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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Historical Commission, SBC  
Nashville, Tennessee

FMB earmarks \$10 million  
for former Soviet bloc

By Mark Kelly

Baptist Press  
10/12/95

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board Oct. 11 endorsed a bold plan to seize emerging opportunities for the gospel created by the collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union.

To take advantage of these opportunities, trustees are asking Southern Baptists to participate in "White Harvest '96" by meeting an ambitious \$100 million goal for the 1995 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

During their Oct. 9-11 meeting in Richmond, Va., trustees approved a \$202.6 million budget for 1996 that injects \$10 million into an intensive effort in the countries of the former Soviet bloc. Trustees earmarked \$90 million of the upcoming 1995 Lottie Moon offering goal for the board's basic budget and the additional \$10 million for White Harvest.

The board also conferred emeritus status on 77 retiring missionaries, appointed 25 new missionaries and reappointed four others, bringing the total missionary force to 4,131. The emeritus group represented a total of 2,205 years of missionary experience. Among the new missionaries was a Vietnamese couple, both born in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), who will work among Chinese people in Spanish-speaking Dominican Republic.

White Harvest money would follow a special infusion into the region this year of \$4.8 million from the Cooperative Program, the Southern Baptist unified giving program.

Last year trustees pledged to use in the former Soviet bloc up to \$5 million of Cooperative Program receipts above 1995 budget needs. In early October, FMB officials learned a year of record giving by Southern Baptists would result in an extra \$4.8 million.

Seventy years of communist repression devastated Baptist work in countries dominated by the Soviet Union, said John Floyd, director of FMB work in Europe. The collapse of the Soviet Union reopened doors for the gospel.

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"We have a tremendous opportunity to intensify Baptist work in these countries," Floyd said. "They've been stagnant for 70 years. Now they (Baptist unions) have the opportunity to do something, but they don't have the resources. Bad economies, devalued currency, high prices and spiraling inflation are keeping them from capitalizing on the spiritual hunger and responsiveness in these countries."

Floyd cited a recent volunteer medical missions trip into Russia that registered 828 decisions for Christ in two weeks. Team members said they could have won 300 or 400 more people if they'd had enough translators.

The \$4.8 million from the Cooperative Program and the \$10 million projected from the 1995 Lottie Moon offering will buy houses and automobiles for new FMB missionaries pouring into these countries. It will fund evangelism projects, new church starts, literature production, strategic land purchases, church construction and renovation and theological education, Floyd said.

The annual Lottie Moon offering will provide 46 percent, a projected \$90 million, of the board's 1996 basic budget. To supply the \$10 million needed in the former Soviet bloc, Woman's Missionary Union and Foreign Mission Board leaders have challenged Southern Baptists to give \$100 million through the offering.

In 1994, Southern Baptists gave 99.9 percent of the \$86 million offering goal. They would need to give 16 percent more this year to reach the \$100 million goal.

"Southern Baptists asked us for a channel through which they could participate in the exciting things God is doing in Eastern Europe," said Don Kammerdiener, FMB executive vice president. "We sincerely hope this opens a door they can walk through."

Apart from the \$10 million for White Harvest '96, the \$192.6 million basic budget represents a 3.4 percent increase over 1995, said Carl Johnson, vice president for finance. Overseas work will receive 87.2 percent of the basic budget.

Missionary support accounts for 70 percent of the \$6.4 million increase in the budget, Johnson said. Record numbers of new missionaries, rising living costs and a weak dollar have dramatically raised the cost of supporting the force of almost 4,200 workers in 131 countries.

Board members also considered a proposal to cut costs by reducing the number of trustees from 89 to 55 through a new formula, implemented by attrition, that allocates one trustee position to each cooperating state and additional positions for each 500,000 members of Baptist churches in a state. The trustees voted to delay action on the proposal until their Dec. 11-13 meeting in Memphis, Tenn.

Among guests at the meeting were Dellanna O'Brien, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union, SBC; former FMB trustee chairman Mark Cortts of Winston-Salem, N.C.; 50 members of the board's National Development Council; and 60 participants in a conference of the FMB's Creative Access Network.

Noting several state Baptist conventions are debating their levels of Cooperative Program support, Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry told trustees Southern Baptists must close ranks and fix their attention on bringing a lost world to Christ.

"I hope and pray our state leadership will see how very strategic it is that we stay together with our focus on reaching our world and our nation," he said. "It's not a win-lose proposition. Either we will win together or we will lose together."

"There is no other group on the face of the earth that has the opportunity and the talent to make the impact on the world Southern Baptists can," Henry said. "God has given us this moment -- unlike any moment in history -- to touch people who've never been touched before. Let's not miss it."

During the meeting, Henry signed a letter challenging Southern Baptists to "pray about what would be a Christ-honoring Lottie Moon gift for your family" and "do all that's in your power to help reach the full \$100 million goal for worldwide missions needs."

FMB President Jerry Rankin told trustees Southern Baptists are like a football team trailing by a few points in the last two minutes of the game that must discard its normal game plan, intensify the effort and play to win.

"We are moving into the final years of Christian history. God is moving to fulfill his purpose of extending his kingdom to the ends of the earth," Rankin said.

"It's time for us to depart from our traditional way of doing missions and accelerate the action -- reaping the harvest and taking the gospel to every nation and people group," he said. "It's time to take the necessary risks to join God on a winning team."

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(BP) photos (black and white) will be mailed to state Baptist newspapers Oct. 13. by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Color photographs available upon request. Call Bill Bangham at (804) 219-1533.

Southern, Campbellsville  
discussing Carver School

Baptist Press  
10/12/95

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Officials at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Campbellsville College have confirmed that the two schools are discussing the possible transfer of the Carver School of Church Social Work and its master of social work (MSW) program.

The agreement, if completed, would allow the Carver school to continue operation in Louisville, Ky., according to Southern Seminary officials. Campbellsville is a 1,300-student Baptist-affiliated college in Campbellsville, Ky., about 60 miles south of Louisville.

Southern President R. Albert Mohler said, "We are very pleased by our conversations with Dr. Kenneth Winters and other senior administrators at Campbellsville College. We are also impressed with the possibility that the Carver School of Church Social Work could continue in Louisville."

Both schools indicated the conversations concerning a potential transfer would continue and no formal agreement has yet been reached. Seminary officials confirmed that Campbellsville College had contacted the seminary several weeks ago, but that active conversations had not been conducted until after the Oct. 10 meeting of the seminary's trustees.

Referring to a previously announced proposal to transfer the Carver School's MSW program to Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., Mohler stated: "Southern Seminary and Samford University had negotiated a written transaction agreement. As of the time of our Oct. 10 trustee meeting, I was prepared to move forward on that previously negotiated agreement.

"Given that such an agreement may not now be consummated, the trustee study committee has been authorized to work with the seminary's administration in exploring options that would perpetuate the MSW program in another institutional context and would protect the interests of those students currently enrolled."

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Golden Gate trustees review  
enrollment growth, finances

By Mark A. Wyatt

Baptist Press  
10/12/95

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Reports on enrollment increases, new campuses and a variety of money matters occupied trustees of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary during their annual fall meeting Oct. 9-11.

President William O. Crews told trustees overall enrollment has increased more than 27 percent since last year -- from a total of 1,092 students in 1994 to 1,395 this fall.

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Fall enrollment at the seminary's residential campus in Mill Valley, Calif., rose to 619 this year, up 39.4 percent over the fall 1994 figure of 444 students, Crews reported.

Combined enrollment at a new teaching center in New Mexico and one started in Arizona last year totaled 41 students this fall.

Slight enrollment reductions were recorded at Golden Gate's regional campuses in Southern California and Portland, Ore. However, those were more than offset by a nearly 55 percent increase in the seminary's Ethnic Leadership Development (ELD) program. This year Golden Gate enrolled 584 ELD students, up from 377 in 1994.

Trustees affirmed steps taken by seminary administrators to prevent a repeat of a budget deficit reported for the 1994-95 fiscal year.

Jim Stephenson, vice president for business affairs, reported revenue shortfalls and a variety of expense overruns during 1994-95 combined to create a \$163,388 deficit.

Roetta Hudson, a trustee from Artesia, N.M., nevertheless reported the finance and properties committee she chairs "supports" decisions which led to the deficit as well as revisions made to avoid a deficit in the 1995-96 operating budget.

On a brighter business note, Crews declared, "We're about to be out of the property business!" He told trustees a years-long land development project nearing completion adjacent to the 150-acre campus north of San Francisco should net \$5 million for seminary endowment.

"That's half what we hoped for (but) \$5 million more than we had when we started," Crews said.

Part of the money is being used to create a \$1.6 million endowment with matching funds allocated by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. The pool provides loans to help Golden Gate employees purchase homes in the San Francisco Bay area, rated the nation's most expensive housing market.

With the growth of seminary endowment funds, currently approaching \$9 million, Crews welcomed another action by trustees instructing seminary staff to develop an investment policy.

"This is a thing that is important to many folks who are thinking about donating to an institution, 'What is your policy concerning investments?'" stated Cactus Jack Cagle, a trustee from Houston. Cagle said a sound investment policy is needed to assure donors their gifts will be invested wisely.

Trustees expressed their approval for a variety of recently completed and ongoing campus improvements including classroom renovations, paving and landscaping. The improvements had been authorized earlier this year by the trustees' executive committee.

Several new projects totaling more than \$100,000 were approved by trustees, including \$60,000 for computer networking and Internet access at the seminary's main campus.

A Nov. 1 target date has been set for introducing Golden Gate's cyberspace "domain." Among its features will be a "home page" where computer users may obtain information about the seminary on the global network known as the World Wide Web.

Additionally, the Southern California campus in Brea will receive a \$30,000 library expansion.

Funds for the new project, plus more than \$195,000 trustees set aside as plant fund reserve, will come from \$308,948 in previously unbudgeted capital improvement money. Golden Gate and other Southern Baptist agencies all shared greater than expected income as a result of record Cooperative Program receipts during the just-completed fiscal year, Crews explained.

The seminary president told trustees, "The Cooperative Program for 1994-95 went over its budget and the result of that was we received an extra \$56,000 in operating funds" in addition to the capital funds windfall.

"Thank your churches for the Cooperative Program. We're very, very grateful for it," he added.

**Southeastern trustees vote relief for stretched housing** By Dwayne Hastings

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Trustees of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary moved to head off a looming housing shortage prompted by burgeoning enrollment during their fall meeting Oct. 9-10.

Southeastern President Paige Patterson said the Lord has been very good in providing such rapid growth, "but this growth has created an enormous number of good problems that we had not anticipated to occur so quickly."

The Wake Forest, N.C., school's board of trustees voted to proceed with the renovation of Bostwick Hall, which sits on the seminary's main campus, to become housing for married students without children.

"This building is probably the most beautiful on campus," Patterson said. "Bostwick is long overdue for renovation." The building, built in 1924, served as a men's dormitory until it was closed in 1988 due to its aging electrical system.

Faced with a fall enrollment of 1,098 students, the trustees also called for the administration to explore the possible acquisition of land off campus for the development of additional student housing.

The board also called for a feasibility study to be completed concerning the renovation of the basement level of Lolley Dormitory, housing for single women, so that additional rooms could be made available for women students.

Trustees participated in the dedication of the Manor House on the seminary campus. Used as a boarding house for women students until the 1960s, it has since been used by the seminary as lodging for prospective students visiting the campus.

"There is nowhere in this country where prospective students go and stay in a nicer place while they're on a campus," Patterson said of the renovated structure.

He told the trustees rooms in the building, also called "The House of Prophets," are dedicated to the ministry of individual pastors, evangelists and laypersons within the Southern Baptist Convention, saying, "It will be an education just to stay there."

Trustees heard that academic degree programs they had approved at recent meetings were up and running, including the upper level baccalaureate degree program which now has 100 students enrolled.

"Our standards in the Ph.D. program are high; only 10 were admitted," said Patterson, indicating the number of applicants to the degree program approved last spring by the trustees were much higher than those accepted. "We are not going to make the same mistakes some other institutions have made in Ph.D. programs and admit more than we can actually handle properly," he said.

In updating the group on foreign mission opportunities for the trustees at Southeastern, Patterson said the school "is planning a trip you won't want to miss." Inviting the trustees to accompany the students and others in traveling overseas next June, he said the group will be heading to Southeast Asia next year to a region "ripe for the gospel right now."

Patterson called on the trustees for their continued support in Southeastern's work with the Hebrew University in the archeological dig at Hazor, Israel. Hazor was, in effect, the capital city of Canaan and was the city Joshua took and "burned with fire" when he came into the land, Patterson said.

"This is the largest archeological excavation in Israel and perhaps in all of the Middle East," Patterson said, "and probably the most promising." He said cuneiform tablets uncovered elsewhere in the region indicate Hazor as the site of an ancient archive whose discovery would be tantamount to the recovery of the Dead Sea scrolls.

"This is a fabulous training experience for students and a wonderful witnessing opportunity," Patterson said. Officials at Hebrew University have been responsive to Southeastern students on the digs, Patterson said, "even though they know they are going to receive a witness about Jesus."

In other business:

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David Beck was elected to the faculty as assistant professor of New Testament, James Porowski as assistant professor of pastoral care and Alvin Reid as assistant professor of evangelism. The three had been teaching on the faculty under presidential appointments.

Danny Akin, professor of theology and dean of students at the school, was elected to a newly created position, vice president for student services.

Trustees approved the addition of 14 new members to Southeastern's board of visitors, a group whose purpose is "to provide a means by which a broad range of friends of the seminary can assist in fulfilling its purpose of preparing God-called men and women for service."

The board of visitors not only supports the school in financial development, but is committed to praying for the students, faculty and administration, said Bart Neal, Southeastern's vice president for institutional advancement.

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Baptist church declines  
Jesse James funeral role

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
10/12/95

KEARNEY, Mo. (BP)--The church where Jesse James once was a member has pulled out of participating in the outlaw's Oct. 28 funeral and reburial.

"Our reason wasn't that it was Jesse James," said pastor Ron Robinson of the unanimous vote by deacons of First Baptist Church, Kearney, Mo., near Kansas City. "Our reason was that it didn't fall under the area of worship, in what was being planned."

Robinson said he and James' relatives initially had agreed on a graveside prayer and Scripture reading so that his body, which was exhumed for DNA tests in July, could be reburied "in some dignified way."

"What's happened is, it has grown enormously," Robinson said. James' casket will lay in state at a Kearney funeral home and the service, now slated for the campus of William Jewell College in nearby Liberty, Mo., will include pallbearers descended from Confederate heroes and an honor guard of Civil War reenactors. James' father, Robert, a circuit-riding Baptist preacher, was among the college's founders in 1849.

A past national commander of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, Robert L. Hawkins III of Jefferson City, Mo., has a lead role in the plans.

Jesse James is believed to have been assassinated by a member of his gang on April 3, 1882, in St. Joseph, Mo. He joined First Baptist, Kearney, by baptism at age 16. But after his first bank robbery, deacons in the church planned to confront him and follow through with biblical discipline, Robinson recounted. Hearing about the deacons' plans, James went to the church's pastor to ask that his name be removed from the rolls to avoid embarrassment to the congregation.

James' father also was involved in starting five congregations in the Kansas City area and later died in California soon after moving there to share the gospel during the gold rush, Robinson said.

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EDITORS' NOTE: The following four stories on domestic violence were written by Julie Nall of Missouri Baptists' Word and Way newsjournal.

**Violence: a reality among  
even Christian families**

By Julie Nall

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--A young, middle-class woman waits in vain for her husband to return home. He has stopped at the bar for a "few drinks" after work. Now at 2 a.m., she prays he will not come home at all; experience has taught her what will occur when he does. Within the hour, the woman will be dragged from her bed, beaten and raped. Her young daughter, awakened by the noise, will listen quietly in her room, lest her father's drunken wrath turn on her.

An infant cries inconsolably in the night. At first, the child's parents attempt to give him comfort. The crying only continues. Frustrated, the parents seize the infant and shake him. They shout at the child to "Shut up!" Moments later, their son lies limp in their arms. His brain has been irreparably damaged by the momentary force of their anger.

In his paper, "Comfort My People: The Church Responding to Family Violence," John Sisson notes these are true accounts. Unlike the sensational stories of O.J. Simpson and Susan Smith, these two stories did not make national headlines. "However, they are real," Sisson wrote. "In fact, they represent scenes which are far too real for many families all across our nation."

Sisson, a member of the Missouri Baptist Convention missions education and ministry development team, said he prepared the paper because incidents of family violence are "a frequent yet sad reality of modern family life, impacting and threatening the very lives of both our present and our future generations."

He defines "family" or "domestic" violence as spouse battering and/or the physical abuse of a child. The term also addresses issues such as emotional abuse, spousal rape, incest, child abandonment and neglect and elder abuse.

Family violence can be summarized as "the physical and/or emotional mistreatment of a family member which has the potential to result in harm to that individual and (ultimately) to others," Sisson concluded.

There is denial in religious communities that family violence occurs, said Thelma Burgonio-Watson, a program specialist for the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seattle. "In all the mainline denominations in the United States and Canada, more and more now because of education awareness, there is a breaking of the silence using our materials or other materials. It cuts across the lines of racial and socioeconomic barriers."

Don Anders, coordinator of mission ministries and special projects for the Missouri Baptist Convention, said statistics show family violence increases when the stress levels of society increase. "Baptists used to deny that such violence was taking place in our Baptist families, but now we are beginning to admit our Baptist families and children are hurting each other."

Sisson called family violence "an equal opportunity crime," noting it occurs among people of all ages, races, socioeconomic classes and religious faiths. "Christians are not immune to family violence," Sisson said. Christian and non-Christian families are equally at risk of including perpetrators and victims. While spouse battering is predominantly a male crime, child abusers appear equally among both genders.

Family violence has a strong correlation with other social issues such as juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, adolescent runaways, violent crime, sex offenses, prostitution and homelessness, Sisson pointed out.

"It has been estimated that 50 percent of our nation's homeless population consists of women and children who are fleeing from family violence. Furthermore, some of our nation's 'missing children' are now believed to be hidden by a relative who is attempting to protect them from an abusive parent(s), or they may have been kidnaped by a relative for use as a bargaining chip in family disputes."

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What is the nature of the problem? Sisson explains family violence as a complex, systematic problem with roots that vary from family to family. Because family violence impacts so many different types of families, there are no composite stereotypes that might represent all perpetrators or victims.

There are some general characteristics that may allow the church to take preventive steps to help before violence occurs:

-- Some men who batter their partners tend to embrace the more traditional male and female roles and stereotypes. Violence can occur whenever the man's role as family leader is challenged by a "disobedient" wife or child. For the Christian male, this can be problematic as the Bible relates concepts of marital submission and parental authority.

-- There is a strong correlation between violence and low self-esteem. A person who may be outwardly confident and genuinely likable may secretly harbor a growing inner frustration that eventually could erupt into violence. The normally passive person might be a candidate for family violence also.

-- There is a strong correlation between family violence and substance abuse. Studies show as many as 67 percent of spouse battering cases were coupled with episodes of substance abuse, primarily alcohol. Children who have been abused are far more likely to become substance abusers themselves.

-- Perpetrators often are individuals who have not learned to label their feelings, understand them or to release them in a healthy manner. The problem is not with anger per se, but with the way in which the anger is understood and later managed by the perpetrator.

-- Emotional dependence is often a strong theme. A fear of losing the spouse may cause the perpetrator to set up a series of crises, such that his partner is drawn to focus her attention solely upon him and his needs.

-- There is strong evidence to suggest that abuse runs in family trees, extending from generation to generation. Children who witness violence in their family of origin are six times more likely to abuse their own spouse or child when they become adults. Thus, violence is a learned behavior.

-- The perpetrator of family violence often holds unrealistic expectations for his wife and children. If the spouse or child fails to meet these expectations, they are punished.

-- Stress has been cited as a major factor in family violence, given that stressful events often serve as a catalyst to trigger violent episodes. The stress may be related to one specific event or it may have accumulated over time.

Sisson emphasizes regardless of what factors might serve as underlying issues in family violence situations, the perpetrator alone is responsible for any violence that occurs.

"Violence is an act of the will," he said. "It is a choice which one makes in terms of managing his family conflicts. ... The claim 'I just lost it' holds no water, particularly given that most perpetrators manage to find other options for dealing with conflict when out in the workplace or community."

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Woman shares experience  
in facing domestic abuse

By Julie Nall

Baptist Press  
10/12/95

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--Cindy had seen a lot in her seven-year marriage, but she'd never seen her husband this badly out of control. Holding a loaded shotgun, he ordered their 5-year-old son to get down on his knees and pray. "Daddy's going home to Jesus," the 6-foot-2, 240-pound man told the boy. "And it's your mommy's fault."

As the child prayed and wept, Cindy (not her real name) suggested to her husband he leave the house for a little while to cool off. As soon as he did, she called her parents for help. The next day she filed for divorce.

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A self-described "typical Southern Baptist child," Cindy is a pastor's daughter who became a Christian at age 5. She became a wife at 21, dreaming of the ideal, perfect marriage relationship.

Although she hadn't intended to have children right away, she soon was pregnant. After their son was born, her husband started in with what she termed mental/emotional abuse. Through his words, her spouse communicated to Cindy: "I was more or less stupid, you know? I was the dumb woman/mother."

The couple lost their second child when she was 26 weeks pregnant. The baby had a disease that strikes one of 60,000 people. Her husband laid the blame on Cindy.

That was when the physical abuse started -- pushing and shoving. Her husband claimed "I wasn't fair to him -- I didn't give him enough attention."

The birth of another child did not bring peace to the household. Cindy slept with the two children in a single bed. She described the situation as "walking on eggshells," never knowing what kind of mood her husband would come home in or what little thing might trigger his violent rage toward her or the children.

One night he threw her across the room because he didn't like what she was fixing for dinner. The family lived next to her father's church; her husband was the music director and Cindy played the piano. "He'd threaten us on the way to church."

Cindy began to pray. She felt that divorce was not right and she worried about the effect of a divorce on her father's ministry. She thought she could make things better.

Later, she discovered that her husband was a closet alcoholic -- literally. His closet, which she had been forbidden to enter, was littered with empty vodka bottles.

"My story is not unique," Cindy said. She is not Nicole Simpson or a rock star's girlfriend, she points out to audiences when she shares her story. "I'm your typical, everyday walk-of-life person."

After she left her husband, Cindy's mother-in-law told her she admired her for getting out -- something the older woman had not had the courage to do in her own marriage.

Still, Cindy suffered for seven years. She stayed, she said, because of fear. One of her husband's repeated threats was: "I'll take the children -- you'll never see them again." Insecurity was another factor. "Your self-esteem is so low you feel you can't make it."

Cindy is making it -- although her struggles continue. Her ex-husband, after dropping out of sight for a time, recently has been seeking extended visitation rights to the children.

She tells her story to different groups. Her hope is that churches will become more aware of the problem of family violence and more willing to minister to its victims.

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Family violence: how should  
churches be responding?

By Julie Nall

Baptist Press  
10/12/95

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--Family violence in Christian families is defined as a real and constantly occurring problem in "Comfort My People: The Church Responding to Family Violence," by John Sisson of the Missouri Baptist Convention missions education and ministry team.

Sisson asked: "So where is the church amidst the turmoil and pain of family violence?" The historical church, he noted, may have made more of a contribution to the victimization of women and children in the family than to their relief.

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"For centuries the church was an integral part of a society which held that women and children were little more than property," Sisson said. "The church at first legitimized spouse battering as a means of correction. Later the practice was outlawed, but it remained largely ignored because it was seen as a personal family matter." Church history related to the abuse of children is equally grim, he stated, and the church has been far too silent about such practices.

The modern church, Sisson wrote, has responded to family violence with mixed reactions, including total naivete, denial, disbelief, indifference, failed logic, faulty theology and support. He classifies churches in three categories: the 'ostrich' church, the 'stumbling block' church and the 'lighthouse' church.

The ostrich is best known for sticking its head into the sand. It remains blissfully unaware of any potential danger, but it is in no position either to run or to sound danger to others. "Ostrich" churches remain silent about family violence, either because they are naive or they deny the problem exists.

Testimonies are plentiful from victims of family violence about churches that met their cries for assistance with total disbelief, Sisson noted. "This seems to be particularly true when the accused is a leader in either the church or community. Thus, the 'ostrich' church needs awakening. . . . For those who suffer from family violence, the silence of our pulpits and the inactivity of our ministries is quite deafening, for there are many who long for a fresh word of hope from the church, for words of either condemnation or of counsel, for ministries which might offer help and relief."

"Stumbling block" is an analogy the church uses to refer to anything or anyone that might serve as a barrier to keep someone away from the hope, love and salvation of Jesus Christ. Sisson said while few would admit it, the modern church has kept people away from the hope, love and salvation of Jesus Christ in relation to family violence.

The error of the "stumbling block" church is that of indifference, failed logic or faulty theology. This church offers little constructive assistance to the cries for help, sometimes even turning the victims back to their homes with instructions to "suffer quietly for the sake of righteousness" or "be more submissive."

"The 'stumbling block' church is awake, but perhaps needs to walk more carefully," Sisson said. "The 'stumbling block' church also must awaken to the fact many states now have laws in place, such that the minister may be held legally accountable if he knows of family violence but chooses not to report the case to an appropriate civil authority."

The lighthouse is a symbol of hope. Sisson pictures a lighthouse standing high above a rocky shoreline, serving as a beacon to those who are lost on stormy seas, steering ships away from that which might otherwise shatter and destroy them. The "lighthouse" church, then, stands as a beacon of hope, extending Christ's love to families who are adrift amidst their own violent storms.

Sisson believes the church is capable of helping in all aspects of the process of healing. In his paper, he offers lesson plan adaptations to train leadership in dealing with family violence. The lesson plans are designed for programming; to prepare the church to be an advocate for abused children that come into the church; and as an outreach tool for community ministry.

Copies of his paper, "Comfort My People" are available by request. For more information, contact Sisson at (314) 635-7931, ext. 442.

Paul Turner, design editor for the youth section of discipleship and family development at the Baptist Sunday School Board, said the agency is aware of the need for resources addressing family violence.

"There has been a stigma among churches to deal with this issue," Turner said. "The perception is that violence is a real problem, but churches don't know how to deal with it because it can be a messy issue when you start reaching out."

"It would be good if churches could start doing some preventive issues rather than having to pick up the pieces. Some churches are criticized for doing this ministry, but I applaud them because there is a need they are meeting."

Turner listed among BSSB resources, "Violence: A Desensitized Generation," designed for youth leadership, and a study "No Place Like Home," which includes a parent-focus section.

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Family violence:  
facts & figures

Baptist Press  
10/12/96

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--In researching his paper, "Comfort My People: The Church Responding to Family Violence," John Sisson of the Missouri Baptist Convention found:

-- Family violence is the most under-reported crime in America. Nearly half of all spouse abuse cases (95 percent of which have women victims) are never reported to police.

-- An estimated 4 million American women are battered every year by their husbands or boyfriends -- an average of one every nine seconds.

-- More than 12 million women (or nearly one-fourth of all American women) will be abused by a current or former partner at some point in their lives.

-- Family violence is the leading cause of injury to American women, exceeding automobile accidents, sexual assaults and muggings combined.

-- Forty-two percent of all female homicide victims (approximately 6,000 annually) are murdered by a male relative or boyfriend.

-- Up to 35 percent of all women's emergency room injuries are due to family violence. Other studies determined battered women account for 25 percent of all women utilizing psychiatric services, and 25 percent of all female suicide attempts.

-- The reports of family violence survivors suggest that 50 percent were battered on a weekly basis, another 25 percent on a monthly basis.

-- Eighty percent of all family violence perpetrators have multiple targets in the home. Victims can include a spouse, a child, a pet and an elderly parent.

-- Children in homes where spouse battering occurs are abused at a rate 1,500 percent higher than the national average in the general population.

-- Over 2 million children are abused each year. Conservative estimates are that 2,000 of these cases will result in the death of a child. Deaths from abuse and neglect of children age 4 and younger outnumber those from falls, choking on food, suffocation, drownings, residential fires or car accidents, according to a national study by the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect.

-- More than 2.9 million cases of child abuse were reported nationwide in 1993, a five-year high.

-- Every 47 seconds, a child is abused or neglected, amounting to over 7,000 children daily.

-- Most abusers of children are "ordinary" people who love their children.

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Director of missions serves  
as associational 'fireman'

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
10/12/95

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (BP)--Paul Wilkerson thinks of himself as a fireman. He tries to put out fires in some churches and start fires in others.

The Oklahoma native moved to Southern California in 1962 after the fires of conflict had split a church. The splinter group called him as pastor of its new San Jacinto congregation.

Now an associational director of missions, Wilkerson tries to keep church conflicts from becoming church splits. His preference, however, is fueling flames of revival.

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For 11 years Wilkerson was director of missions for California's High Desert Baptist Association. During his tenure, the association grew from 24 to 44 churches, and Wilkerson was named mega focus cities director of missions of the year for the western United States by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. A year ago, Wilkerson left there for Calvary Arrowhead -- the state's largest association in number of churches.

Calvary Arrowhead is part of the Inland Empire, an area sandwiched between metropolitan Los Angeles and the Southern California desert. With 3 million people, the Inland Empire's population is larger than 27 states, Wilkerson said.

Densely populated areas do not automatically produce growing churches, however. People move to the Inland Empire for affordable housing and the sunny climate, not to go to church. Attendance at half of the association's 150 churches averages less than 250.

By Southern California's standards, affordable housing is a 1,500-square-foot house selling for less than \$150,000, Wilkerson said. Living here, people may drive more than an hour to work, making free time scarce. Churches must offer high-caliber programs or people won't give up valuable time to attend, Wilkerson said. Some churches adopt flexible schedules, such as changing Sunday evening services to small group meetings in homes.

While housing is deemed affordable for families, it's expensive for churches. Buying a building is virtually impossible for new congregations due to high real estate costs. Many new churches start as home Bible studies and move to rented storefront property as they grow, Wilkerson said.

One of Wilkerson's goals is to raise money for church starts through a campaign called "Partners in Ministry." The campaign includes creating a fund to generate interest income for church starts and increasing support for associational missions.

The association needs all kinds of new churches, Wilkerson said, including churches for immigrants' children who were raised in the United States and think of themselves as American rather than identifying with their parents' heritage.

At least five churches in his association are in rapidly changing ethnic communities where Anglo residents have moved farther into the suburbs, Wilkerson said. Anglo church members drive back to attend church, but "they put steel bars on the windows and build big fences to keep things from happening (to the building) while they're away," he said.

In those cases, Wilkerson tries to fan flames of outreach and ministry that cannot be dampened by racial differences. "Churches need to see that everything doesn't have to take place under their own roofs," he said. "I tell them, 'Please don't concentrate on building buildings. Concentrate on building the church.'"

When churches are without a pastor, Wilkerson helps them develop their vision by studying their community, identifying needs and finding ways to share Christ. "They develop a reason for being and call a pastor to help them accomplish their vision. So many pastors have no vision. They're just looking for a place to preach."

Despite the challenges of working in one of the nation's most populated areas, Wilkerson said, "I've never found ministry in Southern California difficult. People are open and hungry for the gospel. It's a laid-back, casual society with not a lot of pretenses. People are open here. It's refreshing."

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

**'Lighthouse ministry' beams  
in America's wealthiest city**      **By Michael Chute**

NAPLES, Fla. (BP)--It's a playground for the rich and famous. The wealthiest city in America, per capita. More golf courses, per capita, than any other U.S. city. More gated communities, per capita, than any other city in Florida. A city of yachts, Mercedes and million-dollar, beach-front condos.

Yet amid all the opulence around him, Hayes Wicker saw that Naples was in dire need of something -- a lighthouse.

It was the word that stuck in Wicker's mind when he came to Naples three years ago as pastor of First Baptist Church. He saw the coastal area and the spiritual darkness all around the church. The vast majority of Naples inhabitants do not go to church -- any church. Most certainly they don't know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

But First Baptist "is sending out beams of light all over southwest Florida," Wicker says. "We use that term over and over, stressing again and again to laypeople their responsibility to reach and touch as many people as possible.

"We have decided God is calling us to be a large 'lighthouse' ministry rather than a church starting a number of missions. Fort Myers to Marco Island -- that's our territory, our turf. We feel that our area needs a strong multi-ministry church."

Collier County, where Naples is located, is the fastest-growing county in America. When the community is completely built out, it will have a half million people; 125,000 live here now. The population of Naples increases 15 percent from Thanksgiving through Christmas, and one-third move in from January to March.

"Also, many people vacation here -- it's Hawaii without the flight," says Robert Veal, First Baptist's associate pastor and administrator. "People visit over and over, then buy and move down here."

With a per capita income of \$31,000, it's hard for young families to make it in Collier County. Church members come from all socioeconomic levels, however, and the church seeks to minister to all. A 12-week "Why I Believe" seminar by church member Chuck Colson, Prison Fellowship founder, opened the door to the "up and outs" in the community soon after Wicker arrived.

Three years later ministry is definitely what the Naples church is all about. And it is getting results: Over 800 people for Wednesday night programs; 113 baptisms so far in 1995; a church membership approaching 3,000; and the recent purchase of a 100-acre, approximately \$3.5-million tract of land on which to relocate.

When Wicker came, he brought with him a 25-point covenant he shared with the church. The congregation understood that calling the pastor of First Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas, also meant adopting the plan. Wicker took time presenting the plan and explaining it. Two central points stand out first and foremost: discover the activities of God and do whatever it takes to reach people.

"Hayes believes in the lay witness and when you get people together, that's infectious," chairman of deacons Don Bonnette says. "We have a way to go in 'touches' with people. Our focus is to reach this community.

"We're also doing some solid things among our church members in building husbands, wives and children. We're building the complete person -- equipped to take the witness outside the church walls."

Other key points in the pastor-church covenant include: undergird everything with prayer; strive for excellence in all things; the church is led by the pastor and staff; major on ministry, not meetings; committees are not as important as ministry teams; adjust ministry to the lifestyle of southwest Florida so the church can minister to people in the culture where they live.

"They knew I wouldn't come if I hadn't felt the leadership of God to do what I'm doing," Wicker says. "I didn't come to just enjoy the beach and Gulf."

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The Lubbock church had all the facilities, staff and programs in place, whereas in Naples many things had to be initiated. However, the Naples church knew the sacrifices Wicker and his wife, Janet, made in coming. And Wicker saw First Baptist of Naples "had a freedom of worship. They were open to new things that many churches don't demonstrate. We just sensed a spirit of openness among the people.

"The vast majority of the (congregation) have always rallied if they sensed God was in it, even if it was new and they weren't sure where we were going. They trusted me and trusted our leadership to lead them in the right direction."

One strength of Naples is that most everybody comes from somewhere else. It's a place of great social flux. Many come from the Midwest, such as Ohio, Illinois and Michigan.

"It's easier to bring changes about in a place like this," Wicker says. "Since there are no roots and few traditions, we can create our own traditions as we go along. Few people have any family here, so church becomes a 'family,' which brings about a sweeter, stronger fellowship. Many of the people here have lots of needs when they come."

Naples is a land of beginning again. People come here to start over: new lifestyle, new career, new marriage. Because of that openness to newness, the people are more inclined to make changes and be open to the gospel. But where there is affluence, there also are tremendous barriers to presenting the gospel. Wicker lists three major barriers:

- Affluence. "It's hard for people to experience needs. But there're also highs and lows in the socioeconomic structure."

- Gated communities. "We never try to visit cold turkey."

- Recreationally oriented. "People here are involved in a lot of outdoor, recreational types of activities, away from their homes."

To reach its community, the church "is constantly retooling, looking where we are, asking where God is leading us and trying to retool to reach that point," says Keith Stanley, minister of Christian education and program director. "People here really had a desire, a willingness to change, and to reach this community. They are not satisfied" with the status-quo. "Our needs-based ministry approach has opened doors to people in our community."

So the church tries to reach people through a variety of means --all the way from small support groups to seminars; door-to-door evangelism; prison fellowships; sports clinics; youth and children's ministries; seniors programs; a fitness ministry; tract and tape ministries; and ministry to men and women. A specific sample includes:

- Angle Tree, providing Christmas presents to children of prison inmates.

- Crossway Ministry, a Christ-centered care group for teens facing life's tough obstacles.

- Hearts in Healing, for those who have grown up in dysfunctional families where anger, abuse, divorce and fear have been experienced.

- Overcomers, providing a 12-step, Christ-centered, biblical approach to overcoming problems which become life controlling, resulting in broken relationships with family and friends and which produce feelings of hopelessness and despair.

- RefreshHer, nights where women mentor women and receive encouragement, guidance and support.

"You name it, we cover a broad spectrum," Wicker says. "We experiment with a lot of things. We have a lot of hooks and bait in the water all the time. We do anything and everything. Some things work, some don't, and we move on.

"We also try to equip our people to be personal soul-winners -- not just on Tuesday night (outreach program). We stress every member develop a ministry."

The church does sports clinics. For instance, two brothers have a ministry teaching water-skiing to underprivileged people. The church does evangelistic golf seminars. The congregation has fellowships, such as bowling and volleyball nights, and has even rented the YMCA for a family recreation night.

While a pastor in Oklahoma, Hayes baptized pro basketball player brothers Mark and Brent Price. Now the Price family does a basketball camp at the church to bring in prospects.

Wicker is a mover and shaker by anyone's standards. Within a month after coming to Naples, the church started renovating the office area. In another two months, the congregation was making plans for a total renovation, including a balcony for the sanctuary and enlarging the platform. That \$1.4-million renovation project was completed about a year ago.

"In any ministry there will always be crossroads -- either go this way or that way, or go back," Wicker says. "Crucial decisions have had to be made. Whatever has had to be done has been done to keep growing, to be sensitive to do what God is leading us to do."

Now the church feels God is leading them to relocate. Besides the church facilities, the congregation has bought a next-door Jewish temple for youth activities and rents a neighboring middle school and the nearby offices of the Naples real estate association. But the church is quickly running out of available space.

Committed to being a lighthouse ministry, the church has taken the next step to secure adequate facilities to meet its goals. Wicker calls the newly purchased 100-acre site for the new church "Canaan."

"It's God's promised land for us," he says. "We sense he has promised it and we're going to claim it. We believe God has given us all of this area to impact and he's placed us here as a unique 'lighthouse.' We may meet giants in the land but believe God says, 'Be strong and courageous,' just as he said to Joshua."

One thing Wicker and the church staff try to do is keep the relocation project separate from the church's present ministry. They say the church is probably five years away from relocating.

"We have to pay for the development, but have to keep what we have," Wicker says, noting the church will spend \$40,000 this fall renovating First Place, the youth building. "We've got a long way to go. There's a lot of things we still have to do. Our hardest decisions will be in the next one to two years. What to do in the meantime.

"The most important thing is that we stay in touch spiritually. God is giving the increase. It's not me or the staff. God gets the glory for what has happened, what is happening" in and through First Baptist of Naples.

"We try to keep the balance as we continue to grow," Stanley says. "A church not fine-tuning is dying. It's not just to focus on buildings. We don't want that to become the end of the vision; we want it to become a means to the vision. All (is) a means to the common end of evangelizing this community and leading them to become faithful followers of Christ. We're not satisfied until this whole country comes to know Jesus."

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