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November 8, 1995

95-178

TENNESSEE--News Advisory.

MINNEAPOLIS--Graham to remain BGEA leader; son Franklin to be successor.

WEST VIRGINIA--W.Va. Southern Baptists celebrate 25th anniversary.

DALLAS--Annuity Board's total assets near \$5 billion; benefits raised.

DALLAS--Jeanette Henry pinch hits for husband at Annuity Board.

DALLAS--Annuity Board trustees raise retiree benefits 5 percent.

VIRGINIA--Va. conservatives opt against creating 2nd state convention.

ALABAMA--Mercy Rao: Vision necessary to see needs of the world; photos.

GEORGIA--Atlanta-area Baptist association launches Nicaragua partnership.

ARKANSAS--Friendship International marks 20 years of ministry, fellowship.

HONOLULU--You could befriend a future world leader.

NORTH CAROLINA--Service, surrender, sacrifice underscored by Fred Wolfe.

ALABAMA--Church child-care centers yield community outreach.

GEORGIA--Requests for US-2 applications due Nov. 17.

GEORGIA--Change of address reported by SBC registration secretary.

NEWS ADVISORY: Two stories on the Rabin assassination will be released Thursday, Nov. 9, by the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press, along with a third story by Michael Chute, editor of the Florida Baptist Witness.

The main story will examine the impact of the assassination on Baptist work and Messianic congregations in Israel. A sidebar will focus on the reaction of John and Connie Anthony, 22-year veterans of Baptist work in Israel. Chute's story will be an interview with Jim Henry, SBC president who accompanied President Clinton's delegation to Rabin's funeral. Two photographs related to the coverage are being mailed Wednesday, Nov. 8, to state Baptist newspapers from the (BP) Richmond bureau. A horizontal photograph relates to the main story; a vertical of John Anthony accompanies the sidebar. Audio of the Anthony interview is available, as is the Anthonys' phone number.

Graham to remain BGEA leader;
son Franklin to be successor

Baptist Press
11/8/95

MINNEAPOLIS (BP)--Billy Graham celebrated his 77th birthday Nov. 7 in Florida at an annual Billy Graham Evangelistic Association board of directors meeting and affirmed he will continue as the chairman and chief executive officer of the organization he founded in 1950.

Franklin Graham, son of Billy and Ruth Graham, was elected to serve as first vice chairman -- a newly created position with direct succession to become chairman and CEO, should his father ever become incapacitated. The action settled within the organization the question of succession and its future.

Said Billy Graham, "Franklin was selected by the board, and as a father I am both proud of his capacity for leadership and humbled in gratitude for the Lord's blessing on him."

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Cliff Barrows remains as BGEA vice chairman and the program director for all of Graham's crusades, continuing a 50-year partnership in ministry with the Southern Baptist evangelist.

Said Barrows, "I rejoice in God's leadership in the direction taken today by the board, and I consider it a great privilege to continue to stand with Mr. Graham and Franklin in the ongoing ministry of the BGEA with the tremendous opportunities which lie ahead."

Billy Graham's schedule for 1996 includes crusades in Australia, New Zealand, Minneapolis and Charlotte, N.C. He also announced his memoirs will be completed by the fall of 1996.

Franklin Graham will continue his ministry in Samaritan's Purse and World Medical Mission, headquartered in Boone, N.C., and will conduct eight to 10 crusades for the BGEA in 1996.

"I am committed to doing whatever I can to support my father so that he can continue to do the work that God has called him to do," Franklin Graham said. "I accept this position in order to help him and to take some of the responsibility off of his shoulders."

The other four children of Billy and Ruth Graham are Gigi Tchividjian-Graham, the oldest, an author and seminar speaker; Anne Graham Lotz, founder of AnGel Ministries and a popular Bible teacher; Ned Graham, president of East Gate Ministries, an organization focusing on Christian initiatives in China; and Ruth "Bunnie" Graham Dienert, who works with Samaritan's Purse.

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W.Va. Southern Baptists
celebrate 25th anniversary

Baptist Press
11/8/95

CEREDO, W.Va. (BP)--West Virginia Southern Baptists turned their convention's 25th anniversary into an occasion for missions boldness.

Messengers voted to hike the percentage of their budget devoted to Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program missions and ministries by 1/2 percent for 1996 -- and 5.5 percent for 1997 -- and they participated in a Foreign Mission Board-related "MissionsFest."

"Amazed in His Presence" was the theme for the 25th annual meeting of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists, Nov. 3-4 at First Baptist Church, Ceredo.

"There was an attitude of amazement and gratitude to God throughout the entire event -- gratitude to God for his presence and his working with and through Southern Baptists in West Virginia for these first 25 years," recounted Tom Young, the convention's minister of music and family ministry.

A new book, "Go Tell It on the Mountain, A History of the First 25 Years of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists," was released at the convention and a free copy was provided to every church present.

The book was compiled by the standing historical committee under the leadership of Peggy Andes, a member of Calvary Baptist Church, Morgantown, and committee chair.

The convention's executive committee recommended an unprecedented step by a young convention to increase Cooperative Program giving to Southern Baptist national and international missions and ministries by 1/2 percent in 1996 and an additional 5.5 percent in 1997. Thus, 29.5 percent of all receipts in 1996 from West Virginia's 168 congregations will be forwarded to the SBC and 35 percent in 1997.

Several speakers during the annual meeting underscored the effort, saying it is time for the state's 32,000-plus Southern Baptists to grow toward greater maturity in their giving.

The budget of \$1,617,936 for '96 passed in a hearty unanimous vote. Of that total, West Virginia Baptists will raise \$818,889, with \$577,317 to remain in the state and \$241,572 (29.5 percent) to be forwarded to the SBC.

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In a letter to SBC leaders in September, Jere Phillips, the convention's new executive director-treasurer, noted, "This is a bold increase for a small new work state convention, but we believe that we must have a larger world vision and increasingly participate in, and support, mission activities outside our state. To accomplish this, it may be necessary for us to reduce the total of state staff/missionaries, but we feel that the needs on the mission field are important enough for us to take this step.

"We hope that in the coming years," Phillips added, "we will be able to take additional steps to further increase the portion of CP for worldwide missions. Please pray for us as we seek to reach the 1 million unchurched people in West Virginia through evangelism, church growth and new church starts."

The convention's "MissionsFest" was held Nov. 2 in lieu of the traditional pre-convention pastors' conference.

In a "Global Walk Around/Video Theater," 13 foreign missionaries set up learning stations to offer messengers and guests a "hands-on" experience in getting acquainted with them and their work assignments.

The Foreign Mission Board also set up its computer-generated world population clock and missionary quizzes. Special activities were planned for the youth and children as well.

The MissionsFest activities were repeated Nov. 3 prior to the convention's opening session.

Missionaries led the Bible study for each convention session, and FMB President Jerry Rankin presented the FMB report along with the keynote sermon Nov. 3 and a closing missions message Nov. 4.

The Nov. 3 evening session was devoted to remembering the convention's past and seeing its challenge for the future.

A multi-media presentation, of audio and video tapes and photographic slides, recounted God's guidance and blessing of the convention over its 25 years. A number of former staff people and convention presidents were present to bring greetings and share what they are now doing. Carlisle Driggers, executive director/treasurer for the South Carolina Baptist Convention, gave a brief challenge to the convention. Phillips closed the session, speaking on "Challenge for the Future."

Elected for a second term as president was David Jicka, pastor of the Highlawn Baptist Church, Huntington. Mark McClung, pastor of Southern Baptist Fellowship, Summersville, was elected first vice president and Alvie Edwards, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Fairlea, second vice president. Jack Dial, a layman from the Highlawn church, also was re-elected for another term as recording secretary. Dial has been serving in the position since 1992.

Several bylaw changes were approved to make a basic philosophical change in the convention structure from a "program orientation" to a "ministry orientation."

Resolutions presented and passed included opposition to legalized gambling in the state and one voicing resolve "not simply to become complacent or content with the accomplishments of the past, but to commit ourselves to boldly go forth into the remaining years of the 20th century in the power of the Holy Spirit to reach all peoples of W.Va. with the transforming Gospel of Christ."

Copies of "Go Tell It on the Mountain, A History of the First 25 Years of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists" may be ordered through the convention's offices at Number One Mission Way, Scott Depot, WV 25560 or (304) 757-0994.

The convention's 1996 meeting will be Nov. 1-2 at Evangel Baptist Church, Bridgeport.

**Annuity Board's total assets
near \$5 billion; benefits raised**

By Thomas E. Miller Jr.

DALLAS (BP)--Reports of total assets approaching \$5 billion and nine-month earnings exceeding \$621 million were relayed to trustees of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention Nov. 6-7 in a regular meeting in Dallas.

Trustees approved a staff recommendation to grant a permanent 5 percent increase in benefits on Jan. 1, 1996, to people drawing life annuities (except variable annuities) and those receiving fixed-period benefits of 60 months or longer.

The increase will apply to all such annuities that were funded from defined contribution accumulations coming from the Church Annuity Plan, Convention Annuity Plan or the Voluntary Annuity Plan, as well as Plan A retired and deferred benefits. Annuitants will see the increase in checks at the end of January.

Paul W. Powell, the board's president, said, "It is always the intention of the Annuity Board to pass on to our annuitants the results of good investment experience. I am immensely pleased our investment managers performed so well this year. Now it is our pleasure to give a permanent increase."

Harold D. Richardson, board treasurer, reported net income of \$621,830,483 for nine months and participant contributions of \$184,483,317. Benefits paid through nine months were \$146,388,430, an 18 percent increase over the same period in 1994. Total assets stood at \$4,993,691,692, an 11.7 percent increase in 12 months.

John R. Jones, the board's senior vice president for fiduciary services and chief investment officer, told trustees, "In the third quarter most investors were very happily raking in the profits generated. ... The Annuity Board's funds were well positioned to take advantage of this very favorable environment for the financial markets."

For the nine months ending Sept. 30, 1995, Annuity Board investment funds' performances were: International Equity Fund -- 10.30 percent; Variable Fund -- 27.74 percent; Balanced Fund -- 19.53 percent; and Fixed Fund -- 4.56 percent.

Trustees approved a 1996 operating budget of \$35,302,790, which is essentially the same total as 1995.

In other activities, trustees heard reports from standing committees and a Mutual Fund Committee and an address by Jeanette Henry, representing her husband, Jim Henry, current president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Jim Henry, who serves as a trustee by virtue of his elected office, was scheduled to speak but was suddenly called by the White House to accompany President Bill Clinton to the state funeral of Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was assassinated Nov. 4.

The insurance committee reported the entire insurance program had been rebid for 1996, which resulted in changes of carriers for some programs in order to gain lower rates. It was determined in the best interest of participants to continue the comprehensive and catastrophic medical plan administration with the Prudential Insurance Company of America.

The Personal Security Program serving churches and seminarians with self-funded medical coverage, which has not had an increase in rates since July 1, 1992, will experience a 7.6 percent rise in rates on Jan. 1, 1996. Joel H. Mathis, the board's senior vice president for insurance services, said the rate increase is required by a trend in claims and in order to maintain the increased benefits made available in 1994 and 1995. "The lower deductibles and co-payments, the increased maternity benefit and the enhanced prescription drug benefits all remain intact," Mathis said.

Rates for term life will be reduced approximately 15 percent, depending on age category; cost of long-term disability insurance will be reduced 15 percent; and rates for accident coverage will be reduced 28.5 percent, all effective Jan. 1.

Increases in Cooperative Program receipts helped to boost relief payments to \$883,951 through nine months. The relief committee approved a Christmas check of \$175 for each person or couple on either the monthly or expense grant relief roll Dec. 1, 1995. As of Nov. 7, there are 517 people or couples on the relief roll.

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All Cooperative Program money received by the Annuity Board is allocated through the relief program, and all operating expenses of the board are paid from earnings on assets.

The relief committee considered 39 requests, approved 24 two-year monthly grants, four two-year expense grants, one one-time grant and declined 11 requests. One applicant received two kinds of grants.

The Annuity Board's Adopt An Annuitant ministry, which provides an extra \$50 each month to annuitants with inadequate incomes, now provides adoption checks to 1,672 people. C. Joe McIntosh, vice president for endowment, reported gifts of \$2,278,147 in nine months, with \$730,240 in cash gifts for Adopt An Annuitant.

Trustees heard a report from their mutual fund committee and unanimously approved creation of two business trusts, pending approval of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. The proposed business trusts would become mutual funds after trustees give final approval to use a mutual fund structure to conduct the Annuity Board's investment activities, following all necessary applications and approvals by federal regulatory and tax agencies.

The Annuity Board has requested the SBC Executive Committee to approve the creation of the two new legal entities in February 1996 under provisions of SBC Bylaw 35, which requires such approval by either the Southern Baptist Convention or its Executive Committee.

Annuity Board staff and trustees have been working closely with legal counsel and staff of the Executive Committee for more than a year to keep the Executive Committee informed, answer questions and develop documentation satisfactory to both the Annuity Board and the Executive Committee regarding the new trusts. If approval is given by the Executive Committee approval, the Annuity Board can proceed with applications to the federal agencies. Management of the Annuity Board said registration of the investment funds as mutual funds cannot come before sometime in 1997.

The next meeting of Annuity Board trustees will be Feb. 26-27, 1996, in Dallas.

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Jeanette Henry pinch hits
for husband at Annuity Board By Thomas E. Miller Jr.

Baptist Press
11/8/95

DALLAS (BP)--Jeanette Henry, wife of Jim Henry, current Southern Baptist Convention president, was asked by her husband to pinch hit for him in a scheduled address to trustees and guests of the Annuity Board Nov. 6 in Dallas. Jim Henry was suddenly diverted from his speaking engagement when the White House asked him to accompany President Bill Clinton to Israel for the funeral of Yitzhak Rabin, who was assassinated Nov. 4.

Jeanette Henry arrived in Dallas late Sunday evening, having been awake nearly 24 hours after a 1:30 a.m. telephone call from Washington stirred the Orlando, Fla., pastor's home to activity. At a luncheon 12 hours later, she described the grief of her husband who had been in Israel a year ago for the celebration of peace accords between Israel and Jordan.

"President Clinton had taken a group -- Arabs, Jews and Christians -- to the signing of the accords by Jordan's King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin. Jim was included. It was such an exciting, wonderful trip. This trip is so very sad," she said.

"But," said the pastor's wife of nearly 36 years, "good things are going on. There will be peace," she declared, "but the reason will be Jesus, not any man."

Turning to her husband's planned thoughts for the Dallas audience, Henry said, "Good things are going on in the Southern Baptist Convention."

She spoke of the couple's travels in the 17 months since he was first elected president of the convention in June 1994. She reported a spirit of enthusiasm. "Baptisms are up. People groups thought beyond reach just a few years ago are being touched with the gospel."

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Noting Cooperative Program gifts are up, Henry said her husband has visited as many state conventions as possible where he "found a sweet spirit even where we disagree."

Describing herself as a committed "helper," Henry spoke of her husband's commitment to "do something" with the "words" of racial reconciliation adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta last June. She reported a joint effort by Henry and Gary Frost, an African American now in his second term as SBC second vice president, to find ways of working through SBC agencies to add substance to the racism repentance voiced by convention messengers.

The two officers will meet in December with the staff of the Baptist World Alliance, who are hosting representatives of all the African American conventions, in an effort "to put our actions into words," she said.

Speaking in a more personal way, Henry described her childhood and the lessons of thrift taught by her Kentucky farmer father. "Daddy was a quiet man of his word," she said. "He taught me biblical money principles. He taught, 'You only spend what you have. You pay your debts and you save for the future.'"

She told of the lessons of saving and simple investing and how much the early savings helped the Henry family get started in their marriage and early pastorates.

"When we started pastoring," she said, "there were some wise laymen who enrolled us in the Annuity Board retirement plan. That was 35 years ago. Now we look forward to the time of reaping. We thank you, the trustees, for your service."

Henry said she and her husband wanted to thank the Annuity Board for "looking after our money, for taking progressive steps to offer more diversification in investment opportunities, more individual control (of accumulations)" and for the Adopt An Annuitant ministry to annuitants without adequate income.

She said First Baptist Church, Orlando, has placed the Adopt An Annuitant ministry in its budget as a designated missions allocation. The church also supports the relief ministry of the Annuity Board through its pacesetting support of the Cooperative Program. Of the national Cooperative Program, .076 percent -- \$1,077,994 -- goes to the Annuity Board for distribution to poor and aged ministers, missionaries and other church employees or their widows.

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**Annuity Board trustees raise
retiree benefits 5 percent**

By Thomas E. Miller Jr.

Baptist Press
11/8/95

DALLAS (BP)--Southern Baptist church and institutional retirees drawing life annuities and fixed-period benefits of 60 months or longer will receive a permanent 5 percent increase on Jan. 1.

Trustees of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Dallas Nov. 6-7, approved the increase in benefits based on an annual valuation of the Defined Benefit Fund that holds all funds from which such benefits are paid.

Paul W. Powell, the board's president, said, "The spectacular earnings on investments this year overcame the stock and bond turmoil of 1994 and made it possible for us to recommend the increase for trustee approval."

The increase will apply to certain annuities that were funded from defined contribution accumulations coming from the Church Annuity Plan, Convention Annuity Plan and Voluntary Annuity Plan, as well as Plan A retired and deferred benefits. Annuitants will see the increases in checks at the end of January. People still employed who have deferred Plan A benefits will receive the increase on Plan A when they annuitize that portion of their retirement program.

Terry R. Wade, the board's actuary and senior vice president for retirement services, explained, "The 5 percent permanent increase in annuities will not be paid to variable annuities or death and disability benefits paid as a result of the Protection Section of the Church Annuity Plan. Benefits in 1996 for variable annuities will be determined in a regular, scheduled calculation later this month, and recipients will be notified in January what their new benefits will be. Protection Section benefits are paid from a separate fund. The increase also will not apply to fixed-period benefits funded for a period of less than five years," he said.

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Powell explained each year there is a valuation of the Defined Benefit Fund to determine its assets as a ratio of future payment obligations. A reserve in addition to the required assets is maintained to protect against market fluctuations and actuarial variances (annuitants living longer than expected).

"When valuation by the actuary determines a surplus, it is tested for possibility of an increase in benefits," Powell said. "It is always our goal to earn more than required and to pass on a surplus to annuitants as permanent increases," he said.

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Va. conservatives opt against
creating 2nd state convention

By Dwayne Hastings

Baptist Press
11/8/95

NORFOLK, Va. (BP)--Messengers to the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia meeting Nov. 7 declined to launch their own state convention, voting 150-60 to defeat a motion by Terry Harper, pastor of Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Colonial Heights, Va.

Harper's motion called for the creation of a second Baptist state convention in Virginia alongside the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

While the vote was lopsided against the motion, Harper said it was primarily a matter of timing that defeated the motion as SBCV messengers met at First Baptist Church, Norfolk, in their third annual meeting.

"The time was just not right for a work of this magnitude," agreed Charlie Waller, pastor of Fork Baptist Church, Bumpass, Va. "There is still a good chance that the Holy Spirit can turn this state back to the basics of God's Word."

Given the tenor of the discussion preceding the vote, however, the general consensus appeared to be that formation of a new state convention was inevitable in the state of Virginia, where a widening breach exists between those favoring and those opposing the current leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The SBCV was founded in 1993 with 13 churches; 144 churches were involved through giving and by their attendance at SBCV meetings in 1995, reported the group's literature. The literature also said churches affiliated with the SBCV desire to pledge their loyalty and support to the SBC, supporting the Baptist General Association of Virginia "as their conscience allows."

There was no bitterness in the debate on the motion to create a new state convention, Harper noted. He said while there was lively discussion, "the general tone of the meeting was not confrontational; instead a spirit of love was evident."

Harper stressed the motion was not meant to sow dissension among SBCV members, saying, "I don't want to do anything to hinder fellowship in this group."

Bob Reccord, pastor of the host Norfolk congregation, spoke against the motion, expressing concern as to how the Southern Baptist Convention would relate to a state with two conventions.

Reccord also said he did not want to do anything on the state level that might interfere with the planned streamlining of the SBC approved by messengers to the 1995 convention in Atlanta, referring to the Program Structure Study Committee (PSSC) report, "Covenant for a New Century." Reccord chairs the Implementation Task Force, the group that bears the responsibility for implementing the PSSC recommendations.

T.C. Pinckney, a layman from Alexandria, Va., said the debate was in the best Baptist tradition: "The issue was thoroughly discussed. Pros and cons were raised by a number of speakers and the body voted not to proceed at this time. This vote was not a matter of fellowship; it was a matter of judgment."

Messengers signaled no desire to abandon their drive to differentiate themselves from the existing state Baptist convention in an earlier vote, handily approving a motion calling for the selection of a full-time executive director for the conservative Virginia group.

Officials of the Baptist General Association of Virginia were in route to Virginia Beach, Va., for the annual BGVA and were unavailable for comment.

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**Mercy Rao: Vision necessary
to see needs of the world**

By Teresa Dickens

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Christians must seek God's vision if they are going to see the needs of the world, according to Mercy Jeyaraja Rao, president of the Baptist World Alliance women's department.

Speaking to employees of Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, Ala., during their Oct. 31 observance of the Baptist Women's Day of Prayer, Rao said, "My prayer for you, as I hope you will continue to pray for me, is that we would have eyes to see what God wants us to see around the world."

Rao, the first Asian woman to serve as president of the women's department, is in the United States until mid-November on her first speaking tour since assuming her office in August. A resident of Vishakapatnam, India, Rao is a renowned educator and former president of the Asian Baptist Women's Union.

In her first visit to WMU's headquarters since 1960, Rao noted WMU's expansion since then and remarked, "From all that I have known these 35 years, I think those of you who work here are the center of the universe. We believe it because you play a great role in encompassing the world with all that God wants us to do at a time such as this."

The women's department and WMU can discover what "God wants us to do" by "looking," Rao said.

Like Joseph who clung to a dream that God had given him, and Jacob who regained a reason to live upon hearing that Joseph was alive, Christians likewise must allow the Holy Spirit to guide their lives and rejoice in the hope Christ brings.

"My friends, isn't that what you and I need to do?" she asked. "Dream dreams and tell the world that 'my Joseph' is alive and that he is willing to carry you because of what he did on the cross of Calvary and to revive the spirits of so many who today are lost in their despair."

Referring to a prayer time earlier in the program, Rao said, "As you and I prayed for a little while, only eternity will reveal what God will do and has already begun to do because we had eyes to see and we had tongues and hearts that expressed the needs of those who are saying today, 'All these things are against me.'"

Like Isaiah, Christians also must be willing to trust the results to God who is "high and lifted up."

"Do you sometimes wonder about the people for whom you are praying, you're working, you're giving?" Rao quizzed. "You may never be able to see them, but so what? When you said yes to the Lord, he sent you on a trip around the world. Only as a Christian, do you have the privilege to travel in the spirit as you pray and as you give."

Quoting Isaiah 33:7, she continued, "I realize that it is only as I look at God that I will be able to be sensitive to the needs of people who live afar off.

"How is our looking to the Lord Jesus Christ?" Rao asked. "Do we get so busy that we can't see what God wants us to do? God has to stop me ever so often and tell me, 'Mercy, the busyness has resulted in barrenness.'

"Keep the priorities straight," she admonished. "Looking only at Jesus, we will be able to look at the lands that stretch afar off."

Referencing "the great cloud of witnesses" of Hebrews 11 through 12:2, she said, "Today, as they are seated (in heaven) and as they look at you and me on the arena as we struggle with sin, with problems, with situations beyond our control, they would be calling out to us, 'Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus; the author who started the work in you will be the great finisher.'

"Friends, let's continue to look up," she pleaded. "As the time is running out; as the enemy is making so many inroads into families, countries, and Christian institutions; when tiny little problems seem to be looming so large, what is your goal and mine, but to dream those dreams that God would have us dream and to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

"And let us say, 'Lord, here am I. Send me. Send me on the wings of prayer. Send me with a substance that I can give.'

"If this is our prayer," she concluded, "one day we will meet so many of them who will tell us, 'Thank you sister, for doing the work that God put before you.'"

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(BP) photos (horizontal) available upon request from WMU, one with Rao, Dellanna O'Brien, WMU executive director, and Catherine Allen, immediate past BWA women's department president; the other with Allen and Rao at the podium. Call (205) 991-4013 or CompuServe 70423,2401 for photos.

Atlanta-area Baptist association
launches Nicaragua partnership By James Dotson

Baptist Press
11/8/95

MARIETTA, Ga. (BP)--The Atlanta-area Noonday Baptist Association has begun a three-year partnership with the Nicaragua Baptist Convention that will be on a similar scale to partnerships that in past years have only involved state conventions.

The association -- encompassing 101 churches with more than 60,000 members -- plans to send 500 missions volunteers to the country between Jan. 1, 1996, and Dec. 31, 1998, to participate in a variety of projects, including construction, evangelism, medical care and leadership training.

Leaders say the project will take advantage of the proximity and resources of the large metropolitan Atlanta association in mobilizing its members to be more active and effective in missions involvement.

"I believe there is a cutting edge here, and it is a cutting edge for any association to start focusing on really building the kingdom and looking out beyond some boundaries that we have placed ourselves in," said Ted Holley, pastor of Vinings First Baptist Church and chairman of the partnership's task force.

The partnership agreement was signed by Noonday and Nicaragua Baptist Convention leaders during the association's annual meeting Oct. 24.

Holley said a partnership of this type originated with director of missions Bob Franklin. "His goal and heart has been we really need to expand this (local missions participation) out beyond the boundary of our country," Holley said.

Franklin learned of the Nicaragua convention's desire to form a missions partnership through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

In September, an investigative team -- including Holley -- traveled to Nicaragua and learned of the needs.

Nicaragua, Holley said, is a country battered by years of political discord -- from the dictatorship of the Somoza regime, to the communist oppression of the Sandinistas, to the years of civil war between the Sandinistas and the Contras. Just last year, a devastating earthquake damaged large portions of Managua, the capital city. Half of the country's population is 15 years old or younger, and 60 percent is 21 and younger.

"It's just a real suffering people," Holley said.

Despite the strife, Baptists have made gains. When Southern Baptist missionaries returned in 1990, they found 33 new churches had been started during the war years. There are now 87 churches and 120 missions, and the goal is to double that number by the year 2000.

The partnership will be an integral part of achieving that goal. Beginning with the first project in February, teams from Noonday will fund and build new churches at a cost of \$2,000 for a mission church and \$8,000 for a full-size church. On the first project, one team will stay for the full two-week duration, and two other teams will stay one week each, working to construct additional space for a church in Managua.

Medical teams will train personnel at the Baptist hospital in Managua and provide care to Miskito Indians in the largest rain forest in Central America. Other projects include Vacation Bible Schools and student ministries, agricultural assistance and leadership training conferences.

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One project calls for summer camps to be held each summer at the Nicaraguan Christian Academy, the only English-speaking school in Managua and a popular school among some of the nation's leaders. In an effort to raise the educational level in the country, the government provides funding for Christian schools -- providing an opportunity for reaching the nation's future leaders, Holley said.

Each fall eight to 10 evangelistic teams will go into a region of the country for a week of simultaneous revivals, culminating in a large joint evangelistic rally.

Prayer has been given a principal role in the partnership, with an overall prayer coordinator to communicate needs to association members and prayer leaders designated on each mission team.

The cost for participation has been standardized at \$850 for a one-week trip and \$950 for a two-week stay. "We're trying to keep everything as simple as we possibly can and make it affordable for as many people as possible to go," Holley said.

The association is promoting the partnership through such avenues as video and computer presentations, brochures and a quarterly missions study. Holley said in his church one of the members will be creating cartoons based on the exploits of "Nickey" and "George," two characters representing the principal partners.

"We're using the Nicaragua opportunity and partnership as a catalyst by which we can focus in on people's needs wherever, he said.

Holley said the association's partnership is a reflection of a trend among many church members to be less tied to a denominational entity in fulfilling their mission as Christians.

"They are wanting to get involved and they are accepting the challenge to really do that. And if we don't provide them with hands-on opportunities for missions, evangelism or whatever, I think they're going to go somewhere where they can find that," he said.

Also, in addition to Franklin's vision for associational missions on a larger scale, the Noonday association has seen the model of how a local church can be effective in missions through the ministry of Woodstock First Baptist Church, which sends multiple missions teams out every year across the world.

"They come back and share some things, and that spark starts to ignite things," Holley said. "We want to be able to take the success of Woodstock -- how they've been able to mobilize their congregation -- and do likewise throughout the association."

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Friendship International marks
20 years of ministry, fellowship By Millie Gill

Baptist Press
11/8/95

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--Friendship International, an Arkansas Baptist ministry to internationals from more than 85 countries, has reached the 20th anniversary of its founding by a women's group from First Baptist Church, Little Rock.

The ministry effort began when Elaine Moore realized the loneliness and the need to be accepted by four internationals from Indonesia, Sri Lanka, France and Germany who were attending her church.

"At times I knew they were discriminated against and that there must be more in this community with the same circumstances who needed to be ministered to," Moore reflected during an anniversary banquet for the central Arkansas organization at Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock. "I knew my life had been enriched beyond words because of my relationship with the internationals in my church and others in the city and therefore felt an organization for them was a must."

Moore, the first director of Friendship International, traveled from her current home in Alabama to participate in the Oct. 20 celebration. She emphasized involvement in Friendship International enables members and teachers not only to share cultural differences but also allows their families to broaden their outlook on life.

"Personal relationships and learning experiences that have come from such diverse backgrounds could never have come in any other way," she noted. "I am so grateful I could return and be a part of this anniversary celebration and to be with Irene Murphy who assisted me in launching this program."

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Murphy, who remembers her childhood in Hamburg, Germany, as a time of destruction, hunger and poverty, said she and her twin sister were on the verge of starvation before they were sent by the Red Cross to Switzerland for six months to be nursed back to health. Eventually immigrating to the United States, she reflected on the excitement she felt upon seeing the Statue of Liberty as her plane was landing in New York City. "Still feeling the tears and sadness of leaving my parents, brothers and sisters behind in Germany, I nevertheless was incredibly excited about my new adventure of coming to this country," she recalled.

Murphy noted throughout the nation's history, immigrants have learned from each other by sharing the best of their culture and heritage. "The first settlers who came to these shores gave their best fibers to weave together a strong fabric of different shades of people and they called it America," she added.

"To that America I wanted to belong and contribute," Murphy emphasized. "But I remained an outsider very much alone, speaking limited English, moving a lot and becoming very shy even though I became an American citizen within the first seven years I was here."

Murphy, who married Jim Murphy, now a retired military colonel and retired law professor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Law School, said something wonderful happened to her after she moved to Little Rock. "Here I found a church where they accepted me just as I was. Having been raised at home in a church by tradition, I accepted by conviction Jesus as my Lord and Savior in First Church of Little Rock."

Soon after joining the women's prayer group, Murphy joined Moore in an effort to recruit other internationals for a program designed to meet their needs through English as a Second Language classes as well as instruction on cultural exchanges, relationships, citizenship, drivers education, cooking, arts and crafts, general education and piano lessons.

Murphy, who has completed her college education since the launching of Friendship International, as well as becoming a mother and grandmother, is the 1995-96 co-director of Friendship with Ann Rice, a member of First Baptist Church who is serving as director.

"The Great Commission has been obeyed right here," Murphy stated. "The women in the central Arkansas have held high their light of Christ to help foreigners find their way into a new culture and society.

"They have loved us regardless of nationality, background, culture and other religious beliefs," she said. "Internationals who have returned to their home countries have taken with them the message that they met loving, Christian people who cared."

Bible studies taught by Lil Robinson of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, have been instrumental in leading numerous internationals to salvation. "This is one thing I do for the Lord that when I go home I know I am doing something that is vitally important to his kingdom," Robinson said.

She told of one international from Okinawa who had become a Christian through the Bible study class and then returned to her native country, leading her entire family to faith in Christ. "This was one missionary that didn't cost Southern Baptists anything to send," she affirmed.

Deena Chavko of India, immediate past co-director of Friendship International and a nurse at University Hospital in Little Rock, praised those involved in the outreach program for "making me feel at home for 17 years."

**You could befriend
a future world leader**

HONOLULU (BP)--Baptists should befriend students from the 175-countries who enroll in U.S. colleges each year, says Joy Turner, international ministries director for the Oahu Baptist Association in Hawaii.

"These students usually are among the most intelligent and highly educated people in their countries," Turner notes. "Some are future world leaders. Nevertheless, these internationals have special needs as they enter a new and different culture for the first time."

Baptists can take steps of friendship, Turner suggests, such as inviting an international for dinner or a special holiday at their home; acknowledging and celebrating his or her birthday; sending letters or cards of encouragement; and taking cookies to the international student at exam time.

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**Service, surrender, sacrifice
underscored by Fred Wolfe**

By Lee Weeks

Baptist Press
11/8/95

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Knowing Jesus intimately means serving, surrendering and sacrificing daily according to God's will, Fred Wolfe said Nov. 7 during chapel services at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Tracing the final moments of Jesus' ministry on earth to his crucifixion, Wolfe said, to know Jesus "in the deepest part of your being" one must follow him to the Upper Room, Gethsemane and Golgotha.

"A servant's heart, a surrendered heart and a sacrificial heart, that is the heart of the Son of God," said Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hills Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala.

Wolfe challenged Christians to have a servant's heart like that of Jesus who washed his disciples' feet during his last meal with them.

"He who has the keys to death and hell (was) on his knees washing the feet of his disciples," Wolfe said in Wake Forest, N.C. "You're never going to be intimate with Jesus if you're a big shot who wants to be served."

Humility, Wolfe said, is a must for ministers of the gospel charged with discipling and nurturing fellow believers.

"What will sustain you in the ministry is not knowing about God, but in having an intimate relationship with the Son of God," he said. "Your congregation will not be a burden, they will be a blessing."

Wolfe said knowing Jesus intimately means denying one's self and taking up the cross of Jesus. He said it was not Jesus' will to die on the cross but that of God, his Father.

"God had one son without sin," Wolfe said. "He has no sons or daughters without suffering. The will of God oftentimes comes with a struggle. God never said it would be easy, but he said he would be with us."

Like Jesus' sacrifice on the cross at Golgotha, Wolfe said, believers also must die unto themselves to truly know God's Son.

"We have to go to the cross with Jesus every day," Wolfe said. "Religious people hang around the cross. Christians get on the cross."

"It's a daily choice. The flesh doesn't die easy. Self doesn't go to the cross willingly. ... As we die to ourselves his life will come out of us."

Wolfe said to know Jesus intimately is to live like him.

"The life of Jesus needs to come out of you," he said. "The life of Jesus needs to flow out of you to those people around you."

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Church child-care centers
yield community outreach

By Laurie A. Lattimore

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (BP)--Steven Reid, 4, jumps up in front of his class to "Show and Tell" his Mickey Mouse clock. Moments later he is skipping around the indoor playground with other 4-year-olds. An activity and Bible story will soon follow. Just another day for Steven at the child-care center of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, Ala.

But this everyday routine for Steven and some 100 other children is a valuable ministry for the church and a big help for families seeking quality child care.

Barbara Reid, Steven's mother, is the director of the center, which is in its third year of operation. The church offered a Mother's Day Out program before deciding in 1993 that it should expand into a day-care program. Now the center offers half-day programs five days a week for children from six weeks to 4 years old.

"We have very few openings every year," said Reid, noting most of the parents who bring their children are not members of First Baptist. Many parents seem to appreciate that the church is more than just a day-care center. Children between 2 and 4 years old use a Bible Days curriculum "Beginner Bible," from which teachers prepare lesson plans.

"The program was established to be an outreach of the church. We have a very strong commitment to it, and that makes a strong program," Reid said.

James Swedenburg, associate for church administration for the Alabama Baptists' state board of missions, emphasized the need for children's programs like the one in Tuscaloosa. Citing state statistics, Swedenburg said a majority of Alabama children need supplemental care because both parents work full-time or because children live with one parent who is working full-time.

He noted that the community need for child care and child learning centers makes such programs a good outreach ministry for churches. Because many parents appreciate the Christian atmosphere and the high quality of care, Swedenburg said many families who are not members of the church nor perhaps even involved in any church will seek church child-care centers.

Many churches begin by offering day care and gradually expand to educational weekday programs. Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala., started with a kindergarten program 35 years ago and worked its way down into child and infant care programs. In 1979, the church began day care for 3- and 4-year-olds; in 1992, it started infant day-care classes from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The church also offers a morning preschool program nine months of the year, and it continues a Mother's Day Out program Tuesdays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cindy Abercombie, the child learning center director at Whitesburg, said the learning center has numerous opportunities for the church to let its community know it is there to be a service.

"We reach into the community in a lot of ways," Abercombie said, noting the Bible stories and Christian actions taught to the children. "A number of families have joined the church because they first heard about our preschool program."

At First Baptist Church in Oneonta, Ala., the community can take advantage of the church's five children's weekday programs including day care every day, preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds and before- and after-school child care every day. The before- and after-school programs let parents drop off their children early and pick them up late. A school bus picks up and drops off the children at the developmental center. The center does not supply meals, but it has been known to have some boxes of cereal handy, especially for disadvantaged children who may not get three meals a day.

Marguerite Chambers, director of the child developmental center, said the church started the program five years ago because Oneonta had no child care. Already the program is bursting out of the church's \$1 million multipurpose building.

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"We really view this as a ministry. Many of our families are not in any church," Chambers said. During the first year, 73 of the 122 families at the developmental center visited the church and most joined, she said.

Chambers added that church child-care centers are a nonthreatening way for the church to invite families to come. Parents also are more likely to visit the church because they are familiar with the building and even know some of the members.

"Parents will be more comfortable coming because they know somebody here and they are not coming to a strange environment," Chambers said.

Starting a preschool/child-care program is one of the most popular ways to open the church up to the community, because the facility and resources are available. But Swedenburg and others recommend that churches do demographic studies to determine whether such a need exists in the community. Beyond that, the success of the ministry depends on the quality of the teaching and care for the children. The primary reason for the center is to be a service in the community, not for the community to be a service to the church.

Eloise Chandler, a preschool consultant for the Alabama convention, has started and worked in church day-care programs for more than 10 years. She cautions against churches using the day-care programs as proselytizing tools but encourages taking advantage of witnessing opportunities when possible.

"Child-care centers are a ministry because they meet a need in the community," Chandler said. "They are also good outreach because you let people know you want them to be a part of the church."

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Requests for US-2
applications due Nov. 17

Baptist Press
11/8/95

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)--Anyone considering becoming a US-2 home missionary in 1996 must request an application by Friday, Nov. 17, to be considered.

The US-2 program assigns college graduates in their 20s to two-year home missions assignments for evangelism, church starting and ministry. The Home Mission Board has 25 vacant US-2 positions for service starting Aug. 15, 1996.

Applications are due back to the board by Dec. 1. Group interviews will be in Atlanta Feb. 2-4. More information is available from the Home Mission Board at 1-800-HMB-VOLS.

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Change of address reported
by SBC registration secretary

Baptist Press
11/8/95

LAWRENCEVILLE, Ga. (BP)--Lee Porter, Southern Baptist Convention registration secretary, has moved to Lawrenceville, Ga., from Panama City, Fla.

Porter's new address is 1765 Watercrest, Lawrenceville, GA 30243; telephone, (770) 338-7388.

Porter, a Baptist Sunday School Board retiree, said he and his wife, Pat, selected Lawrenceville as a location "in the middle of SBC life." He said he intends to do interim and supply work for churches, in addition to his role as registration secretary, the post he was first elected to during the 1977 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Kansas City, Mo.

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