopt by mid-November.

An effort to increase the number of members required to call a special business meeting from 7 to 500 or 5 percent of the membership did not pass. According to Boyd Wages, church administrator, results of a secret ballot indicated only 62 percent voted in favor of the change, short of the constitutional requirement of a two-thirds majority.

Speaking to the issue, Stanley said, "Presently the (required) number is low enough that any small group can call a meeting and have us here Sunday night after Sunday night for business meetings. Let's be careful that we're not here arguing every Sunday night instead of preaching the gospel."

Upon unanimous recommendation from a special study committee, the church also voted not to constitute its north Atlanta congregation into a separate church.

The north location was acquired several years ago when the church voted to move from its downtown location. In preparation for that move, worship services were started two years ago in temporary facilities at the new site, with Stanley's son, Andy, as worship leader. The North Fellowship, as it is referred to by FBC members, now has two morning worship services with more than 3,000 average weekly attendance.

The younger Stanley resigned in August in disagreement over his father continuing to serve as senior pastor. Stanley told the congregation he had dinner with his son a few nights prior to the meeting. "We had a wonderful time of fellowship," Stanley said.

He shared with the congregation that his son felt it was God's will he not return to the North Fellowship even if it were constituted as an autonomous church. "He might go further north (in the Atlanta suburbs) to another location to start a new work. He's my son. I love him dearly, and I'm going to support him no matter what he does," Stanley said.

The days leading up to the special meeting generated an unusual amount of media interest in the Atlanta area. Due to the limited capacity of FBC facilities, the meeting was announced for members only. Members registered prior to the meeting and received a packet of colored ballots similar to those used at the annual Southern Baptist Convention.

The meeting lasted two and a half hours and was characterized by a friendly, at times jovial mood. Draper, who also moderated the August meeting, commended the congregation for the absence of rancor and expressions of love and dignity.

WMU mails 'special report'
as answer to Rankin letter

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Woman's Missionary Union has released a "WMU Special Report" in response to an Aug. 25 letter mailed to Southern Baptist churches by Jerry Rankin, president of the Foreign Mission Board.

The four-page WMU report, mailed the week of Sept. 27, includes a letter explaining WMU's plans to produce "missions education supplements" for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and 10 short articles on ways WMU is working to support the missions efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention Home and Foreign Mission boards.

The WMU report was sent to pastors, directors of missions and church and associational WMU directors in a third-class mailing. Copies also were sent to SBC agency executives, state convention executive directors and state editors in a first-class mailing.

A letter on the cover of the WMU report opens with an expression of thanks "for your support of Woman's Missionary Union" and an acknowledgement of Rankin's letter.

In his letter, Rankin had called for prayer for WMU to reverse its plans to produce materials for the CBF, an organization of Baptist moderates opposed to the Southern Baptist Convention's conservative leadership.

The WMU cover letter's first paragraph concludes with the purpose of its report: "Perhaps our response will interpret for you the activities in which we are engaged."

The subsequent paragraphs note WMU's October release of coeducational missions education material. "These will focus exclusively on the work of the Home and Foreign Mission Boards," the cover letter states.

Beginning in 1996, the letter continues, "For those churches who request it, we will make available in our coed materials a supplement which will give information about Cooperative Baptist Fellowship missions work and their missionaries. This is a cost-recovery project and will be marketed only by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship."

The letter then states WMU's intention to continue its historic relationship with the HMB and FMB. "Every magazine, video, book, or other product published by WMU supports the work of our mission boards.

"These are days of missions advance," the letter concludes. "It behooves us to join hands with all Great Commission Christians to spread the gospel to every part of the world.

"Our primary responsibility as an organization is to make Southern Baptists aware of these needs, then trust the Holy Spirit to lead them to respond. We would do nothing that would diminish the participation of Southern Baptists in the effort to win the world to Christ."

The 10 articles included in the report highlight WMU's new organizational changes, its ongoing promotion of SBC Foreign and Home Mission studies, the Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong offerings, and emphasis on prayer for home and foreign missionaries.

The report also notes new WMU initiatives in mission support, including Christian Women's Job Corps and Project HELP emphases on social issues such as AIDS.

Other articles highlight WMU's Vision Fund, Second Century Fund, Acteens Activators, Women on Mission Enterprisers and its five-year growth plan, "A Place for You."

The article on the growth plan concludes, "WMU wants every Southern Baptist to know, 'There is a place for you in reaching the whole world for Christ, and we can show you how.'"

A spokesman for the FMB said Oct. 3 no FMB response was being formulated to the WMU mailing.

Rankin, in his Aug. 25 letter to nearly 40,000 Southern Baptist churches, said WMU had abandoned its "historic role of exclusive support" of FMB and HMB missionaries at a time of "evangelistic harvest and unlimited opportunities overseas." WMU's assistance to CBF, Rankin said, "undermines a cooperative spirit" among the FMB, HMB and WMU. And Rankin voiced dismay that WMU would work with the CBF after appealing to be incorporated into a new SBC structure approved during the convention's sesquicentennial meeting in June.

Dellanna O'Brien, WMU executive director, at the outset of an Aug. 31 reaction to Rankin's letter, said, "We are furious with the letter sent by Jerry Rankin, written at the encouragement of Foreign Mission Board trustees, to pastors and WMU directors. The letter is inflammatory, misleading and divisive."

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Compiled by Art Toalston, with reporting by Teresa Dickens. The full text of the WMU report is on SBCNet in the MissionsNet Library.

ACTS announces 3-year
pact with F&V channel

By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press
10/3/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The Faith and Values Channel (F&V) and ACTS (American Christian Television System), the cable television service operated by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, have announced a new three-year programming agreement.

A joint statement Oct. 2 from Nelson Price, chief executive officer of F&V, and Jack Johnson, president of the RTVC, reads: "Both parties believe the arrangement helps the channel fulfill its purpose of providing interfaith and evangelical programming with a broad viewership appeal to the American public."

Johnson said, "I'm pleased with the agreement. I think our position is the finest in the industry for evangelicals. We are continuing on a major cable network that stresses family values, and I think the general public and our constituency will be pleased by the new look of the Faith and Values Channel."

Specific details of the agreement, however, were not being released by either party Oct. 2, nor the date of the agreement's beginning date. Currently, ACTS programming appears on the F&V channel eight hours per day in four different time slots.

ACTS has been on F&V since October 1992 when the SBC network and VISN (Vision Interfaith Satellite Network) began a three-year programming agreement. The name of the channel was changed from VISN/ACTS to the Faith and Values Channel in January 1994.

F&V is now available in 24.1 million cable households, a growth of approximately 2.5 million since January 1995.

The Oct. 2 announcement notes that on Oct. 1, 1995, the channel became available nationwide on Channel 83 of PRIMESTAR, a direct-to-home satellite service.

Price is quoted as saying, "With the addition of PRIMESTAR, anyone in the United States can now receive the Faith and Values Channel by securing an individual home satellite dish."

According to the press release, PRIMESTAR anticipates offering more than 150 channels to subscribers by 1996.

F&V is jointly owned by VISN Management Corp., a subsidiary of the National Interfaith Cable Coalition (NICC), and Liberty Media Corp., a subsidiary of Tele-Communications Inc. (TCI).

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**BWA official: Rwandan Baptists
need aid to resume ministry**

By Wendy Ryan

WASHINGTON (BP)--Schools, clinics, churches and the office of the Baptist Union of Rwanda all need to be repaired for Baptist work to move ahead in Rwanda. Baptist pastors also need food, medical care and bicycles to get around.

After a Sept. 13-19 fact-finding visit in Rwanda, Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid, said the mostly Tutsi Baptist leadership needs a lot of help, especially as they are still burying the dead from the massive human destruction in their country from warfare between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes.

Montacute was in the country when Samweli Rugambage, the new general secretary of the union, participated in a service in Cyahinda to bury many of the dead there. It is estimated 50,000 people died in Cyahinda.

"Today they were just burying the bones of some people," Montacute said, "but the bodies of others had been recovered in a cesspit. At one stage, Rugambage said, they buried a mother with her baby still strapped to the back."

Montacute learned 75 percent of the Rwandan population is now women and young children, as many of the men and boys were killed.

Counseling for Rwandan Baptists is a priority need as are reconciliation seminars to bring Hutu and Tutsi Baptists together again.

Among the buildings that must be restored is "Le Petit Seminaire," the Rwandan Baptist high school described as "the crown jewel" of the union and key to the strategy of educating future Baptist leaders. Baptist leaders hope the school can be reopened by Jan. 1.

The headquarters of the Baptist union, ransacked during the fighting, needs to be repaired and refitted so the union can operate.

The Baptist clinic in Nyantanga, base for Danish Baptists for 30 years, is completely wrecked.

Through all of the destruction Montacute saw, he also met people like the pastor at Nyantanga who said church attendance is growing every week "with a special emphasis on repentance."

Montacute heard from the mostly Tutsi pastors that -- while buildings and churches need repair, people need health care, pastors need bicycles and the office needs typewriters and computers -- Rwandan Baptists, and all of Rwanda, needs repentance, reconciliation and healing in even greater supply.

BWAid continues to seek funds to assist both the union and the Association of Baptists in Rwanda. Donations may be sent to BWAid, 6733 Curran Street, McLean, VA 22101-6005.

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**U.N. community urged to seek
global spiritual awakening**

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
10/3/95

UNITED NATIONS (BP)--The remedy for wars and tribal conflict is not peace treaties but the Prince of Peace, delegates to the United Nations International Prayer Breakfast were told in mid-September.

"Without spiritual awakening on a world-wide scale, civilization is doomed," said Samuel J. Barkat, a Pakistan native and former vice president for academic affairs at King's College, New York.

This year marks the UN's 50th anniversary, Barkat noted as he acknowledged the progress member nations have made toward their ideals. The United Nations and its organizations have received the Nobel Peace Prize five times.

Yet global and regional conflicts, violence and dehumanizing of individuals persist. "You are leaders and decision makers, but you are part of a fractured and fragmented humanity," Barkat told 340 people attending the 10th annual prayer breakfast.

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Scripture describes a state of peace known as shalom, Barkat said, adding most people live without that peace. Examples of the absence of shalom include ethnic cleansing, racism, religious bigotry, religious oppression and loss of hope, he said.

"We all break shalom. We have done wrong by the failure to show justice and mercy and the misuse of power," Barkat said. "The miracle is God's forgiveness. It is no simple matter; it was very costly to God himself. The price has been paid. Acceptance is up to us."

The Sept. 18 prayer breakfast was co-sponsored by Christian Ministries to the United Nations Community led by Southern Baptist home missionary Ted Mall and Christian Embassy, a Campus Crusade for Christ organization.

The breakfast, held every fall before the opening of the U.N. General Assembly, is becoming a prestigious event for diplomats to attend, Mall said. Every diplomat who signed the guest register will be contacted for a follow-up visit, Mall added. At least one Muslim and one Buddhist were among those attending, he said.

Mall will use contacts from the prayer breakfast to accomplish one of his main goals: building relationships through which witnessing and outreach can occur.

Another of Mall's goals is to help meet physical needs. Some governments do not pay diplomats enough to survive in New York City, he said. People receive assistance through local churches and Southern Baptist hunger funds.

Mall's third goal is to build international bridges for the gospel in cooperation with the Foreign Mission Board. For example, reopening of mission work in Vietnam and beginning of Southern Baptist work in Mongolia can be traced to connections made at the United Nations, Mall said.

The diplomatic corps in New York, including the ambassadors, their families and support staff, approaches 100,000 people, Mall said. "They are the ones, who while working in the background, influence the decisions that shape our world. ... Any strategy to reach our world for Christ would be incomplete without taking this special group into account."

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She says God planned
her New York adventure

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
10/3/95

NEW YORK (BP)--Trying to outsmart the system backfired for Kendra Cole.

People applying for US-2 missionary positions list their three top choices of places to serve. Cole had heard candidates are rarely assigned to their favorite spot, so she listed New York City first, assuming she would be appointed to her second or third choice.

The Florida native has been in New York City a year. "Me being here had to be God, because I would never have chosen to come here by myself," she said. "I mean really."

US-2 missionaries are college graduates who serve two years in Southern Baptist home missions. Cole is assigned to Christian ministries to the United Nations, a Southern Baptist ministry among the international community of d legates, their families and staff. Cole manages the office and works with weekly support groups and Bible studies.

Cole, who had never lived by herself, lives alone in an apartment several blocks west of Central Park. "I was terrified at first," she said. "I only went to work and church. Then I slowly made bigger circles." Now she doesn't think twice about riding the subway and switching trains for her 30-minute commute to work.

Learning how to get to work was the easy part for this minister's child.

"I thought I knew everything. I can speak the language, but people here want it straight. I've had to nail down what I believe and why," said Cole, whose father, Bill, is minister of students at Northwood Baptist Church, West Palm Beach, Fla.

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Cole was accustomed to large churches with multiple staff members. In New York City, she attends West End Church, one of three English-speaking Southern Baptist churches in the city. The church meets in a school and currently has an interim pastor but no deacons or staff.

"People here don't go to church for tradition or because it's the social thing to do. Here you go because you want to. People are not so much interested in your words or hearing a great story. They want to see what backs up your words."

One of the main things Cole said she's learning is obedience. On the way to work one morning she ordered hash browns to go, planning to eat breakfast at the office. She saw a man asking for money. Although she does not give money to beggars, she sensed God telling her to share her hash browns. She kept walking.

The next week, she had four bananas she planned to share with visitors to her office. She passed another beggar and again sensed God telling her to give him a piece of fruit. She kept walking, but this time she turned around to give him a banana.

"No one gave me a pat on the back, but it was a relief to know I had obeyed. That's what God expects of us."

Being in New York City also has been a missions education. She had made a commitment to full-time Christian service but thought being a missionary meant "living in a grass hut in Africa, not eating breakfast in a New York diner."

While she still thinks foreign missions is important, she asked, "How can a foreign person's need be greater than your neighbor's?"

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press.

Pastor says peers not requiring premarital counsel are 'l-a-z-y' By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
10/3/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--"L-a-z-y." That's what Charlie Chilton calls ministers who refuse to require premarital counseling of every couple they marry.

"It takes a lot of time, and it's an investment," Chilton, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Woodbridge, Va., said of the counseling he requires before helping couples tie the knot.

But thanks to a marriage policy initiated in his community near Washington about a year ago, Chilton and about 25 other pastors in the area are enforcing the same rules -- counseling as a prerequisite to marriage.

"So now when couples ask me to marry them, I tell them they will have to go through six to eight hours of counseling first," Chilton said. "And when they say, 'Thanks, but no thanks,' I say, 'Well, you're going to get the same treatment down the road.'"

Essentially, the Community Marriage Policy, which has been adopted in dozens of neighborhoods across the nation, works under the principle of teamwork. Pastors of several denominations within a certain community sign a contract that says they will attempt to reduce the divorce rate by:

- requiring engaged couples to undergo a minimum of four months of marriage preparation, completing a premarital inventory that identifies areas of conflict in the relationship;

- establishing mentor couples in the congregation to work with engaged or newlywed couples;

- encouraging engaged and married couples to attend weekend marriage encounters; and

- appointing a committee of attorneys to draft possible changes in marriage and divorce laws.

Syndicated religion columnist Michael McManus is the lead champion of the Community Marriage Policy. The "Ethics and Religion" columnist has traveled across the nation attempting to get pastors to buy into the marriage contract.

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McManus has written a book, "Marriage Savers," which outlines his strategy for reducing the number of divorces in America and includes the concept of the Community Marriage Policy. His book is part of the Marriage Savers Video Series package, produced by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

The concept of premarital counseling is not a new one for Chilton, who has been requiring it since 1960 when he graduated from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

"From the beginning of my ministry, I worked hard in premarital counseling, and I spent a lot of time doing it. But I couldn't get anyone else to agree that it was important," he said. "When I told couples who came to me to marry them that they would have to go through counseling first, they would just go to some other pastor on down the road.

"Every place I pastored that was the pattern, and I just couldn't get people to think too seriously about premarital counseling. Couples are just so in love, and they know all the answers. What can a preacher tell anybody?" Chilton said. "It's just a part of American culture that a wedding takes place in a church, but the general idea seems to be that the preacher is irrelevant to the marriage ceremony."

However, Chilton said, 10 years ago, when he started the church where he is now pastor, he "went on record that no one would get married without premarital counseling."

His conviction has finally paid off, he said.

With the Community Marriage Policy instituted in his area, Chilton said, "People have got to look hard to get married now without premarital counseling. This is an across-the-board contract with Episcopalians and Methodists and others saying, 'You've got to have premarital counseling before you get married in my church.'"

Jim Ramsey's favorite part of the Community Marriage Policy, which pastors in the Albany, Ga., area adopted about a year ago, is the marriage inventory he administers to couples before they begin premarital counseling.

Ramsey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Albany, said the "Prepare/Enrich" inventories focus on such issues as families of origin, communications, sexuality, religious issues, raising children, conflict resolution and finances. The inventories help couples see how much work needs to be done on the relationship before marriage, he said.

"I had one couple that took the inventory and realized they were not prepared to get married. And that was their decision. The inventory covered so many areas they needed to talk about and resolve that they realized it was better for them not to get married."

Ramsey said he believes the inventories and premarital counseling that follows help couples understand what they are "getting into."

"A lot of couples are apprehensive about going to counseling," he said. "These inventories give us a basis for something to talk about. And couples who I am now performing ceremonies for are much more knowledgeable about what they are getting into."

Pastors and counselors can find resources such as the Prepare/Enrich inventories in the back of McManus' "Marriage Savers" book. The Marriage Savers Video Series, which includes six 30-minute videos, a leader's guide and the "Marriage Savers" book, addresses the issues and needs of persons who are dating, engaged, newly married, estranged couples, separated and divorced couples, and remarried/blended families. Additionally, "Faithful & True: Sexual Integrity in a Fallen World," a LifeWay product, will be released in June 1996.

In the first six chapters, the Life Support Series support group workbook deals with the development of healthy sexuality. In the final six chapters, sexual dysfunctions are discussed.

Information about marriage conferences and events sponsored by the Sunday School Board can be obtained by calling (615) 251-2277.

**Sexual affairs not lone definition
of adultery, former therapist says** **By Terri Lackey**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Sex outside of marriage is a woeful breach of one of God's Ten Commandments, but it is not the lone definition of adultery, a former marriage and family therapist said.

"We come as a total package -- mind, heart and body. I'm afraid that many people feel that physical infidelity is the only definition of adultery," said Betty Hassler, a former marriage and family therapist and now a design editor for LIFE support products at the Baptist Sunday School Board. "When we are not faithful in our minds and hearts, there can be devastating consequences to the marital bond," Hassler said.

"Just because you're not having sex with anybody else doesn't mean you're necessarily being a faithful partner. If I am only physically faithful, I can still picture myself intimately involved with someone outside my marriage relationship. Jesus said lust is just as destructive as committing the physical act because you have betrayed the oneness of the marital union."

Hassler was reacting to a University of Chicago poll which indicates couples seem to be taking a turn toward righteousness.

The survey conducted about America's sexual practices found "more than 80 percent of women and 65 to 85 percent of men of every age report that they had no partners other than their spouse while they were married."

According to the book, "Sex in America: A Definitive Survey," which reports the University of Chicago findings, "no matter how sexually active people are before and between marriages, ... marriage is such a powerful social institution that essentially married people are nearly all alike -- they are faithful to their partners as long as the marriage is intact."

While Hassler believes married couples are, for the most part, faithful physically to each other, she said she's not completely convinced moral reasoning is the root of the loyalty.

"I think the trend toward monogamy is partly based on survival instincts," she said, indicating couples are more worried about deadly sexually transmitted diseases and about what divorce does to their children.

"I think people are afraid to be promiscuous because of those reasons, not necessarily because of religious reasons."

Hassler, co-author of the LIFE marriage enrichment series "Covenant Marriage," said God cautioned Israel against worship that was only the physical exercise of sacrifices. "God wanted their minds and hearts as well," Hassler said, pointing out faithfulness in the Bible is always associated with the totality of our being.

"In our sexually explicit society, it is very difficult to avoid sexual temptation," Hassler stated, acknowledging physical attraction to a person other than one's spouse will occur.

"We don't want to set people up for failure in counseling by making them think they will never be sexually attracted to anybody other than their spouse. It's not that you will not be physically attracted to another person. God made us with the capacity to be attracted to the opposite sex.

"But it is at that point that you guard your heart. It's like having that extra discipline to say 'no' to that piece of pecan pie even though it's very appealing. That's the point that often doesn't get communicated in premarital counseling."

While Hassler supports the premarital counseling many pastors are requiring before performing a marriage ceremony, she said she feels more caution "needs to be given to the issue of what faithfulness means."

"Couples need to be told that when you take this man or woman to be your spouse, you are really giving up a roving eye. You are promising to be faithfully committed to protecting that sacred union until death.

"If I don't understand what I am giving up when I get married, then I don't really have a good basis for making that leap of faith into marriage. I think counselors need to emphasize that couples who get married are giving up license to certain relationships with the opposite sex. And that doesn't mean we just don't go to bed with them."

Hassler has counseled couples where infidelity started with seemingly harmless office flirtations. "In many situations where people are unfaithful to their spouses, it starts out innocently enough. Because of the sexual freedom today, we don't seem to be as wary and protective of what we say to each other because there is a lot of flirty conversation passing as innocent that would not have been there a generation ago.

"It's a sexual mine field out there," Hassler continued. "People are being bombarded with sexual situations in the media, which can lead to mental, if not physical, unfaithfulness.

"Hollywood sets up this false image of sexuality. Those people on the screen rehearse scripted love-making scenes. Marital sex, however, is not all bells and whistles. Sexual satisfaction takes time and patience."

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CBF to seek Sherman's successor,
to relocate to Mercer, Atlanta

Baptist Press
10/3/95

ATLANTA (BP)--The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is seeking a new leader and making plans to relocate its offices at Mercer University's Atlanta campus.

Cecil Sherman, 67, CBF coordinator since 1992, announced during a CBF coordinating council meeting Sept. 28 he will retire from the position June 30, 1996.

Also during the meeting, the CBF announced plans to purchase a \$1.25 million, four-acre tract adjacent to Mercer's Atlanta campus and enter a five-year rental agreement on the campus beginning in 1997 in a building to be built for Mercer's proposed theology school, slated to open in 1996.

The CBF, organized in 1991, is an organization of Baptist moderates opposed to the Southern Baptist Convention's conservative leadership. The CBF lists 1,400 supporting churches, an annual budget of \$13 million, 80 missionaries and 21 staff members.

CBF chairman Pat Anderson, of Lakeland, Fla., named an 11-member search committee for Sherman's successor, to be chaired by Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler, the CBF's past moderator and retired executive director of the SBC Woman's Missionary Union, and including five pastors, four women and two African Americans.

Sherman formerly was pastor of Broadway Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, from 1985-92.

CBF's property plans were approved by a 46-10 coordinating council vote Sept. 30, with five abstentions. The five-year lease at Mercer, for \$750,000, will be paid in advance; the four acres will be paid for from CBF investment funds. CBF's leased office space in Chamblee, Ga., ends in December 1996.

Also during the coordinating council meeting, Anderson reported a committee studying whether the CBF should declare itself a denomination has begun its work.

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Compiled by Art Toalston.

**William Hendricks to lead
Baptist studies at Brite**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--William L. Hendricks, senior professor of Christian theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., has accepted the position of director of the Baptist studies program and lecturer in theology at Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, Texas, effective Aug. 15, 1996.

Hendricks was on Southern's faculty from 1984 until his retirement in December 1994.

Leo G. Perdue, Brite's dean, said, "Duke, Candler and Princeton have led the way in developing excellent Baptist studies programs, and we plan to be equal in quality to our peer institutions."

Hendricks also has taught at Southwestern and Golden Gate Baptist Theological seminaries, authored eight books and served 12 Baptist churches as pastor. He holds the master of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from Southwestern and master of arts and doctor of philosophy degrees from the University of Chicago.

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Church's broadcast, magazine
call city to 'Take A Minute'

By Don Kirkland

Baptist Press
10/3/95

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--It took a lot more than 60 seconds for Northside Baptist Church to observe "Take A Minute Day" Sept. 24.

The church had issued an invitation to meet pastor Steve Cloud, who has been telling them in radio broadcasts and now in print to "Take A Minute."

It all began five years ago, and the original concept was "Take Five." But a media expert advised Cloud that a 60-second format would be better, and a ministry was born.

"I have thought many times about how much more effective the 60-second story works," Cloud said in the first edition of the ministry's magazine, also call d Take A Minute.

The magazine -- a 32-page, full-color publication -- was introduced in the summer, featuring an interview with University of South Carolina football coach Brad Scott. The fall edition features Charles Austin, chief of police for the city of Columbia.

About the size of Reader's Digest, the 35,000 copies of the magazine are distributed free in the greater Columbia area.

Many of the carriers of the quarterly publication are church members who hand them out at work. The church also has boxes at various locations to make the magazine available in what church administrator Jim Brown calls "high-traffic" places.

The "Take A Minute" radio broadcasts, heard on two local stations, consist of a poignant story, a related Scripture passage and the hope from Cloud that his listeners will "have a great day."

The pastor is always searching for material. "I've used stories from the newspaper, books and magazines," he said. "People have sent me or told me their favorite story, and I've used some from my personal experiences."

Cloud has been encouraged by the lives changed by the ministry, many of them turning up at Northside on a Sunday morning.

"A number of those people have shared that they had never given much thought to their personal or spiritual lives prior to listening to the program," Cloud said in the summer magazine.

Many have made professions of faith in Christ and become involved in a local church as a result of the radio program, he said.

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The magazine grew out of the success of the radio ministry. For several years, Cloud has received requests for a printed version of his radio stories.

The listeners got that, and more; the magazine also includes feature articles, interviews and testimonies.

Scott Crede, a church member who works for R.L. Bryan Company, is editor of the magazine, and Wendy McDougal, another church member employed by Lexington County School District One, is one of the main writers.

The publication runs advertisements to pay for the magazine, which is not an item in the church budget.

Cloud is pleased over the success of the radio program and now the magazine. "I sincerely pray that it will be a source of encouragement, instruction and a spiritual challenge for many people."

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Univ. of Mobile team touching
churches with drama, music

By Alison Fanning

Baptist Press
10/3/95

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)--What started as a fun night and study break soon became a life-changing experience for about 75 students at the University of Mobile. The Baptist Campus Ministries drama and ensemble team, "Witness," presented the gospel to their fellow classmates.

"During the invitation everyone came forward in tears," said Adam Creel, a former Witness member, as he recalled that spring 1994 program. "It was a real time of rededication and renewal."

This is just one example of how God has used Witness. Members travel to churches throughout the Southeast, spreading the gospel through music and drama.

The drama team focuses on skits that present the Christian life in unique ways. They have dealt with issues such as alcoholism, peer pressure, gossip and answering God's call to missions.

One particular skit is performed to the accompaniment of Ray Boltz's song "Feel the Nails." The skit portrays an alcoholic teen-ager who comes to the realization it was his sin that nailed Christ to the cross. Creel recalled an experience at a church in Birmingham, Ala.: "We were coming to the close of the service and had just done 'Feel the Nails.' There were 1,000 to 1,500 people there, but there was one man who just stood up, raised his hands and shouted 'Praise the Lord!' God was there."

Utilizing drama in conjunction with music has added a whole new dimension to the ministry, said Kimberly Doyle, road manager and ensemble director. While music and singing leads in praise to God, drama captures the "real-life" situations people find themselves in every day, she said.

"If people can actively visualize the words that the ensemble is singing, it sometimes hits a little closer to home," Creel noted.

Witness' main purpose is evangelism. "It's not just a program, and it's not just us getting up there and singing and leaving," Doyle said. "We want to share as much as we can."

On last year's tour people, were being saved after nearly every concert, she said. "I saw God breaking and mending a lot of hearts," Creel added.

Witness also sends any offerings directly to the Alabama State Mission Board. The money is distributed to give students an opportunity to minister as summer missionaries all over the world.

Portraying the role of Jesus in "Feel the Nails," Creel said, left him feeling humbled and unworthy. "I learned the impact that Jesus Christ has on people's lives. I grew with every experience doing that. You realize the impact he has on your own life when people come to you in tears after the service. 'Feel the Nails' made people realize how real Jesus is."

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Witness' approach to ministry has been an attraction to both younger and older generations. While much of the music is contemporary, there is a good mix of more traditional music as well, Doyle said.

In their appearances, the members also strive to reach as many people as they can, she said. "We spend a lot of time at the church getting to know the people. We deal a lot with one-on-one. People always come up and say, 'We were so blessed by that,' but I always felt that I was the one receiving the blessing."

Doyle said Witness has taught her much about God being in control. She shared an experience from a small church in Atlanta, when the group had been praying for the salvation of one of the team member's father. "The invitation went four verses, but I wouldn't stop. I knew his dad was going to get saved that night," Doyle said. "On the last verse he came down the aisle.

"We have a lot of people get saved during the year, but to have it hit home like that -- someone's dad -- it was unbelievable," Doyle said.

It is these experiences that make coming home from a performance at 4 a.m. and having an 8 a.m. class all worth it, she said. "God can use me as unworthy as I am just to minister to these people," she said. "It's really humbling."

The students in Witness audition for a place on the team. Auditions are not based solely on the best talent, but more on the spirituality of the individual. "We find ourselves dealing with so many different situations that you have to know what you believe and why," Creel said.

"The hearts of the people in the group are genuine -- honestly, their main concern and main goal is ministry," Doyle said. "They do it because they love Jesus."

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Fanning is a student newswriter at the University of Mobile. Additional information about Witness' performances can be obtained by contacting Doyle at (334) 679-3732.

Texas students note challenge
of missions in New England

By Dan Nicholas

Baptist Press
10/3/95

NORTHBOROUGH, Mass. (BP)--Three Texans will never forget their life-transforming experiences as summer missionaries in New England.

When Michael Brinkley made his first visit to New England this summer he "had great expectations for what I would find." He thought the Southern Baptist churches would all have "thousands of people and a big youth group, just like in Texas."

Instead, he discovered small congregations and "frustrating" experiences when visiting door-to-door in the Boston area. But the 21-year-old senior at Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacodoches, also gained "an experience that will last a lifetime."

New England for Brinkley was "like being on a foreign mission field." He learned about the sufficiency of God's grace while knocking on doors during his weeks as a summer missionary assigned to Community Baptist Church, Weymouth.

The people who bothered to answer their doors were "not receptive," and when they did talk about faith they relied on good works for salvation, Brinkley reported. "It was an eye-opening experience. I learned to accept them and have enough respect for their faith, while God provided the witnessing opportunities."

A 45-ish Waltham, Mass., woman named Donna listened receptively as Brinkley shared the gospel but made no outward commitment of faith. "I still pray for her because maybe no one else will. I guess that's my job," he said.

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Based on his summer missions work, Brinkley said he has learned he is not cut out for church planting or youth ministry, aiming instead toward a career in marriage and family counseling. A self-confessed "incredibly organized person," Brinkley learned at the Baptist Convention of New England youth "Centrifuge" conference "God wants me to relax and enjoy him. God doesn't care about rigid schedules. He just wants us to serve him.

"I learned a lot about who has the power, and now I know it's not me. God taught me that I'm powerless and I can't do anything without him."

Upon returning to Texas, several friends commented on Brinkley's new-found "maturity," which he also humorously called "the summer missions weirdness syndrome."

Despite experiencing cross-cultural tensions, Brinkley said he wants to return to New England to minister one day.

For summer missionary Suzanne Weidner, in mopping floors and cleaning at Smith Street Baptist Fellowship, Providence, R.I., she "began to understand what it takes to have a servant's heart."

Before spending the school break as a missionary, Weidner, 19, a sophomore at Texas A & M University, Corpus Christi, had never been to New England or even to a large city, with its many poor families.

"Welfare was never real to me until I was a summer missionary. (Working in Providence) made me appreciate my family much more than I did," Weidner reflected.

In addition to the physical labor and the chance to lead youth activities, Weidner was "humbled" when a 12-year-old girl named Jennifer "started looking up to me as a mentor and called me her 'sister in Christ.'"

New England is "an area where Jesus Christ is really needed. It's not like in the South, where there's a Southern Baptist church on every corner," she said.

Jason Bien, meanwhile, will remember his weeks in New England for two diverse encounters. First, two teen-agers, Andy and Bobby, found faith in Jesus Christ after Bien shared the gospel and jumped off a Cape Cod bridge with them. While not a necessary part of evangelism, Bien said he now considers "bridge jumping" from 20-30 feet in the air a hobby worth pursuing.

Second, he "wrecked and blew up" a 1972 pick-up truck belonging to Charles Chamblee, pastor of Franklin (Mass.) Baptist Church, the congregation he served over the summer. As if that weren't bad enough, Chamblee's wife, Laura Lea, supervised all of the summer missionaries serving in New England. Bien was not injured in the auto accident on I-495.

A ministry and music major, Bien said he also will recall fondly the times he played guitar and sang Christian songs for open-mike nights at The Grind, a Franklin coffee house.

Bien, 20, a sophomore at East Texas Baptist University, Marshall, said he learned, like Brinkley and Weidner, the humbling lesson "God is in control no matter what the circumstances or no matter who seems in control."

Thirty-eight college and university students served BCNE churches and associations last summer, the highest number to date.

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