

(BP)

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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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October 27, 1995

95-171

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NOBTS search finds presidential nominee,
will vote at special meeting, Nov. 8-9

Baptist Press
10/27/95

By Herb Hollinger

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The culmination of a year long search, trustees of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary will vote at a special called trustees meeting Nov. 8-9 for a new president.

However, the trustees' search committee is not divulging the candidate's name, waiting to introduce the person to the full 40-member board of trustees followed by a vote. A notice has been sent to the trustees following the search committee's intent to give trustees two weeks notice of the special meeting, Morris Anderson, search committee chairman told Baptist Press Oct. 27.

But Anderson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pigeon Forge, Tenn., declined to give any information about the candidate, citing a previous commitment to first tell other trustees. Anderson said the candidate would meet with the trustees at a dinner Nov. 8. The morning of Nov. 9 will be a closed session with a vote followed by an introduction to the faculty and an appearance at chapel later that morning.

The search process started at the end of 1994 when Landrum Leavell II, president for 20 years, announced his retirement. He continued as interim president.

Anderson indicated the search committee received 25-30 recommendations during the year, narrowed it down to about 10 and then trimmed it further to a "few."

The only recommendation made public came when Jim Henry, SBC president and considered to be a strong contender for the New Orleans presidency, withdrew his name in late summer. Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, was elected to a second term as SBC president in Atlanta in June.

**Witnesses express division
over religion amendment**

By Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP)--Opponents of a religious equality amendment argued in recent congressional hearings such an effort would occur at a time when there is widespread consensus on the legal status of religious expression in the country and would cause years of divisive debate.

Supporters of such a constitutional amendment testified inconsistent court rulings illustrate the need for immediate passage of such a proposal.

The future of a religious equality amendment, which supporters say will protect religious expression, remains uncertain.

During Oct. 20 and 25 hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Sen. Orrin Hatch, R.-Utah, committee chairman, said he was "very troubled (at) what to do." While saying he recognizes the concerns, he is "very loath to amend the Constitution," Hatch said.

Soon, however, one or two proposals may be introduced in the House of Representatives.

During the two days of testimony, a Justice Department official confirmed President Clinton opposes such an amendment. Oliver Thomas of the National Council of Churches, Brent Walker of the Baptist Joint Committee and David Saperstein of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism also expressed opposition.

Walter Dellinger, assistant attorney general, expressed surprise an amendment would be attempted in an area where the Supreme Court normally has been correct in its rulings the last 10 years. An amendment is wrong, he said, because it will create confusion and debate over what new language means. He predicted seven years of division in the states during the amendment ratification process.

"How tragic that we engage in this debate at exactly the moment when religious groups across the political and theological spectrum have exhibited unprecedented willingness to cooperate in ameliorating violations of the free exercise clause (of the First Amendment) by educating Americans on how to protect religious freedom," Saperstein said. "If the debates that accompanied the town hall meetings convened to shape and discuss this amendment are any indication, the ratification battle over this amendment will be five to seven years of the most contentious, nasty, vituperative debates in each and every one of the 50 states."

Thomas, formerly general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee, said, "The solution is not more law we are not going to comply with." He urged instead the support of current efforts in states and communities to find "common ground" on religious freedom issues.

Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, questioned why amendment opponents fear such a proposal.

"The White House and other opponents of an amendment sound like Pollyanna, talking about the sweet harmony and agreement among religious groups in America," Whitehead said after sitting in on both hearings.

"But then they sound like Chicken Little when they cry that the constitutional sky is falling if an amendment is even debated. 'We must not fiddle with the First Amendment,' they warn. But what about the courts, which have been fiddling with the First Amendment for 50 years and fiddling away fundamental religious liberties of citizens in the school house, work place and public square? Are the words all-important or are the rights the important thing?"

"They say there is already a clear consensus that government cannot discriminate against religious speech and we don't need an amendment to state the obvious," Whitehead said. "But there is precedent for writing down even self-evident truths. Why are these people afraid to say, in simple words, government shall not discriminate against any person on account of religious expression?"

During the hearings, representatives of the Christian Legal Society, National Association of Evangelicals, Family Research Council, Traditional Values Coalition and the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, as well as First Amendment scholar Michael McConnell, endorsed a constitutional amendment.

Calling the consensus on religious expression recent and temporary, McConnell, law professor at the University of Chicago, said Congress has the chance to "express that consensus in a principled" way.

"Congress has an opportunity to do something truly in the public interest," he said, noting the Clinton administration guidelines have "no teeth."

"The establishment clause has taken more than its share of victims" in the way of statutes rescinded, said CLS' Steven McFarland. More than a set of unenforceable guidelines like those sent to public schools by the Clinton administration in August is needed, he testified.

"We need a constitutional amendment, and we need it today," he said.

NAE General Counsel Forest Montgomery said, "In short, the establishment clause should no longer be construed to trump the free exercise clause."

Doug Laycock, a First Amendment scholar and law professor at the University of Texas, warned drafting an appropriate amendment would be "very difficult."

After hearing a version proposed by Montgomery, however, Laycock, who presented himself as an opponent of an amendment, expressed the belief its language would be an improvement over the current status of nondiscrimination against religious people. The problem is "much more severe" in the lower courts than the Supreme Court, he said.

A subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee held hearings on religious expression during the summer in several cities.

In August, the Education Department, at the direction of the president, mailed guidelines on religious expression to 15,000 public school superintendents. The guidelines closely followed a joint document released in April by such organizations as the BJC, NCC, CLS, NAE, American Jewish Congress and American Civil Liberties Union.

The 35-member coalition almost unanimously opposes a constitutional amendment. CLS and NAE are the exceptions.

The Christian Life Commission refused to endorse the document.

According to the guidelines, the following religious expressions are among those allowed in schools: prayer by individuals and groups as long as it is not disruptive; prayers over lunch; student-initiated religious discussions; witnessing that does not constitute "harassment;" individual reading of the Bible or other religious books; teaching about religion; student expression of religious beliefs in homework and class presentations; distribution of religious literature; wearing clothing with religious messages if clothing with other messages is allowed, and equal treatment of student religious clubs.

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Northeast Indians respond
to Fanini's preaching

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press
10/27/95

MEGHALAYA, India (BP)--More than 6,000 Garos from Meghalaya, northeast India, responded to the invitation to accept Jesus Christ in evangelistic meetings held by the Baptist World Alliance with President Nilson do Amaral Fanini, Oct. 18-22. Each night, approximately 25,000 people attended the meetings.

"There was a mighty outpouring of God's spirit on the Garo people" the six times Fanini preached, said Tony Cupit, BWA's director of evangelism who organized the meetings with the Garo Baptist Convention.

One hundred and twenty five people, trained by Cupit and Harry Monro, acting general secretary of the Baptist Union of Australia who chairs the Asian Baptist Federation's evangelism committee, counseled those who came forward each night.

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Every person was given a decision card and his/her name, address and home church were recorded for follow-up. "Definite and extensive follow-up will be done by the GBC," Cupit said.

For Fanini, it was an impressive start to evangelistic meetings he plans to conduct around the world with national Baptist leaders. An evangelist and pastor of the Niteroi Baptist Church, Brazil, Fanini has placed evangelism as his primary focus for his five-year term as BWA president. He was elected to the post at the 17th Baptist World Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Aug. 1-6.

For Cupit, the evangelistic meetings were part of a conference on unevangelized peoples, also known as "World A" or the "10/40" window," held to encourage Baptists in northeast India and particularly those of Meghalaya to be more committed to spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, especially to reach out to unevangelized peoples in northeast India and beyond.

More than 400 representatives from seven different Baptist conventions in India attended the conference, as well as people from Bangladesh and Nepal. For several days, attendance reached beyond 1,000 because of interest among the local people.

Baptist leaders in northeast India asked Cupit to hold the conference to learn more about the more than 1 billion people, many of whom live in their part of the world, who have yet to hear the gospel. They wanted to know what other Baptist groups in the region are doing and set goals and objectives for evangelistic outreach between now and A.D. 2000.

Evangelized by American Baptist missionaries, the GBC was formed in 1875 and now encompasses 1,471 churches with 148,652 baptized believers. The Christian faith is widely accepted in the region and Baptists hold important political and economic positions. Cupit reported there were eight to 10 government representatives on the platform during the meetings. The government also declared a holiday on the Saturday to enable people to attend the meetings.

However, in recent times, because of political unrest and divisions among Baptists, Garo Baptists have not put a high priority on evangelism, he said.

"Pray that the work which has begun will be followed through with resolve and in an effective way," said Cupit, "so that people who made commitments to Jesus Christ will be nurtured and integrated into the life of the Garo Baptist congregations."

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Casinos said to be gambling
interests' aim in California

By Mark A. Wyatt

Baptist Press
10/27/95

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--If card rooms flourish, can casinos be far behind?

It's a question that concerns Harvey Chinn, who says that is the real issue behind a flurry of gambling measures on the ballot in more than a dozen California cities this fall.

"Card rooms are only the stomping horse. The real battle is for casinos," declared Chinn, legislative director for the California Council on Alcohol Problems (CAP).

CAP is a church-related organization which works with legislation and education in the area of gambling as well as alcohol and other drugs. California Southern Baptist Convention, which provides an annual budget allocation to help fund CAP's work on moral and social concerns, is among its supporters.

Chinn said "competition for increased gambling" is coming from various segments of the gambling industry, not from local citizens. "It's outside interests coming in, getting (gambling) on the ballot and forcing citizens to organize to keep it out," Chinn said.

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"No places in the country are people saying 'we want more gambling,'" Chinn said Oct. 24 in a telephone interview with The California Southern Baptist. He noted recent statewide votes in Oklahoma, Rhode Island and Florida all turned back attempts to expand gambling. "The people don't want it," Chinn said, referring both to increased levels of gambling and the crime which he said always comes with it.

Chinn compared gambling to "playing with fire." Not only does gambling promote skimming and racketeering, but it also depresses business, he said.

"You can't spend money twice," Chinn said, explaining money lost gambling often deprives families of basic needs and results in loss of jobs in other businesses. And he said gambling leads to the "personal disintegration" of families and individuals torn apart by the compulsion.

But Chinn said the situation isn't hopeless. Already this fall, voters in South San Francisco and Irwindale voted down efforts to build or expand card rooms. That brings to at least 20 the number of California communities that have rejected similar measures during the past three years, compared to only six which approved card rooms in the same period, according to Chinn.

He noted Southern Baptist ministers are among those fighting the rising tide of gambling measures across the state. Chinn specifically mentioned Richard Neely, who helped defeat a card room expansion in South San Francisco, and Wayne Stockstill, a leading opponent of a gambling initiative in Hesperia.

Nevertheless, Chinn said, three groups in particular continue to back card rooms as they press the fight to increase gambling in California. First, he said, Indians want legalized casinos on reservations. Also, gambling interests currently operating casinos in Nevada are eager to tap California's lucrative gambling potential. And Chinn said California horse racing interests want to start casinos "because people aren't coming to horse races any more."

He said owners of a Southern California horse track are building card rooms in Inglewood and Compton equipped with electrical wiring capable of handling slot machines, video poker games and other gambling equipment as soon as casino gambling is approved.

"They want to turn these card rooms into casinos next year," Chinn said.

If there is any doubt that gambling fever is spreading, consider a full house of gambling measures on local ballots this fall. Voters are being asked to decide card room questions Nov. 7 in Palm Springs, Coachella, Hesperia, Ontario, Suisun City, San Mateo and Pomona, where a previous card room measure was narrowly defeated, sparking several law suits and prompting a second vote.

Another card room measure will appear on the ballot in the Orange County community of Hawaiian Gardens Nov. 21. And voters in Azusa, Colton, Pacifica and Perris will consider card room measures Dec. 12.

"It has to be recognized that this will change the entire environment" of California if gambling interests succeed, Chinn said. "They're trying to impose a gambling culture on our state."

Chinn said rank and file Baptists and other citizens must get involved to prevent the expansion of gambling in the Golden State by voting against gambling measures in their communities.

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Church organizes 'grassroots'
to defeat card room expansion By Scott Valentine

Baptist Press
10/27/95

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (BP)--A Baptist church used grassroots involvement of churches and community residents to deal a hand of defeat to a casino card room bill in South San Francisco recently.

Some South San Francisco residents wanted to add 150 tables to an already-existing card casino located across the freeway from Grand Avenue Baptist Church. The city's ruling, that a card room cannot exist without a public vote, motivated the South San Francisco Ministerium to stop the measure.

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The ministerial group asked Richard Neely, pastor of Grand Avenue Baptist, to involve area churches to work with a city committee against the measure.

The Ministerium created a resolution which about 150 pastors signed. About 75 people, 20 of them from Grand Avenue Church, canvassed neighborhoods, asking homeowners and residents to vote against the bill. "NO on A" posters and hand-outs were displayed and given to shop owners and to frequent voters.

The Grand Avenue Baptist Church facility became the unofficial headquarters for the campaign. Using the building tied the church with other denominations and community groups to a social issue benefiting the community, according to Neely.

Grand Avenue youth even held a car wash to raise money for the campaign, Neely noted.

"This measure was a moral and social issue, there was no candidate to raise funds, therefore, money had to be raised by outside special interest groups," Neely said.

While campaigning, Neely discovered other groups wanted to see the measure defeated. Churches, regardless of denomination, were against the card room measure as were homeowner associations, local businesses, new council candidates along with the mayor and one council member, he said.

As pastor, Neely sees his church committed to social issues.

"If the churches don't stand for righteousness, no one else is going to do it," he emphasized. "I am convinced that the key was the churches."

The Ministerium which helped with the campaign is a group of ministers in South San Francisco who meet once a month. Their meetings include such activities as operating a food pantry, hosting services together, inviting speakers from the community such as police officers, housing officers or anyone who gives information beneficial to the community.

Neely emphasized the importance of many people helping defeat the measure. The effort started at the grassroots level with many groups coming together.

"It wasn't any one person. A lot of people cared about the community besides the ones in our little group. That was important," Neely declared.

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Pastor says what works
on television is preaching

By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press
10/27/95

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The first time Adrian Rogers ever broke into the clear and raced toward a touchdown with the defense in hot pursuit, he was so anxious to score that he dived across what he thought was the goal line.

It was, instead, the 5-yard line.

That was probably the last time Rogers ever stopped himself short of a goal.

Of course, the aborted touchdown was at Palm Beach (Fla.) High School where he went on to become team captain and was named to the All-Southern football team. He received numerous football scholarship offers to major universities, but chose Stetson University at Deland, Fla. He chose the Baptist school because, when a teen-ager, he had answered God's call to preach. Preaching was then, and still is, his all-consuming passion.

Rogers is senior pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis, Tenn., one of the world's largest congregations. The church has a membership of more than 25,000 and a sanctuary that seats 7,000. It is located on approximately 400 acres, 23 of which are used for a retirement home.

The sanctuary is not large enough for the Sunday morning attendance, so Rogers preaches two services.

But, those who attend Bellevue represent only a small number of the people who hear him preach every week. Rogers is founder and president of "Love Worth Finding" Ministries, a nationally syndicated television and radio ministry, that reaches millions of people every week.

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Bill Skelton, vice president of the ministry, said, "We're currently on 428 television broadcast stations, three satellite networks and 14,734 local cable TV systems. We're also on more than 400 radio stations."

In the U.S. alone, "Love Worth Finding" reaches a potential weekly audience of more than 120 million people. The TV version reaches much of the Middle East -- Israel, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The radio version reaches much of the South Pacific, India, Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea and South Africa. Five days a week, on radio or Sunday on TV, "Love Worth Finding" reaches into more than 50 countries.

Rogers began his media ministry in 1950. The 19-year-old student pastor of First Baptist Church of Fellsmere, Fla. preached into a tape recorder and took the tape to a Fort Pierce, Fla. radio station for broadcast. He initially paid for the time from his own pocket.

"I got out of media when I was at the seminary in New Orleans," he said, "but later I had a daily 15-minute program on the station in Fort Pierce. It was live radio, which takes a high degree of commitment. I was on early in the morning and the program, which was called 'Daybreak,' reached a lot of people. I often came in contact with people who knew who I was because they recognized my voice."

Rogers said he was not on television until 1972 when he became pastor of Bellevue.

"Bellevue has been involved in television since the early '50s," he said. "The church has been broadcasting on WHBQ (Channel 13) in Memphis for more than 40 years. And, I think Bellevue may have been the first church in the nation to own and operate its own TV equipment. The people here have been very innovative in the use of media."

The pastor said it is an insult to God, who made technology, not to use it to proclaim the gospel.

"God created the universe and built within it electronic capability," Rogers said. "In using technology to preach the gospel we are synthesizing, employing what God created. We have allowed Satan to pervert what God has done. That's what Satan is, a pervert. He has no raw materials. All that is here in the way of electronic communication is owned by God and is a powerful means of preaching the gospel. We need to use it. In fact, it is sheer folly not to use it."

Rogers said Christians must, however, exercise wisdom in regard to everything they use, that the church cannot depend on technology as a cure-all. The church must, instead, depend on the Holy Spirit, he said.

"There's nothing magic about media," the pastor said. "Some churches think that all their problems can be solved by being on television. Many of them simply advertise their ineptitude. If you're going to broadcast, you need something worth broadcasting."

That something worth broadcasting, Rogers said, is the gospel of Jesus Christ. He has no patience with subtle, "sneak up on them" so-called religious programming that is apologetic about the gospel.

"When we're moved by pragmatism instead of truth, we've just about lost it," he said. "When we truncate truth to fill a sanctuary or build ratings for a TV program, we're merchandising instead of preaching the gospel."

Rogers said media are systematically seducing "our children" with Satan's perversion. He said in order to reach kids the church must reach parents.

"TV is a problem for kids because parents have such weak standards," he said. "The '60s generation has taken its jeans, beads and pot and gone to Washington. Kids now watch trash on TV in the presence of their parents. Their parents even take them to see salacious movies. While I hate to say it, we may have lost a generation. There's definitely a need to retool."

"One of our primary goals should be to teach responsible parenting. And, we have to raise up some spiritual green berets. We have to niche them out from the 'other' crowd."

That other crowd, Rogers said, is trying to out-do MTV and calling it Christianity. He refuses to buy their concept or "reasoning," which is that kids have to be reached at the MTV level.

"In programming, we have to understand where the truth lies," he said. "So-called Christian music that sounds like MTV doesn't get the job done. In fact, with some of these so-called Christian programs that are allegedly directed toward kids, you have to wonder who's converting who. You can get so busy entertaining that you forget about winning people to Christ. In all programming we need to drop the H-bomb, which is the Holy Spirit.

"I'm convinced that young people want to be challenged full bore, no holds barred. We need to go head-to-head with them and to call them to radical discipleship. An anointed proclamation of God will create in young people and adults a sense of idealism, heroics and great power."

Rogers said all television viewing is educational, that what a person sees and hears affects him or her.

"So it's simply a matter of whether the program is God's classroom or the Devil's," he said.

A concern, the pastor said, is TV viewing is passive and too much of it can cause a person to become asocial.

"TV and computers can create electronic zombies who can't differentiate between what is real and unreal," he said. "The menu can poison a person's mind. But, that just emphasizes the need to get to people with the message, to bring them out of their lethargy. Passivity can become activity. That's the difference between a sermon and entertainment. A real sermon calls people to action."

Rogers said he tries to make sure all his sermons encompass four words: "Hey, you, look, do."

"The 'hey' in a sermon is the attention-getter," he said. "The 'you' makes it personal. The 'look' is information, proof and content. And, the 'do' is a call to action."

Rogers is not a fence straddler as to the type radio and television programming he thinks Southern Baptists should emphasize.

"What works for us is preaching," he said. "And, when you ignore what works, that's futility. The Bible says it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

"When it comes to reaching people for Christ, there is a difference in methods and means. Methods are intrinsic to the Word of God, whereas means vary. Methods include things like evangelism, prayer, faith, proclamation, fellowship and church growth, which are ageless and never vary. Means can be a quill, printing press, radio, TV or computer ... any form of communication.

"A major problem is that some preachers and religious programmers think they're being successful with the means, when in reality they're presenting a lot of 'splendid nothingness.' We should use all the means available, but we should never substitute means for God-ordained methods."

Rogers said many people study means instead of methods in order to become better at "marketing the church."

"Instead of marketing the church, we need to be taking the church into the marketplace," he said. "What many church people don't seem to realize is that we have an unfair advantage over Satan because we have the Holy Spirit. We simply aren't using our resources."

Through product sales and gifts "Love Worth Finding" receives approximately \$4 million annually, all of which goes back into media ministry. Rogers receives no salary from the media ministry.

"I don't preach on radio and television for notoriety or personal aggrandizement," he said. "I don't think I ever have. For me it's a matter of stewardship, of following Christ's command to take the gospel to the entire world."

Skelton said four years ago "Love Worth Finding" had a mailing list of 34,000 names. It has grown to more than 150,000 and was recently purged of 30,000 names.

"We want to keep the mailing list as lean as possible," he said. "Our inbound telephone service employs 58 telephone operators who work around the clock in responding to calls on our 800 number. The operators stay busy because 'Love Worth Finding' is seen and heard at various times."

An ordained minister and native of California, Skelton said "Love Worth Finding" is on the crest of a wave in communication.

"We're going to ride it in," he said.

In a recent survey of television viewers, the best-known preachers were evangelist Billy Graham, Rogers and Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta.

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Pastor says media should
not be tail that wags dog

By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press
10/27/95

SHREVEPORT, La. (BP)--A person going through a crisis or transition in life often is drawn to a church as a result of its media ministry.

Mark Brister, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, has witnessed the phenomenon numerous times during his six years with the Shreveport, La., congregation.

"At Broadmoor, we use a media mix and many different approaches in our efforts to touch people with the gospel," he said. "Because of our use of media, people know us. So, when they are going through a crisis or transition in life, they are drawn to Broadmoor because they know they can receive help here."

One of the more touching stories and examples of the power of Broadmoor's media ministry occurred when Brister went to an area hospital to visit a church member. Without his knowing it, he had been given the wrong room number.

Brister knocked on the door, opened it, and a man he had never seen before sat up in bed with a surprised look on his face. A woman sitting beside the bed sprang to her feet and said, "Oh, Dr. Mark, we just knew you would come."

What happened, Brister said, was a demonstration of God's power. He had never met the couple, but they had been touched by Broadmoor's media ministry. The couple had prayed he would visit while the husband was in the hospital.

"People often watch our services on television for months before they come to the church," he said. "I often become their pastor before they ever become a member of the church. Or, I become a short-term pastor of people who are ill and can't go to their own church.

"The purpose of our media ministry is to reach families in the Ark-La-Tex (the geographical area around Shreveport that includes a portion of Arkansas and Texas) with the gospel, to minister to people who might never just walk into a church. We have a great evangelistic opportunity made possible by media."

Broadmoor's television production/broadcast facility in Shreveport serves as the city's ACTS affiliate, receiving the satellite signal and sending it to the cable company for re-broadcast to 59,000 subscribers. Both the morning and evening worship services are broadcast live from the church. ACTS is the cable television service operated by the SBC Radio and Television Commission (RTVC). The church also telecasts its Sunday morning worship service each week on KTBS-TV, the local ABC affiliate. Brister's sermons are re-broadcast a week later, at 7:30 a.m., on KEEL radio.

"Our weekly radio broadcast has stimulated people to attend church the same day they heard it," Brister said. "We also do some spot advertising on radio and television that has been very successful for us."

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Broadmoor is also known for its high visibility billboard located at the corner of Your e Drive and Kings Highway. Over the years, the church's billboard messages, as well as its radio and television advertising campaigns, have won numerous regional and national awards. A recent board, next to one advertising the opening of Harrah's Casino, featured a large picture of the Bible with the words, "The Only Sure Bet In Town." It attracted local and national media attention, garnering a gold medal in the Shreveport Advertising Federation's annual competition and appearing in newspapers in Texas, Florida and Virginia.

A couple of years ago Broadmoor ended up on the CBS television program "60 Minutes" because of the congregation's stand on sex education programs for schools in Caddo Parish.

"We took a stand that abstinence was the only thing that should be promoted," Brister said, "and that displeased a number of people. We were accused of trying to put morality into schools, which is something we're proud to be accused of.

"Rush Limbaugh (national TV and radio talk show host) and James Dobson (founder of Focus on the Family ministry) discussed Shreveport on their programs. '60 Minutes' would not talk to me, but they did talk to some of the church's members. And, they did take a clip out of one of my sermons without permission and broadcast it nationwide."

Brister chuckled and said, "I'm told that the program was viewed by 28 million people, which is a few more than we had in our evening service that day."

He said the church's stand strengthened the congregation, but more important there is today an abstinence-based sex education program in Caddo Parish schools.

"We had only one negative call as a result of the '60 Minutes' program," he said. "All the other response was positive."

Brister said after preaching at an association's annual evangelism conference a man walked up to him and said, "I watch you regularly on TV and your ministry really blesses me."

He thanked the man, who hesitated for a couple of seconds and continued with, "You know, you look better on TV than in person."

Brister laughed and said, "I told him it was amazing what computer enhancement could do."

Broadmoor's sanctuary currently is being renovated. Included in the renovation is a video wall the pastor said he thinks will enhance the experience of worship.

He said, "We are in a culture that gets its information from and focuses on media. In order to reach many people, you have to use the medium that is so much a part of their daily lives. We're all more visual in our way of thinking and learning now, whether with television or computer.

"TV in and of itself is a valueless tool, one that can be used for wonderful things or terrible things. I see it as a wonderful way of reaching children and young people whose parents may have no interest in the gospel. They're barricaded from the gospel unless they watch and hear of Christ's love and salvation on TV. I reiterate that it's a tool that can open the door with the message of salvation. But, the message will always be more important than the tool."

"At Broadmoor, media is not the tail that wags the dog," Brister said. "It remains an important tool for extending the church's ministry to the community, but we would be doing the same thing in worship if the cameras were not here. We may not be welcome to personally visit in many of the homes in our city, and those families may not show up at Broadmoor on Sunday morning, but most have television sets. TV simply provides a window for many people to look inside the church, to see and hear of the Christ who offers them salvation."

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Missouri pastor happy to see,
witness to, Jehovah's Witnesses By Tim Palmer

Baptist Press
10/27/95

ST. CHARLES, Mo. (BP)--Pat Campbell doesn't cringe when Jehovah's Witnesses show up at his front door. In fact, he's glad to see them.

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"I always look forward to that," said the pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, St. Charles. He relates to such visitors because he used to do the same thing they're doing -- go door to door selling The Watchtower and other Jehovah's Witnesses literature.

"I've had good experiences of winning Jehovah's Witnesses to Christ," Campbell said. He stressed I Peter 3:15: "Always be ready to answer everyone who asks you to explain about the hope you have"

"Christians need to be very solid in their doctrinal understanding because (Jehovah's Witnesses) can really tie you up in knots," he said. He agreed taking an evangelism course is helpful. "You've got to be ready to back up what you believe when they start asking you questions."

Campbell said he was a little uneasy about Jay Hess's suggestion to visit the local Kingdom Hall. To do so could get a person on a list to be visited daily by Jehovah's Witnesses, he cautioned.

An aunt of Campbell's who was a longtime Jehovah's Witness began teaching Pat when he was in junior high school in Collinsville, Ill. "Out of curiosity I got involved in it." From the time he was in the eighth grade until he was a freshman in college, Campbell read Jehovah's Witnesses literature and knocked on doors.

"I was pretty thoroughly, thoroughly indoctrinated and believed the way they taught." Then his sister married the son of a Southern Baptist preacher. When Pat tried to convert the brother-in-law, the young man steered him to his father, telling Pat, "If he'll become one, I'll become one."

One night from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m., Campbell listened to preacher Charles Taylor. "I was spellbound by the truth that he was sharing." The next day a second Southern Baptist preacher, Bill Davis, led him to Christ using the Roman Road -- Romans 3:23, 6:23 and 10:8-10. The same night -- now 31 years ago -- Pat was called to preach.

His conversion caused the Jehovah's Witnesses to shun him, Campbell recalled. "They pretty much wrote me off, which I've been grateful for ever since."

Campbell agreed winning Jehovah's Witnesses to the Lord requires relationship building, dialogue, much prayer, patience, reliance on the Holy Spirit and "willingness to articulate our faith to them clearly."

He has written a booklet that describes how to share the Christian faith with Jehovah's Witnesses. It explains the deity of Christ and the Trinity -- both of which Jehovah's Witnesses deny -- are key strategic points in converting them. "Know what you believe and the error of their way."

"They are a cult," he emphasized. "They are not Christian. That needs to be clearly understood -- that you're dealing with a cult."

To request Campbell's booklet, write to him at Ridgecrest Baptist Church, 1402 South First Capitol Drive, St. Charles, MO 63303-3702; phone 314-724-3359. There is a \$3 charge to cover costs.

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**Buckner Baptist Benevolences
begins international ministries**

By Scott Collins & Russell Rankin

**Baptist Press
10/27/95**

DALLAS (BP)--Buckner Baptist Benevolences, one of the nation's oldest and largest Christian social service agencies, has announced plans to begin cooperation with officials in three Eastern European nations, opening the door for Buckner's first-ever international ministries.

Buckner President Kenneth L. Hall said the international ministries will involve a wide range of Christian social services, from international adoptions of special-needs children, to joint exchanges of social workers between Buckner's staff in Texas and social workers in Russia, Poland and Romania.

Hall said Buckner is responding to requests from officials in those countries who contacted the Dallas-based agency. "Our reputation of being a quality social service agency led to those inquiries," he said.

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Buckner's first international adoption was finalized recently when a couple from Houston returned to the United States with a 5-year-old girl from an orphanage in St. Petersburg, Russia.

In February, two social workers, one from Oradea, Romania, and another from St. Petersburg, will arrive in Dallas to train with Buckner's staff for three months. Mike Douris, director of Buckner Children and Family Services, Inc., for East Texas, said the purpose of the staff exchange is "to assist the people in those countries in developing a comprehensive social work program."

Along with international adoptions and staff exchanges, Hall said Buckner will cooperate with officials in the three countries to provide a variety of services including medical care for children in orphanages and supplies ranging from medicine to computers and toys. Hall said Buckner will begin seeking volunteers willing to travel to St. Petersburg and Oradea to work with orphanages. He said officials in those cities expressed a special need for ophthalmologists.

An agreement with city officials in St. Petersburg will enable Buckner to serve as an international adoption agency for special-needs children from that city. Hall said a pool of potential families in the United States is already being established.

Amy Norton, director of Buckner Adoption and Maternity Services, Inc., said special-needs children from Russia who will be considered for international adoption generally range in age from 3 to 9; may include an entire sibling group; could have physical or developmental concerns; or could have other needs. Some teenagers are also in need of homes, she said.

Norton said Buckner will conduct home studies and provide other services for potential U.S. families. She added U.S. families who are approved for international adoptions may face delays due to new government restrictions once the process is started.

"We're saying to officials in St. Petersburg, 'You tell us the child who has the needs and we'll try to find a good home for that child,'" Hall said.

Douris added officials in St. Petersburg would prefer Russian children remain in that country. However, because of the numbers of special-needs children, they are willing to work with agencies such as Buckner to find homes for those young people.

Hall said Buckner will seek "to work alongside these people to help them provide better services in their countries. We do not want to sensationalize anything or do anything that will reflect poorly on their societies or cultures."

Hall said during a recent trip to the three countries, he and Douris found "a lot of nurture and love by the care givers to these children. There was only a lack of resources."

"These countries are starting over and they are trying to build an infrastructure," Douris said.

Hall said Buckner will be working with other Baptist agencies and individuals to coordinate ministry efforts.

"We came at the invitation of people in those countries," Hall said. "We're not out there looking for new work. But how do you turn down these people? They said to us, 'We've got hurts and you've got expertise.'"

Hall said Buckner's international ministries will be funded by donors who give specifically for that purpose. He said anyone wanting to donate money to help with the work may contact Neal Knighton, vice president for Advancement at (214) 321-4594. Anyone interested in volunteering for work as part of Buckner's international ministries may contact Mike Douris at (214) 321-4500.

Anyone interested in participating in Buckner's international adoption program may contact Amy Norton at (214) 321-4506. A complete list of materials needed for the overseas orphanages, such as developmental toys, Sunday school supplies, clothing and various equipment, is available from Buckner.

More than 10,000 people receive ministry through Buckner's Adoption and Maternity Services, Children and Family Services, and Retirement Services each year. Founded in 1879, Buckner currently operates in 17 cities and towns in Texas.

Campbell Univ. to open
divinity school in '97

CARY, N.C. (BP)--Campbell University will establish a divinity school on its Buies Creek, N.C., campus, according to an Oct. 25 announcement made by college President Norman A. Wiggins.

Students will enroll for the charter class in August 1997, with limited courses to be available in August 1996. Master of divinity and master of arts in Christian education degrees will be offered, with an enrollment of 125 expected when the charter class graduates in 2000.

Leaders of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina joined Campbell University trustees, faculty, alumni and guests at the Baptist Building in Cary for the announcement, which also featured a North Carolina-style barbecue luncheon and the university choir.

The university's trustees voted to establish the divinity school Sept. 22; feasibility studies for the undertaking were first commissioned in 1969.

Alfred T. Ayscue, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Mount Airy, and president of the 1.2 million-member state convention, praised the establishment of the divinity school as "good news that the overwhelming majority of North Carolina Baptists will greet with enthusiasm and gratitude."

"The establishment of the Campbell University divinity school is a vitally important event in North Carolina Baptist life," said Roy J. Smith, executive director-treasurer of the state convention.

Elsewhere in the state, Gardner-Webb University is now in its third year of theological education with 102 students at the Boiling Springs campus. Wake Forest University has been in the process of establishing a divinity school, with announcement of its opening expected when the financial base for operations determined by the college's trustees is reached.

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