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OCT 24 1995

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**Baptist Press, WMU launch
home pages on the Internet**

By Art Toalston

**Baptist Press
10/20/95**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Baptist Press and Woman's Missionary Union are providing Southern Baptists' first "home page" offerings on the Internet's World Wide Web.

The address for Baptist Press' home page, which began Oct. 2, is <http://www.goshen.net/BaptistPress> (with only B and P in Baptist Press used as capital letters).

The address for WMU's home page, which was announced Oct. 16, is <http://www.wmu.com/wmu>.

The home pages are in addition to Southern Baptists' primary computer service, SBCNet, coordinated by the Baptist Sunday School Board. SBCNet, operated over the CompuServe network, now has more than 6,000 Baptist users. It offers Baptist Press daily along with an array of resources from the BSSB, WMU and other Baptist entities.

The Baptist Press home page on the Internet was provided to the Southern Baptist Convention news service as part of the "Goshen" project by Media Management and Religion Today, sister organizations based in Roanoke, Va.

Goshen (Global Online Service Helping Evangelize Nations), which began Sept. 1, is providing web sites to Christian organizations without charge, said Bob Rudis, Goshen's Internet specialist. Goshen's goal is to serve the Christian community by building the most comprehensive list of Christian resources on the Internet, he said.

Goshen is now hosting 80 organizations, with 120 waiting to be added, Rudis said.

Baptist Press and National & International Religion Report, an every-other-week Christian news summary published by Religion Today, are the two key news services currently with Goshen home pages, Rudis said. Other organizations with Goshen home pages are Prison Fellowship, Zondervan books and Strang Communications, publisher of Charisma and New Man magazines.

Goshen's resources currently are averaging about 10,000 accesses per day, Rudis said, up from a 3,900 daily average in September.

Each home page is a database, Rudis said. Baptist Press, for example, can be searched by topics, names, dates and key words.

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Baptist Press also is available to individuals with Internet access at colleges or universities via the computer mailing list of ICLnet, operated by the Institute for Christian Leadership, Tigard, Ore.

Internet users can request Baptist Press daily releases by forwarding an e-mail message and their Internet address to ICLnet at martin@iclnet.org.

For America Online users, Baptist Press is carried daily in the Christianity Online forum operated by Christianity Today. AOL users should type the initial keyword, "Christ," for Christianity Online's main menu, then select "Newsstand," then "Religion News Update," then "Denominational News Services," then "Baptist Press."

Woman's Missionary Union's home page has been generated by TECH-COMM, Inc., Birmingham, Ala., using WMU graphics and text from the WMU marketing group, according to Patricia Ferguson, director of WMU's information services department.

The WMU home page provides an overview of WMU's age-level missions organizations and selected products. Viewers can view the cover of various resources and read a brief description of each. Other features will promote various WMU activities. Using TECH-COMM software, a Web browser can order WMU products. The Web browser also allows the viewer to ask questions and send comments to WMU.

"We are excited about new opportunities as WMU enters the information highway," said Ferguson. "The potential for involving more adults, youth and children in missions through Internet access is the future. It opens the door to worldwide missions education. Dial in and browse our home page and let us know what you think."

"I am grateful that WMU continues to be a visionary force moving missions forward into the 21st century," said Dellanna O'Brien, WMU executive director. "To meet the needs of this generation and future generations, WMU must be on the cutting edge of modern technology. The WMU home page will serve as a creative way to get the missions message to all the world."

Internet plans also are under way at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Baptist Sunday School Board, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in California, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

The FMB has begun testing a home page on the Internet but has not yet opened it to the public, said Louis Moore, associate vice president for communications at the Richmond, Va.,-based agency. As soon as board leaders feel comfortable with the design of the online site, they will promote it to Southern Baptists, Moore said.

"We are clearly positioning ourselves for the future in which online services will play a significant role," Moore said. A newly organized electronic media department will manage the site, as well as continuing to provide audio and video services for the board, he said.

Linda Lawson, communications department director at the Baptist Sunday School Board, reported the agency is looking into the possibility of a home page. "We are in the process of evaluating benefits and getting input from a range of board personnel as well as outside resources," Lawson said.

During Golden Gate Seminary's Oct. 9-11 trustee meeting, an expenditure of \$60,000 was approved for computer networking and Internet access, with a Nov. 1 target date for opening the seminary's home page. Southwestern and New Orleans seminaries have slated Jan. 1 for startup of their Internet home pages and are currently developing related policies and procedures.

The Home Mission Board's evangelism section and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., also are exploring the possibility of a home page, according to staff members there.

"SBCNet remains the most complete, most reliable source of Southern Baptist news, information and resources," noted Herb Hollinger, vice president for convention news for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. Inquiries about obtaining free computer software for SBCNet and monthly charges may be phoned to (615) 251-2895.

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Teresa Dickens, Marty Croll, Charles Willis and Jan Johnsonius contributed to this story.

Indiana Baptist state paper sends
special edition to Texas readers By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
10/20/95

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--It's about Texas Baptists, has a Texas editor and a Fort Worth address. But, it's the Indiana Baptist -- Texas edition.

In what may be a first for a state Baptist paper, and possibly a sign of the times, the newsjournal of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana has been mailed to 6,000 Baptists in Texas. A four-page "The Plumline," a publication of "Southern Baptists of Texas," was wrapped around the Oct. 18 edition of the Indiana Baptist and mailed to a special Texas Baptist mailing list.

Indiana Baptist editor Gary Ledbetter said the Southern Baptists of Texas group paid the cost of the four-page wrap -- \$1,000 -- and then mailed it from Grand Prairie, Texas. Southern Baptists of Texas is a group of conservative Texas pastors and laypeople who are critical of a moderate direction of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, especially in relationship to the Southern Baptist Convention.

"They asked us to produce it for them," Ledbetter told Baptist Press. The Indiana Baptist printer designed the wrap-around edition, printed it and then mailed it to the Texas group. It is seen as a "more convenient way" for the Texas group to communicate, as opposed to publishing their own publication, Ledbetter said.

Toby Druin, editor-elect of the Texas Baptist Standard, weekly newsjournal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, said he didn't think it was in the best interests of Indiana Baptists.

"It is one thing for a state paper to be used by another convention for the promotion of missions -- the Baptist Standard has done that in the past, offering its pages to the Minnesota-Wisconsin convention to help tell their story and establish their work. Other state papers are currently doing similar things."

"What the Indiana Baptist has done, in this case, however, is different. The Indiana paper has lent its good offices to a partisan, political cause in another state in an unprecedented manner. While I don't question the editor's right to do it, I question whether this use of the paper, which is almost totally supported by Cooperative Program funds, is in the best interests of Indiana Baptists," Druin said.

The first Indiana "Texas edition" focused on the upcoming annual meeting of the Texas convention in San Antonio Nov. 13-14. It features the conservative-backed candidates for convention officers; an opinion piece by editor John Yeats, "Texas Southern Baptists face big decisions;" an article by the group's president, Miles Seaborn, a Fort Worth pastor; "A Woman's View" by associate editor Skeet Workman; and some advertising.

Texas Baptist messengers will vote on a plan recommended by the executive board of the state convention which would reduce the percentage of Cooperative Program funds sent to the Southern Baptist Convention by 2.5 percent, about \$1.5 million annually. The funds would help start new 1,400 new churches in Texas over the next five years.

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Asked why the Indiana Baptist decided to circulate in another state, Ledbetter said it reflects several things: the presence of a conservative fellowship and the need to communicate with its constituency; a change in state Baptist papers involving the continuing problem of declining circulation; groups like the conservative fellowships having a difficult time competing with the resources of their state convention; and feeling "their side" is not being published in a fair way.

Ledbetter said he had been asked about the ethics of the Texas edition.

"We (state editors) all acknowledge that readership is declining. We may need to find different ways to communicate, rather than the way we have been doing it," Ledbetter said. He spoke of the future possibilities of "regional" Baptist papers, encompassing several state conventions in pioneer areas. Ledbetter said he felt the Indiana Baptist already was a "niche" publication. Many Southern Baptist conservatives feel the Indiana Baptist is the only "truly conservative" state Baptist paper, an SBC leader told Baptist Press.

The twice-monthly Indiana Baptist also carries a feature for which interest transcends Indiana, Ledbetter said. James Hefley, a Missouri author who has chronicled and is sympathetic with the "conservative resurgence" in the past 16 years in the SBC, is a regular columnist.

Ledbetter said he doesn't see it cutting into the circulation of the Baptist Standard, which is the largest state Baptist paper with 222,000 circulation.

"These people either will take both papers or they don't take the Baptist Standard anyway," Ledbetter said.

There will be at least one additional Texas edition, Ledbetter said, also in preparation for the November Texas convention annual meeting. Whether it continues after that Ledbetter said will be up to the Texas conservative group.

Ledbetter was elected Oct. 16 as vice president for student affairs at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., effective Dec. 1. Whether his successor would continue to produce a Texas edition would be a question for his successor, Ledbetter said, although Ledbetter's decision for a Texas edition was wholeheartedly supported by his governing board in Indiana.

A new editor in Indiana is expected to be elected in the November meeting of the state convention's executive board, prior to the annual meeting.

Ledbetter's wife, Tammi, is the managing editor of the Indiana Baptist.

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**Southwestern trustees elect Terry
as institutional advancement v.p. By Jan Johnsonius**

**Baptist Press
10/20/95**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Jack Terry, 22-year dean of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's school of religious education, was unanimously elected as vice president for institutional advancement during the Oct. 16-18 seminary trustee meeting on the Fort Worth, Texas, campus.

In other action, trustees approved the new Lewis and Betty Drummond Chair of Spiritual Awakening and Formation, received and accepted the audited financial statements for the past fiscal year, approved the naming of the B.H. Carroll Founders Day Award recipients for 1996 and approved a new faculty member in the school of religious education.

Terry, who has been interim director of institutional advancement since May, will assume the vice presidency Nov. 1. Charles Tidwell, who retired as professor of administration in May after 30 years of service, will serve as acting interim dean, according to seminary President Ken Hemphill.

Terry fills the post previously held by Jay Chance, who resigned May 13 to become vice president of The Lockman Foundation.

"We will begin immediately the search for Jack Terry's successor," Hemphill said. "According to our policy manual, I will spend time in dialogue with the religious education faculty and get recommendations from them and then begin the search process. We hope to have a new dean by the first of the year."

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Seminary trustees will not meet in full session until March 11-13, 1996, but Hemphill noted the bylaws empower the executive committee of the trustees, in the interim, to consider a recommendation of the president. "We don't want to spend six months without a dean," Hemphill said.

Terry received his master of religious education and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southwestern and has taught at the institution since 1969 as professor of foundations of education. He has served as dean since 1973. He also has served as the seminary's consultant in planned giving since 1993.

In other action during their semiannual session, trustees approved the new Lewis and Betty Drummond Chair of Spiritual Awakening and Formation in the school of theology. Evangelist Billy Graham has accepted the position of honorary chair of the endowment fund drive for the \$1 million chair.

Drummond, who earned his master of theology degree from Southwestern, currently serves as Billy Graham professor of evangelism and church growth at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Ala.

In accepting the role of chair, Graham said Drummond has been both a mentor and an encourager to a generation of young people who now proclaim the Word of God around the world. "We have the opportunity to set into motion the continuation of the ministry of Dr. Drummond through the years that follow in training and equipping young people for the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

In other business, trustees approved the audited financial statements for the fiscal year that ended July 31, 1995. The seminary finished the budget year in the black, noted Hubert Martin, vice president for business affairs.

Total expenditures for 1994-95 were \$19,167,352, with revenue of \$20,494,025. Excess of revenues over expenditures and transfers totaled \$1,335,985, with \$600,000 of that amount representing previously designated monies for insurance, equipment and parking reserves, Martin noted.

"That leaves us with approximately \$700,000 of revenue over expenditures, which will be used to upgrade equipment, which we haven't been able to do for two years, and cover deferred maintenance needs," Martin said. "The remainder goes into reserves for future equipment needs and deferred maintenance."

Martin noted expenditures were reduced by \$1.2 million between fiscal year 1993-94 and 1994-95. "This came about through reorganization and doing things more efficiently without displacing employees."

Martin also reported the market value of endowment and similar funds increased from \$56.7 million as of July 31, 1994, to \$69.9 million on July 31, 1995. "That is significant growth in one year," Martin said, explaining it was made possible through prudent investments of the Baptist Foundation of Texas. Life and annuity funds also increased from 10 million to 13.5 million, Martin said.

In other action, trustees approved the addition of Dan Earl Clement to the school of religious education faculty as associate professor of psychology and counseling. Clement, who earned master of arts in religious education and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southwestern, has been a psychotherapist with Neuropsychological Associates, Arlington, Texas, since 1993 and associate professor of counseling at Criswell College, Dallas, since 1994. From 1985-90, he was assistant professor in psychology and counseling at Southwestern.

Trustees also approved the 1996 B.H. Carroll Founder's Day award recipients -- Joe and Eleanor Hayes of Greenville, S.C., and C.M. and Louise King of Kingsville, Texas.

The award is the highest award given by Southwestern to honor people who have had a significant relationship in support of the seminary. Joe Hayes is president and chairman of the board for Hayes Food Products, Inc., Greenville, S.C. C.M. King worked with Hoechst Celanese Corporation at the Bishop plant in Kingsville until his retirement in 1982.

Texas CLC retains exceptions
in revised abortion statement

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (BP)--The Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission has revised its position paper on abortion, affirming reverence for life but retaining exceptions for abortion in certain "extreme circumstances."

The revised paper, "Abortion and the Christian Life," was approved by a 10-2 vote at the Oct. 12-13 meeting of the Texas CLC, the moral concerns and public policy agency of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

"Abortion as birth control is not compatible with the gospel's call to reverence life," the revised document states. But reverence for the life of the mother and the competing claims of one life over another must be considered, according to the paper.

Circumstances in which Christians might "prayerfully choose abortion as the least tragic choice," the paper states, are threats to the life of the mother, cases of rape or incest, pregnancies involving severe fetal deformity and disease incompatible with life, and cases of severe and chronic mental illness in which the pregnancy imminently and severely threatens the life of the mother.

Raising possible exceptions "should not be interpreted as encouraging abortion even in the face of extreme circumstances," the revised document states.

"The mother whose life is threatened by her pregnancy may choose not to abort. The parents of an unborn, whose life has been deemed by expert medical counsel to be unlikely to survive long after delivery, may choose to carry their child to term. The point is that extreme circumstances are inevitably complex and cannot be judged ahead of time," the paper states.

"Each case is unique, must be approached in prayer, in the context of the community of faith, and with reverence for every life involved."

The document calls on Christians to teach and live a sexual ethic characterized by fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness. Believers also have a responsibility to encourage conception control through such means as age-appropriate, abstinence-based sex education in public schools. And churches should be "safe havens" of support and encouragement for women who carry crisis pregnancies full term.

Left unchanged in the document were sections reviewing biblical teachings on reverence for life, outlining the church's responsibility to children and exploring public policy implications.

"Abortion and the Christian Life" initially was printed in December 1992. Messengers to the 1993 Baptist General Convention of Texas meeting in Dallas rejected a motion instructing the Texas CLC to rewrite its statement on abortion to bring it in line with the position of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, which condemns abortion in all situations except to save the life of the mother.

The issue came up again at the BGCT in Amarillo last year. Messengers voted to refer back to the CLC a motion that would have instructed the BGCT to "renounce the exceptions for abortion" in the commission's position paper and would have instructed the CLC to "rewrite the paper with clear biblical support for the preservation and protection of the unborn child."

At their Oct. 13 meeting, commissioners made several editorial changes in the document as presented by the abortion committee, chaired by Cassandra Northcutt of First Baptist Church, Longview, Texas.

However, they left largely unchanged the portions that sparked the most intense debate -- those sections clarifying but retaining potential exceptions to the basic position against abortion.

In opening discussion on the matter, commission chairman George Mason, pastor of Wilshire Baptist Church, Dallas, lamented that rather than looking at a "full-orbed document" that presents a profound respect for life and fundamental aversion to abortion, most attention would be focused on the exceptions to the rule.

Roger Deerinwater, pastor of First Baptist Church, Archer City, said the exceptions noted in the position paper leave a "wide open door" to allowing abortions.

"Any exception -- other than to protect the life of the mother -- denies the sovereignty of God," he said.

Deerinwater said that by including exceptions to opposition in certain cases, the abortion document "comes off as more of a pro-choice than a pro-life piece, and I'm convinced that grassroots Southern Baptists in Texas don't feel that way."

He predicted if the CLC did anything other than eliminate completely the section citing the exceptions, the document would "get spit right back to the commission" by BGCT messengers.

Margaret Rice of First Baptist Church, Lolita, Texas, a member of the committee that drafted the revised document, pointed out that the exceptions cited in the position paper amount to a tiny percentage of the abortions performed in the United States. The position taken in the CLC document strongly opposes well over 90 percent of all abortions, she said.

Other commissioners noted that even the exceptions were phrased in very restrictive terms.

However, G.A. McGee, a retired pastor from Midland, Texas, said that the abortion paper contradicts other stands taken by the Texas CLC.

"I think we are wrong. We say we oppose violence, but there is no act more violent than abortion. We say we are concerned for children, but we make allowances for abortion in some circumstances," McGee said.

"I don't want to see us straddle the fence. If we would just make the statement that we are opposed to abortion, that would take care of it."

Ebbie Smith, professor of ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, and a member of the committee that revised the CLC paper, took issue with any characterization of the document that would paint it as anything less than basically against abortion.

"I think this is a strong stand against abortion," he said.

Several other commissioners maintained that taking a more hard-line approach -- particularly in the document's introduction -- would limit the document's effectiveness as a tool to be used by pastors or hospital chaplains in counseling settings.

In other business, the CLC approved a proposal by its world hunger committee designed to increase giving to hunger causes, which has dropped sharply in recent years.

Citing the "adopt-a-child" approach of World Vision and the Christian Children's Fund and the "Manna" and "Jerusalem" projects of the Southern Baptist Foreign and Home Mission boards as examples, the committee proposed a similar way of personalizing world hunger giving.

Instead of promoting a general world hunger offering which is split 80 percent/20 percent between the two Southern Baptist mission boards, under the proposed plan the BGCT would solicit specific national or worldwide ministry proposals from those two boards, as well as the Baptist World Alliance and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Proposals for projects within Texas would come from local Baptist associations and churches.

Targeted distribution of funds would be 60 percent to worldwide hunger causes, 20 percent to hunger projects within the United States and 20 percent to hunger programs in Texas.

The proposed change would require the approval of the BGCT administrative committee before being considered by the convention's executive board.

**Preaching is church's mainstay,
Steve Lawson tells seminarians By Dwayne Hastings**

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Calling the exposition of Scripture key in a pastor's ministry, Steve Lawson said Oct. 19 too many preachers jump over the reading and explaining of the Word of God and go straight to exhortation.

Lawson, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., said, "There is a lot of shoddy, shallow superficial preaching out there where the preacher only has great illustrations."

Citing 1 Timothy 4, Lawson told the chapel audience at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, preachers must remain faithful to their sacred calling.

"It is the preaching of the Word that drives the ministry of the church," Lawson continued. "We cannot worship a God we do not know. We cannot witness a God we do not know."

If there is going to be revival in the church, it must start in the pulpit, Lawson said at the Wake Forest, N.C., school. "When fire falls in the pulpit, it will spread to the pews."

Preaching is truth on fire, Lawson stated. "Preaching is the declaration of what God has to say in his Word and then, the fervent motivational application that calls for a decision, for a verdict."

Expressing concern that much contemporary preaching doesn't have its root in Scripture, he added, "Enough of illustrations, it's time for the Word of God."

Preachers must recall their calling, Lawson said. They're "not CEOs, not real estate brokers, not marketing gurus and not storytellers, but heralds and preachers of the Word of God."

Scripture is the only light that will expose sin in this dark generation, he said, telling students God's calling to a preaching ministry "is the greatest privilege in the world."

Lawson, who holds degrees from Dallas Theological Seminary and Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Miss., challenged his listeners "to be sowers of the only seed that can cause eternal life to be germinated in the dead souls of men."

Preachers must be single-minded, not pursuing a double agenda, Lawson said. "His concern cannot be lowering his handicap on the golf course, trying to get ahead on a little side business deal, not to improve his tennis game or to get into Amway and make a bunch of money on the side. His driving passion and obsession must be to take pains and be absorbed in the Word of God."

Those called to preach are called to declare the mind of God on the burning issues of the day, Lawson said. "Bottom line -- the preacher is the mouthpiece of God."

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**Church's media ministry evidences
'vibrant, evangelical' Methodism** By C.C. Risenhoover

**Baptist Press
10/20/95**

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--The envelope had a New York City postmark. The note inside was printed and looked as if it was the work of a third-grader. It read: "My mother lets me stay up and watch your service. I love you and your church. Here's my allowance. Love, Joanie."

Taped to the note were two \$1 bills and two quarters. The story of the little girl's note and gift is just one of many John Ed Mathison can tell about the impact of his nationwide media ministry.

The senior pastor of Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Ala., is seen and heard weekly on ACTS and FamilyNet, the cable and broadcast television services of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. The church also owns a low-power TV station.

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"One of the reasons we're on national television," Mathison said, "is that we want a United Methodist Church presence on TV that is evangelical, one that portrays basic biblical and Wesleyan values. The public's image of the United Methodist Church is often negative. What we portray is a vibrant, evangelical Methodist church."

The pastor said the church must use every avenue of technology to reach people, which is why Frazer Memorial is now exploring ways it may be able to use the Internet.

"It's important that we find ways in which we can use computer technology as an evangelistic tool," he said. "We have to use the tools available in proclaiming the gospel."

Mathison attributes his commitment to a media ministry to his father, Si, also a Methodist minister.

"Even back in the '40s, when Dad received an appointment he always looked for a radio station on which to broadcast the gospel," Mathison said. "So he planted in my mind the seed of how important it is to use media in preaching the gospel."

Mathison said that when his father became pastor of First United Methodist Church, Panama City, Fla., in the 1960s, he was the first minister in the city to use both radio and television. He served the Florida church 15 years and still lives in Panama City.

"So when I became pastor of Frazer 23 years ago, I immediately started looking for media avenues I could use," he said. "We began by placing the worship service on radio. And I now do a two-minute devotional every day on the most-listened-to radio station in the area."

"Recently a person wrote to me and said, 'I've been an atheist, but started listening to you and am now exploring the Christian faith.' I may never meet this person. This person may never come to our church. But our reward is in knowing that something we said is causing him to consider Christ in his life."

Mathison laughed and said that because of his church's unique evangelistic flavor, music and enthusiasm -- and because its services are carried on a Baptist network -- he has received as many as 10 letters a week addressed to "Frazer Baptist Church."

He also said he has received at least 15 letters addressed to "Dr. John Ed Stanley." Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, also broadcasts on ACTS and FamilyNet.

"People from all over the country watch our Sunday service," Mathison said. Many families visit Montgomery and Frazer because they have watched. A man in Arkansas asked his wife what she wanted for their 50th anniversary and she wanted them to attend Frazer, which they did.

"For his birthday an elderly man in North Carolina asked his wife that they attend Frazer. She bought him a blue blazer and gray slacks for the service because that's what the staff and I wear. They thought all the men in the church wore blue blazers and gray slacks."

"It's important that homebound people feel a part of a church, no matter where they live. We appreciate the fact that so many people throughout the country feel they are a vital part of our church."

During its televised service, Frazer has a toll-free 800 number on the screen and volunteer counselors for eight telephone lines.

"The phone lines are very busy," Mathison said. "In the 90 minutes or so that our volunteers handle calls, more than 1,000 callers are unable to get through. Recently one of our volunteers told me that in just one hour she had three people on the line who prayed to receive Christ."

"People call for many reasons. All have spiritual needs."

The extent of the church's outreach through television often surprises even Mathison. For example, he said one of the church's choir members was in Detroit, when a man walked up to him and said, "I've seen you on television. You're in the choir at Frazer Methodist."

He said another church member was in a hotel in Pittsburgh. It was late, the dining room was closed, so he went into the bar to see if he could get something to eat and a Coke. Because of his accent, the bartender asked where he was from. On learning he was from Montgomery, the bartender asked if he was familiar with Frazer Methodist. When he told the man he was a member, the bartender said, "Well, I've been watching Frazer Methodist on television. And, I'm either going to have to change TV programs or change professions."

The low-power television station owned by Frazer is channel 13 and is carried by both cable companies in Montgomery.

"We have daily 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. family devotion on the channel," said Mathison. "We ask family members to join hands and to pray together. Then we pose questions the family can talk about and relate to biblical principles. We've been doing this for more than a year and people of all races and denominations have commented on how meaningful it is for their family."

The pastor said the reason Frazer wanted its own television station was because secular programming cuts to the core of family values and the ethical structure of the country.

"We're raising a generation whose values are opposite of what the church is trying to teach," he said. "We wanted a Christian station in Montgomery to show the good things people are doing. Our vision is to give the city of Montgomery an option for viewing, a station grounded in teaching positive Christian values."

Mathison said he does not ask for money from viewers, that he does not want to be identified with the so-called Christian TV stations or networks whose primary purpose seems to be that of raising money. In fact, channel 13 broadcasts worship services of other churches free of charge.

"We have invited every pastor in Montgomery to give a devotional or promote a church event during our two-minute breaks," he said.

"In our media ministry we are responsible to God, and we want to walk through the doors God opens to us."

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40-year-old railroad retiree
is first Ridgecrest volunteer

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
10/20/95

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Garry Giddens believes his opportunity to retire at age 40 after "20 years, two months and three days" of working on the railroad was a gift from God.

In return, he set out to find the best way to give time back to the Lord. He found the answer, at least for six months, at Ridgecrest Conference Center.

"I felt the Lord was wanting me to serve him in some kind of capacity even though I wasn't a preacher or anything," said Giddens, a slow-talking native of Ringgold, La.. He and his wife, Patricia, moved to Ridgecrest in June from Lafayette, La., to become the conference center's first volunteers.

Patricia, who had been a secretary at First Baptist Church of Lafayette, became a paid employee after three months, now serving as marketing clerk.

Garry puts in 60-hour weeks greeting guests as they arrive at Ridgecrest, punching tickets in the dining hall, talking to every child and most adults, solving problems of guests, cooking, serving food and any other needed task that arises.

"The Lord through me makes people feel comfortable," Giddens said. "I like to bring smiles to faces that are sad and hope to people who seem hopeless. And," he paused and then quipped, "they seem to like the accent."

Of his 60-hour weeks, Giddens emphasized, he is only asked to work 30 hours in return for a place to live on campus.

"I didn't come as a worker. I came on a mission. You can't put time limits on that," he said.

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Sandra Boone, administrative coordinator and director of Ridgecrest's volunteer program, said of Giddens: "I think God sent him to be the first volunteer to let me know this program was something we should be doing. He has influenced many others who want to be volunteers."

Giddens turned teary-eyed when he reflected on people he has met at Ridgecrest, especially the children, including one girl in a wheelchair.

"She'd just reach out and rub my beard," he said.

That the people attending Ridgecrest have appreciated Giddens' kindness is evident in the letters he has received from people throughout the country, including one woman from New York. Giddens drove her to the bus station. She sent him a thank you card.

He answers every letter with a handwritten note in time beyond his 12- to 16-hour days.

While Giddens' primary responsibilities have been with guests, he has made an impact on Ridgecrest employees as well. Summer staffers named him the employee of the year. He returns the admiration.

"From the toilet cleaners to G.W. (G.W. Lankford, director of Ridgecrest), they all know each other and work together," he said. "People who retire from here come back to be sure everything's running smooth."

The Giddens' sixth-month commitment ends in November. They plan to return to Louisiana to visit their three daughters and one grandson. They also will check on their belongings that are stored in a railroad car. After that, they have no definite plans, except to continue ministering as volunteers.

"Wherever the Lord leads," Giddens said.

They may return to Ridgecrest. They have had invitations from others they have met while at Ridgecrest.

"I know this was where I was supposed to be," Giddens aid. "I'll know when I'm supposed to be somewhere else."

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

**Texans send water purifiers
to Roxanne victims in Mexico**

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
10/20/95

DALLAS (BP)--Texas Baptists sent two water purifiers and one volunteer technician to Mexico following Hurricane Roxanne.

Mel Goodwin of Gregg Association cleared customs at the international airport in Laredo on Oct. 19 with two machines, each capable of purifying 25,000 gallons of water per day, and a truckload of water bags and storage bladders.

Goodwin and the equipment were expected to be flown by the Mexican government to the Campeche area of the Yucatan peninsula where 145,000 people were reported to be cut off from any reliable water supply.

Texas Baptists responded to a request from the Mexico Mission and the director of Middle America for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

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CORRECTION: In the (BP) stories, "Author urges less paranoia over \$5 trillion deficit" and "Burkett maintains warning against rising U.S. deficit," dated 10/19/95, please change the headlines' references from "deficit" to debt.

Also, in the former story, make the same change in the 1st, 5th, 15th, 16th and 17th paragraphs as well as the second reference to deficit in the 19th paragraph.

In the latter story, make the same change in the 1st paragraph.

Thanks,
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